

Child and Family Centre

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AUTISM CAMP FOR NORTHERN WISCONSIN

Camp Birch Trail, a residential camp located in Minong, Wisconsin will begin offering a short stay residential and day camp for children with high functioning autism and aspergers syndrome. Birch Trail has been offering residential camping opportunities for girls since 1959. The camp is a beautiful recreational facility with over 300 hundred acres of land and 4,000 feet of shoreline on Lake Pokegama in the north woods of Wisconsin (50 miles south of Duluth/Superior).

The camp will be called Camp BT. The camp director is Dr. Caleb Knight, a School Psychologist in private practice who specializes in the assessment and treatment of children on the autism spectrum. The Directors of Birch Trail, Gabe and Barbara Chernov are happy to be able to utilize their facility and help others understand what a great experience organized camping can be for all children, "Dr Knight approached us with the idea of hosting an autism camp at the end of our normal camping season and we were very much in favor of the idea as it gives us a chance to expand the use of our facilities and help out special needs children". "We are excited to be able to offer some supported recreational experience to children from local communities as well as be a site for educators to expand their professional knowledge and experience". Camp BT will offer a wide variety of recreational opportunities including land and water sports as well as social skills training. Camp BT will start out very small in its first year (ten to fifteen children). A small number of places will be offered to typical children who will act as peer counselors in facilitating activities and participating in peer mediated social skill training.

Educators and other professionals in the area will be able to obtain credit through the University of Wisconsin- Superior, Office of Continuing Education by working at Camp BT as counselors and support staff. Staff training will include a 1 day seminar that includes an overview of Autism Spectrum Disorders with an emphasis on gaining knowledge of intervention strategies, particularly social skills training taught by Dr. Knight.

Camp BT's session will run from August 11th through 13th for campers. Professionals interested in working as counselors or facilitators should contact Dr Rhoda Robinson at the UWS Department of Special Education and The Office of Continuing Education at UWS. More information on Camp BT can be obtained at www.birchtrail.com/camp_bt.shtml or by writing to Dr. Knight at cknight77hk@yahoo.com