



# GET YOUR CAMP ON!

YMCA Overnight Camps Parent Handbook

YMCA OF ORANGE COUNTY  
[ymcaoc.org/camps](http://ymcaoc.org/camps)



UNPLUG. EXPLORE. CONNECT.

## Hello Overnight Resident Camp Families,

Thank you for choosing the YMCA of Orange County for your summer camp experience.

Ever since the YMCA came to America over 165 years ago, camping has been a strong tradition and cornerstone of the YMCA work we do to fulfill our mission. The YMCA of Orange County strives to continue this fine tradition.

This guide is designed to provide you with details and information you and your child will need to prepare for camp.

Additionally, it is a helpful tool for parents/guardians who have questions or concerns about your child's overnight resident camp experience. We encourage you to visit our website as well for more helpful information.

The YMCA has a long history of providing safe, fun and memorable Camp experiences to youth and families at two fantastic locations, Camp E.L.K. located near Wrightwood, CA and Camp Oakes located near Big Bear Lake, CA. Both locations have a long history and commitment to serving youth and to get people connected with nature and each other.

Both Camp E.L.K. and Camp Oakes are accredited by the American Camp Association (ACA). ACA camps meet over 300 standards for health, safety, staff qualifications and training, and program quality. It is our intention to return your child to you full of self-esteem, new skills, new friends, and a wealth of memories to share and treasure!

Everyone at the YMCA of Orange County is looking forward to welcoming your child into our Camp family and enriching lives through the summer camp experience.

Sincerely,

**The Camping Services Team**

YMCA of Orange County

## YMCA of Orange County

### Our Vision

To improve lives and strengthen character through youth development, healthy living and social responsibility driven by passionate staff and volunteers. At the Y, strengthening community is our cause.

### Our Values

Caring, Honesty, Respect, and Responsibility – Our values are celebrated by staff and members and provide a positive foundation for all Y programs and a healthy connection with others.

### Our Impact

Strengthening the foundation of communities.

### Our Commitment

The Y is a nonprofit charity that serves the entire community. Donations support our scholarship program and our commitment to keep programs open for all.

## Resident Camp Goals & Philosophy

Overnight resident camp is a place where kids can unplug and connect with themselves and others.

We believe every camper should have the opportunities to:

- Participate actively in a community in which they are accepted for who they are
- Receive guidance and support in setting and achieving new goals
- Learn new skills
- Increase self-awareness, self-confidence, self-reliance and self-esteem
- Expand their sense of responsibility for the shared experiences of the community
- Develop healthy, supportive relationships with peers and mentors
- Explore and appreciate nature in a beautiful outdoor setting
- Respect the rights and dignity of all campers and staff

Camp provides a positive atmosphere of safety, support, and care for all participants and support the personal growth and development of each camper. Our camping programs utilize the resources of the natural environment to provide campers with recreational, creative, and educational experiences that build spirit, mind, and body. Campers develop friendships, form memories, and acquire skills that will be with them throughout their lifetime.

## Camp Information

YMCA Camp E.L.K. is located in the heart of the beautiful Angeles National Forest in California's San Gabriel Mountains near Mountain High Ski Resort. Camp E.L.K. sits at an elevation of 5750 feet and is approximately 15 minutes from Wrightwood, CA.

YMCA Camp Oakes is located in the San Bernardino Mountains off Highway 38 near Onyx Summit. The camp sits at an elevation of 7200 feet and is approximately 15 minutes from Big Bear Lake, CA.

## American Camping Association

Both Camp E.L.K. and Camp Oakes are accredited by the American Camp Association. ACA camps meet over 300 standards for health, safety, staff, and program quality to ensure the best camper outcomes. We encourage you to visit their website [www.acacamps.org](http://www.acacamps.org) for camp resources and information.

