



from the beach...

CAMP IS CALLING

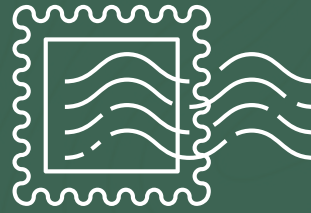
...to the BEAR



2025 CAMP HANDBOOK



A Letter From the Camp Director



Hello Campers and Families!

I am so excited for this upcoming Summer! At The Santa Monica Family YMCA's Camp Big Bear, we believe that every kid should have an opportunity to experience the beauty of California's outdoors. Camp is a place where all kids are encouraged to try new things and to be true to themselves, all through fun camp activities.

As a YMCA, we work to make sure nobody is turned away. Through our financial assistance program and payment plans, we strive to ensure camp is available to all. With our well-trained staff and commitment to the growth of each child, we take care to ensure that camp is welcoming and accessible.

Since 1938, Camp Big Bear has developed a reputation for providing life-changing camp experiences. Our staff put your camper's physical, mental, emotional, and social health at the forefront of everything we do. Our staff and crew of volunteers, made up of amazing young leaders from all over the world, receive extensive training in camper well-being, activity leadership, emergency response, teaching skills, and more.

For more than 87 years, families have trusted YMCA Camp Big Bear to build their children into the future leaders of the world. We've built long-lasting friendships, developed good character, and helped thousands of kids experience transformative growth at camp. Our campus is so much more than just a place to have fun. We are a community pillar responsible for fostering empathy, growth, education, and inclusiveness. I hope that you'll entrust us with your child(ren) this summer and see what your child can gain from a week at camp. See you this summer!

Huy Lu
Camp Big Bear Director
bigbearinfo@ymcasm.org

Camp Big Bear 2025 Parent & Camper Orientation Night

Come meet staff, campers, and parents. Get all your questions answered, pay balances, & complete registration.

In Person: Friday, June 27th
6:30pm

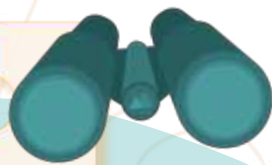
Virtual: Saturday, June 28th
(Zoom) 10:00am



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REGISTRATION PROCESS

1. Register in person, online or over the phone. Pay the \$100 deposit to reserve your spot, or pay in full.
2. Complete your CampDocs Information Forms entirely. Campers with incomplete packets will not be able to attend camp. It is the parent's responsibility to complete the Camper Information Forms in CampDocs by June 27th . Space and deposit may be lost if forms are not received by July 3rd.

DEPOSIT, BALANCES, CANCELLATIONS, & LATE FEES

- Deposits are due at time of registration. All deposits are non transferable and nonrefundable.
- All balances are due on June 30.
- Balances received after June 30 will be charged a \$50 late fee.
- Returned checks are charged a \$35 processing fee.
- All deposits and balances are non-refundable after camp begins.
- Any cancellations before camp begins will forfeit deposit. Any cancellations after camp begins will forfeit all fees paid.

CAMPERSHIPS, MEMBERSHIPS, & PROMOTIONS

Members of the Santa Monica Family YMCA receive a 25% discounted rate for Camp Big Bear. In order to receive the member rate, campers must be members at the time of registration and through the end of the program. Contact member services for prices and membership registration procedures.



CAMP SESSIONS

Week 1:
July 13-19, 2025

Week 2:
July 20-27, 2025

CAMP CATEGORIES & FEES

	SM Y MEMBER	NON-MEMBER
Explorers 2nd- 6th Grade	\$ 675	\$ 843
Trailblazers 7th- 9th Grade	\$ 675	\$ 843
Leaders In Training (LIT) 10th- 12th Grade *under 17 years old*	\$ 335	\$ 420



CAMP STAFF

All Camp leaders are at least 18 years of age and are carefully selected based upon previous work experience, background knowledge, & enthusiasm about providing your child a safe & fun environment. All staff go through extensive background checks including a interview, reference checks and background checks. All staff hold current CPR & First Aid Certifications, as well as, attend rigorous trainings in guiding children's behavior, camp procedures, child abuse prevention & reporting procedures, and in-house safety trainings. Staff are supervised daily by camp directors and program administrators, & supported by Leaders in Training.

