



Summer Camp Parent Info Guide

YMCA Camp Ernst Residential
Overnight Camp

Index

Page 3.....Contact/Mail Information

Page 4.....About YMCA Camp Ernst

Page 5.....Staff Information

Page 6.....Preparing for Camp

Page 7.....Packing List

Page 8.....Arrival and Departure at Camp

Page 9.....Health Information

Page 10.....Code of Conduct

Page 11.....Camp Life: What to Expect

Contact Information

Website: www.myvcamp.org
Phone: (859) 586-6181 – Camp Office
(859) 912-3457 – Executive Director Eli Cochran’s Cell Phone (emergencies)
Email: ce@myvcamp.org
Camp Address: 7615 Camp Ernst Rd
Burlington, KY 41005
Fax Number: (859) 586-6214
Social Media: Instagram: @campernst
Twitter: @campernst
Facebook: facebook.com/campernst

Care Packages&Letters

Camp care packages are welcome and a good way to make a camper feel comfortable at camp. There are many ways to send a care package to your camper. You can mail your own throughout the week to the camp address above (please make sure you include your camper’s week and cabin on the package). You can also order one of our In Camp Care Packages throughout the week. An order form is available on our website and will also be included in your cabin assignment email. You can also call the office and order over the phone. We ask that you order them at least 48 hours ahead.

You can also mail your camper letters as well to the address above. Also available is an email form on our web site. Your camper will not be able to email you back. Go to myYcamp.org/parentresources/messageyourcamper.

You can drop mail off on Sunday; just include the day you want it delivered on each package or letter. There will be mail stations by the nurse tables during Sunday check-in. If you have something to drop off during the week, please bring it to the camp office in the Welcome Center.

Campers are kept busy all week and most are not in the habit of letter-writing. However, during the week we do encourage writing home. We offer our own camp postcard for a brief, midweek message and counselors may review it to address any concerns. We recommend sending paper and stamped/addressed envelopes for the best chance at getting a complete letter home from your camper!

Telephone

Campers do not have phone access during their week of camp. Campers may not bring cell phones to camp. A YMCA Camp Ernst staff member will contact you in the event of an emergency or other situation. Please do not hesitate to contact us in the office while your camper is at camp.

Please respect our camp "no cell phone" policy and help your children understand the value of unplugging in order to be fully engaged with their time at camp!

YMCA of Greater Cincinnati Mission Statement

The mission of the YMCA of Greater Cincinnati is to put Christian principles into practice through programs that build healthy spirit, mind, and body for all. The Y is about...

Youth Development: Children need caring adults to provide support, guidance, and encouragement as they grow. All kids deserve the opportunity to discover who they are and what they can achieve.

Healthy Living: Wellness is spirit, mind, and body strengthens our very being and enhances our interactions with others.

Social Responsibility: We truly are in this together and together we can harness our individual strengths and bring about positive change around us. The Y is dedicated to building healthy, confident, secure and connected children, families and communities.

Program Philosophy

Since 1928, YMCA Camp Ernst has been providing youth unique experiences that broaden their horizons and shape them into more confident, conscientious, responsible and independent individuals. Camp uses a variety of engaging activities to instill core values and life lessons in tomorrow's leaders. Through all of these activities, youth are exposed to the Y's Core Character Values of caring, honesty, respect, and responsibility. Camp also enables significant growth in self-esteem, confidence and relationship skills. Leadership development is also a core component of camp- designed to prepare teens for future counselor positions.

History

In 1928 Willard L. Wade was looking for a way to provide a positive summer experience for the young people of Greater Cincinnati. He shared his vision with United States Senator Richard P. Ernst, who donated the funds for the first 100 acres.

Since that time Camp Ernst has grown to 365 acres of rolling hills, a 26 acre lake, ponds, creeks, and clearings. Currently, there are 2 swimming pools, a 28 horse ranch, 40 cabins and out buildings to accommodate more than 400 boys and girls each week.

The YMCA Camp Ernst Staff

More than 80-percent of our staff were campers at Camp Ernst. The summer staff is recruited: from past campers and staff, staff contacts, from area and national colleges and high schools, and international counselor programs. Prospective staff must complete an application, provide references and be interviewed. Applicants 18 and older must pass a criminal record check. YMCA Camp Ernst staff members receive CPR, First Aid, and Child Protection training as part of their employment. They also attend a week-long staff training with emphasis on safety, risk-management, social and skill development, and community building.

