



## The most frequently asked questions about Pact Family Camp

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- What is the ideal age for children to attend Pact Family Camp?
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### **Is Pact Family Camp for transracial families only?**

Pact Camp is appropriate for ALL adoptive families with children of color. Over 30% of the families in attendance include at least one parent of color at both Camps. In the past, between 65-75% of the participating families have adopted transracially, and most but not all of the parents in those families are white. Recognizing that talking about race in racially mixed groups is sometimes challenging, we offer daily times and spaces exclusively for adoptive parents of color to interact in a safe space with other parents of color, and opportunities to focus more on adoption issues and the intersections that occur with race for them which are quite different than those for white adoptive parents. For white parents, we offer specific programming on parenting across racial lines, and “brave spaces” in which to explore concepts of racial identity, including white identity. We place great value on creating opportunities for everyone to interact as a multiracial community.

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### **Should we attend if we are adoptive parents of color?**

At Pact Family Camp, we provide a welcoming and supportive environment for parents of color—we are here to meet the needs of you and your family. We expect that between 30 and 35% of the families in attendance at both Camps to include at least one adoptive parent of color; this percentage is increasing each year as more families learn about Camp. The majority of the camp speakers, workshop leaders, and staff (including the counselors who spend the day with your children) are people of color, many of them adopted. There are daily opportunities for adoptive parents of color to attend workshops or meet among themselves, because our curriculum addresses topics of oppression, race and culture, and we want to make sure that you are not being asked to be a teacher of white people if that is not your desire. Of course, we invite people to reach across racial lines as they choose, but we want to acknowledge the power dynamics that can happen when adoptive parents of color are in the minority. At Pact Family Camp, we emphatically believe that it is not the “job” of people in the minority to help those from the majority process their feelings about race, adoption, gender, sexual orientation etc. We want to see you at Pact Family Camp and we are committed to making it an experience that will meet your needs.

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### **Do we stay in tents? What is the housing like at Camp?**

No! No camping is involved at Pact Family Camp

- **Pact Family Camp West** is held at the charming and well-appointed Granlibakken Resort. All families are housed in comfortable hotel-style rooms with private baths and an appropriate number of beds for all family members (sometimes including fold-out Murphy beds and/or sofa beds), with daily room service, and provided with three generous meals a day, plus snacks. Amenities include a heated swimming pool and hot tub, a small fitness room, and even a spa where you can



book an appointment for a massage. The resort is surrounded by walking trails; while many campers remain on the resort grounds the entire time, a pleasant hike brings you to Lake Tahoe, the Truckee River, and Tahoe City, as does a five-minute drive. You can request a housing upgrade to a studio with a full kitchen; a 2-bedroom unit with a full kitchen; or an entire townhouse for your family. A limited number of upgraded accommodations are available on a first-come, first served basis (*Additional fees apply*).

- **Pact Family Camp East:** will be held at beautiful Callaway Gardens located in Pine Mountain Georgia. All families are housed in comfortable hotel-style rooms with private baths and an appropriate number of beds for all family members (sometimes including fold-out Murphy beds and/or sofa beds), with daily room service, and provided with three generous meals a day, plus snacks. Amenities include a heated swimming pool and hot tub, a small fitness room, and even a spa where you can book an appointment for a massage. You can request a housing upgrade to a suite with a family room and a separate sleeping quarter; a shared cottage (with another camp family) with 1 bedroom which has 2 queen beds, a shared full kitchen and family room; or a private 2-bedroom cottage for your family. A limited number of upgraded accommodations are available on a first-come, first-served basis at the time of camp registration. (*Additional Fees Apply*).

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### **What is the ideal age for children to attend Pact Family Camp?**

Pact Family Camp is appropriate for all ages, and the ages of participating kids are spread out surprisingly evenly, from infants to 18-year-olds. The time that all the kids spend with mentors (many of them adult adoptees) who “look like them” is a valuable experience for children of all ages and stages. Parents of children at all ages report that they benefit tremendously from finding community, sharing information, and learning new parenting strategies. Pact Family Camp provides a safe, supportive environment—for both kids and adults—in which to explore the complex issues faced by adopted children of color. Coming to Pact Family Camp can open new channels of communication in your family that you will use long after camp is over. When families begin to attend with younger children they are investing in the future of their family and the cohort of peers that is bound to occur through attendance and the connections they make with other participants.