Camp Staff Ratio: 1 counselor to 6 campers, plus one Leader-In-Training per sleeping unit (at the least, when able 2 counselors are in every living unit)

BUNKMATES

Campers are roomed with other campers their own age and grade. Campers can request cabin mates at sign-up. Cabin buddies must be the same grade or within one grade difference to be considered.

We will do our best to accommodate everyone's request. However, we cannot guarantee we will be able to fill all requests. There will not be any refunds for unfulfilled requests.

HEALTH, WELLNESS, & CAMPER SAFETY

HEALTH SCREENINGS

Each camper must pass a health screening at the time of check-in. The practice is a risk-management strategy to protect the camp community from preventable illness and to obtain up-to-date and complete health information for each person. In general, the process updates the health form, gathers information about medications, assesses current health status and specifically asks about exposure to communicable disease. It is expected that campers and staff arrive for their camp experience in good health. Camp Big Bear reserves the right not to admit an ill person.

All campers will undergo a health screening at drop-off/check-in, which includes:

- Head Lice Check
- Check for fever
- Ask about chicken pox or other communicable disease exposure in the previous 20 days. Ask about changes in health-history information since it was submitted

MEDICATION

All medications whether they are over-the-counter or prescribed must be turned in at check-in, be in their original containers, and accompany doctor instructions. Medications cannot be expired.

All prescribed medications must be in their original containers with the camper's name on the bottle.

Distribution of over-the-counter medication will only be given according to the medication's label. Any variation from the label's instruction must be accompanied by a doctor's prescription. If your child takes daily medication please check-in early to ensure plenty of time to review medicating procedures.

CAMP DEPARTURE, RETURNS, & TRANSPORTATION



The Santa Monica Family YMCA provides transportation from the Santa Monica Family YMCA facility located on 6th Street, between Santa Monica and Arizona to Camp Big Bear by charter bus.

Check-In begins at 10:00am on their first day of camp (Sunday). All campers should arrive on time for check-in and have already eaten lunch. Campers can bring snacks for the bus ride, however, food is not allowed in their sleeping units.

If parents choose not to utilize bus services, they must notify the Camp Director before July 1st in writing and provide their own transportation to camp. Campers providing their own transportation cannot check-in to camp until 4:00pm on their first day of camp (Sunday).

Campers that miss the bus will need to find their own transportation. There is no refund or transfer of fees for late campers.

Campers returning home will arrive at the Santa Monica Family YMCA at 2:30pm (depending on traffic). Please contact the Santa Monica Family YMCA for estimated time of arrival or unforeseen circumstances that may delay arrivals.



LAYOVERS FOR MULTI-WEEK CAMPERS & PARENT VISITS

The Santa Monica Family YMCA feels that parent visitations take away from the camp experience. Parent visitations are prohibited for one-week campers. Parents may sign up for Family Camp, Memorial Day, or Labor Day to experience camp with their kids and family.

Campers that are signed up for more than one session will stay up at camp through the weekend. Parents are welcome to sign out campers on Saturday between the hours of 10am and 4pm.

Parents picking up children for the day must make written plans in advance with the Camp Director, please email the Camp Director prior to arrival. Parents and/or guardians must have photo IDs and check in with the Camp Director before taking any child off camp property. All children must also be checked back in by 4pm on Saturday, the same day.

GENERAL RULES & CONSEQUENCES



All parents and campers must understand and abide by the rules and guidelines explained in the Code of Conduct. It is mandatory for each parent to review the rules and guidelines with their children prior to going to camp. It is also mandatory for any children that take regular daily medication to stay on their medication regimen while at camp.