## Registration

Spaces at camp are limited and are available on a first come, first served basis. At the time of registration a non-refundable deposit is required to secure your child's space. Final payments are due 30 days prior to the start of the camp session along with submitting a completed registration packet for each camper. Payments can be made online, by mail, via phone, or at local Y branch locations. Registration packets can be mailed, emailed, or dropped off at local YMCA of Orange County branch locations. One of the registration requirements is that each participant must have physical exam conducted by a licensed healthcare professional, so please plan ahead. Refund/cancellation requests are taken on a case by case basis after the final payment deadline.

## Financial Assistance

Qualifying families unable to pay the full cost of participation are encouraged to apply for YMCA Financial Assistance made available through generous contribution made to the YMCA of Orange County. Please contact the Camp Director for more information and eligibility requirements.

## Camp Staff

Camp Counselors and other Camp Staff are hired for their experience, related education, enthusiasm and expertise in working with school-age children in a camping environment. Your child will be supervised 24 hours a day by friendly, warm, and thoughtful adult role models, whether that is their cabin counselor, a program staff member, or a camp director. All staff and volunteers are 18 years of age or older and undergo extensive training, background checks, and clearance through the CA Department of Justice and FBI. All staff members have American Red Cross First Aid and CPR training. All program areas are supervised by staff members and specialized activities such as pool, waterfront, archery, ropes course, rock wall, etc. are facilitated by staff with specific certifications in these areas.

## Camp Activities

The Camp schedule is fully programmed everyday with both group and individual experiences. Campers will participate in multiple program activities each day, such as archery, rock climbing, and arts and crafts, as well as morning inspiration, twilight/evening activities, campfires and other special events.

The following are some of the activities that may be included depending on the specific session and camp location attended:

Camp E.L.K. activities may include: recreational swim, archery, low ropes (teambuilding), rock wall, arts & crafts, nature/outdoor science, hikes, organized sports (Gaga Ball, basketball, Frisbee golf, volleyball, etc.), outdoor living skills, music, drama/theater, astronomy/stargazing, etc. Outside of program time, the daily schedule will include themed meals, all camp activities, campfires, character development programs (Morning Inspiration, Rags & Leathers), and so much more!

Camp Oakes activities may include: recreational swim, mine chute slides, low ropes (team building), zip line (age and weight restrictions apply), archery, BB guns, slingshots, climbing sports, arts and crafts, fishing, canoeing, astronomy, etc. Outside of program time, the daily schedule will include themed meals, all-camp activities, campfires, character development programs (Morning Inspiration, Rags & Leathers), and so much more!

## Camp Life

On arrival day campers are placed into cabin groups that they will spend the majority of their time with at camp. Our ratio of campers to staff is based on the suggested staffing ratios from ACA. Campers are grouped by age and gender. At camp our goal is to encourage new friendships. If you would like to request that your child is housed with another camper it must, 1) be stated in your registration packet prior to arrival, 2) be requested by the other camper, and 3) the campers must be of the same gender and age. We do not take cabin number or counselor requests.

Camp is fully programmed all day with the exception of rest period for one hour each afternoon. This is an opportunity for campers to be on their bunks resting, reading, writing, playing quiet games, etc. Campers are encouraged to bring materials for this time, especially letters and stamps for writing home.

Being away from home will provide your child a chance to be independent and take charge of their personal care. We will remind and encourage normal routines (i.e. brushing teeth). If there are special situations or concerns we should know about, please be sure to include them in your registration packet.

Each day breakfast, lunch and dinner will be provided. We serve nutritious food that campers like to eat. Meals are served buffet style so children have choices. Each lunch/dinner includes a salad bar. Milk or juice and water are provided at each meal. Our staff will try to accommodate most dietary needs, with prior communication in the registration packet, giving us plenty of time to meet the needs before arrival. Food cannot be kept in the cabins because it attracts insects, rodents and other campers. Please do not send snacks, candy or gum with your camper!

