



Day Camp 2026

Parent/Guardian and Caregiver Handbook

Day Camp Information for Parents/Guardians and Caregiver

Thank you for choosing the Chicago Park District as the place where your child will spend six active weeks having fun, making friends and engaging in nature, sports, arts, fitness a providing affordable and dynamic programming with inclusive and varied activities. We look forward to making this a positive and memorable summer for your children!

Please take time to review the following guidelines and to discuss the policies with your child. During your parent/guardian and caregiver orientation, you will receive additional camp-specific information. This year, we updated the Day Camp General FAQs- at the end of this handbook-to provide you with answers to a few of the most popular summer camp-related questions.

Campers will have a jam-packed summer filled with brain boosting activities, nature exploration, sports, fitness and arts. Our diverse program ensures every child has the opportunity to Create, have Adventures, participate in Movement, and of course Play. Wellness is always a key component of our summer camp, and all campers will receive a free healthy snack and lunch each day.

Summer Camp Philosophy

Our goal is to provide fun, safe and appropriate activities for children, whether your child is a first-time camper or a veteran.

Camp Staff

On-site supervision is the responsibility of the Day Camp Director at each location. All day camp staff complete an extensive training program, which includes safety and awareness, activity development, and group management techniques.

Participant Information

You must notify the Chicago Park District in writing, of any medical condition, disability or other situation requiring special consideration by the Chicago Park District staff; this information should also be listed in your Chicago Park District online account. We want to make your child's camp experience successful and satisfying and we will make every effort to accommodate your situation.

If your child is going to carry an Epi-Pen auto injector for severe allergies, a doctor's authorization form (Parent/Guardian Authorization for Emergency Care of Child with Severe Allergies) must be filled out and turned into Park Supervisor before the first day of camp. This requirement applies to every Chicago Park District location where your child is enrolled. The doctor's authorization form (Parent/Guardian Authorization for Emergency Care of Child with Severe Allergies) immediately follows this section. Failure to submit this completed form prior to the first day of camp, can result in the delaying participation. Confidentiality and all HIPAA laws are respected.

Children ages eight (8) and older are expected to understand their allergies and be aware of how to use self-administer their prescribed emergency medication. Medication must remain with the child at all times. Parents/Guardians should inform the staff overseeing the child's group each day of the medication's location. Staff will not hold or store medication, as doing so may delay necessary care.

For children ages seven (7) and under, parents/guardians must reach out to Park Supervisor to request a reasonable accommodation. Auto injectors/Epi-Pens may not be stored at any Chicago Park District facility. Parents/Guardians are responsible for bringing the autoinjector/epi-pens to and from the program each day and for ensuring the autoinjector/epi-pen is in proper condition.

Chicago Park District
Risk Management
(773)947-0715
riskmanagement@chicagoparkdistrict.com



**CHICAGO PARK DISTRICT
PARENT/GUARDIAN AUTHORIZATION FOR
EMERGENCY CARE OF CHILD WITH SEVERE ALLERGIES**

Physician Name: _____

Date: _____

Your patient, _____ ("Enrollee") is enrolled/enrolling in a Chicago Park District program(s). The Enrollee's parent/guardian has requested the Chicago Park District provide certain emergency care for the prevention of anaphylaxis in the event the Enrollee comes into contact with an allergen(s), as described below. Please complete Part I of this instruction record. This record will remain in the Enrollee's file at the Chicago Park District so we may assist with the allergy care and needs of Enrollee. If you need to provide further instructions or clarifications, please do so on a separate sheet of paper (letterhead), which will become a part of this record and will be kept with this form in the Enrollee's file at the Chicago Park District.

*****TO BE COMPLETED BY ENROLLEE'S PHYSICIAN*****

Enrollee's Name: _____ Enrollee's Birth Date: _____

Allergens:

Please provide a complete list of all events and/or substances that may trigger a severe allergic reaction (i.e., anaphylactic shock) in the Enrollee.

Symptoms:

Please provide a complete list of all symptoms that indicate that the Enrollee has come into contact with an allergen and that they require emergency treatment.

