



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®  
FOR HEALTHY LIVING  
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

# PREPARING YOUR CHILD FOR THE SUMMER OF THEIR LIFE

**A Guide to Resident Camp  
for Parents, Campers and Alumni  
YMCA CAMP CARSON**

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# The YMCA Camp Carson Adventure

**OUR MISSION:** The YMCA of Southwestern Indiana, Inc., following the example of Jesus Christ, responds to community needs by serving all people, especially youth, through relationships and activities that promote healthy spirit, mind and body.

## Life Skills and Values

At the core of our program is the cabin group and the lessons that come from living together with 12 other people. Through this experience, campers learn life skills and values that will serve them throughout their life. Our focus and guarantee that your child will learn more about the character values of Caring, Honesty, Respect, Faith, and Responsibility while at camp helps set us apart from other experiences.

## Staff

Our Staff is comprised of young adults who have completed at least one week of specialized training each year. Staff are chosen for maturity, commitment to children's growth and a love for making a difference. Also, our campers will meet staff from across the globe. We typically have 8-10 countries represented on our summer team.

## Facilities

YMCA Camp Carson is an overnight camp in southwestern Indiana, just 30 minutes north of Evansville. It sits on 300 acres of property, with over 7 miles of trails, that are utilized for various activities (horseback, dirt bikes, mountain bikes and hiking). However, the core camp activities are located in the heart of camp. This includes the Camper Cabins, Dining Hall, a staffed Healthcare facility, new Boathouse, and Lodge.

Campers sleep in new, modern cabins that still have a rustic and homey feel of camp.

## Affordability for all

As a YMCA, we realize families have differing abilities to pay for camp and have instituted a 3 rate pricing option. The camp program is the same regardless of the rate you choose, and we trust families to best select the rate they are able to pay.

**RATE A:** Actual cost of providing a week of camp for a child.

**RATE B and RATE C:** Subsidized rates available for families who do not qualify for traditional scholarships but still need some financial assistance. Rates B and C subsidies are funded by Annual Campaign donors.

## FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

It is our desire to make camp financially accessible to all families. Through the commitment of our board members and many other volunteers, funds are raised each year to provide a camp experience to families who qualify. Assistance is awarded based on income level and positive school references.

**Income Level:** Based on a sliding scale dependent on number of persons in the household. Generally, a household gross adjusted income up to \$45,000. Extenuating circumstances are also considered.

## FENNEMAN SCHOLARSHIP

Thanks to special donors, these partial scholarships (50% off Rate A) are offered to middle income families who do not qualify for traditional financial assistance. Requirements include community service hours, good grades and a good citizenship rating at school. Available only to first time Camp Carson families.

**Income Level:** Generally, a gross adjusted income between \$45,000 and \$87,000. Extenuating circumstances are also considered.

**PLEASE NOTE:** In order to help as many campers as possible, financial assistance and Fenneman Scholarships are awarded for one week of camp only except for the LIT and CIT which are two week sessions.

Complete Financial Assistance information and packet is available at [campcarson.org/summer-dates-and-rates](http://campcarson.org/summer-dates-and-rates).

### DISCOUNTS AVAILABLE

FRIEND REFERRAL CREDITS - Your family will receive a \$25 credit for EVERY camper you refer.

- Must be a new-to-YMCA Camp Carson family.
- Please provide your friend's name in the Camper Information Form during your registration. You can also call the camp office to make referrals at any time.
- Credit will be applied to your account once your friend has registered for camp.

2nd CHILD DISCOUNT - A \$20.00 discount is applied to all campers in one family except the first registered child.

### REGISTRATION INFORMATION

Please see our website for the current summer session dates and program rates at [campcarson.org/summer-dates-and-rates](http://campcarson.org/summer-dates-and-rates). Registration is easy to do online to secure your camper's spot.

# Camp Activities

**CAMPERS DESIGN THEIR ACTIVITY SCHEDULE:** Our unique morning program design creates the opportunity for campers to experience the true freedom of choice on activity selection.