Here is a sample schedule of a typical day at Camp:

7:00am	Wakeup
7:30am	Morning Inspiration: Word of the Day – Respect
8:00am	Flagpole Assembly *Announcements
8:15am	Breakfast
9:00am	Cabin Clean Up! *Try to win the Cleanest Cabin Mop
9:30am	Activity Rotation
10:45am	Activity Rotation
12:15pm	Flag Pole Assembly *Time to share your cabin cheer!
12:30pm	Lunch
1:15pm	Rest Period
2:15pm	Activity Rotation
3:45pm	Activity Rotation
5:00pm	Get ready for Dinner *Be sure to wash your hands!
5:15pm	Flag Pole Assembly * MAIL CALL!
5:30pm	Dinner
6:30pm	All Camp Twilight Game: Dinosaur Egg Hunt!
7:45pm	CaaaammppppFIRE!
9:00pm	Return to Cabins *Get ready for bed
9:30pm	Cabin Devotions *Time to bond as a cabin and debrief the day.
10:00pm	Lights out

## Inclusion for All Children

The YMCA of Orange County welcomes all children. To the extent it is reasonably able to do so; the YMCA will provide services to children with disabilities or special needs in the same manner as comparable age. However, we are unable to provide one-to-one care for any child except on an intermittent basis. Additionally, families must keep in mind the open natural environment, natural hazards, camper independence, personal care routines, and recreational activities associated with resident camping when deciding if the program is a good fit.

It is important that families start working with the camp director during the enrollment process on any special needs children might have. Each camper's needs are taken on a case-by-case basis to provide the best service and determine if the program is right for your child. We can also refer families to Y-Inclusion and can consider a family sponsored aide if they meet our hiring standards.

## Camp Behavior Policy

The camp staff are highly trained in providing quality care for our campers and will try several methods to correct undesired behavior (i.e. redirection, cool down period, etc.). If a situation arises where a camper threatens the safety or security of another camper or shows a complete disregard of camp community rules, the child may be dismissed at the discretion of the camp director. Parents/guardians will be responsible for any costs associated with the camper's dismissal for behavioral reasons. If a camper is removed from camp for behavioral reasons, no refund will be given for any portion of the camp session. Parents/guardians are responsible for picking up their camper from the camp location, including expenses to do so should it become necessary to send a camper home.

## Homesickness

The camp staff is trained to detect early symptoms of homesickness and approach it with caring and supportive methods. It is common for a few campers to experience this at the beginning of the week. If you have questions about your child's progress at camp, you may call the camp director but remember campers are the priority and it may take some time to get back to you.

Parents/guardians can help minimize homesickness by playing an important role in preparing their child for camp. First and most important, show your excitement for your child to attend camp! Keep them focused on the positive, all the new things they will learn and do. Second, keep your child informed about what to expect at camp. Go over important items in this guide, packing lists, etc. Finally, send your child letters before they leave so it will be waiting for them at camp when they arrive.

## Medical Information

Camp is well prepared for medical situations. We have necessary supplies (i.e. first aid supplies, AED) and extensive staff training in this area. All staff at camp are American Red Cross First Aid and CPR certified and our health center supervisor is always on site and readily available in our health center. Due to the nature of our outdoor activities, scrapes and bruises are bound to happen. If we feel a phone call home is necessary, we will make this a priority. If your child becomes ill at camp you may be contacted to come and pick them up as our health center is not equipped to take care of ill children for a long period of

time. If an attempt to contact you has been made with no response, an attempt to contact those on the emergency contact form will be the next step, and if still no response, emergency medical personnel will be contacted, followed by the police. If a trip to the hospital or medical clinic becomes necessary, two staff members will accompany your child and our camp director will contact parents/guardians immediately.

**Medical Exam:** Your child must have a medical examination performed within 24 months of arriving at camp as part of your registration packet. If your child has had an exam already falling within the 24 months before camp, you may attach a copy of that medical examination and fill in the results on the child's medical form. Please attach a note and signature from your child's doctor or signed health passport.