Staff to camper ratio is usually 2:10

Leadership Staff

Elizabeth "Eli" Cochran – Executive Director
Bryan McIntyre – Assistant Camp Director
Al Reynhout – Operations and Property Manager
Megan Gierhart – Senior Program Director
Michael Lindley – Teen Program Director
Natalie Hamilton – Ranch Program Director
Emily Momberger – Head Wrangler
Barb Rathbun – Office Manager
Jennifer Hart - Registrar

ACA Accredited

ACA Accreditation means we follow the health, safety, and program standards set by the American Camp Association. ACA collaborated with experts from the American Academy of Pediatrics, The American Red Cross and other youth service agencies to assure that camp practices reflect up-to-date research based standards in camp operation.



Camper Paperwork

The following must be completed and submitted before your child's arrival at camp. These forms can be completed online: Registration Form, Health Form (does NOT require a physical or doctor's signature), Any final payments (at least **2 weeks** before their arrival)

Cabinmate Requests

We think it's great to come to camp with the objective of making new friends. About 50% of our campers register without a cabinmate preference. However, If your camper has a friend or group of campers he or she would like to bunk with, please make the request during the registration or by giving us a call at the office. We can accommodate most cabinmate requests if the campers are within 18 months of age of each other. For any pair or group, please pick one camper's name as "cabinmate" to use on all registrations (so even that camper will have her own name as "cabinmate."). We can honor cabinmate requests for groups of up to 6 campers. We can accommodate a larger group only if you are able to fill a cabin of 12. Any requests between 7-11 campers will be asked to be split into two groups. Cabin assignments are emailed out approximately one week prior to your camper's stay. If there are any issues with assignments, give us a call so we can work with your request.

Preparing to be away from home

Being away from home overnight can be a challenge for first time, or even experienced, campers. Homesickness is common at resident camp. The YMCA Camp Ernst policy on homesickness is that counselors will work individually with campers to help them work through their homesickness. The most common time for homesickness is right before bed or during some of the rest periods throughout the day. Counselors will get in touch with you if the homesickness is severe and they need some additional support. We rarely have campers call home or talk to their parents on the phone because it typically makes the homesickness worse. Each camper's homesickness is unique and the counselors are trained to help each camper make an independent plan for a successful and fun week.

Changes and Cancellations

If you are registered for camp and need to change or cancel your registration you may do so by calling our camp office. After March 15th, we do not refund the deposit.

Absences

We are concerned when your child is registered and does not show up for check-in. Please call the Camp Office at (859) 586-6181 or Executive Director at (859) 912-3457 on Sunday and leave a message if your child will be late or not able to attend the session. Please be specific, stating your child's full name and the reason they will not be attending. If necessary, our office staff will return your call to confirm the details.

Photos and Video

YMCA Camp Ernst staff may take photos or video of your child for promotional purposes.

VisitingCamp

We do not offer a camp visit day to camper's relatives and friends. Instead, we encourage letter-writing and happy reunions at the end of the session! If you would like a camp tour before your camper's session, please let us know.

Camper Packing Checklist

We recommend that you pack your camper's belongings in a large Rubbermaid-type tote bin. This makes it easy for campers to keep their things together and easy for parents to clean out when they come home!

Packing Essentials (represents the bare minimum)

- **Shorts** – Nylon shorts are **NOT** suitable for the ropes course
- **T-Shirts**
- **Sleepwear**
- **Underwear and Socks**
- **Raincoat/Poncho**
- **Sweatshirt/Jacket**
- **Long Pants** – For cooler times of day and any horseback riding
- **Shower Articles** – 2 bath towels, wash cloth or sponge, soap, shampoo/conditioner, toothbrush/toothpaste, and shower shoes.
- **Shoes** – **2 pairs of gym shoes**, 1 pair old enough to wade in a creek. Ropes Course and Ranch require closed-toe shoes.
- **Bathing Suit** – **1 PIECE ONLY**; 1 or 2 suits and 2 beach towels
- **Laundry Bag**
- **Bedding** – Sleeping bag/comforter, sheets and pillow
- **Bug Repellant**
- **Water Bottle**
- **Sunscreen** – taking care of camper's skin/protecting it from sunburn is a top priority for us, but we need everyone's help. When you send sunscreen with your camper please encourage them to be responsible about reapplying it throughout their week at camp.
- **Medication** – In the original labeled container, to be given to the nurse on Sunday during check-in. Epi-pens and inhalers can be carried by campers or staff by must be logged with the nurse. The nurse recommends you send an extra inhaler/epi-pen as backup to be kept in the health center.