## WATERFRONT ACTIVITIES ALL AGES 7-16

BLOB*	ZIP LINE	ROLLING LOGS	ROCKIT*
TOM SAWYER SWING	RINGS*	TRAPEZE*	TEETER TOTER*
SWIM SHALLOW END	WATER CANNON	WATER BASKETBALL	KAYAKING*
CANOEING	SLIDE*	WATER GAMES	SWIMMING - DEEP END*
WATER VOLLEYBALL	SAILING**		

Off-site Canoe trips for Ridge Top cabins.

\* Must be a band swimmer, camper has passed the swim test.

\*\* Can sail with a staff member.

## LAND ACTIVITIES ALL AGES 7-16

FISHING	ARTS & CRAFTS	GUITARS	RADIO STATION
ARCHERY	CLIMBING WALL	SOCCER	SAND VOLLEYBALL
NATURE	MOUNTAIN BOARDS	BASKETBALL	SLING SHOTS
RIFLERY	DRUMMING	GAME ROOM	WOODWORKING
GAGA	HUMAN FOOSBALL	GIANT SWING	PAMPER POLE
BLACK HOLE	LOW ROPES COURSE	POTTERY - TABLE HAND BUILDING PROJECTS	

AGES 8 and up (except LIT and CIT)

- Horseback Trail Riding - available to Traditional campers

AGES 11 and up

- Pottery Wheel
- 55' Alpine Climbing Tower
- Mountain Bikes - Feet must be able to touch the ground while seated on the bike.
- Dirt Bike Trail Riding (Returning Dirt Bikes) - Available to Traditional and LIT campers after completion of First Year Dirt Bikes at Camp Carson.

## RETURNING DIRT BIKE RIDER

This add on option is available to Traditional and LIT campers who have completed YMCA Camp Carson's First Year Dirt Bike Camp. Campers will receive a quick refresher and riding evaluation on day 1 and then hit the trails the remaining 4 days at camp.

### Riding Gear:

The bike and helmet are provided by YMCA Camp Carson. For protection, riders must bring non-polyester long pants and long sleeve shirts. Riders will also need to wear a sturdy boot with ankle protection and protective gloves (batting gloves are fine). Expensive motor cross riding gear is not necessary!

## MORE THAN AN ACTIVITY

Through intentional use of things like our **ACE** concept, we strive to ensure that while campers are at program areas, they are learning so much more than just an activity skill.

Throughout their participation, they are also learning life skills such as teamwork, communication and problem solving. We also intentionally focus on increasing camper understanding of the YMCA core values of caring, honesty, respect, responsibility and faith.

## CHALLENGE BY CHOICE AT ACTIVITIES

Our "challenge by choice" philosophy encourages campers to stretch their comfort zones and discover they can do so much more than they imagined. Campers receive lots of encouragement to "go for it" but in the end, it's always the camper's choice to take on the challenge before them.

## ONGOING SKILL DEVELOPMENT OPTION

Campers can choose to participate in activities from a simply recreational perspective or work on the recognition skill development program which we track throughout their years at camp. At the end of the week, a certificate goes home for each level achieved.

## GETTING TO ACTIVITIES

While camp covers a 300-acre property with over 7 miles of trails, the core camp activities are located in the heart of camp. Lots of open space makes it easy for campers to identify their destination as they move from activity to activity - spending more time "being there" not "getting there".

Campers travel from activity to activity with a "buddy" which could be another camper or a program team member. Program team members are stationed in all areas to ensure that campers find their way to their next activity destination.

## FREEDOM OF CHOICE BENEFITS

Campers have complete freedom to choose the activities they wish to participate in and the amount of time they spend there. There are numerous benefits for your child with this system.

