



# YOUNG EXPLORERS SOCIETY

## Summer 2024 “Week of Exploration” Day Camp Parent Guide

### Welcome to the Young Explorers Society!

#### Our Mission

*To provide well-rounded outdoor adventure education that inspires and enables kids and their families to enjoy creation together.*

#### Program Outcomes

**The “Big Idea” at Y.E.S. is to encourage kids to think beyond themselves and consider the needs of the people and places around them as they learn and play outside. The following benefits are a natural result of applying this mindset to our adventures, and we help participants notice and discuss them along the way:**

1. EXPERIENCE WONDER – Outdoor exploration develops a strong foundation for spiritual growth by exposing us to the awe of creation and allowing space for introspection. We encourage observation and foster kids' natural curiosity to help them encounter the incredible power and intricate beauty all around them.
2. GROW RELATIONSHIPS – Real adventures are a fantastic catalyst to help kids build lasting friendships and bring families closer together. We open doors to share more quality time and make unforgettable stories.
3. CULTIVATE CHARACTER – Engagement in challenging experiences provides a rich environment for developing character attributes like gratitude, joyfulness, and perseverance. Along the way we teach fundamentals like responsibility, decision-making, and activity-specific skills all while helping kids realize a lifelong opportunity for physical activity.
4. STEWARD PLACES – We need wild spaces and they must be cared for to thrive. By training responsible users we maintain and improve the places where we love to play.

### Summer Day Camp Details

#### Curriculum

Your child will receive age-appropriate skill instruction in kayaking (2<sup>nd</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> grade groups), canoeing (5<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> grade groups), rock climbing, hiking/exploring, and Leave No Trace principles with the goal of showing kids a variety of ways to enjoy the outdoors responsibly. Each Week of Exploration will generally include two days of paddling (5<sup>th</sup>- 8<sup>th</sup> grade groups will have a flatwater day and potentially a day on gentle moving water, depending on group skill level), two days of rock climbing (which may include top roping, bouldering, and/or rappelling), and a swimming hole hiking/exploring day. Final activity selections may vary depending on weather and other factors. We will also have a group discussion topic relating

to one of our program outcomes each day, in addition to countless opportunities to learn about those outcomes along the way.

### Ages & Prerequisites

Week of Exploration day camps offer two co-ed age groups: rising 2<sup>nd</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> graders & rising 5<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> graders. Please see our website for dates available to each age group. Older children in each group will be encouraged to lead and set an excellent example for the younger children. More advanced skills will be taught to those in the group that are ready.

**The following are prerequisites to join the program.** Participants should be:

- Able to hike 3 miles with a loaded day pack
- Able to use the restroom in the woods independently (#1 and #2)
- Able to tie shoes and manipulate zippers with minimal assistance
- Able to listen carefully and follow multiple instructions
- Able to respect the physical and emotional boundaries set forth by instructors
- Able to verbally communicate personal needs to instructors
- Willing to be outside for extended periods in various weather conditions

**Our program takes place in remote settings with real environmental risks. If your child has a disability or significant health condition, please reach out to us directly at the time of registration to discuss program specifics.**

### Cost

One Week of Exploration is \$500 per child, with a multi-child discount available (first child \$500, additional children within the same family \$465 each). A non-refundable deposit of \$150 per child will be due at the time of registration. The balance will be due on 5/31 for camps beginning in June, 6/30 for camps beginning in July).

### Registration Requirements

All participants must have a completed Registration Form, Acknowledgement & Assumption of Risks/Release & Indemnity Agreement, and Insurance Acknowledgement (with copy of medical insurance card) on file before their first day. **If your child carries an inhaler or epi-pen, or if any medications will need be administered during the program, the corresponding forms must be filled out and signed by a healthcare provider with prescriptive authority.**

### Staff-Child Ratio

While in the field, we will maintain a ratio of 1 instructor per 6.5 children. There will be a minimum of 2 instructors with the group at all times.

### Absences, Cancellations & Refunds

We will intentionally be out exploring rain or shine (excepting extreme weather events), which will provide excellent learning opportunities. We appreciate your commitment to your child's group for the week. Please keep in mind that excessive absences negatively affect group dynamics and hinder skill progressions.