Campers are also expected to follow all rules set forth by camp staff when traveling to and from camp. Campers must stay seated while the vehicle is in motion. Any child exhibiting behavior jeopardizing the safety of other campers and staff will be safely removed from the vehicle and expelled from camp. Staff will stay with the child until the parent is able to provide transportation.

All staff use preventive techniques to guide children's behavior and provide a positive and fun camp experience for all campers. All staff treat children as individuals, fairly, and consistently. However, any camper found in violation of the rules and guidelines will result in the child being removed from activity and/or group for "time-out" discussion/counseling with Camp Director.

All incidences will be documented. Any further investigation will be conducted as needed. An individualized guidance plan including review of rules and guidelines will be administered at the discretion of the Camp Director. If the camp director feels the camper is jeopardizing their own safety, the safety of other campers, and/or the safety of staff, the camper may be expelled from camp.

There is a zero tolerance policy for any camper found in possession of tobacco, drugs, alcohol, or paraphernalia. Campers in possession of these prohibited items will be expelled from camp. Parents must make all transportation arrangements for any child expelled from camp and have them picked up within 12 hours.

For the safety of our campers and to limit the number of visitors on campus, food delivery services such as DoorDash, UberEats, InstaCart, etc. will not be allowed. Deliveries will be turned away and fees will not be refunded.

Any cost incurred in violation of the rules and guidelines will be the sole responsibility of the parent. No refunds will be given if your child is expelled from camp.

For any questions regarding the rules and guidelines or disciplinary procedures please contact the Camp Director at your convenience.

WHAT NOT TO BRING TO CAMP

- Cell Phones
- Foods
- Pets
- Personal Sports Equipment
- Money
- Electronics
- Matches
- Tobacco Products
- Expensive items you do not want lost
- **NO WEAPONS OF ANY KIND**, including, but not limited to
 - Firearms (including airsoft and bb guns)
 - Knives
 - Archery Equipment

We are a drug and alcohol free environment. If found, campers will be asked to leave camp immediately.





COMMUNICATION WITH CAMPERS

HOMESICKNESS

Homesickness is very common especially for first-time campers. Staff will help kids deal with being homesick by being caring and empathetic, by keeping them active and facilitating bonding with new friends. Writing letters home is another way campers can deal with homesickness. Homesick campers will usually become comfortable within the first 24 to 36 hours.

If a camper is unconsolable, parents will be contacted. Campers usually experience homesickness at quiet time or bedtime and are not homesick all-day long. Parents can help avoid and deal with homesickness by:

- Talking about camp and frequently expressing enthusiasm
- Refrain from expressing anxious or ambivalent feelings about time away from home
- Well-intentioned parents have often exacerbated homesickness with comments like,
 - "I sure hope the food there is decent"
 - "I hope you'll be okay"
 - "Have a wonderful time. I hope I remember to feed your dog"
- Visit the website below and check out their camp prep articles:
campspirit.com/top-ten-summer-camp-prep-tips
- Have overnights with friends or grandparents before camp
- Send self-addressed and stamped envelopes and stationary and tell campers to write back
- Have campers help prepare and pack for camp
- Attend Parent & Camper Orientation Night and bring your camper to meet staff and other campers

Campers love to get mail! Parents are encouraged to please send mail to their campers. Receiving their letters at "Mail Call" is a memorable camp tradition.

SNAIL MAIL & CARE PACKAGES

While campers cherish hand written mail most, please plan ahead. Mailed letters and packages can take 5 to 7 business days to reach camp.

DO NOT send food in packages. Food will be confiscated. Food attracts rodents and animals into living areas and cannot be shared with other campers for health reasons. Make sure letters and packages are sent in advance and using the following address:



PHONE CALLS & CELL PHONES

Camp is a place for children to learn independence. We understand that parents have a harder time than campers do when their children are away at camp. However, campers are busy all day long in camp activities and we are busy providing the fun. We understand that campers frequently carry cell phones and have become quite dependent on cell phones. However, camp is a **NO CELL PHONE ZONE**.

PLEASE DO NOT SEND CELL PHONES.

