



Talisman Summer Camp

2025

45 Years OF
Exceptional Programs
FOR Exceptional Kids!



828-697-6313 • www.talismancamps.com

About Us

For 45 years, Talisman Summer Camp has provided exceptional programming for exceptional children with Autism Spectrum Disorders, ADHD and similar Neurodevelopmental Disorders in a traditional camp environment. Our activities are designed to increase confidence, promote responsibility, and enhance communication and social skills. We teach problem-solving and conflict resolution through group discussions, modeling, and practice. Our highly-structured schedule and supportive staff provide a safe environment in which to build friendships and independence. Most of all, our campers have fun!



Our campus is located in Zirconia, NC, between Asheville, NC, and Greenville, SC, and in easy reach of Atlanta, Charlotte, and Knoxville. This is currently the only location of Talisman Summer Camp.



The Story of the Talisman

A talisman is an object that holds special meaning for its owner. It is meant as a physical token to represent a memorable experience that the holder wants to retain. Each Talisman camper receives a talisman at their closing ceremony. The talisman is passed around the group and imbued with memories, praise, and encouragement by staff and peers, to act as a reminder of their camp experience and growth throughout the coming year.

Our Staff

Positive and appropriate relationships are crucial to guiding children effectively and safely. Our counselors are carefully screened for competence, responsibility, compassion, and understanding of our camper profile. They are typically college students or graduates planning a career in education, psychology, outdoor leadership or social work. Our comprehensive staff training program includes certifications in CPR, Wilderness First Aid, de-escalation, and Lifeguarding, as well as professional-level training on Autism, learning disabilities, and other neurodevelopmental differences affecting our campers. Using our interactive training model and following the American Camp Association guidelines, staff learn to utilize the camp environment to build social skills, independence, and confidence in our campers. All staff go through a national background check and pre-hire drug screen.



“

*I have made so many friends at this camp, it's like a family.
I have been to different camps, and this is by far my favorite.
I love it so much, it is so incredible. — Current Camper*

”



BASE CAMP PROGRAMS vs.

TEEN ADVENTURE PROGRAMS

All of our programs work on a similar skill set at each level. We meet each of our campers where they are in communication and independent skills, and continue to build on them while providing encouragement and reinforcement. We focus on developing social interactions, frustration management, and effective communication, thus increasing self-esteem, sensory management, and friendship-making skills. Every day is highly structured and filled with adventures, plus regular downtime. Greater independence is developed through daily goal setting, group living, participation in activities, and problem-solving sessions.

Base Camp Programs

(Discovery, Foundations, Sight, Insight, and Young Adults) are based and focused around our campus. Groups of 8-9 campers with their 3 staff live in the cabin and have daily adventures both on and off campus. These groups spend most nights in a cabin except for their 1-2 night overnight camp adventures at our on-campus campsites. This provides a strong and consistent structure that feels supportive. This allows for optimum levels of reliance and consistency.

Teen Adventure Programs

follow a modified expedition model. These programs start on-campus as campers and staff get to know each other. Once the group has formed, they head out on their themed adventures. All Teen Programs tend to spend many of their days camping out and away from campus. Our teen programs offer wilderness adventures focused on skill mastery while building personal responsibility, leadership and decision-making skills. Here we blend campers with Autism Spectrum Disorder, ADHD and similar Neurodevelopmental issues, as a model in which to teach appreciation for differences and tools for living in a diverse peer group. The variety of programs allows campers to choose the session that interests them most. Teen Adventures are for campers who are more advanced, have some camping experience, want to come to camp and want to be challenged by the outdoors. Typically, Teens campers are returning Talisman campers or have experience in expedition or adventure settings.

Most programs participate at some level in the following activities:

Hiking • Science • Canoeing • Field Games • Swimming
Arts & Crafts • Archery • Slingshots • GAGA • Fishing • Funyaking
Rock Climbing • Technical Tree Climbing • Campus-Wide Events

Let us help you choose the right program for your child!
Call us at 828-697-6313, we are happy to assist you.