**COVID-19 Related Operating Procedures:** On the day of departure, each camper and staff must provide a negative at home or lab antigen test (AKA rapid test) administered and dated within 24 hours of camp departure. A lab provided print out, the physical at home test strip, or a time stamped photo of the at home test strip will be accepted as proof of testing. Any camper or staff who has tested positive for COVID-19 within 90 days prior to camp departure may provide a doctors clearance stating that their contagion/quarantine period has ended instead of a negative test if they choose. Any camper or staff who cannot provide one of these options will not be allowed to attend camp. At this time, those who have been vaccinated are NOT excluded from the testing requirement. All campers will be asked COVID related screening questions including a temperature check. \*Procedures/requirements are subject to change. To find testing locations, visit <https://testing.covid19.ca.gov/>.

**Medications:** Do not pack any medications in your child's luggage. This includes vitamins and over-the-counter medications. Give medications to health center/camp staff at check-in on departure day. All medications must be in the original packaging (bottles, blister packs, etc.) with the name of the camper clearly labeled. This is because our health center supervisor is only legally permitted to dispense medications in their original containers. Do not send any unlabeled medications with your child. All dosages and indications must match the prescription. If your child's dosage of a particular medication is different from that which is indicated on the bottle/package you must get the prescription changed by your doctor prior to attending camp. You must send enough medication to last the entire camp session plus an additional two day supply in case of emergency or unforeseen extended stay at camp.

**Arrival Day Health Check:** Part of the check in process on departure day will be a health check by our staff team. You and your child will be asked various questions about current health conditions, recent illness, and will be checked for observable signs of injury. We will check for lice. Any camper with lice or nits will not be permitted to attend camp. Please check your child in advance to ensure they can attend camp. We may also ask if there have been any recent incidents of bed bugs in the home and measures taken to eliminate any bed bug issues.

## Child Abuse Prevention

The Y maintains a policy of Child Abuse Prevention practices, which include procedures related to employee hiring, staff training, relationships with children, and camp visitors. Additionally, we must comply with Section III66 of the Penal Code that requires us to report known or suspected instances of child abuse to a protective agency. This would include emotional abuse, physical abuse, sexual abuse, and neglect within or outside of camp.

## Packing List

Gathering and packing the proper clothing and equipment are important parts of your child's camp experience; be sure to involve your child in the packing process. This also makes it more likely that everything that goes to camp will come home again! Make sure to label EVERYTHING your child brings to camp with their name. NOTE: The YMCA is not responsible for camper's lost or stolen personal belongings. Do not bring valuables.

The packing list included in this handbook is the best place to find a good printable list of items to bring. When packing please keep in mind that children will be in the great outdoors for 100% of their week. Pack clothing that can get dirty, protect children from sun with hats and sunscreen, provide layers for a variety of weather, and ensure that closed toe shoes are worn. Flip flops, sandals or any other type of shoe that does not completely cover the entire foot are not allowed at camp (except on the pool deck and in the shower, closed toe shoes must still be worn to and from the pool or showers).

**Leave at home:** The following items must not be brought to camp and will be taken from campers until departure day: money, any form of technology (i.e. **cell phone**, laptop, hand held games, speakers, tablets), hair styling tools (i.e. blow dryers, curling irons), food, candy, gum, dangerous items (i.e. matches, knives, weapons), illegal items (i.e. drugs, alcohol, fireworks), toys, personal sports equipment and animals.

## Lost & Found

Upon arrival at home if you find that your camper has forgotten items; we can make arrangements for you to pick them up at camp or at the YMCA association office in Tustin. We will only hold items for pickup for 10 days after your child's camp session has ended.

## Arrival Day/Drop Off Day

Full details will be distributed at least two weeks prior to the camp session dates including times and locations for drop off and pick up of your child.

Transportation to and from camp is included in the registration fee. On arrival/drop off day to camp, families will visit three stations prior to boarding the bus: camp nurse, health check, and registration. Medications will be submitted first to the camp nurse, so do not pack them. All campers must visit the nurse regardless if they have medications. The nurse will be reviewing other items with families like allergies, dietary needs, emergency protocols, etc. An overall health check by staff will be completed, including lice check. Finally, a review of payment and registration paperwork will be completed and campers will be signed in by a parent/guardian. Campers will then load their luggage and board the bus with their cabin.