- Campers are able to explore and give lots of things a try including activities he/she may not have been aware of prior to camp.
- Campers who find interest in some activities more than others are able to spend more time there as opposed to being stuck all week at an activity he/she does not enjoy.
- Campers may come to camp with a friend but they may not be interested in all the same things. With teamwork, respect and cooperation, open schedule allows campers to pursue his/her individual interests.
- Campers who are go-getters can challenge themselves to try every activity and earn lots of skill levels, concentrate on upper levels at their favorite activities or both. For those who enjoy a more relaxed pace, they are also able to fine tune skills in focused areas of interest.
- One incentive we offer is the Carson Junior Award which is given to every camper who earns the first level at our core activity areas. The first level usually takes 20-30 minutes, and on Wednesday-Friday, they can easily move through several activity areas. We track skill levels from year to year so campers can continue to develop upper level skills and work towards the Carson Senior and Rocker awards.
- All campers will learn and exercise the important life skills of decision making and goal setting. Because they are free to explore, they will discover a lot of things about themselves and most importantly gain the confidence to keep trying new things and taking on challenges when they return home.

## ACTIVITY SIGN UP

- On Sunday afternoon, campers will go on a camp tour with their cabin to see all the activities available to them. They will then go to "Activity Sign Ups" and choose activities for Monday and Tuesday morning. For these first 2 mornings, campers will stay at the activity area they have chosen for a full period.
- By Wednesday, we hope they have become comfortable at camp and are now more confident to try a new activity or pursue more skill levels at an activity they have already tried. For this reason, the Wednesday through Friday morning schedule moves to an "Open Choice" format. Open choice allows campers to move between activities at a pace of their choosing - they can stay at an activity for as little or as long as they wish. Campers sign in and out of each activity area and there are several staff available to ensure campers are able to find their way to their next activity.

ACE is at the heart of everything we do. We firmly believe that if campers feel accepted and know they belong, they are much more willing to stretch their comfort zones and take on the challenges at camp. It is our hope that self-confidence gained through these challenges will empower our campers to take home an awareness of how they can facilitate acceptance in daily living as well as the confidence to take on any challenge they face.

To implement ACE, we are very intentional about every aspect of camp. Whether it be at an activity area or with a cabin group, we are committed to developing young people who are caring, responsible, honest, respectful and of a strong faith.

- Campers know they are accepted and this environment enables our campers to truly stretch their comfort zones and take on new challenges without fearing awkward embarrassment should they not reach their initial goal.
- With everyone at camp cheering for each other through thick and thin, campers discover it's OK to try and try again. With each challenge attempted, self-confidence grows stronger.
- This self-confidence leads to a tremendous feeling of empowerment which translates on to all sorts of situations - meeting new people, holding a conversation, trying out for a sport, a choir, debate team...
- Ultimately, we hope campers strive to always ensure others feel accepted, take on new challenges, grow in confidence and self-esteem and leave camp feeling empowered to take on some of the bigger challenges that they encounter in the journey of life.

## COVID-19 Updates

Ensuring a safe and healthy Camp will require a strong partnership among all of us.

As always, our top priority at YMCA Camp Carson is to keep our campers, families, and staff safe. In light of our current reality, we are reviewing and updating our medical protocols and practices using recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Indiana State Department of Health, American Camp Association (ACA), Gibson County Health Department, and with guidance from the YMCA Camping Cabinet. We are forming a Camp Medical Advisory Committee as well, to review and add to this plan.

In our commitment to the health and safety of our families and staff, we will continue to monitor guidance from the CDC and other state health agencies. We recognize that recommendations and guidelines will change, and we commit to updating our programming and protocols accordingly.

We will continue to update our Covid-19 web page, and will send specific information to parents as appropriate. Thank you for your support and patience as we all navigate through this. If you have questions, please call or text Jim Sexstone, our Executive Director at 513-383-0204.

Please visit our website for the most up-to-date information, at [campcarson.org/covid-19](https://campcarson.org/covid-19)

## Important details for parents

### ACCREDITATION STATUS

YMCA Camp Carson adheres to the very highest in health and safety standards and is proud to be accredited by the American Camp Association (ACA). Developed exclusively for the camp profession, this nationally recognized program has been formulated to promote safe and professional practices in all aspects of camp operation including site, health and safety, food service, staff and program quality. YMCA Camp Carson has voluntarily submitted to this independent appraisal done by camping experts and has earned this mark of distinction.