Do not administer medication in the absence of known exposure to allergen (Explain):

(please indicate all steps necessary and the order in which they should be taken):

Give Benadryl Elixir. ____ ml orally // Administer Auto-Injector // Call Emergency Medical Services 911

Other (Explain)

Recreational Activities:

The Enrollee may participate in recreational activities:

Yes

No

Activity Restrictions:

None

Some Restrictions (Explain below)

Enrollee's Physician Information:

Name:

Address:

Telephone Number:

Physician Signature: _____ Date: _____

TO BE COMPLETED BY ENROLLEE'S PARENT/GUARDIAN

Enrollee's Parent Information:

Name:

Address:

Telephone Number(s):

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____ Date: _____

PARENT/GUARDIAN MUST PROVIDE A COPY OF THIS SIGNED FORM TO THE PARK SUPERVISOR(S) AT EACH PARK WHERE ENROLLEE IS ATTENDING ACTIVITIES

What to Bring to Camp

It is not recommended that campers bring any items from home. However, some of the traditional items will be permitted: backpack, change of clothes (if needed), water bottle, sunscreen. All items will be confined to one location within the facility or within the designated start space for your child's pod.

Snack/Lunches

All campers will have access to a free snack and lunch for the duration of camp. Lunches from home are not recommended. However, if your child must bring a lunch, they will need to keep their lunch in an assigned bin-which cannot be removed until it is time to eat. Only the child should handle their lunch.

Field Trips

Some day camps may participate in field trips. These trips are carefully planned to enhance the camp curriculum. All costs have been included in your child's camp fee. For supervision purposes, your child must wear their camp T-shirt on trip days. The "buddy system" will be in effect while on trips. Discuss with your child the importance of staying with their "buddy" at all times while on a trip. Children may bring spending money on field trip days only, provided they are responsible for their own money. Camp staff cannot be responsible for securing a child's spending money. To determine the appropriate amount of spending money your child should bring on field trips, please discuss with the Day Camp Director.

Children should arrive promptly on field trip days. The Chicago Park District is unable to provide alternate transportation in the event your child misses the bus. Children may NOT be dropped off or picked up from a field trip location. While traveling on the bus, children will be expected to follow the general safety rules as passengers. In the case of inclement weather, a trip destination may be changed or cancelled.

Swimming

Proper behavior will be insisted upon while visiting the pool. Campers must abide by the local camp pool rules. Please discuss the following general rules with your child prior to their first visit to the pool.

1. Obey all pool safety rules and follow lifeguards' instructions.
2. No running permitted.
3. Street clothes and shoes are not permitted in the pool area.
4. No flotation devices or rafts brought from home will be allowed at any time.
5. Campers who behave in an unsafe manner may be subject to expulsion from the pool.

Medical/Emergency Policies

The Chicago Park District strives to provide a safe and healthy environment for your child/children. In the event of an emergency, the staff will adhere to the following procedures:

1. Park staff will call 911 for medical professionals to handle all serious accidents/episodes/illnesses.
2. A call will be made to the parent/guardian to inform you of the situation. If a parent/guardian is not available, the staff will call the first and second emergency contacts listed, which may include another caregiver, in the online account information. Be sure those contacts are up to date.

Nutrition Services

The Chicago Park District's Wellness Unit provides nutritious meals – lunches and snacks – districtwide for youth and teens under the age of 18 through the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP), which is administered by the Illinois Board of Education (ISBE) and the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). This grant funded program aims to improve the diet and health of children and model healthy eating to support lifelong healthy eating choices and patterns. Similar to the role of an active lifestyle, healthy eating is just as critical for healthy aging by improving psychological function, helping maintain a healthy weight, and reducing the risk of developing a host of chronic conditions such as diabetes, heart disease, stroke, and hypertension.

The Chicago Park District, provides families with information to connect residents with trusted organizations that improve food access, support health and wellness, and share updated information on federal nutrition programs. In a city where many households experience food insecurity, access to reliable resources is essential. The guide helps families learn about available meal programs, supplemental food assistance, and community-based services that promote healthy living. By offering current information on program regulations and eligibility, the document empowers residents to make informed decisions and access critical support. This effort strengthens community well-being and helps reduce barriers to nutritious food across Chicago neighborhoods.