Families should not leave until their camper has been signed in with their counselor.

**FOR CAMP ELK: PLEASE MAKE SURE YOUR CAMPER EATS LUNCH BEFORE CHECKING IN**, we will not be stopping for lunch and dinner will be served at 5:30pm at Camp.

**FOR CAMP OAKES: PLEASE MAKE SURE YOUR CAMPER EATS BREAKFAST BEFORE CHECK IN** and **BRINGS A SACK LUNCH**, we will not be stopping for lunch and the first meal served at camp will be dinner at 5:30pm.

Please note that luggage is limited to two bags plus a sleeping bag and pillow. Please put your child's name on all luggage and personal belongings going to camp including sleeping bag and pillow.

The bus will not wait for any campers or last minute items. If a camper misses the bus, the parent/guardian will be responsible for transporting the child to camp and the costs incurred.



## Departure Day/Return Day

When the buses have departed from camp, families will receive an email. No other communication will be given unless there is a significant delay in timing.

In order to pick up your child from the departure/return day locations you must be listed on the authorized release form and bring a valid, government issued photo ID with you to be able to sign for release. Anyone without proper authorization or identification will not be allowed to sign-out a camper. In case of emergency, a parent/guardian may give temporary permission for a child to be picked up in the registration packet or in writing. At the time of sign-out, medication will be returned.

**Special Instructions/Notes:** 30 minutes after arrival if a child has not been picked up phone calls will start to emergency contacts and a late pick up fee of \$25 will occur. 1 hour after arrival the local authorities will be contacted if a child has not been picked up. In the event of emergency, you may call the camp director.

For up to the minute updates on bus whereabouts check our Facebook page.

**Your patience is greatly appreciated during bus travel. We will do our best to communicate any changes in the schedule caused by unforeseen circumstances.**

## Emergencies

Camp is well prepared for emergencies. We work closely with local emergency management officials (i.e. Fire Department, Sheriff's Department and Forest Service) and have emergency plans in place. The camp staff receives training on emergency situations and conducts emergency drills on a weekly basis during the summer camp season to familiarize all participants with the proper procedures and actions (i.e. evacuation, shelter in place) to be taken in the event of an emergency. Depending on the situation and in the unlikely event of an emergency, parents/guardians will be contacted and provided with the latest updated information available.

## Family Communication

During the week, we strongly encourage parents to like and follow our Facebook page where we will do our best to give daily updates with all the exciting things going on at camp!

Our Facebook page is where we will let you know when campers arrive to camp and when campers have departed camp on the last day.

To help each camper experience the rewards of a successful, independent stay at camp, we believe it is best to limit telephone contact from home. Telephone calls with your child are only permitted under emergency circumstances. You can, however, call the camp and speak to a staff member who can provide you with information about your child. Please keep in mind that camp operations are our first priority, so allow time to return your call.

For the same reason we do not allow visitors up to camp. Visits to camp can be disruptive and counterproductive, especially for campers prone to homesickness. Please refrain from stopping by and instead phone the camp for an update on your child's progress. Again, please keep in mind that camp operations are our first priority, so allow time to return your call.

We encourage campers to write home, so feel free to send your child with paper, pre-addressed envelopes or postcards and stamps in their bag.

## Camper Communication

Everyone likes to receive letters and postcards, so please write! Make sure you clearly indicate your campers name and cabin number (if you know it). Please try to mail 3-5 days prior to start of camp. See below for mailing addresses. On the last day of camp we allow campers to exchange contact information with each other if they would like to stay in contact after camp. However, please know that we do not permit staff to have contact with campers outside of camp or YMCA approved functions. Our staff works with your child in the context of a visible, well scrutinized community that has many built-in checks and balances. Since we are unable to monitor activities outside of camp, it is our policy that there is no camper-staff contact outside of camp.