### BIRTHDAYS AT CAMP

A special dessert is prepared for your camper and his/her cabin group. While we're in the Dining Hall, the camp family will recognize campers with birthdays and sing Happy Birthday. During Check-In, families can drop off birthday cards with the staff. Mail is delivered at lunchtime.

### CABIN MATE REQUESTS AND CABIN ASSIGNMENTS

We try to honor mutual cabin mate requests if campers are within one year of age or grade of each other. We ask that you limit your requests to 2 mutual cabin mates. A vital part of the camp experience is making new friends and building new relationships. It can be overwhelming for a camper to be in a cabin with a large group of other campers who are already friends, so we try to split large groups of campers from the same school, etc.

Cabin assignments are made 2-3 days prior to check in and are not released prior to Check-In day. You will receive a phone call prior to arrival if we are NOT able to meet your cabin mate request.

### CANTEEN (CAMP STORE)

The Canteen is open each afternoon during free swim. A selection of t-shirts, souvenirs, ice cream, beverages, candy and salty snacks are available. Campers are limited to 2 sugary snacks each day (sugary snacks refers to candy and soda). Pretzels, ice cream, nuts, trail mix and a variety of baked chips are also available.

You may deposit canteen money to your camper's account online prior to your camper's arrival

- Access your Parent Account
- Click on the View Accounts section
- Select your camper and click "Fund"
- Enter in an amount and your credit card information, click "Fund Account"

We recommend a \$40 deposit for snacks/drinks and camp tshirt or souvenir. For campers staying over the weekend, we recommend an \$90 deposit.

For safekeeping, please DO NOT allow campers to keep money in the cabin.

Canteen refund information:

A canteen summary of your camper's account will be made available to you at check-out on Friday. Three options are available for any remaining funds in your camper's account on Friday:

- Donate remaining funds to provide camp scholarships for children of military families
- Spend the remaining funds
- Receive a cash refund if \$25.00 or less. For refunds over \$25.00 a refund check will be issued within 3 weeks of check out day.

If you do not check out at the canteen on Friday, we will automatically designate any remaining funds to scholarships for children of military families.

## CHRISTIAN EMPHASIS & CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT

It is our desire to positively influence the character of each camper we serve. We accomplish this by carefully weaving the YMCA core values of Caring, Respect, Honesty, Respect and Faith throughout our programs as well as large and small group discussions. Living in a cabin with 12 other people for the week and participating with friends at activities gives campers the opportunity to exercise these core values every day. It is our hope that campers will take these life skills with them as they return to their home, school and community relationships.

The core values we share are based on Christian principles. While we are committed to our foundation, we absolutely respect and welcome children of ALL faiths.

Our Christian emphasis is shared through morning chapel, blessings at meals, taps talks, and cabin devotions each evening. We also hold a Body, Mind, Spirit ceremony each week in which we share with our campers the importance of each of these important areas for every individual.

## EVALUATIONS - CAMPER and PARENT

Parents receive a survey request from us at the end of your camper's week. We truly value your feedback, and ask that you respond to this survey we can better serve our camp families. Campers will also participate in surveys during their stay at camp. This feedback helps us continuously improve & ensure that our campers have the best experience.

## HOMESICKNESS - PREPARING FOR CAMP

Preparing for the camp experience is often something that is overlooked or misunderstood. However, if we plan and discuss the camp experience with our children, it can help create a powerful set of first camp memories.

