

Summer Day Camp 2026

Frequently Asked Questions

YMCA OF METROPOLITAN MILWAUKEE

DAYCAMP@YMCAMKE.ORG | YMCAMKE.ORG/CAMP



What can my child expect to experience at camp?

SAMPLE SCHEDULE

7:00–9:00 AM Drop Off & Camper's Choice Activities
9:00–9:45 AM Sunscreen, Wash Hands & Breakfast
9:45–10:00 AM Opening Ceremony
10:00–10:30 AM Small Group Games & Team Building
10:30–11:30 AM Nature Walk & Adventure Activities
11:30 AM – 12:00 PM Wash Hands & Lunch
12:00–12:30 PM Reading, Rest & Relaxation Time
12:30–1:00 PM Educational Activity
1:00–2:00 PM Physical Activity
2:00–2:30 PM Art Project
2:30–3:15 PM Large Group Game
3:15–3:30 PM Closing Ceremony
3:30–4:00 PM Wash Hands & Afternoon Snack
4:00–6:00 PM Pick Up & Camper's Choice

Every day is a new adventure, but it can be overwhelming at times. Here are situations that campers should be prepared for:

- **Large groups** of 20+ children.
- **Loud noises:** Be able to tolerate loud noises or bring noise-reducing headphones.
- **Sensory tolerance:** Prepare for singing songs, laughter, wet clothes, messy crafts, sunscreen, and bug spray.
- **Natural elements:** Expect outdoor spaces and be prepared for sun, rain, dirt, grass, heat, and insects.

In addition to being able to independently manage and navigate their day, campers are expected to be able to:

- Stay with their supervised group for the duration of the program. Children who elope pull staff away from supervision of the whole group. For the safety of all in the program, we must stay in the ratio.
- Adhere to staff instructions.
- Keep their hands, bodies, and belongings to themselves.
- Use appropriate language that is inclusive, caring, and developmentally appropriate.
- Be responsible for their personal belongings.
- Respect program and participants' equipment/belongings.
- Transition activities frequently.
- Follow safety guidelines.
- Change in and out of a swimsuit.
- Complete a swim evaluation.

- Handle disappointment/frustration without harming others.
- Participate in or tolerate non-preferred activities.
- Tolerate a variety of sensory input.
- Use the bathroom independently.

If your child is not able to follow the areas above, they may be removed from the program. If a child is removed from the program, families will still be responsible for the weekly fee.

Are campers outside all day?

Campers will spend the majority of their time outdoors each day, enjoying the weather and exploring nature. Youth will encounter bugs, engage in a lot of hiking, and play in the woods in different types of weather/temperatures.

During the summer, conditions can become hot, humid, or rainy, so staff monitor the weather throughout the day. In light/moderate rain, we will still hold outdoor programming. In the event of lightning and/or thunder, we will move indoors until the weather improves. Covered shelters can be used when the weather is not ideal.

What is the inclement weather policy?

If temperatures and humidity hit a certain index per state's licensing, or rain becomes excessive, the camp will move indoors. If there is a severe weather warning, all campers will be inside and follow Y safety procedures. In the rare case that camp needs to close, families will be contacted.

When do sunscreen and bug spray need to be applied?

Please apply sunscreen and bug spray each day before sending your child to camp. We will prompt campers to reapply sunscreen and bug spray throughout the day and monitor, as appropriate. Campers often like to share with friends, but remind them to not use it all up in one day!

What should my child bring to camp?

Campers spend most of the day outdoors, so be sure to send your child to camp wearing appropriate clothing and footwear.

Please label and send the following items with your camper

every day in a backpack:

- Non-perishable lunch (optional)
- Water bottle
- Sneakers or closed-toe shoes
- Swimsuit & towel (swimming days vary by location)
- Sunscreen & bug spray
- Change of clothes (recommended for younger campers)

Personal items of monetary or sentimental value, including toys, electronic devices, gaming systems, trading or game cards, valuable jewelry, and money, should be left at home. Weapons of any kind are prohibited, including fake weapons and water guns.

Children are not allowed to be on phones during programming. If they have a phone and refuse to put it in their backpack, it will be put in a locked box and returned at pick-up.

What food is provided?

Campers are provided with breakfast, lunch, and afternoon snacks every day. On field trip days, campers will be given a bag lunch. Meals follow USDA guidelines and are subject to change based on availability. Menus will be posted monthly at each camp for parents to review. Here are some examples:

Breakfast (includes milk)

- Multigrain Cheerios, applesauce
- Graham crackers, fresh fruit
- Banana bread, fresh fruit

Lunch (includes milk)

- Crispy chicken wrap on tortilla, seasonal veggies, fresh fruit
- Turkey kielbasa on a whole grain bun, baked beans, fresh fruit
- Pasta with meatballs and marinara sauce, sliced cucumbers, graham crackers, fruit

Field Trip Lunch

- Turkey and cheese sandwich on a whole grain bun, celery, fresh fruit, milk

Afternoon Snack

- Goldfish crackers, applesauce
- Tropical orange juice, graham crackers
- Pretzels, clementines

Campers are welcome to bring their own lunch, but will not have access to a refrigerator or microwave. When packing your camper's lunch, please choose healthy options and limit items such as candy, chips, and soda. Campers are not allowed to share food with others unless it's approved by camp leadership.

What if my camper is sick or going to be absent?

If your camper will be absent, please email the camp leadership team your child's name and age, the reason for the absence, and when you expect them to return.