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### **We are an LGBTQ-headed family; will we be welcomed at Pact Family Camp?**

Between 25% and 35% of the families attending Pact Family Camp over the last several years self-identify as LGBTQ-headed households. Pact is committed to being allies to the LGBTQ community. We hire and train our staff accordingly. We also are proactive in hiring LGBTQ-identified staff to reflect and offer supportive conversations and support to youth growing up in LGBTQ-headed households as well as those who are exploring their own sexual and/or gender



expression. In addition, we create opportunities for parents to connect in affinity lunch groups to explore their parenting issues and share their experiences.

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### **I am a single parent, will there be other single parents in attendance?**

Each year approximately 15% - 25% of the families in attendance at Pact Family Camp are headed by single parents; there are also some parents who attend without their partners. We work to create opportunities for single parents to connect in affinity lunch groups to explore their parenting issues and share their experiences. Some single parents share childcare responsibilities to increase their own adult time while ensuring that their children are fully engaged during family time each afternoon and evening. We encourage single parent families to connect with others to enhance their camp experience.

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### **Can we bring extended family members to Pact Family Camp?**

There are always extended family members who attend Camp, including grandparents, aunts and uncles, friends and even children's caregivers. Each year they tell us how important the experience is for them in navigating their own growth and understanding of their family's experiences of adoption and race. [Click here for more information.](#)

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### **Can our child's birth family attend?**

More birth family members are attending Pact Family Camp each year! We welcome them as important members of the triad who we are delighted to count as members of the Pact community, along with not only the children they have placed for adoption but also those whom they continue to parent. [Learn more about the birth parent experience at camp.](#)

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### **Is the children's programming age-appropriate?**

Yes! Children and youth are separated into groups for developmentally age-appropriate programming generally determined by grade level. Each group wears a different color t-shirt for easy identification; many children look forward with great anticipation to moving up to the next group. In the past, campers have been grouped as follows: The "Littles" kindergarten and younger. The "Middles" are elementary school aged. The "Tweens" are middle school aged. The "Teens" are in their last year of middle school or high school. Each of these groups are then sub-divided into younger and older groups. *Age groups/ colors may change or be modified based on the number of children in each age group, so please do not promise a particular color or grouping to children without checking in with Pact first.* Each group has its own head counselor leading a team of counselors, with a ratio between 3:1 for the youngest to 5:1 for the oldest. Each group enjoy activities that explore issues related to adoption and race, beginning very gently with the youngest children and gradually allowing for more in-depth consideration as the kids are ready for it.



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### **My child is under 5 years old; does Pact Family Camp make sense for our family?**

Parents who come for the first time when their children are Middles (elementary school aged children) tell us that they wish they had started attending when their children were even younger, because they see the comfort and sense of safety that younger children have already achieved by attending earlier. Our youngest campers get the chance to grow up always knowing lots of other adopted kids of color—and meeting lots of adopted adults as well. Attending while your children are very young allows them to build community and form connections with counselors and other children so that when they are older and begin to engage with deeper feelings about adoption and race, they already trust the Pact community to be a safe and supportive place to express those feelings. And even children at very young ages can begin to learn words that will help them talk about adoption and race. We introduce language and ideas through art and music projects that support racial identification, adoption comfort, and strong family connections. Because many of our youngest campers have a high need to be connected to their parents, we have an alternative schedule for them and you to promote family attachment. A typical schedule will have parents pick up children who are 4-years-old or younger after lunch, to have family reconnect time (or nap time), and then have the option to return to programming in the late afternoon for parents who choose to do that. The older pre-K children typically stay in programming until 3:00 pm when they join their parent(s) for family time.

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### **What kinds of conversations happen with youth 6 to 9 years old?**

Children this age are ready to ask questions and expand their understanding of race, adoption, and identity. At Pact, we have developed a curriculum called Adoption Facts that we use to answer the children's questions about adoption. Each year they are energized and ready to engage in discussions about what adoption and foster care mean to them, how they feel about their racial identity and their birth heritage. They often ask questions about birth family. We brainstorm ideas for improving the adoption system. These children, whom we call the Middles, are divided into at least two sometimes three groups (dependent on grade level) and they are often among our most enthusiastic Pact Campers. They respond energetically to art projects and activities that promote a sense of community and pride in racial heritage.