We recommend that parents read *The Summer Camp Handbook* by Dr. Chris Thurber. This is the premier preparatory resource for all families looking to maximize the quality of the camp experience. Another great book is *Homesick and Happy* by Michael G. Thompson Ph.D.. [michaelthompson-phd.com/books/homesick-and-happy/](http://michaelthompson-phd.com/books/homesick-and-happy/)

## HOMESICKNESS AT CAMP

On occasion, some campers may experience homesickness. We explain to our campers that everyone at camp experiences some level of homesickness, even our staff. During the week, campers and staff quickly become a family for the week and most homesickness is resolved within a day or two. If your camper experiences a higher level of homesickness and is having unusual difficulty working through it, we will give you a call to inform you of your camper's progress and seek your advice moving forward. Historically, out of the 1200+ campers we serve, less than 1 camper per summer is unable to work through this very normal emotion of homesickness.

We would ask that you please not tell your child you will come and pick them up if they "don't like it". If your child is experiencing homesickness on Sunday night, they most often will take you up on your offer. At that point we will ask you to keep your promise. This comes at the expense of giving your child the opportunity to work through his/her homesickness and experience the sense of accomplishment in overcoming it.

## LAUNDRY

Please make sure campers have enough clothing for their one or two week stay. We do not typically offer laundry service, but we will check in with our two-week campers at the end of the first week to be sure their clothes, bedding, and towels are still good.

## LOST AND FOUND

We do everything we can to help your camper keep track of their belongings. Please label your camper's belongings. As stated on our application parent agreement, YMCA Camp Carson is not responsible for articles of clothing or personal belongings damaged or missing in transit, loss or theft.

## MEALS, SPECIAL DIETS and FOOD ALLERGIES

All meals are served family style and campers eat together with their cabin group. In keeping with the YMCA's area of focus - Healthy Living, YMCA Camp Carson strives to provide plenty of balanced healthy meal options for our campers. Breakfast always offers a hot entree as well as a cereal, fruit and yogurt bar. A salad bar is also offered at each lunch and dinner meal. A variety of fresh fruit and milk is available to campers throughout the day. For those who may need a PBJ, we have Sun Butter and jelly available.

**Special Diets:** If your child has dietary restrictions or food allergies, please clearly document your camper's needs in the Health History Form. Adjustments can be made for special medical diets such as gluten and other allergies. Our staff will make your camper aware of food offerings that contain your camper's allergens. Menus for your camper's week can be provided to you prior to camp. If necessary, you may also bring alternative safe foods for your camper which our kitchen personnel can easily prepare and make available for your camper at meal times.

## PAYMENTS, CANCELLATIONS & REFUNDS

A non-refundable registration fee of \$75 per session is required at registration and is applied to the total tuition fee. The remaining balance is due by May 15th. Registrations received after May 15 should include the entire camp fee.

**REFUND POLICY:** If YMCA Camp Carson receives WRITTEN NOTIFICATION of cancellation two weeks prior to my child's session date or with a doctor approved medical reason, I will receive a full refund less my \$75 registration fee. After this date the fees are non-refundable, unless a camper from the waitlist can accept the space.

## SWIM TEST

To become a band swimmer, campers must be able to swim 25 yards with their head out of the water and no doggie paddling. Campers must also tread water for 30 seconds. Some campers struggle to pass the swim test on Opening Day due to first day jitters. Campers can take the swim test each day, but for the safety of campers, we absolutely will not pass a camper until they are able to demonstrate swimming ability per these swim test details.

Some waterfront activities are limited for campers who are not able to pass the swim test. Waterfront staff work with campers who do not pass the swim test to help them increase their swimming skills.

## WEATHER - SEVERE WEATHER PROCEDURES

Camp carries on through the rain, however, if lightning is present, campers are restricted to covered areas. In the event of a tornado warning, all campers and staff move to the basement of the Dining Hall for safety.

## CAMP PHOTOS

It's always exciting to see your kid enjoying YMCA Camp Carson, and we take thousands of pictures throughout the week. You will receive information at check-in with a link to register with our web photo provider, so you'll have access to new photos every day.

**PLEASE NOTE:** By making application, it is understood that permission is given to use pictures in which your child as a camper may appear in the Camp brochure, website or other promotional literature/posters used by the camp, YMCA of Southwestern Indiana Inc., American Camp Association, YMCA of the USA, or other camp affiliates.