BASE CAMP PROGRAMS

Discovery (AGES 6-7)

SESSION 4
7-DAY OVERNIGHT ADVENTURE

Discovery is designed for children ages 6 and 7 who may have ASD, ADHD, or learning disabilities. In just a week, campers enjoy many of our popular on-campus activities. The Discovery program model emphasizes both consistency and compassion, as campers build foundational skills in social communication and independence within a developmentally appropriate peer group. This is a great introduction to camp.

“

The camp provides youths on the spectrum with amazing options and opportunities to grow and work on social skills in a way that is not available in any other manner. The ability to disconnect from devices and distractions, to focus on oneself and in a group, doing and learning new things is what all young people need, especially those on the spectrum. The staff is amazing and they are so supportive. — Parent

”



Foundations (AGES 8-13)

OFFERED EVERY SESSION
7-DAY, 13-DAY & 17-DAY SESSIONS

For children with ADHD, Talisman's Foundations program is specifically tailored to help campers who struggle with social and executive functioning skills. Campers learn to take responsibility for their own behaviors as they explore the connection between choices and consequences. Special emphasis is placed on focus, goal completion, and thoughtful decision-making.



BASE CAMP PROGRAMS

Sight (AGES 8-13)

OFFERED EVERY SESSION
7-DAY, 13-DAY & 17-DAY SESSIONS

Our Sight program is designed specifically for young people with an Autism Spectrum Disorder, including Asperger's Syndrome, PDD, high functioning Autism, and similar Neurodevelopmental Disorders. Campers are given a gentle introduction to many new activities and guidance in building friendships.

“

Camp ups his confidence significantly and he loves that he's amongst other kids like him. He just wants to be liked for who he is, and Talisman helps him find kids that do. We look forward to future years and the growth that comes along with it. — Parent

”

Insight (AGES 14-17)

OFFERED EVERY SESSION
7-DAY, 13-DAY & 17-DAY SESSIONS

The Insight program provides an appropriate challenge for teens with ASD or ADHD. Insight provides a gradual introduction to adventure, with a higher level of structure and support than our Teen Adventure programs.

“

CURRENT CAMPERS WERE
ASKED WHAT THEY LEARNED ABOUT
THEMSELVES AT CAMP:

*“I'm a good leader”
“I can live independently”
“(I am) resourceful”
“(I gained) confidence”*

”



BASE CAMP PROGRAMS

Young Adults (AGES 18-22)

OFFERED SESSIONS 1, 2 & 3
13-DAY & 17-DAY SESSIONS

This program is designed for young adults who are on track to achieve independence and possibly post-high school education with focus on self-care, cooking, cleaning, budgeting, transportation, community involvement, and job readiness. Activities may include planning and preparing a meal, field trips to job resource sites, community service opportunities, social outings and group lessons on social, independent living, and transitional skills. Traditional camp-based activities add opportunities for developing friendships, socialization, and increased physical activity.

“

My daughter has loved it ever since the first year she went. She said she felt like there are so many people that are like her. Before she felt alone. — Parent

”



“

We could not have been more impressed. Loved the emphasis on goal setting, confidence building and overall approach. — Parent

”



TEEN ADVENTURE PROGRAMS

Expeditions for Teens with ASD, ADHD, or Similar Needs

Leadership (AGES 16-22)

OFFERED SESSION 2
13-DAY SESSION

This is an invitation-only program.

This program is for returning campers only. Campers must have completed a Base Camp program and one Teen Adventure program successfully to qualify for the Leadership program.

Staff recommendation required.

Leadership consists of a self-directed wilderness trip and an on-campus leadership training course. The group functions on their own with guidance from staff, learning important leadership skills and roles. Participants fine-tune and build on the social, communication, and group skills that they have learned throughout their time at Talisman, while serving as leaders within the camp community.

Note: Successful completion of a Leadership course is required for campers who wish to be considered for Talisman Krewe.