All cell phones will be powered off, collected, and returned to parents at pick-up.

Please limit phone calls to Camp Big Bear to emergencies. Camp staff will, however, call parents if the health administrator has a general question, the child needs to stay overnight in the health center, needs a prescription, needs to see a doctor, or there is a behavioral management issue.

A DAY AT CAMP BIG BEAR



7:15am	Rise & Shine
8:00-8:45	Breakfast
8:45-9:15	Cabin Clean Up
9:15-10:30	Activity Period 1
10:45-12:00	Activity Period 2
12:15-12:30	Noon News - Mail Call & Golden Broom Award
12:30-1:00	Lunch
1:00-2:00	Camp Siesta
2:00-3:15	Activity Period 3
3:30-4:45	Activity Period 4
4:45-5:15	Prepare for Theme Night
5:15-5:30	Flagpole (Evening Assembly)
5:30-6:15	Dinner
6:30-7:30	Special Event
7:30-8:30	Evening Activity (typically campfire)
9:30-10:00	Cabin Time
10:00	Bed Time



PACKING FOR CAMP



1. **Please put your camper's name on every item they are packing!**
2. Involve your camper in the packing process. Buying new things for camp is fun, but if children do not recognize their clothes, they may not want to wear them. Packing is not only a fun bonding experience; it gets kids excited about camp and helps them understand their responsibility for keeping up with their belongings.
3. We recommend packing each outfit for each day of camp down to the socks so your camper is prepared for camp. This helps them get ready to take on the day more quickly so they can get to their fun activities with ease. Packing each day's clothes in a separate gallon size ziploc baggie is a great packing hack!
4. Pack all clothes and toiletries in one duffel or suitcase. Sleeping bags and pillows can be packed in a trash bag, however, make sure you pack an extra trash bag so they can pack up for the way home.
5. Items we ask your campers not to pack:
 - cell phones
 - food
 - medications (these should be checked in with the camp staff upon arrival)
 - toys
 - jewelry
 - expensive or precious items you do not want to risk being lost

EVERYDAY ESSENTIALS

The following table lists recommended items to pack and quantity. There is no laundry service at camp. Campers staying multi-weeks may have parents visit on Saturdays between sessions and do laundry in town (if you plan on doing laundry, only pack for 2-weeks). Please see page #5 for policies regarding parent visits.



PACKING LIST



What to Pack	1-week Campers	2-week Campers
Underwear	10	17
Shirts	10	14
Something White to Tie Dye i.e. shirt, socks, etc.	1	2
Shorts	5	10
Sweatshirt	1	2
Pants/J Jeans	2	3
Socks	10	17
Shoes (closed toed, ex. Tennis shoes)	2	2
Flip Flops	1	1
Swim Suit (one-piece)	2	3
Toothbrush	1	1
Toothpaste	1	1
Hairbrush	1	1
Shampoo/Conditioner	1	1
Deodorant	1	1
Soap	1	1
Towel	2	3
Wash cloth	1	2
Sleeping bag or sheets/blankets	1 (pack extra if child has tendency to wet the bed)	1 (pack extra if child has tendency to wet the bed)
Pillow	1	1
Reusable Water Bottle	1	1
Flash Light	1	1
Extra Batteries	Enough to replace the ones in the flash light	Enough to replace the ones in the flash light 2x
Pajamas	2	3
Chap stick	1	2
Hand Sanitizer	1 Bottle	2 Bottles
Current Rag or Leather	If you have one	If you have one

CREATING A CHILD SAFE ENVIRONMENT AT CAMP



The Y takes the following steps to keep children in our programs safe:

- Detailed employment and volunteer application forms.
- Comprehensive reference checks that include standardized questions that assess risk for abuse.
- Criminal Offender Record Information (CORI) check and Sexual Offender Registry Information (SORI) check.
- All staff and volunteers complete an extensive Child Abuse Prevention Training Program.
- Staff and volunteers are mandated to report any suspected child abuse.
- Staff are prohibited from working 1-on-1 with or contacting youth outside the Y.
- Policies exist to ensure staff and volunteers are not alone with a child. All interactions between a staff member or volunteer and a child must be observable and interruptible.