Rite-Hite YMCA: rhdaycamp@ymcamke.org

Lincoln Park: lincolnparkdc@ymcamke.org

Wilson Park: wilsonparkdc@ymcamke.org

Email is preferred, but you may also call our leadership team to communicate the absence.

Please do not send your child with any of the following symptoms:

- Sore throat
- Excessive coughing
- Diarrhea or vomiting
- Fever
- Head lice
- Undiagnosed rash, sore, or other skin condition
- Any other contagious disease or symptom

Parents/guardians must notify the Camp Director if their child contracts a communicable disease as soon as diagnosed.

When a communicable disease occurs, the Y will notify other participants in writing, including the cause and symptoms.

Children must be symptom-free for a full 24 hours before returning to camp. A doctor's note may be required before re-admitting a child to the program.

What training and experience do staff have?

Our camp teams are made up of certified staff who have an interest in education, recreation, or other youth-focused fields and are dedicated to making day camp a fun, engaging, and safe experience for every camper.

Each staff member undergoes an extensive hiring process, including a criminal history background check and an interview. All counselors receive over 40 hours of training in camp program areas, such as basic water safety, first aid, CPR, child abuse prevention, and emergency procedures. All staff members are committed to being positive role models for campers.

What are the staff to camper ratios?

We follow state requirements for ratios based on campers' ages, with a standard ratio of 1 counselor per 18 campers.

State-required ratios are:

- **4-year-olds:** 1 staff to 6 campers
- **5-6-year-olds:** 1 staff to 12 campers
- **7-13-year-olds:** 1 staff to 18 campers

Campers are with their preassigned group and counselor all day. Their groups may vary from week to week, but they will always be grouped with other campers of similar ages. During before- and after-care, younger and older campers may be grouped together.

How independent does my camper need to be with personal care?

Campers must be predominantly independent in their personal care needs (toileting, feeding, and dressing). Y staff will provide reminders and verbal cues, but cannot provide physical assistance with clothing management.

Campers must be fully potty-trained before attending camp.

My child has 1:1 support at school -- will they have an aide at camp?

We work to create a positive environment for everyone, including those with disabilities, but the Y is not required to provide the same accommodations as the school system. While our youngest campers operate at smaller ratios, we do not have additional staff on hand to provide 1-on-1 care for campers.

If your camper requires accommodation due to a disability, please contact the director of your camp to discuss what supports and modifications can be put in place within our 1:18 staff-to-camper ratio.

What are the expectations for camper participation?

Campers are expected to meet the program eligibility criteria (regardless of disability status) in order to participate. Eligibility criteria may vary from program to program, based on the program's physical space, but not from person to person.

Campers are expected to understand and follow the program's general behavior expectations with or without accommodations.

The Y's top priority is to provide a safe and enriching experience for all children. Participants are expected to adhere to the Y's participant expectations. The accommodations provided may assist a youth in meeting those expectations, but do not exempt a youth from following them.

Campers are expected to be willing and able to participate in a majority of the program activities, with or without accommodations.

TAKING BREAKS

The Y understands that some campers require breaks throughout the day to best meet their needs.

- A break is defined as a short, structured pause in the daily routine to promote a camper's well-being with the expectation to return to the large group environment after a reasonable amount of time.
- Any breaks from the large group must take place within sight and hearing range of other Y employees. For example, having a camper read at a picnic table on the edge of the field where their group is playing kickball. Staff are not permitted to be alone with a camper at any time.

How do I prepare my camper for swimming at camp?

Campers have the opportunity to participate in swimming activities and will receive water safety instructions, including basic swim skills and essential water safety practices. Staff will email or post swimming schedules once dates are finalized, so you know when to send your camper with their suit and towel.

Campers will be asked to rinse off head to toe before getting in the pool and will have their head in the water during some lessons. Swim caps are encouraged for those who don't want their hair to get wet.

No previous swimming experience is necessary. All campers will remain in skill-level and age-appropriate water, closely supervised at all times by trained counselors and certified lifeguards.

Are visitors allowed at camp?

Parents are welcome to visit camp; however, for the safety of all campers, parents must be accompanied by a Y staff member and cannot walk through camp independently. Visits are strongly recommended to be scheduled in advance with leadership staff to ensure availability.

Each camp hosts an Open House for families and campers to meet staff, see the spaces, learn what a typical day looks like, and have fun together. It's a great way to learn about camp before it starts and help campers feel excited and prepared.

During the summer, there will also be a Family Night hosted by each camp as another opportunity for families to see the camp spaces and participate in fun activities. Please look for communication from your camp leadership team and save the date on your calendar!

Are phones and other electronics allowed at camp?

All electronic devices, phones, smart watches, electronic games, etc. are not allowed at camp and should be left at home.

Children are not allowed to be on phones during programming. If they have a phone and refuse to put it in their backpack, it will be put in a locked box and returned at pick-up.

If you need to contact your camper during the day, please call the camp phone, and staff will relay the message or connect you with your camper, if necessary.

My camper lost something -- How do I retrieve it, if it's found?

Our camps are in shared spaces, but Y staff will do their best to collect the lost items we find. However, we cannot guarantee all belongings will be recovered.

All found items will be kept for at least two weeks and displayed regularly for campers and families to look through. If you are missing a specific item, feel free to email the day camp directly with a description of the item so we can watch for it.

Camp staff will provide regular reminders to help campers keep track of their items, but ultimately, campers are responsible for keeping track of their personal belongings. We recommend sending a backpack so they can keep their items with them at all times. The YMCA of Metropolitan Milwaukee is not responsible for lost, stolen, or damaged personal items.