Mountain Odyssey (AGES 13-17)

OFFERED SESSION 2
13-DAY SESSION

Campers explore the history, folklore, trails, and tales of Western North Carolina. They travel across the lands of the Cherokee, Pioneers, and Rangers that made this area the first Wild West. Campers take day and overnight trips to discover the courageous, fearless, adventurous, lawless, and fiercely independent people and culture of the mountains.



TEEN ADVENTURE PROGRAMS

Expeditions for Teens with ASD, ADHD, or Similar Needs

Quest (AGES 13-17)

OFFERED SESSIONS 1 & 3
17-DAY SESSIONS

Bringing treasure hunt adventure games to life! Complete the Quest by conquering lakes, rivers, and trails and learning wilderness skills, map & compass, and navigation on a multi day expedition on a lake. Stay on various islands, seeking hidden treasures while learning cooperation, problem-solving, and teamwork. Utilize tandem canoes as a time to strengthen communication skills when navigating the lake.

Caves & Mining (AGES 14-17)

OFFERED SESSION 1
17-DAY SESSION

Attention rockhounds! Did you know the first ever gold rush in the United States happened here in North Carolina? Explore new depths and geology this summer. Exploration of several caves across the Southeast will focus on proper technique, environmental education, and the geology and biology of caves. Campers will also explore rock and gem mines to learn, practice, and pan for gemstones. Visits may include both commercial mines and panning in nearby mountain streams. No prior caving or mining experience is necessary.



TEEN ADVENTURE PROGRAMS

Expeditions for Teens with ASD, ADHD, or Similar Needs

Tri-Adventures (AGES 14-17)

OFFERED SESSION 3
17-DAY SESSION

Experience three popular outdoor adventure activities: **backpacking, canoeing, and rock climbing.** These activities provide natural opportunities to incorporate social interactions among peers. Learn wilderness skills such as tarp set-up, water purification, packing a pack, and “Leave No Trace” principles. Participants refine their interactions and decision-making skills, while building self-esteem, as they face the challenges posed by these adventure activities. This program is for campers who are excited about all 3 activities and have prior outdoor camping experience, as they will spend more time camping than in their cabins.

Teen Adventure Series (AGES 13-17)

OFFERED SESSION 4
7-DAY SESSION

Talisman Teen Adventure Series is an introductory week for our Teens Program. We offer different challenges and adventures for participants to build a foundation of skills to then use on further Teen Adventure Programs. TAS will do day trips to gain experience with paddling, hiking, and more!



Applying to Talisman

Thank you for your interest in Talisman Programs. We are proud of the wide range of programs that we offer. Contact us for assistance in choosing the right ones for your child. **828-697-6313**

HOW TO APPLY

- Fill out application on www.talismancamps.com.
- We will contact you after application review.
- **\$300 deposit** is required upon acceptance.
- **Full tuition due by May 1st (or upon on acceptance after May 1).**
- Complete online enrollment forms **by May 15th, including doctors visits & forms.**

INCLUDED IN TUITION

- All activity costs, meals, and snacks
- Nurse-based care and oversight
- Transport to and from the Greenville/Spartanburg (GSP) or Asheville (AVL) airport on opening and closing days between the hours of 9am and 3pm. (Outside of time parameters for additional fee upon approval.)

ADDITIONAL COSTS

- Special diets (GF, CF, Dye-Free, Vegan, etc.)
- Medical costs
- Airport costs and fees, other travel to and from camp

We will ONLY offer in-between session stay between session 2 and 3 at the daily rate of \$350.

PAYMENT OPTIONS

MasterCard, Visa, AmEx, Discover, and E-Check. Credit card on file for incidentals and emergencies required for all campers while they are at camp.

REFUND POLICY

Deposits are non-refundable once the camper is accepted. Full tuition is due by May 1st to retain your spot. Cancellations will be refunded (minus the deposit) at the following rate:

- 100% refund or credit until April 1st
- 75% refund or full credit until May 1st
- 50% credit after May 1st

There is **no** refund or credit for early discharge of a camper.