Employees and volunteers who are trained in abuse prevention are more likely to understand their role as a protector, to recognize the signs that abuse is occurring, and to report suspicious or inappropriate behaviors. Trained volunteers and staff members are also less likely to place themselves in situations where they could be falsely accused.

WHAT IS CHILD ABUSE?

We want all children to be safe. Unfortunately, child abuse does exist, taking on many forms.

Emotional: Threatening a child or using words that can hurt a child's feelings and self-esteem, withholding love and support from a child.

Physical: Causing injuries to a child on purpose, such as bruises, burns, scars, broken bones, etc.

Sexual: Having sexual contact in any form with a child, including exposing, fondling, intercourse, pornography, or internet solicitation.

Neglect: Not providing children with enough food, clothing, shelter, medical care, hygiene, supervision, etc.

WARNING SIGNS OF ABUSE

1. Unkempt or malnourished appearance.
2. Unexplained bruises, welts, or burns.
3. Disturbed sleeping or eating patterns.
4. Abrupt changes in behavior, anxiety, clinging, aggressiveness, or withdrawal.
5. Sexually transmitted diseases and infections.
6. Discomfort with physical contact.
7. Fear of a specific person or place.
8. Fearfulness or depression.

ZERO TOLERANCE POLICY

YMCA has a zero-tolerance policy for serious behavior infractions. Since the goal of the YMCA is to provide a healthy, safe and fun environment, serious inappropriate behaviors have no place. The behaviors listed below are grounds for immediate removal from the YMCA Camp Programs. Each incident will be considered on a case-by-case basis to determine if the child is capable of functioning in a group setting while at Y Camp.

- Any behavior that endangers the health and safety of children or staff members
- Leaving the camp property without permission, or refusing to remain with assigned group
- Inappropriate touching of other children or sexual misconduct
- Theft, defacing or destruction of property belonging to the YMCA or others
- Any kind of physical assault such as hitting, kicking or biting
- Possession of tobacco, alcohol, drugs, or paraphernalia
- Verbal abuse or threats; confirmed acts of bullying

WHAT CAN PARENTS DO ABOUT ABUSE

TALK regularly to your child about his or her experiences in YMCA programs, school, sports, and other activities.

Periodically **ASK** your child these questions:

- Is anyone scaring or threatening you?
- Is anyone asking you to keep secrets?
- Has anyone said anything to make you feel bad?
- Is anyone touching you in a way you do not like?

DROP IN on your child's programs.

TRUST your instincts. Don't wait to tell us if something seems 'strange'. Speak up.

LISTEN & WATCH for signs of your child receiving special attention that other children or teens are not receiving.

EDUCATE your child about self-protection, including information about strangers, and good and bad touches.

LEARN to control the stress level of yourself and family members.

COMMUNICATE with your child and really listen to their concerns.

RECOGNIZE the fact that most abuse happens by people that children know and trust.

BECOME AWARE of your community resources.

KNOW where your children are and who their friends are.

TEACH your children it's not okay to keep secrets from you; that they can always tell you the truth.



COMMUNICATIONS & CONTACT INFORMATION

Due to the nature of how a resident camp program is designed, the camp director is not at a desk at all times as they are running camp and looking after day-to-day activities.

The best way to contact the camp director is via email. Messages are checked throughout the day and calls are returned as soon as possible. If there is an emergency and you need to speak to someone right away please contact the Camp Big Bear office and leave a message.

Santa Monica Family YMCA Camp Big Bear

Mailing Address
P.O. Box 2882
Big Bear Lake, CA 92315-2882

Physical Address
38908 North Bay Drive
Big Bear Lake, CA 92315

(Complete Zip Code must be used when mailing care packages or letters)

Phone #: 909-866-3977
(EMERGENCIES ONLY!!!)