### Camp E.L.K. mailing information:

#### For delivery via USPS

YMCA Camp E.L.K.  
(Your child's name and session dates)  
P.O. Box 2828  
Wrightwood, CA 92397

#### For delivery via UPS/FEDEX

YMCA Camp E.L.K.  
(Your child's name and session dates)  
21280 Big Pines Hwy.  
Wrightwood, CA 92397

### Camp Oakes mailing information:

#### For delivery via USPS

YMCA Camp Oakes  
Attn: Y of OC, Camper Name, Cabin #  
P.O. Box 452  
Big Bear City, CA 92314

#### For delivery via UPS/FEDEX

YMCA Camp Oakes  
Attn: Y of OC, Camper Name, Cabin #  
47400 Monte Vista Dr.  
Big Bear City, CA 92314

## Camp Contact Information

Camp E.L.K. Contact Information:

Please direct all inquiries regarding registration, payment, and financial assistance along with any questions about your camper's progress or activities to:

Jim Emery

Camp Director

[campelk@ymcaoc.org](mailto:campelk@ymcaoc.org)

(760) 249-3822

Or

Camp Oakes Contact Information:

Please direct all inquiries regarding registration, payment, and financial assistance along with any questions about your camper's progress or activities to:

Andie Prabhu

Camp Director

[aprabhu@ymcaoc.org](mailto:aprabhu@ymcaoc.org)

(714) 508-7671

During the camp session, you may also contact the Camp Oakes office at (909) 585-2020 or the Camp Director's cellphone at (949) 702-3663.

## Facebook Pages

Be sure to "Like" and "Follow" our Facebook pages!

You can find us on Facebook at the following:

YMCA Camp E.L.K.: [www.facebook.com/campelk](http://www.facebook.com/campelk)

YMCA OC Camp Oakes: [www.facebook.com/ymcaoccampoakes](http://www.facebook.com/ymcaoccampoakes)

## Website

You can find more useful information on our website: [www.ymcaoc.org/orange-county-camps/](http://www.ymcaoc.org/orange-county-camps/)

## Overnight Summer Camp Packing List

### Clothing:

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Underwear (8)                              | <input type="checkbox"/> Hat  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Socks (8)                                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Bathing suit   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> T-shirts (8)                               | <input type="checkbox"/> Pajamas  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Long-sleeve shirts (3)                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Sneakers (2 pairs) Shoes must cover entire foot.<br>(No open toes or backs on footwear/shoes.) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Shorts (4-5)                               | <input type="checkbox"/> Flip flops (for showers and pool time only)  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Long pants (2-3)                           | <input type="checkbox"/> Laundry bag  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Jacket or sweatshirt (1-2)                 |   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Face masks/coverings (7-8) <i>optional</i> |   |

### Bedding:

- Sleeping bag
- Pillow & pillowcase

### Toiletries:

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Towels (2 – Shower & Pool) | <input type="checkbox"/> Soap                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Comb/brush                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Toothbrush/toothpaste |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Deodorant                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Glasses/contacts      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lip Balm                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Sunscreen             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Shampoo/conditioner        | <input type="checkbox"/> Reusable water bottle |

### Optional:

- Cabin decorations
- Dress up attire for theme meals
- Raincoat/poncho
- Fitted twin sheet
- Extra blanket
- Washcloth/hand towel
- Feminine products
- Camera (cellphones should be left at home, disposable or small digital is best)
- Flashlight
- Sunglasses
- Pencils & notebook
- Reading book
- Stationary & stamps
- Stuffed animal
- Day backpack
- Rags/leathers









## OUR FOUNDATION

### Our Mission

To put Christian principles into practice through programs that build healthy spirit, mind, and body for all.

### Our Vision

To improve lives and strengthen character through youth development, healthy living and social responsibility driven by passionate staff and volunteers.

### Our Values

Caring, Honesty, Respect, and Responsibility – Our values are celebrated by staff and members and provide a positive foundation for all Y programs and a healthy connection with others.

### Our Cause

Strengthening the foundation of communities.

### Our Commitment

The Y is a nonprofit charity that serves the entire community. Donations support our scholarship program and our commitment to keep programs open for all.

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