



Summer Camp Parent Info Guide

YMCA Camp Ernst
Residential Overnight Camp

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WELCOME TO CAMP!

We are so glad you have chosen to send your child to YMCA Camp Ernst! Since 1928 the YMCA has been building into kids here at camp, and we are looking forward to helping your child make new friends, try new things, and let their light shine here this summer. Please call us if you have any questions!

Contact Information

Website: www.myycamp.org
Phone: (859)586-6181 – Camp Office
(859)912-3457 – Executive Director Eli Cochran’s Cell Phone (emergencies)

Email: ce@myycamp.org
Camp Address: 7615 Camp Ernst Rd
Burlington, KY 41005

Fax Number: (859)586-6214

Social Media: **Instagram:** @campernst
Twitter: @campernst
(*Frequent updates during each camp day, including weather situations!)
Facebook: [facebook.com/campernst](https://www.facebook.com/campernst)
BLOG: myYcamp.tumblr.com

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 in 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.

A Mission For All

The Y is made up of people from all backgrounds working together to **strengthen community.**

Together we work to ensure that **everyone**, regardless of ability, age, cultural background, ethnicity, faith, gender, gender identity, ideology, income, national origin, race or sexual orientation **has the opportunity to reach their full potential with dignity.**

We share the **core values** of caring, honesty, respect and responsibility

– they guide everything we do.

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 and leadership later in life.

History and facilities

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, and creeks. The camp property is home to 2 swimming pools, a 28 horse ranch, and 40 cabins and out buildings which accommodate more than 400 boys and girls each week.

Strengthening Communities

Our advisory board and staff work hard to raise more than \$200,000 each year to help fund campers who couldn’t otherwise afford a week of camp. If you would like to make a tax-deductible contribution to this cause, please visit: www.myYcamp.org or call 859-586-6181.

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. They are chosen for their interest, experience, and qualifications for working with children, and 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 1:6

Administrative Staff

Elizabeth "Eli" Cochran – Executive Director ecochran@myY.org
Bryan McIntyre – Assistant Camp Director
Al Reynhout – Operations and Property Manager areynhout@myY.org
Megan Gierhart – Senior Program Director mgierhart@myY.org
Michael Lindley – Teen Program Director mlindley@myY.org
Emily Momberger – Ranch Program Director Emomberger@myY.org
Grace Barnes – Head Wrangler gbarnes@MyY.org
Barb Rathbun – Office Manager brathbun@myY.org
Carly Wright – Registrar cwright@myY.org
Claire Daugherty – Alumni and Development Director cdaugherty@myY.org

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. For more information, please visit www.acacamps.org



Camper Paperwork

The following must be completed and submitted before your child's arrival at camp. These forms can be completed online: Registration Form, Online 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. One or two days of mild homesickness is common at resident camp. Only a few will experience prolonged, more intense feelings of missing home. The most common time for homesickness is right before bed or during some of the rest periods throughout the day. 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. 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 and disrupts the child's ability to achieve independence.

If you are anticipating homesickness, prior to your camp week, please call and speak to one of the directors. We will help you with some resources and ideas to help set your child up for a successful week. If your child has not been here to see what camp is like, many times a site visit, open house, tour, or simply a phone conversation with a friendly camp counselor can help alleviate fears.

Another important element of your camper being away from home is the fact that you will miss them as much as (if not more than!) they miss you! It is important that you do not pass your own anxieties on to your child. For example, instead of saying, "I'm really going to miss you," say, "I'm looking forward to you telling me all about the fun you've had when you get home!" Please do not make "Pick Up Deals," which include saying, "Just try it until Tuesday and then I will come to get you." These "deals" make it harder for children to really lean in to a sense of belonging with the group. We have found that families have success when they express a positive sense of belief in the great fun and experience of camp.

Changes and Cancellations

Changes to camp sessions will be accommodated as availability allows. A deposit of \$100 per session is required with registration and is non-refundable after March 15. The final balance is due at the latest by two weeks before the session begins. Cancellation for a session must be made at least two weeks before that session begins. Cancellations within two weeks of the session's start day will be nonrefundable.

All cancellations must be made in writing, by emailing ce@myYcamp.org.

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. You can view daily photos of all the fun at camp at www.campernst.zenfolio.com.

Visiting Camp

We do not offer a camp visit day during summer sessions 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.

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. An order form is available on our website beginning in June, or you can also call the office and order over the phone. Orders must be made by your session's opening Sunday at midnight.

