



# 2025 Y DAY CAMP FAMILY HANDBOOK

YMCA of Metro Atlanta

BUILDING CONFIDENCE IN KIDS ONE WEEK AT A TIME!



## WELCOME TO CAMP!

Thank you for choosing the YMCA for your child's camp experience. We strive to provide a safe, structured and fun environment where campers can build self-confidence, learn new skills, deepen their respect for themselves and others, and make new friends. All of our age-appropriate activities are designed to promote independence and develop our four core values: Caring, Honesty, Respect, and Responsibility.

YMCA staff members are here to support both campers and parents. We believe in open communication among campers, parents and Y staff. Please share with us questions, areas of interest, hopes, fears and concerns.

The following policies and procedures are minimum guidelines set to provide for a positive, healthy, safe, energetic, and fun environment for the children entrusted in our care.

Thank you for allowing us to be part of your child's summer. We can't wait to watch your kids LEARN, GROW & THRIVE at Y Day Camp!

## YMCA Day Camp Expectations

- 1. Have Fun:** Let your joy shine! We're all about smiles, laughter, and adventure.
- 2. Be Kind:** Kindness is cool! Spread good vibes and help out a friend.
- 3. Keep Your Hands to Yourself:** Personal space is important! Keep your hands to high-fives and thumbs-ups.
- 4. Listen to Your Staff (Blue Shirts):** Staff know the way—so stay on track and listen when they lead.
- 5. Have a Good Attitude and Use Positive Language:** Bring your best self! Lift others up with your words and spread positivity.

## CAMP GOALS

- Provide a safe, fun, recreational atmosphere for all campers.
- Promote caring, honesty, respect, and responsibility throughout the day camp program.
- Help campers and staff build a sense of belonging and self-confidence.
- Provide opportunities within the program for campers to develop interpersonal relationships and social skills.
- Provide campers with the opportunity to experience a sense of achievement through progressive activities.

## CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT

Please help us teach your children the YMCA values by supporting the staff and program in the following areas:

- 1. Caring:** Sharing is caring! Lift each other up with helping hands and big hearts.
- 2. Honesty:** Truth is our superpower! Be real, be true—honesty is the best policy.
- 3. Respect:** Respect is the key! Treat others the way they want to be treated.
- 4. Responsibility:** Own it! Take charge of your actions and lead by example.

## CAMP OPERATIONS

This information varies by YMCA location. Please refer to the parent handbook you will receive in the weeks prior to your child's camp start date.

## FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

We believe every child and family should have the opportunity to participate in any Y program. Those not able to pay the full fee may be awarded partial financial assistance based on their ability to pay and the Y's ability to fund the subsidy. If you would like to donate to help send a child to camp, visit [ymcaatlanta.org/give](http://ymcaatlanta.org/give). The YMCA is a CAPS (Childcare and Parent Services) provider, please work with your case worker and Y team to complete the process for CAPS.

## SIGN IN/OUT PROCEDURES

This information varies by YMCA location. Please refer to the parent handbook you will receive in the weeks prior to your child's camp start date.

## EARLY CHECK OUT

If you need to pick up your child before 4:00 pm, please give Y staff a written note during morning car line with your child's name, camp and what time you will check your child out. Between 3:45 & 4:00 pm, campers are in transition preparing for end of the day and we will be unable to sign out children during this time.

## OUR COUNSELORS - 1:12 RATIO\*

Recruiting, selecting, training and supporting staff are essential, interrelated processes to ensure the success and integrity of our Y Day Camp program. The staff is selected for personal qualities of warmth, empathy, and ability to relate positively to children. They receive training in many areas: CPR/First Aid, Risk Management, Youth & Teen Safety and numerous activities including arts/crafts, games, group team building and much more. Background Checks and Drug Tests are conducted on all staff and volunteers. This includes criminal record background checks and reference checks. **Each staff person will also be a Mandated Reporter.**

\*School break camps may operate at a 1:18 ratio.

## REQUIRED FORMS

The State of Georgia requires an immunization form 3231 for every child, due no later than the Friday before the child starts camp. Please provide your child's current form 3231 and the [YMCA Medical Waiver](#) by emailing it to [This information varies by YMCA location. Please refer to the parent handbook you will receive in the weeks prior to your child's camp start date.](#) If your child needs to take medication during the camp day, please complete the [Medication Authorization](#) and bring to camp with the medicine.

## WHAT TO BRING

This information varies by YMCA location. Please refer to the parent handbook you will receive in the weeks prior to your child's camp start date.