FOOD ACCESS AND BENEFITS

Illinois Benefit Hub- provides information on benefit eligibility and how to apply



University of Illinois- Extension- Nutrition Education, Recipes, Physical Activity Promotion and Find Food IL (community food map)



Greater Chicago Food Depository - Mission is to end hunger, supports local food pantries, soup kitchens, shelters and programs. Use find food map or learn about support for families



City of Chicago Farmers Market- Chicago Farmers Markets sell fresh seasonal produce, flowers, prepared foods. LINK-up Illinois information



Public Concerns

Immigration

- The Chicago Park District prohibits federal immigration enforcement activity on Chicago Park District property. Any suspected federal immigration activity can be reported to a Chicago Park District employee, who will follow the Chicago Park District's internal protocol, which includes alerting Chicago Park District Public Safety.
- While we do not anticipate increased immigration activity this summer, the Chicago Park District recommends that all parents and guardians update their child's emergency contact information and their back-up emergency contact information in ActiveNet or at their park. You can edit them for yourself and each of your family members by logging into ActiveNet, clicking "Edit" by each name, and then clicking "Contact Information."
- For families who would like additional guidance, we recommend reaching out to the following Know Your Rights Resources:
 - **City of Chicago Resources** | [Available here](#)
 - Resources include Know Your Rights information and city services information
 - **Illinois Immigration Information Hub** | [Available here](#)
 - Includes Know Your Rights resources and legal resources
 - **Illinois Coalition for Immigrant & Refugee Rights** | [Available Here](#)
 - Includes Know Your Rights resources and a Family Support Network and Hotline (and to report suspected ICE activity) – 855.435.7693
 - **National Immigrant Justice Center** | [Available here](#)
 - Includes Legal Resources and Services

Public Health Concerns

Contagious diseases include any illness which may be transmitted from one person to another and will be dealt with quickly to prevent their spreading among the general population. The most common conditions observed among children are:

- Ringworm (Tinea): small worm-like lesions just beneath the skin which spread outwardly
- Head lice (Pediculosis): itchy scalp, most commonly found in hair and base of the neck
- Pink Eye (Conjunctivitis): red coloring of the eye, slight swelling and fluid discharge
- Hand Foot & Mouth (HFM): fever, sore throat, and blisters on the mouth, hands, and feet
- RSV: runny nose, decrease in appetite, coughing, sneezing, fever, and/or wheezing
- Influenza A: runny nose with green discharge, cough, fever, body ache

Also, of concern are:

- Mononucleosis
- Hepatitis
- Meningitis
- Mumps
- COVID-19

If a member of the Chicago Park District staff suspects that a child may have a contagious disease, the child's parent/guardian will be contacted. The child must be picked up immediately and cannot return to camp until a doctor's statement is presented for clearance to return to program per the Chicago Park District's Risk Management department. The Chicago Park District will notify the parents/guardians of other children enrolled in the program. Please know, the name(s) of any child(ren) in these cases will remain confidential. If you suspect that your child has one of the above contagious diseases, please refrain from bringing them to camp and alert the Park Supervisor or Day Camp Director.

COVID-19 and Camp

The Chicago Park District 2026 Summer Camps will continue to be operated in accordance with the recommendations of the City of Chicago Department of Public Health (CDPH) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). For the latest Covid recommendations please visit the CDPH and CDC websites at: <https://www.chicago.gov/city/en/sites/covid-19/home.html> and <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/index.html>.

Illness

If your child is ill or has a fever/vomiting/diarrhea or one of the contagious diseases listed above, please do not send them to camp. Children attending camp must be well enough to participate in all scheduled activities. If for any reason your child will be absent from camp, you must notify us by phone or note. If your child falls ill while at camp, they will be isolated and you will be called to pick them up. If there is no answer, every number on the emergency contact list will be exhausted in order to pick up child. A doctor's note is required to return to camp per the Chicago Park District's Risk Management department.

Release Authorization

For the safety of your child, the following attendance procedures have been established for all campers. Your cooperation in helping us fulfill these procedures is greatly appreciated. When you pick up your child, go to the park's designated pick-up spot, sign the roll sheet and write down the time. The staff will not dismiss a child without a parent/guardian or authorized individual signing the child out for the day.