You can also mail your camper letters to camp. If you prefer email, please see the "message your camper" form on our website. Emails will be printed on a slip of paper and distributed with the mail. Your camper will not have direct access to the internet, and so will not be able to email you back.

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 may not bring cell phones to camp* Campers do not have phone access during their week of camp. A YMCA Camp Ernst staff member will contact you in the event of an emergency or other situation. If there is an emergency at home or if you have a particular concern, 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!

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! Please label everything with camper's last name.

Packing Essentials (represents the bare minimum)

- o **Shorts** – Nylon shorts are **NOT** suitable for the ropes course
- o **T-Shirts**
- o **Sleepwear**
- o **Underwear and Socks**
- o **Raincoat/Poncho**
- o **Sweatshirt/Jacket**
- o **Long Pants** – For cooler times of day and any horseback riding
- o **Shower Articles** –2 bath towels, wash cloth or sponge, soap, shampoo/conditioner, toothbrush/toothpaste, and shower shoes.
- o **Shoes** – **2 pairs of gym shoes**, 1 pair old enough to wade in a creek. Ropes Course and Ranch require closed-toe shoes.
- o **Bathing Suit – 1 PIECE ONLY**; 1 or 2 suits and 2 beach towels
- o **Laundry Bag**
- o **Bedding** – Sleeping bag/comforter, sheets and pillow
- o **Bug Repellent**
- o **Water Bottle**
- o **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 each day of their week at camp.
- o **Medication** – In the original labeled container, to be given to the nurse on Sunday during check-in. Special blister packs will be provided at check-in. Epi-pens and inhalers can be carried by campers or staff but must be logged with the nurse. The nurse recommends you send an extra inhaler/epi-pen as back up to be kept in the health center.

Recommended Items (not required)

- o Stationery, pre-stamped/addressed envelopes
- o Writing utensil
- o Flashlight
- o Small **BATTERY OPERATED** fan
- o Backpack
- o Disposable camera
- o Snacks to share
- o 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

- o **CELLPHONES**
- o **HAND-HELD VIDEO GAMES**
- o **VIDEO CAMERA**
- o **DIGITAL CAMERA**
- o **iPods/SMART WATCHES**
- o **EReaders**
- o **FITNESS TRACKERS**
- o **EXTENSION CORDS**(prohibited by the Fire Department unless equipped with a surge protector)
- o **CASH**
- o **POCKET KNIVES**
- o **MATCHES/LIGHTERS**
- o **FIREWORKS**
- o **EXPENSIVE ITEMS** (clothes, shoes, jewelry, etc)

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Arrival and Departure at Camp

Check-in Day

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

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. You should remind the counselor of any special situations/needs, early pick ups, etc. that apply.
2. **Health Care and Medications:** All medications must be turned into the camp nurse. This includes vitamins and herbal remedies. We have most common over-the-counter medicines in stock so no need for you to bring those. All campers will participate in a health check.
3. **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 take a swim test to determine which areas of the pool they can swim in.

Mid-week appointments

Any special arrangements for check-out should be made in advance by calling the camp office. To limit disruption to the program, special pick up or drop off must occur at the Welcome Center at one of the designated times Monday-Friday: 9am, 2pm, 6pm, or 10:30pm.

Check-out Day

Check-out times: **Saturday from 9:00 - 9:15am**

Early final departure from the week must be pre-arranged for 6pm or 10:30pm Friday, or 7:30am Saturday.

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 station before leaving camp. IF you get home and realize something is lost, please call or email the office with a complete description. Lost and Found items are kept in Welcome Center for two (2) weeks and then donated to charity. We can mail items for a postage and handling fee.

OFFICE HOURS

Our office is open Monday–Friday from 8:30am–5:00pm.

859.586.6181.

For an afterhours or weekend
Emergency, call/text Eli's cell phone,
859.912.3457

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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 all 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. You will place it into special blister packs provided by the camp nurses for easy distribution. Medication will not be administered on Saturday mornings. For a list of common Over the Counter meds we stock, see <http://www.mycamp.org/parent-resources/faqs> (under Health and Safety)

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 a 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. As an alternative, we have established a partnership with a company called Simplicity. They will come to camp to provide lice removal and treatment for you for an additional fee. Simplicity: (859) 414-6487. www.simplicity.com

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 bathroom 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, special diets, food allergies, diabetes, sleep walking, 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 2 weeks 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.