Recommended Items (not required)

- Stationery, pre-stamped /addressed envelopes
- Writing utensil
- Flashlight
- Small **BATTERY OPERATED** fan
- Backpack
- Disposable camera
- Snacks to share
- Non-perishable item to donate to the local food pantry – perhaps your camper's favorite food he or she won't be eating while at camp (e.g. Spaghetti or cans of soup)

PROHIBITED ITEMS

- ∅
- ∅
- ∅ **CELL PHONES**
- ∅ **HAND-HELD VIDEO GAMES**
- ∅ **VIDEO CAMERA**
- ∅ **DIGITAL CAMERA**
- ∅ **iPods**
- ∅ **EXTENSION CORDS (prohibited by the Fire Department unless equipped with a surge protector)**
- ∅ **CASH**
- ∅ **POCKET KNIVES**
- ∅ **MATCHES/LIGHTERS**
- ∅ **FIREWORKS**
- ∅ **EXPENSIVE ITEMS (clothes, shoes, jewelry, etc)**

Arrival and Departure at Camp

Check-in Day

Check-in times: Sundays from 3:00 PM to 4:00 PM

Any special arrangements for check-in should be made in advance by calling the camp office.

1. **Sign-in:** A parent, guardian, or other authorized adult over age 18 must sign your camper in with their counselor. The counselor will ask you some basic questions and if you have any notes for them. This is where you would inform the counselor if you need to pick your camper up early, or other important information.
2. **Paperwork:** If you have not submitted a health form for your camper, you will be asked to fill one out when you check in.
3. **Health Care and Medications:** All medications must be turned in to the camp nurse. This includes vitamins and herbal remedies. All campers will participate in a health check.
4. **Merchandise and Mail:** If you pre-ordered merchandise for your camper or would like to purchase merchandise, there will be an opportunity to do so once you have checked your camper in. You will also be able to drop off any mail you have for your camper.

After your camper is checked in on Sunday, the cabin as a whole will attend some orientation sessions. Your camper will receive an orientation on our bullying policy and behavior expectations, and they will be swim tested as well.

Check-out Day

Check-out times: Saturday from 8:30 AM to 9:00 AM

Any special arrangements for check-out should be made in advance by calling the camp office.

1. **Sign-out:** An authorized adult must sign your child out of camp.
2. **Medications:** Please make sure to collect any medications from your camper's counselors.
3. **Lost and Found:** Please make sure to check the lost and found before leaving camp. Lost and Found items are kept in Welcome Center for two (2) weeks and then donated to charity.

OFFICE HOURS

Our office is open Monday – Friday from
8:30am – 5:00pm. Give us a call at
859.586.6181.

For an after hours or weekend
emergency, call Eli's cell phone,
859.912.3457

Important!

Pertinent information regarding any special medical issues, special needs, and allergies must be clearly noted on your camper's health form. Please call our office two weeks before your camper attends camp if he or she has any special needs. This may include diabetes, food allergies, sleep issues, recent trauma or anything requiring extra staff attention.

Medications

Administration of medications (over the counter or prescription) will be performed by one of the two nurses that we have on site. You are required to note any medications on your camper's health form and bring their medication in the original containers. Medication will not be administered on Saturday mornings.

Accidents, Illness, and Emergencies

YMCA Camp Ernst staff members are trained in First Aid and risk management, but the nurse or health care assistant will handle all medications (prescription & non-prescription), minor illnesses and injuries. Parents will be notified at the discretion of the nurse: Basically, if there is a significant health problem, a continuing fever of 101+, or if camper needs treatment beyond our health center.

Lice Policy

It is our policy that if a camper is found with lice or nits/eggs, the camper may not attend camp. If we find nits/lice while performing our health check on Sunday evening, you will be contacted and your child will need to be picked up immediately. Campers will not be able to return until they have been checked and cleared by the nurse.