Parents/guardians may provide authorization for their child to leave camp unescorted at the time of dismissal. When entering your Chicago Park District online account information, or when registering in-person, you may check the appropriate box if you wish for your child to leave the grounds at dismissal time unescorted. Note, however, staff may decline to release a child until an authorized individual arrives if the staff is concerned for the safety or welfare of the child.

Siblings or other relatives aged twelve (12) or older may sign a younger sibling / relative out if they are listed as an authorized individual in the child's ActiveNet account.

Only parents/guardians and other authorized individuals, such as caregivers, listed in the account creation section in your Chicago Park District online account may pick up a camper. **We will not release any child to an unauthorized person for any reason.** Please remember to update your online account preferences as necessary through-out the summer or to revise your account information with our staff at the park if you registered in-person.

Please follow these steps to confirm/update the information on file for your child:

- From the home page (chicagoparkdistrict.com) click on Programs, then Registration Information, then Login to your Account
- Enter your email and password and click Submit
- From the Account Options page, choose Answer/Edit Account Questions within Personal Information section - Questions are divided by Family Member, then by occasion, the question was asked.
- "Account Creation Questions" for each family member must have the most up-to-date information; any other sections may be ignored. - To modify a question's answer, click on the question. Provide the answer on the subsequent page and click Submit. You will be returned to the Customer Questions page.

To confirm a family member's phone number, email address or emergency contact information:

- From Account Options page, choose Change Information about Family members within Personal Information section
- Update necessary information, click Save
- Address and Date of Birth changes must be made in person at a park, with supporting documentation.

If you need assistance updating your preferences, you may also visit our web site for directions by typing in the URL <http://www.chicagoparkdistrict.com/programs/registration-check-list/> Children will not be released to anyone who is visibly incapacitated or intoxicated. In such an event, the emergency contact will be contacted. If a special, one-day circumstance requires someone not listed in the account to pick up your child, a note may be sent PRIOR to dismissal with that person's name and details.

Late Pick-Up/Fee

Any parent/guardian or authorized person who arrives after dismissal time to pick up a child will be charged a late fee of \$5 for every 15 minutes the parent/guardian is late. Prompt payment is required and due by the following morning before your child will be admitted back into camp. A receipt will be issued for all late pick-ups. If a late pick-up becomes an on-going problem, more than twice per week, or a total of three (3) times throughout the summer program, the child will be dismissed from the program with no refund.

Refund Policy

Refunds will only be issued for cancellations requested on or before June 8th (two weeks prior to camp starting). All cancellations are subject to a 15% cancellation fee. Exceptions will be made on a case-by-case basis.

Absences & Early Releases

If your child is going to be absent from day camp for an extended period, or if you wish to have your child dismissed early from day camp, you must send a note to the Camp Director listing the days and times of the absences or early dismissals, as well as a phone number where the Camp Director can reach you.

If a camper leaves the camp without permission, a meeting will be scheduled with the parent/guardian or caregiver to discuss the matter.

Only children ages 10 and older may be authorized by their parent/guardian to sign themselves out of Park District programming prior to program dismissal. Such authorization must be provided in the child's ActiveNet account. If a camper leaves the camp without permission, a meeting will be scheduled with the parent or guardian to discuss the matter. If a camper leaves the park repeatedly without permission, they may be dropped from the program with **no refund of fee**.

Camper Expectations

The purpose of discipline is to help a child develop self-control and learn to assume responsibility for their own actions. Ultimately, rules help create a fun, safe camp environment. We use positive statements and reinforcement to redirect negative behavior. For continued negative behavior, a "time-out" period may be initiated. Consequences will be administered for one or more of the following:

1. A child disturbing or hurting others, verbally or physically.
2. A child damaging equipment or property.
3. A child placing themself or others in a dangerous situation.

In the event that your child is misbehaving, the staff will escort the child away from the situation and discuss the matter with the child. Under no circumstances will corporal punishment be used. Continued misconduct will be handled as follows:

1. **First Notice:** Continued inappropriate behavior will be discussed with the parent/guardian or caregiver and/or a written notice will be forwarded to the parent/guardian(s) to request a meeting with them to discuss the matter. Parental failure to respond may result in indefinite suspension of the camper.
2. **Second Notice:** If a second written notice or meeting is needed due to continual inappropriate behavior by the child, it may result in a 3 to 5-day suspension from the camp.