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### **My tween is not sure he/she wants to attend – how do you ensure that older children have a successful experience at Pact Family Camp?**

We understand that tweens don't want parents or professionals selecting friends for them. Can Pact guarantee that each tween will have fun or connect at camp? No. Is pushing attendance just setting up another source of ammunition for them to say, "I told you so," if they don't have a good time? Maybe. Is it worth a try to give them an opportunity to find a setting that may feel like a better fit than some others? Yes. We know that it has worked for the overwhelming



majority of participants, who once they attend have found the experience to be fun, rewarding, and important. Many of them turn around and insist that their parents promise to return each year thereafter. Youth this age are given the chance to discover how cool our Camp counselors are; often the very ones who swore they would not participate are our most active members. Discussions, art projects, and dance classes all offer opportunities for youth to explore new areas of racial and/or adoption identity in ways that they may not have previously. Programming also includes some discussion of new awareness and/or questions about sexual identity, peer-relationships, birth parents and other related topics. The tweens also participate in a fun activity geared to develop group bonding within the group. In past years, this has been a ropes course, movie night, paddle boarding and canoeing.

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### **How is programming different for teen campers?**

Teens (age 13 and older) are separated by age into two separate groups: younger teens ages and older teens. Younger teens are in programming not only during the day but also part of the evening before they reconnect with their parent/s to sleep in their family room. Older teens are housed together with their counselors, and have their own round-the-clock staffing (20 hours a day, with 4 hours of designated family reconnect time with their parents). (All other age groups return to their parents after the day's programming is over, generally at 3:00 pm.) Each year some parents tell us they don't expect their older teen will want to live with the other teens and would prefer to stay with them. This is an option they can exercise but it rarely happens – almost all of the older teens seem to prefer to stay with their peers. Each group participates in a fun and stimulating program that includes a wide variety of outdoor activities (often at least one field trip); they also serve as mentors and buddies to our younger campers. They have their own "hang-out" room, in which they spend a great deal of time. Teens participate in adoption, race and identity discussions with adult adoptees and other mentors of color, who talk to them in honest and supportive ways. Programming includes workshops on communication, decision-making, values, and sexuality, with opportunities for facilitated interaction between teens and their parents.

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### **How can I become a Camp Counselor?**

We are always looking for dedicated compassionate people to work with our youth at Pact Family Camp. Young adults (21 and older) are encouraged to apply to become a counselor at Pact Family by completing an application. [Click here to learn more.](#)

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### **Do you have a Counselor in Training program?**

Pact's Counselor-in-Training (CIT) Leadership Program is looking for energetic and motivated young adults (ages 18 to 21 years old, with a high school diploma or G.E.D.), who want to learn leadership and job skills while working with young adopted youth of color. CITs will develop leadership and mentoring skills through direct supervision and regular educational seminars



with their CIT Program Coordinator and experts in the fields of adoption, race and child development, while engaging in a hands-on experience with young campers. We particularly invite adopted and/or foster-care alum, people of color and others personally impacted by adoption and/or foster care to apply. [Learn More Here.](#)

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### **What are the races of the children that attend Pact Family Camp?**

At Pact Camp, we are inclusive of adopted children of color of all races and ethnicities because we believe that they have much in common with one another despite their differing racial and/or ethnic experiences. Fundamentally all adopted people of color tell us that race matters and adoption matters and we provide curriculum and a community that supports these commonalities, so that children and youth can learn how to find and recognize allies within their own communities. Over the last several years, 75-80% of the youth in attendance are African American or part African American, and 20-25% are split between Latin-x and Asian/Pacific Islanders ethnicities. There are also a small number of white siblings in attendance. We carefully hire our counselor and program/curriculum staff to reflect the children's racial/ethnic demographics so that youth in most groups not only have peers who share their racial group but also at least one counselor. The Pact community is intentionally inclusive and proactively anti-racist.

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### **Should I bring the children born to our family to Pact Family Camp?**

Pact's Director, Beth Hall, is herself a non-adopted sibling who grew up in an adoptive family. She hosts a special dinner for non-adopted siblings of all ages every year at Pact Camp so that these children recognize that they are important members of the Pact community. We often have one or two counselors who are non-adopted siblings of adoptees themselves and they make sure the program is inclusive for these children. Non-adopted siblings tell us that they like knowing more about adoption and exploring and understanding better some of the issues their brothers and sisters are facing so they can become allies.