## WHAT TO LEAVE AT HOME

- Electronics including smart watches and phones (Phones, tablets, gaming devices, will be collected by the counselor and will remain with the Director until camp dismissal)
- Playing cards & Pokémon cards & toys
- Candy and caffeinated drinks
- Valuables, such as money and jewelry
- Library books
- Sports Equipment

## EXTRA CLOTHES/OTHER ITEMS

Children will be responsible for changing out of their soiled/dirty clothing and cleaning themselves if an accident occurs. Children will be assisted at bathroom time if needed, however, if a child cannot clean themselves adequately or does not have a change of clothes, parents may need to be notified. Please be advised that soiled clothing will be placed in a plastic bag and underwear thrown away (BM accidents) unless otherwise directed by the parent. YMCA staff cannot wash your child's soiled clothing. Pack extra clothes, in case of any incident, as camp is held outside. Please also pack personal items such as deodorant, sunscreen, pads, & other feminine items.

## LOST & FOUND

The YMCA will keep a Lost & Found at Camp during the week. Please label all items to help with this process. Check for lost items daily, as we donate the unclaimed items at the end of each week.

## FIRST AID & ILLNESS

YMCA staff are First Aid & CPR certified and have been trained in emergency procedures. Plans for handling fire, floods, tornadoes, severe weather, intruders, lost/missing children, injuries/illnesses are covered during staff training prior to the start of camp. We will call you or your emergency contact to notify of a minor accident or injury. If your child falls ill or has a fever over 100.4 F during camp we will move them to a monitored, isolated room for immediate pickup. If it is medically necessary that your child be taken to the hospital, we will call you to inform you of our course of action as soon as possible. Please make sure your information is up to date. You can update your Y account at [ymcaatlanta.my.site.com/s/login](http://ymcaatlanta.my.site.com/s/login).

## COMMUNICABLE DISEASE

YMCA staff are trained to recognize the common signs of communicable disease or other illnesses and will observe each child at the beginning of his/her day. Children who are mildly ill (e.g. minor cold symptoms) may remain at the program only with the Director's approval. A slight cold is acceptable but heavy coughing or runny nose, or worsening of symptoms during the day will result in the parent being called to care for the child. Children with symptoms of communicable disease are isolated immediately. An area, within sight of the teacher and not used by the other children, will be set up to isolate the child. A staff member will remain with the child until the parent or designated representative arrives for the child. If a child is deemed with a contagious or infectious illness then an email will be sent by the Metro Atlanta YMCA Directors. Please make sure your email is correct on your contact form and regularly monitored during camp days.

## RETURNING TO CAMP AFTER ILLNESS

Per Georgia Department of Health and CDC, any worker or camper that has stayed home sick, been prevented from entering camp due to signs of illness, or been sent home during camp due to signs of illness shall not be permitted to attend camp again until...

- At least 24 hours have passed since last fever without the use of fever-reducing medications
- AND symptoms (cough, shortness of breath, etc.) have improved

## CANCELLATION POLICY

A written email request must be submitted at least 2 weeks prior to the start of the week to be cancelled. A refund will be issued, less the \$25 non-refundable/non-transferable deposit to hold the day of camp. The account must be in good standing for a refund to be issued. The YMCA reserves the right to apply refund/credit to any outstanding balances.

## INCLEMENT WEATHER POLICY

Please plan for sunshine and rain. We will continue our outdoor activities as long as there is no thunder or lightning. Should there be thunder or lightning, we will move the children into the facility until the weather is safe to move back outdoors. The safety and well being of our campers and staff is always our first priority.

## DISCIPLINE

The YMCAs philosophy of a discipline program is that discipline is a continuous daily process of redirection, conversations, planning and partnership between the family/guardian, camper and camp staff. We will work through the following steps to address behavior concerns:

1. Child will be redirected and encouraged to participate in other ways.
2. Child will be given verbal warning.
3. Child will be asked to take a personal time in. A time in is an opportunity for camp counselor and child to engage in dialogue about their behavior and create a plan together. Also provides opportunity to calm down and regroup.
4. Child will potentially lose some/all of privilege of participating in a special activity.
5. Child will talk with camp leaders and develop a behavior action plan. Parents will be called to discuss a positive plan for change.