Camp Food

Our two kitchens and dining halls manage meals for more than 700 people each day. We eat family style but also offer many alternatives, including a fresh, well-stocked salad bar, vegetarian and vegan options, baked potato and soup bar, and the classic PB&J for picky eaters. Our detailed menu and meal plan is published on our web site www.mycamp.org under summer camp/camp life.

Bed Bugs

The reality of life in Greater Cincinnati is that bed bugs are where people are. We take extreme measures to reduce the risk of bed bug exposure, including weekly canine inspections of cabins, staff education, and treatment if necessary. Even so, our health care and facility teams recommend that each camper's belongings be treated with care when returning home. Experts recommend high heat wash and dry for all clothing and bedding, and for anything else, they recommend tying it up in a black trash bag to heat up in the sun or trunk of the car. Our pest control partner is Perfection: www.perfectionpest.com

Camp Emergencies

In severe weather emergencies, campers and counselors will utilize one of our storm shelters, located in each area of camp. In case of medical emergencies, we have two RNs on the property each week, and EMS can be here within five minutes. While our first priority is obviously the safety of the campers, we will also communicate with you as appropriate via our twitter feed (@campernst) and via phone when necessary.

Abuse Prevention

The YMCA of Greater Cincinnati and Camp Ernst take abuse prevention seriously. Each employee and volunteer is required to participate in multiple trainings on the topic. Background checks, screenings, and supervision is done with intentional care toward keeping each child safe. Our policies include ensuring that no two people are to be alone, away from the group. As mandated reporters, any YMCA employee is required by law to report any suspicion of abuse or neglect to the appropriate authorities.

Behavior, Discipline, and Dismissal Policy

Our discipline policy is designed to help children develop self-control and assume responsibility for their actions. We are guided by our core values of honesty, caring, responsibility, and respect. Clear, age-appropriate rules and limits are established at camp. As in any group activity, inappropriate behavior by one or two children can spoil the experience for the entire group. Staff will deal with normal day-to-day behavior issues using acceptable techniques and approaches, such as: redirecting campers, rewarding positive behavior, encouraging campers to use "I" statements and talk about their feelings, role modeling on how to speak and interact with campers in a positive manner, and implementing time out when appropriate.

Behavior which is minor but disruptive and inappropriate, including profanity, acting uncooperatively, or refusal to participate will result in counseling with the leaders of the unit. Further problems may result in written documentation with logical consequences. Parents may be contacted to discuss behavior or special circumstances. Repeated behavior problems may result in dismissal from camp.

Behavior which may result in more serious consequences includes but is not limited to damage or theft to property, hitting, and verbal abuse. Such behavior will be documented and addressed and may result in dismissal from camp.

Camp dismissals due to behavior challenges will not be eligible for refunds. Parents will be responsible to pick up the camper.

Campers will partake in an anti-bullying seminar on their first evening at camp and sign a pledge stating that they understand the importance of creating a positive community 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." There are also anonymous reporting boxes in both nurse offices. In addition, the "Tuesday check in" by the unit leaders gives campers a designated, individual, programmed procedure for reporting any problems or concerns.

Lakeview Unit (entering grades 1st-4th)

During our week-long summer camp, campers going into grades 1-4 stay 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 and Yellow Unit, stay 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 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.

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

YMCA Camp Ernst
7615 Camp Ernst Road
Burlington, KY 41005

859-586-6181
ce@myYcamp.org
www.myYcamp.org

Directions to camp:

From Cincinnati

- I-75/71 South into Kentucky
- Take Exit 181 (Florence/Burlington)
- Turn right on Rt. 18; go 3.2 miles
- Take ramp on right hand side towards Union/Hebron
- Turn left at the light going towards Union onto Camp Ernst Rd; go 2 miles
- Turn right at our sign

From Lawrenceburg

- Travel East on I-275
- Take Exit 8 (Hebron) onto Hwy 237; go 4.2 miles
- Cross Rt. 18 (Burlington Pike) onto Camp Ernst Road; go 2 miles
- Turn right at our sign

From East Cincinnati

- Travel West on I-275, pass airport
- Take Exit 8B (Hebron) onto Hwy 237; go 4.2 miles
- Cross Rt. 18 (Burlington Pike) onto Camp Ernst Road; go 2 miles
- Turn right at our sign

From Lexington

- Travel North on I-75/71
- Take Exit 181 (Florence/Burlington Exit)
- Turn left on Rt. 18 (Burlington Pike); go 3.3 miles
- Take ramp on right hand side towards Union/Hebron
- Turn left at the light going towards Union onto Camp Ernst Rd; go 2 miles
- Turn right at our sign