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### **Can we attend Pact Family Camp part-time?**

Pact Family Camp is and should be a full-immersion experience; parents and children form bonds by living in close proximity for the full period of the camp program. Program-wise, it is important for all children in the program to have continuity in their peer group. It is disruptive to have some kids attending camp for only a few days. For these reasons, we do not allow families to attend Pact Family Camp for anything other than a full-time, full-session basis. Our contracts with the camp venues includes only a small reduction in price for commuters, making it hardly worth the savings given the loss of the experience of being on-site continuously: so much of the community-building benefit of Camp comes from informal visiting that occurs during meals, in proximal living space, at the pool, and during family free time. We strongly recommend against participating on a commuter basis.



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### **Can we have visitors while we are at Pact Family Camp?**

In an effort to provide the best camp experience in the safest environment possible, Pact Family Camp has a No Visitors policy. Camp is a very close-knit and relational community. This bond represents the best aspect of the camp experience, allowing all of us to recognize one another and feel safe as we explore the sometime volatile intersections of adoption, race and family. It also makes our camp a very secure environment. Visitors can jeopardize both of these outcomes. Sometimes attendees have friends or family in the area they would like to see while they are at Camp. If you would like to see these friends or family while they are visiting the area, we encourage you to extend your stay or meet them off-site.

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### **Why does Pact Family Camp cost so much?**

We understand that Pact Family Camp is not cheap and that some families have to make difficult tradeoffs in order to participate. Pact is a non-profit organization, and our Board of Directors has committed to NOT using Pact Family Camp as a way to generate revenue; the goal for Camp is simply to break even. We want as many families as possible to be able to participate. Camp fees are set on a sliding-scale based on family income. The Board has committed to ensuring that 25% of attending families have incomes under \$75,000 and an additional 25% have incomes under \$125,000. We have a fund that supports scholarships (partial subsidies) for qualified families. We see Pact Family Camp as an investment in the well-being of adopted children of color and those who love them. Pact Family Camp costs what it does because it takes a lot of money to provide a five-day, all-inclusive program that offers world-class education and support for children of all ages as well as their adoptive parents, birth parents, and other allies. It is often a great sacrifice for families to come to camp, and we appreciate the choice they have made. What they get in return is nationally renowned speakers; incredible counselors and mentors (many of whom are themselves adopted or fostered) who are devoted to supporting adopted children of color; unique programs to help children process their adoption experience; the chance to connect with other families who share their experiences; learning experiences for parents that can be transformative; and opportunities for recreation in a beautiful setting. Pact Camp creates community for families who too often don't find services specifically designed with them in mind.

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### **What are the payment options for Pact Family Camp?**

You can pay the full camp fee or select a payment plan. If you choose the payment plan, there is a \$150 fee. Those who choose a payment plan will be charged in regular equal installments on the first of each month, with the balance paid in full by July 1st for Camp West and August 1st for Camp East.



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### **Is financial aid available?**

We do everything we can to ensure that families at all income levels can participate in Pact Family Camp. Families with income/assets under \$125,000 who qualify for subsidy are offered the opportunity to attend Pact Family Camp at a reduced rate. This support is made possible by gifts we have received from generous donors who want to make sure that the Camp experience is available to all.

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### **How does the registration lottery work for Pact Camp West?**

Pact Family Camp West is in high demand. Although we would love to have every family who wants to register come to camp, we do have a limit of @100 families at our current site. All families begin by registering with a deposit that places them into the lottery; the deposit is fully refundable if you are not offered an opportunity to attend and will be rolled into your Camp Fees if you do attend. Pact Family Camp East does NOT currently have a lottery although the Camp filled to 85% capacity in 2019, therefore we suggest that families register as early as possible to ensure their spot. If we are over-enrolled, which we expect is likely for 2020, we will create a waiting list and the deposit will be fully refundable to families who are not offered the opportunity to attend.

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### **What if I need to cancel, what is your refund policy?**

We realize that Pact Family Camp comes at a significant cost for many families. It is critical that participants also realize that Pact runs this event on an extremely tight budget. We would like to be able to issue refunds when a family cancels, but we cannot because of the enormous financial obligation we incur when we register families for camp. Camp deposits are fully refundable ONLY if Pact is not able to offer your family a slot at camp. We encourage you to take care great in making your summer plans. [You can read our detailed refund/cancellation policy here.](#)