Family/guardian will be called to pick up their child early if the behavior is causing a disruption to camp and other campers. In some instances, if issue continues or is of a severe nature, removal from camp for 1-5 days or indefinitely may be necessary. Occasionally, it becomes necessary to inform family/guardian of disruptive behavior that is above and beyond the typically expected range. In an event such as this, family/guardian communication will occur to discuss the child's behavior. In cases where a child receives two family/guardian conferences, a final conference will be scheduled to discuss the child's continued participation in the program. In some cases, it becomes necessary to remove the child from the day camp program. If this occurs, family/guardian will be asked to find alternative care immediately. Behavior that endangers the camper or others will result in immediate removal from camp. In some cases, return is possible and can be discussed between the Director, family/guardian and camper.

## BEHAVIOR & BULLYING POLICY

Each child entering our camp program will attend a camp orientation on the first day of the session where staff will discuss camper expectations, our behavior policy and the zero tolerance policy against bullying. All parents will be notified by an incident report, a phone call or email if their child is involved in a reported incident. To be successful with this aspect of our camp community, we will deliver age-appropriate activities that encourage and develop listening skills, working together and understanding others. We are committed to incorporating this aspect into our existing camp program to ensure that our campers have the opportunity to learn and explore in an emotionally safe environment designed to build self-confidence and teach responsibility. If a camper cannot adjust to these rules and expectations, we reserve the right to terminate the camper's enrollment indefinitely.

## ZERO TOLERANCE POLICY FOR AGGRESSIVE BEHAVIOR

**Purpose:** The safety, well-being, and positive experience of all participants and staff are the top priority at our camp. To maintain a safe and respectful environment, we have a Zero Tolerance Policy for any form of aggressive behavior, whether verbal, physical, or emotional. This policy applies to all children, staff, and adults involved in our programs.

### Policy on Aggressive Behavior

Aggressive behavior is defined as any action or words that may cause harm, fear, or discomfort to another person. This includes but is not limited to:

- Verbal Aggression: Insults, threats, name-calling, or use of inappropriate or offensive language.
- Physical Aggression: Pushing, hitting, kicking, or any form of physical violence.
- Emotional Aggression: Bullying, intimidation, exclusion, or actions that affect the emotional well-being of another person.

Any behavior deemed as aggressive or harmful will result in immediate action by camp staff. This may include but is not limited to:

- Separation from the group for a cooling-off period.
- Parent/guardian notification of the incident.
- A meeting with camp leadership to discuss the behavior.

## Consequences of Aggressive Behavior

Our camp maintains a Zero Tolerance Policy, which means aggressive behavior will result in the following consequences:

### 1. First Offense:

- A formal warning will be issued, and the child/adult will be removed from the activity temporarily.
- Parents/guardians will be notified immediately, and a meeting with the camp leadership may be required.

### 2. Second Offense:

- Immediate removal from the program for the day, with a mandatory meeting between camp leadership, parents/guardians, and the participant.

### 3. Third Offense:

- Permanent dismissal from the program with no refund of fees. The participant will not be allowed to return for the remainder of the camp session or future sessions.

### Serious Violations:

In cases where aggression is deemed severe (e.g., physical violence or severe bullying), immediate dismissal from the program without prior warnings may occur.

By implementing this policy, we are ensuring that all participants can enjoy a safe, supportive, and positive camp experience.

## SOCIAL EMOTIONAL LEARNING AT CAMP

As part of the Y-2025 Strategic Plan, our Y is working to infuse social emotional learning (SEL) into youth programs. SEL is the process through which young people understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions. What better place to do that than camp? Measuring impact will be critical to ongoing program improvement. We are partnering with Hello Insight to use a research-based evaluation tool to collect data through camper surveys. When you complete your registration information, the consent form including more information is part of that packet.

## YOUTH WITH DIVERSE ABILITIES

At the YMCA of Metro Atlanta, we know that communities are stronger and more vibrant when everyone can take part in programs where they can learn, grow and thrive.

Our Y day camp program provides fun and engaging activities to engage children all summer. While we strive to adapt and modify activities to address different levels of ability and learning styles, there may be instances where a child's needs may exceed the parameters of the scope of our program. Due to the program components and environment, Y programs may not be a fit for every child.

While your child's growth and development is our top priority, we do not offer therapeutic or clinical levels of intervention or reporting. Progress notes should not be expected as they are outside our scope of services.

As a parent/guardian, you know your child best, and we want to learn from you.

We ask that you take the following steps before the program begins:

- Share any behaviors and accommodations that may help your child be more successful in Y programs on the registration form.
- Meet with the Program Director before the start of the program to ensure we are setting your child up for success.

The Program Director may also request a meeting after the program begins to learn of recognized steps that may help your child be more successful in Y programs. If you miss a step, the start of programming for your child may be delayed.