**Refunds will not be given for missed days.** If your child becomes ill, please let us know as soon as possible so we can plan accordingly. If you must withdraw due to illness or injury, we will do our best to transfer your child to another session (if capacity allows). Please contact us to discuss your situation.

A non-refundable \$150 deposit per child is due upon registration and will be applied to the price of camp. If a conflict arises, we will do our best to transfer your child to another session at no charge (if capacity allows). **If you withdraw 30 days or more before the program start date, you will only forfeit your deposit. If you withdraw less than 30 days before the program start date, you will owe 100% of your balance.**

## Logistics

### Contact Information

Mitch Groothuis Cell Phone (administrative/lead instructor contact): 423-284-2868

Golden Goss Cell Phone (lead instructor contact): 478-636-3190

David Ragland Cell Phone (lead instructor contact): 205-612-3425

Laura Groothuis Cell Phone (emergency base camp contact): 931-273-2185

Email: [youngexplorerschatt@gmail.com](mailto:youngexplorerschatt@gmail.com)

Website: [youngexplorerssociety.com](http://youngexplorerssociety.com)

Social Media: @YES.chatt (Facebook and Instagram)

### Communication

**The day prior to each camp day, you will receive a group text to the primary parent or guardian's cell phone letting you know which activity your child will need to be prepared for the following day, as well as where we will be going.** This allows us to choose the best activity available depending on weather conditions and the group's progression. We will also use this communication method for any severe weather updates or transportation delays (sometimes unexpected adventures may delay us in the field, in which case we will let you know as soon as we do).

**If you are running late for drop-off or pickup, please let us know. Keep in mind that some of these activities are logistically complex and we need the entire time slot to execute our plan for the day.** If you are more than 15 minutes late for drop off, we may need you to meet us at the activity site, though depending on the nature of the day's activities that may or may not be practical. Prompt pickup is appreciated so we can begin preparations for the next day's adventure!

### What to Pack

Don't forget that involving your child in preparing for a day outside is a great opportunity to teach responsibility!

Activity-specific gear (Boats, PFDs, Paddles, Helmets, Harnesses, Rock Shoes, etc.) will be provided by Young Explorers Society.

**Please DO NOT send phones** or other unnecessary items (smartwatches, toys, money, electronics, etc.) as they tend to distract the group and could easily be lost or damaged in the field.

**Please send your child with the following personal items (labelled with their name) EVERY day:**

- Backpack – One that will hold all the following personal gear and that your child can carry comfortably
- Lunch – Please send food that does not require refrigeration and that is packaged to create the minimum amount of trash possible. We will let you know if anyone in your child's group has a severe food allergy that requires adjusting what you pack.
- Snacks – More than you think they will need. Water – Two FULL one-liter water bottles that WILL NOT LEAK. Hydration bladders are not recommended. **Please label all water bottles!**
- Footwear – Closed-toe shoes appropriate for hiking and with good traction. Poor footwear choices are responsible for many first aid incidents.
- Clothing appropriate for the weather – Synthetics are ideal if you have them. Multiple layers enable customization based on output level and conditions.
- Rain Jacket (bring every day, no matter the forecast).
- Extra change of clothes appropriate for the weather (including socks and underwear) in a gallon Ziploc.
- Sun Hat and Sunscreen - Please do not send aerosol sunscreen or bug spray...the group's lungs thank you in advance. **Please apply sunscreen before drop off.**
- **Additional items for water days:**
  - Footwear that can get wet AND will stay on your child's foot. Crocs and Flops may look awesome, but unfortunately do NOT qualify. Chacos or Keens are great if you have them, but old tennis shoes are just fine as long as they still have tread.
  - Swimsuit OR synthetic shorts & shirt (long-sleeve rash guards are great). Shorts over swimsuits are highly recommended for girls for abrasion resistance. **Please have the swimsuit already installed on your child before drop-off.**
  - Towel for the van ride home (we will NOT have time for everyone to change)

### Drop-off & Pickup

Our rendezvous point each day will be at Restoration Southside Church (3146 Broad St, Chattanooga, TN 37408). Only individuals listed on your registration form will be allowed to pick up your child. If you need to add someone to the list of authorized people at any time, please provide notice via text or email.