## Check-in and Check-out information

### CHECK-IN: Sundays, 1:00 - 2:30 pm CST

Please note, the Sunday afternoon check-in process at camp will be an express drop off, an email with detailed instructions will be sent to families in advance. Please be sure all of your forms are submitted, and fees paid in full prior to arrival.

### CANTEEN DEPOSITS

Can be made online prior to your arrival at camp, through your Parent Account. Please DO NOT allow campers to keep money in the cabin. (More Canteen information on P. 9)

### CAMPER HEALTH

- Please refer to the Covid-19 tab of our website, for the most up-to-date information specific to Covid-19.
- Our expectation on Opening Day is that all campers arrive in a healthy condition. If your child has a fever or is experiencing nausea or unusual pain, please delay his/her arrival time until 48 hours after illness has abated and there is no elevated temperature. Contagious diseases spread quickly in the camp setting.
- If your child has had head lice or has been exposed through a friend or family member, please have a nurse or physician carefully check your child's scalp before opening day. The presence of head lice should be treated and then rechecked before coming to camp. Please also ask the camp nurse to check your camper's scalp prior to your departure.
- In order to minimize external ear infections, swimmer's ear drops are administered prophylactically after each visit to the swim lake.
- Parents are promptly notified by phone by our Health Center staff whenever their camper is staying overnight in the Health Center.

### CAMPER MEDICATIONS

- ALL medications must be given to the nurse on opening day at check-in.
- Prescription drugs must be in the original container with current dosage clearly stated on the container.
- If your camper requires any non-prescription drugs such as Zyrtec etc., these medications should also be in the original container in order to provide the camp nurse with all the appropriate medication information. The Health Center is stocked with basic Tylenol and Ibuprofen etc. so it is not necessary to bring these to camp.
- Keeping ALL medications out of the cabin helps ensure the safety of all campers. All unused medications will be placed in your camper's luggage on closing day.

### DROP OFF CAMPER MAIL DURING CHECK IN

Everyone loves to receive mail! Sending mail by postal service can be slow. Please send your camper cheerful letters or a couple of cards, and leave them with us on Check-In Day. Just write on the envelope the camper's name, cabin name, day you want us to deliver it, and we'll deliver to your camper during lunch on that day.

### CHECK-OUT: Fridays, 4:30 – 6:00 pm CST

Please note, the Friday evening pick-up process will be an express pick-up similar to drop off. More details will be shared with families prior to camp via email.

### WRANGLER HORSE SHOW

Wrangler parents, we will contact you directly regarding a possible horse show, prior to arriving at camp.

### PHOTO ID IS REQUIRED

The counselor will check your photo ID as part of the check-out process.

### PERMISSION TO LEAVE CAMP FORM

For the safety of our campers, counselors can ONLY release campers to adults listed on the Permission to Leave Camp Closing Day form. You may log into your parent account to review this form & confirm the adults listed. If you need to make changes, please call the camp office at 812-385-3597.

### EARLY CHECK OUT PROCEDURE

The camper experience is designed for the entire week and is intentionally programmed through a progression of relationship building, challenges, personal reflection, and growth. When a camper leaves early, part of the overall experience is lost.

However, we understand some early dismissals cannot be avoided. If you need to pick your child up during camp or early on closing day, please send an email to [carsonoffice@ymcacampcarson.org](mailto:carsonoffice@ymcacampcarson.org). It is best if we receive this email prior to check in day. If something comes up after your child is at camp, please call the camp office and follow up with an email.

### ON THE RIDE HOME

We have crafted a few open ended questions as conversation starters with your child on the car ride home, for you to better understand their experience and learn more about their week:

- What are the things you are most proud of this week?
- I noticed camp has a motto, ACE – Accepted, Challenged and Empowered! Can you tell me about that?
- Tell me about your cabin mates, counselors and cabin group activities.
- What are some goals you set for yourself?
- I saw a photo of you doing \_\_\_\_\_. Tell me about that.