EXCLUSIONARY CRITERIA

- Verbal IQ 85 and below
- Physical aggression or self-injurious behavior
- Drug or alcohol use/abuse
- Conduct Disorder
- Sexually acting out/inappropriate sexual behaviors

Functioning Level: Language must be comprehensible by others and appropriate to age level. Able to participate in group activities that require conversation skills, follow verbal directions, and participate in simple discussions. Campers must be willing to eat 50% of camp food offered. Ask to see our session menu!





2025 Talisman Open Houses, Webinars and E-Campfires

**All times are EDT, and all webinars will be recorded and emailed.*

Get To Know Talisman Webinar for Prospective Parents

Wednesday, February 5th at 6:30pm

OPEN HOUSE

Come to camp this spring to check out our facilities, try some of our on-campus activities, and meet other families!

Saturday, March 29, 2025 • 10:00am-2:00pm

A link to RSVP will be sent in late winter.

**Individual visits by appointment only*

PARENT WEBINARS & CAMPER E-CAMPFIRES

In an effort to help you and your camper transition to camp, we offer several online webinars for parents of enrolled campers. Learn details, ask questions, and alleviate any anxiety and fears you have prior to camp. Camper E-Campfires are your child's version of a webinar. Your camper will meet some of the staff prior to camp, get answers to any questions they have, and learn more about what to expect while at camp. Enrolled campers and families will receive an invitation.

Parent Webinars

Discovery, Sight & Foundations — Wednesday, May 7th at 6:30pm

Insight, Teens & Young Adults — Thursday, May 8th at 6:30pm

E-Campfires

Discovery, Sight & Foundations E-Campfire — Wednesday, May 14th at 6:30pm

Insight, Teens & Young Adults E-Campfire — Thursday, May 15th at 6:30pm

PARENT SEMINARS

Talisman offers parent seminars at the end of every session, free to our Talisman families. We explain the activities we offer our campers, why we do them, and what we hope to achieve from them. We describe our group problem-solving process and other tools used to help our campers develop socially. This allows parents the opportunity to learn the skills, elements, and principles of our camp philosophy for use in their home so that each camper's growth and progress can continue beyond the camp experience. We also provide current information on Autism, ADHD, and neuro-development. Finally, the seminar offers the opportunity to build a community of support with other families.

Session 1 — June 22 (12pm-3pm)

Session 2 — July 7 (12pm-3pm)

Session 3 — July 26 (12pm-3pm)

Session 4 — August 4 (12pm-3pm)

2025 DATES & RATES

SESSION 1

	Length	Opening Day	Closing Day	Price
Base Camp Programs FOUNDATIONS, SIGHT, INSIGHT and YOUNG ADULTS	17-days	June 7th	June 23rd	\$5,950
Teen Adventure Programs CAVES & MINING and QUEST	17-days	June 7th	June 23rd	\$6,460

SESSION 2

	Length	Opening Day	Closing Day	Price
Base Camp Programs FOUNDATIONS, SIGHT, INSIGHT and YOUNG ADULTS	13-days	June 26th	July 8th	\$4,550
Teen Adventure Programs MOUNTAIN ODYSSEY and LEADERSHIP	13-days	June 26th	July 8th	\$4,940

SESSION 3

	Length	Opening Day	Closing Day	Price
Base Camp Programs FOUNDATIONS, SIGHT, INSIGHT and YOUNG ADULTS	17-days	July 11th	July 27th	\$5,950
Teen Adventure Programs TRI-ADVENTURES and QUEST	17-days	July 11th	July 27th	\$6,460

SESSION 4

	Length	Opening Day	Closing Day	Price
Mini Camp Programs DISCOVERY, FOUNDATIONS, SIGHT, INSIGHT and TEEN ADVENTURE SERIES	7-days	July 30th	August 5th	\$2,660



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Contact Us

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