Camp Hygiene Standards

Cleanliness is a key component to keeping campers healthy. Campers will be encouraged to wash their hands prior to every meal. Bathrooms are inspected and sanitized each day by Crew and housekeeping staff. Camp clean-up takes place each morning when campers assume responsibility of cleaning their cabin areas. Unit leaders will inspect cabins for neatness daily. Campers go to the bathhouse each morning and evening to get cleaned up and brush their teeth. Showers are scheduled at least two times per week and are available the rest of the week.

Special Needs

Campers with specific emotional or physical needs, including, but not limited to: behavioral challenges, food allergies, diabetes, sleepwalking, bedwetting, challenges in social interaction, etc. should be called to the attention of the Program Director or Executive Director prior to their arrival in camp. If your camper requires special medical attention, we ask that you please include it on their health form, in addition to calling the camp office a week or two before his or her arrival. We welcome campers with special needs that we are able to accommodate. It is helpful to give us as much information about your camper so that we can help your child enjoy his or her summer camp experience.

Code of Conduct

YMCA Camp Ernst has a clear responsibility to protect the children in our programs and to promote the development of honesty, caring, respect, and responsibility. Our Code of Conduct identifies unacceptable behaviors and the actions that will be taken by the staff in response to such behavior.

Discipline

Campers are expected to treat fellow campers and staff with respect and abide by the camp rules. Our policy when disciplining campers is a three step process:

- 1) Verbal warning
- 2) A conference with their counselor and unit leader
- 3) Phone call home

Severe behavioral incidents will result in moving straight to a phone call and perhaps the camper being sent home. Campers sent home because of behavior problems will not be given any refund of fees.

Graffiti

The staff at YMCA Camp Ernst work hard to provide a safe, clean and well cared for facilities for your family. In years past, we have noticed that campers write their names on various surfaces around camp, especially bunks. We believe in the notion that you should leave things the way you found them, if not in better condition. Please discuss this with your child before his/her arrival. Our goal is to keep our facilities in the condition you would expect of an excellent program.

Bullying

YMCA Camp Ernst does not tolerate bullying. There are several different kinds of bullying including **physical** (hitting, tripping), **verbal** (name calling, humiliating) and **social** (exclusion, singling out for ridicule). We take bullying very seriously and a violation of these standards will result in counseling, which could lead to dismissal from camp (with no reimbursement for missed days). Campers will partake in an anti-bullying seminar on their first evening at camp and sign a pledge stating that they know the consequences of bullying, but please feel free to discuss our policies with your campers before arriving at camp. It is emphasized repeatedly to all in the camp community that "If something or someone is keeping you from having a good time, tell your counselor. If your counselor doesn't do enough about it, tell another counselor."

Camp Life: What to Expect

Lakeview Unit (entering grades 1st-4th)

During our week-long summer camp, campers going into grades 1-4, stay the week in Lakeview Lodge where all of the amenities are under one roof (cabins, bathrooms, and dining hall)

Valley Unit (entering grades 5th-7th)

During our week-long summer camp, campers going into grades 5-7, broken down into the Red (typically 5-6) and Yellow Unit (typically 6-7); stay the week in the original part of camp. Cabins are open air with screen windows and doors. Bathrooms and showers and the dining hall are located in separate buildings.

Leaders in Training (L.I.T.) Unit (entering grades 8th-10th)

During our week-long summer camp, campers going into grades 8-10, stay the week in the Loft or Longhouse in the Leadership Village near the lake. Cabins are open air with screen windows and doors. In the Loft, bathrooms and showers are located in the same building. For the Longhouse, they are housed in a separate building. L.I.T.s use the dining hall located in Lakeview Lodge.

Daily Schedule

Below is an example of a daily schedule for your camper. Times and activities will vary depending on the unit your camper is in.

7:30 A.M.	Polar Bear Swim (optional)
8:00 A.M.	Wake-up and cabin clean-up
8:15 A.M.	Breakfast
9:15 A.M. – 12:15 P.M.	Camp activities with the cabin group like Ropes, Lake, or Valley activities
12:30 P.M.	Lunch
1:30 P.M. – 4:30 P.M.	Camp activities
4:30 P.M.	Chapel (non-denominational with a simple, moral message)
5:00 P.M.	Dinner
5:30 P.M.	Mail call and cabin time
6:00 P.M.	Choice Activities (for example: creek hike, soccer, or brace making)
8:00 P.M.	Evening program
9:30 P.M.	Cabin time and devotion
10:30 P.M.	Lights out!