Drop off is at 9:00am each morning. Pickup is at 3:30pm (2<sup>nd</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> grade groups) OR 4:00pm (5<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> grade groups) each afternoon.

### Transportation

Y.E.S. provides transportation via 15-passenger van from the rendezvous point to each day's recreation site and back. We take this responsibility very seriously. We will provide backless booster seats for those children who need them, but are happy to use your booster seat if you prefer. Transportation rules are as follows:

- No child will be allowed to ride in the front seat.
- Children will remain seated and wearing a seat belt at all times.
- Children will not be left unattended in the vehicle.
- Children will not be permitted to stand or sit on the floor of a moving vehicle and their arms, legs, and heads will remain inside the vehicle at all times.

## Risk Management

### Approach

Risk is inherent in outdoor activities and must be approached with respect, skill, and experience. The presence of risk also provides excellent opportunities to teach children situational awareness, decision-making skills, and responsibility. Whenever practical, Y.E.S. staff will help children anticipate and understand what the primary risks are in a particular situation or environment, and how to respond appropriately as an individual and as a group to reduce the likelihood of an accident.

### Discipline

Y.E.S. strives to establish clear expectations at the beginning of each program. If expectations are not met, we utilize logical or natural consequences applied in problem situations, redirection of children to more acceptable behavior, and encouragement of appropriate behavior. We will sometimes encourage children to solve problems rather than imposing a solution. As supported by our "Big Idea" above, we will help children recognize and respect each other's feelings and encourage cooperation, helping, and constructive verbal communication to solve problems.

Y.E.S. will make every effort to resolve recurring behavioral issues in conjunction with parents, but reserves the right to dismiss any participant from the program that we believe, in our discretion, presents a safety concern or medical risk, is unduly disruptive, or otherwise conducts him/herself in a manner detrimental to the program. Examples include but are not limited to: fighting, bullying, inappropriate behavior, etc.

### Notification of Illness, Accident, or Injury

Y.E.S. field staff are required to attain a minimum of CPR and Wilderness First Aid training, and will carry a first aid kit at all times in the field. Staff will handle everyday bumps and bruises that occur. Parents will be notified when they pick up their child of any minor incidents.

For accidents that are not life threatening, but require medical attention, Y.E.S. staff will immediately notify a parent/guardian. If the parent/guardian(s) cannot be reached, emergency contacts on the injured child's registration form will be notified. If staff cannot reach any of the emergency contacts, the injured child's physician will be contacted and appropriate actions taken.

Should a life-threatening accident occur, Y.E.S. staff will immediately contact 911. After emergency assistance has been requested, the parent/guardian will be notified of the situation. If necessary, the child will be transported by ambulance to the nearest hospital or other medical center specified by parent. The Y.E.S. Acknowledgement & Assumption of Risks/Release & Indemnity Agreement gives permission for medical care in an emergency situation.

A child with any of the following symptoms: a fever of 100 degrees or higher, diarrhea, vomiting, or symptoms of a contagious disease will be sent home. The ill child may return to the program 24 hours after the last episode of fever, vomiting or diarrhea.

If a child becomes ill during the day, he/she is immediately separated from the other children and a parent or emergency contact is notified. Items used by the child will be disinfected

before use by another child. It is expected that the ill child will be picked up as soon as possible.

### Administering Medications

Whenever possible, we encourage parents to administer medications to their children outside of program hours. If your child requires the administration of routine medication(s) (prescription or non-prescription) during program hours you must provide a signed Medication Administration Permission form signed by a healthcare provider with prescriptive authority. **If your child carries an inhaler or epi-pen the corresponding Health Care Plan form must be filled out and signed by a healthcare provider with prescriptive authority.** Medications must be kept in the original bottle or container. Prescription medications must have the original pharmacy label intact, non-prescription medications must be labelled with the child's first and last name. Staff will carry medications in the field (except in the case of epi-pens and inhalers IF self-carry is indicated on the appropriate Health Care Plan form).