

OUTDOOR DISCOVERY CAMPS FAQs

How do I see all the camps that you offer?

Thank you for your interest in our camps!! The best way to see all that we have to offer is to visit the camp website: <https://www.oakgov.com/community/oakland-county-parks/nature/nature-education/outdoor-discovery-summer-camps>. For more information or assistance with online registration, call 248-858-0906.

How do I register?

To register online, you must know your Household #/Username. New users can create an account online by following the prompts. Be sure to include all your household members and accurate information. If you have participated in an Oakland County Parks activity before, your Household Number can be located on a past receipt from our department. If you don't know your Household Number, or if you need to make changes (add family members, change your address, etc.), call us at 248-858-0906. Payment is due in full at time of registration. Online registration is available at: <https://mioaklandcityweb.myvscloud.com/webtrac/web/splash.html?ccode=SplashSummerCamp>

Do you offer discounts or financial aid?

We do not offer discounts for families enrolling more than one child or enrolling multiple weeks at a time. Scholarships are not currently available. Reach out to smithac@oakgov.com for questions regarding financial aid.

What if my camper can only attend part of the camp week?

If your camper needs to miss time at camp, we'll still make sure they have a great experience. Please speak with camp staff on the first day to make them aware of which days the camper will be absent, and we will communicate with you about what you may expect for the remainder of the week. If you know of these required absences prior to registration, you may also add this as a roster note during the registration process. Please know that camp registration fees will not be prorated or altered based on attendance.

What if I need additional child care hours before or after camp?

Aftercare is available from 3-5:30 p.m. and is offered as an option for an additional fee. You must sign up for the full week of aftercare. A prorated option or discount for fewer days is not available. Before-camp care is not offered at this time.

What if I'm late picking my child up from camp?

If participants are picked up more than five minutes after the program ending time, late pick-up fees will be incurred and are required to be paid prior to the next camp day. Fees are as follows:

• 5-15 minutes, \$15 • 16-25 minutes, \$25 • 26-30 minutes, \$50 • 31+ minutes, \$75.

What is your Refund & Transfer Policy?

If you need to update, transfer or change your registration, please call 248-705-7212 or email smithac@oakgov.com. Camp fees must be paid in full at the time of registration and are nonrefundable. For extenuating circumstances, a refund may be requested and granted on a case-by-case basis. Absolutely no refunds may be requested after May 1, 2026.

I received an email to complete paperwork for my camper after registering. What is it?

Upon registration, an email will be sent prompting you to fill out paperwork about your child. We need to know their emergency contact information, adults that are allowed to pick up from camp, allergy information, medication and any special instructions regarding your camper. This information must be completed and submitted BEFORE the first day of camp.

Can I register for more than one camp?

You will see that camps have multiple sessions offered throughout the season. We welcome and encourage your camper to sign up more than once! All projects, themes and activities change from week to week. We love it when we see repeat campers throughout the summer!

Who should I contact regarding accommodations for my camper?

Please reach out to smithac@oakgov.com or lkavanaugh@oakgov.com to let us know more about your camper's needs and discuss an accommodation plan well before the start of their camp session. This is particularly helpful if your child has any medical conditions such as, but not limited to, allergies, asthma, diabetes, neurodivergence or behavioral needs. The more information provided to us prior to camp, the better support we can provide campers for a successful and meaningful camp experience.

What are your health guidelines?

Oakland County Parks and Michigan State University Extension are committed to the health and safety of all participants, staff and community members. We follow proper health and safety guidelines as provided by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), State of Michigan and Oakland County. Campers with a communicable disease, or any contagious health problem, such as a cough, sore throat or runny nose, are asked to stay at home to avoid the spread of illness to campers and staff. Campers will be sent home for fever, vomiting, diarrhea or any illness that keeps them from participating in camp activities. Campers must be free from fever/vomiting/diarrhea without the use of medications for 24 hours to return to camp.

How are you encouraging campers to have healthy hygiene?

We will cover healthy hygiene rules. Campers will be reminded to:

- Wash their hands with soap and water or hand sanitizer after the completion of each activity, using the restroom or after blowing their nose, coughing or sneezing
- Sneeze or cough in the crease of their elbow
- Avoid touching their face, especially their eyes, nose and mouth

How do you accommodate kids with food allergies?

We ask families to send nut-free snacks and lunches to camp. After registration, you will receive an email where we ask you to input information related to your child's allergies. It is extremely important to include this information as it will alert camp staff to be aware and on alert about your child's allergies. If you have additional questions, please reach out to lkavanaugh@oakgov.com.

Are snacks and lunches provided?

Snacks and lunches are not provided. Campers should bring a nut-free lunch, snacks and a water bottle to camp every day.

What does a day at camp look like?

After arriving at the drop-off location, campers will disperse within their camp groups to begin the day. Each morning, campers and staff will work together to set the day's expectations. The morning is full of activities whether it be beginning specialty projects related to their individual camp, playing active games or going outside for adventures. Most camps will take a mid-morning break for snacks and calm time before moving on to different pre-lunch activities. Lunches generally occur mid-day and most camps use this time for outdoor picnics and high-energy games. The afternoon consists of returning to activities and projects before beginning the clean-up and wind down process prior to dismissal. Camp staff are adept at providing ample time for snacks, rest and reset opportunities to provide the most well-balanced camp experience possible. Specific daily activities will depend on the camp location and will be communicated closer to the start of camp.

When will I receive pre-camp communication?

You will receive a camp welcome letter by the end of the day the Wednesday before your camp starts. This communication will include camper expectations and important information related to drop-off and pickup, any events or special activities, what to bring, information about lunches, snacks and more. This information will be sent to the email address provided during registration.

What will drop-off and pickup look like?

Each site will have a specific procedure that will be detailed in the pre-camp communication emailed to you the Wednesday prior to camp. Please know that photo ID is required at pickup, and campers will only be released to individuals listed on the pickup list who are age 16 and older. Sign-out is required before a camper can leave the site. Camps are offered at various locations throughout the county including Independence Oaks County Park, Red Oaks County Park and Waterford Oaks County Park.

We understand you may have multiple children attending camps at different sites in the same week which may cause you concern with picking each child up on time. Pickup timeframes for each site will be included in the pre-camp communication. Please allow extra time when picking up and dropping off at Independence Oaks, since Wint Nature Center is more than a five-minute drive from the entrance of the park. Also, pickup and drop-off locations may change in the park day-to-day based on activities and weather. For example, campers may be dropped off at Red Oaks Nature Center but picked up at Red Oaks Golf Course. Instructions or changes in pickup or drop-off locations will be communicated via email and/or text to parents.

What support do you offer for campers with separation anxiety?

Our staff are trained to recognize and address any separation anxiety we see. Our goal is to make drop-off stress free and smooth for you and your camper as they transition into the camp day. We use a variety of techniques including introducing them to a new friend that has attended before, starting them in quieter spaces first, providing a distracting activity and above all, validating their feelings. Please take time to explain the camp drop-off process to your camper ahead of the camp day and send them equipped with comfort items such as a small toy or stuffed animal, their favorite book and drawing or writing supplies. If your camper is having issues at drop-off, we ask that you do your best to keep goodbyes brief and positive. In our experience, lingering at drop-off can make the experience more challenging and may delay your camper's adjustment time. We will always work to ensure open communication with families about their child's adjustment to camp. Please seek out a camp director for additional help if needed.

Will campers go on field trips?

Campers will participate in on-site field trips to experience the unique amenities each park has to offer. A daily schedule will be provided closer to the start of each week. All materials and equipment will be provided for each activity, unless otherwise instructed. On rare occasions, campers may be transported from one area of the park to another. Camp staff will communicate this with parents. Otherwise, campers will travel on foot throughout the park as part of their adventures for the day.

Will all camps include swimming? What if my camper does not know how to swim?

Campers at Independence Oaks may have the opportunity to go kayaking or swimming at the beach in the park. Campers at Red Oaks will have the opportunity to visit Red Oaks Waterpark across from the nature center. These activities will be supervised in accordance with state licensing requirements. Life jackets and equipment will be provided. Campers will be responsible for bringing a bathing suit, towel, water shoes and extra clothes. Campers at all locations may participate in water play days with sprinklers, squirt guns, water balloons, etc. and may also need a bathing suit or change of clothes. Water play, kayaking and/or swimming days will be shared in advance.

What are your camper to staff ratios?

At a minimum, we follow one staff member for every 10 campers. However, in addition to our 1:10 ratio, there is always a minimum of two staff members with each group so those camps having less than 20 for maximum enrollment will have a lower ratio. The maximum number of campers each week is 30.

What are your staff's qualifications?

Supervisors and site directors have degrees in related fields and years of experience working with children and developing youth enrichment programs. Oakland County Parks is partnering with Michigan State University Extension to provide experienced and well-trained staff at each of the camps. Our large team of lead counselors are college-age and older with a history of working with children and have been selected because of their experience, skills, character and enthusiasm for working with kids! Many of our counselors have degrees or are currently taking classes in child care, physical education, art, education or other related fields. We even have some schoolteachers that work with us during the summer! All staff have completed background checks and are First Aid/CPR certified. All staff also undergo intensive training prior to each camp season. Examples of covered topics include, but are not limited to, safety protocols and procedures, positive youth development principles, our camp standards and expectations, group work skills, behavior management, inclusive practices, emergency procedures and program content.