3. **Third Notice:** Your child may be dropped from the program after a third notice of inappropriate behavior is documented.

Safety of staff and participants is the utmost importance. If a camper verbally or physically abuses staff or other campers it can result in immediate termination. All participants – including parents/guardians and caregivers – are expected to exhibit appropriate behavior at all times while participating, spectating, or attending any program or activity sponsored by the Chicago Park District. This includes adhering to the Chicago Park District’s Facility Users Code of Conduct, available here: <https://www.chicagoparkdistrict.com/park-policies>.

Cell Phone Policy/Social Media

For the safety of all campers, cell phones are not permitted in Chicago Park District day camps. If a camper requires a cell phone to commute to/from camp alone and park staff is alerted to the exception, phones can be brought to camp, provided that they must be turned off during camp hours, and only used at the end of each day. **Cell phones being used by campers during camp hours will be confiscated by the park staff** and only returned at the end of day camp.

Taking photos of fellow campers is not permitted. While it may seem fun and harmless, this policy of the Chicago Park District is to specifically prevent photos being posted via social media without the consent of the campers/parents/guardians.

Camper Attire, Sunscreen, Water

It is important that your child is dressed appropriately for camp activities. Comfortable, cool clothes suitable for multiple activities are a necessity. All camp participants should wear gym shoes daily. Open-toed shoes are not allowed. We request that you not send your child to camp wearing any valuable clothing or accessories. Grass stains and paint spills are not always avoidable during the action-packed day. Since a portion of the children’s camp time is spent outdoors, we ask that parents/guardians apply sunscreen to their child before their arrival at camp. Campers are also encouraged to bring labeled sunscreen and a water bottle to camp each day. Please be advised we cannot replace or be responsible for personal property.

Day Camp Survey

We want your feedback! In a continuous effort to make the Chicago Park District Day Camp program the best it can be, we appreciate feedback about the camp experience from all parents/guardians and campers. The online day camp surveys will be available on www.chicagoparkdistrict.com just prior to the end of camp. If you prefer hard copies, some will be available at the parks during the last week of camp. Thanks in advance for your time and your input!

Upcoming Program Registration

This fall the Chicago Park District will offer a variety of programs to stay active. Please stay tuned for details!

Stay Informed

We want to keep you up to date on all the great things happening in the parks. Please stay in contact with us through the following ways.

- Our website: www.chicagoparkdistrict.com
- Monthly email newsletter – **sign up on our website**
- Stay Connected. Facebook | Twitter | Instagram | @chicagoparks
- Park District channel: visit us on You Tube www.youtube.com/ChicagoParkDistrict
- 312.742.7529 or 312.747.2001 (TTY)

Thank You for Choosing the Chicago Park District

We are here to serve you and your child(ren). We have planned what we feel is an outstanding summer program. However, we do need your assistance to make sure that your child gets the most out of the session. Please encourage your child to take part in all activities. If at any time a special circumstance arises that needs attention, contact the Day Camp Director and/or the Park Supervisor.

Have a safe and fun summer!



**City of Chicago, Brandon Johnson, Mayor
Chicago Park District Board of Commissioners
Carlos Ramirez-Rosa General Superintendent & CEO**

For more information about your Chicago Park District, visit www.chicagoparkdistrict.com or call 312.742.7529

Summer Day Camp General FAQs

1. What time does camp start and end?

Chicago Park District Day Camp will run from June 22-July 31, 2026. Day Camp traditionally takes place between the hours of from 9am-3pm or 10am-4pm.

2. Can I still get a discount if I have a medical card for my child?

Yes, the Chicago Park District offers a discount for qualifying families. For more information, visit www.chicagoparkdistrict.com or please see additional financial assistance information at the link below: www.chicagoparkdistrict.com/programs-memberships/programs-overview/day-camp/day-camp-financial-assistance-program

3. What activities are available for youth in day camp?

The 6 weeks of summer fun will include brain play, nature, sport & recreation, fitness & wellness, visual & performing arts, electives and specific park special events.

4. Will my child spend a lot of time outside on super-hot days?

Many Chicago Park District activities will take place outdoors. We prioritize your child's safety and take the necessary precautions to ensure their well-being.

5. Can I attend field trips with my child during camp?

Unfortunately, we do not allow chaperones on our field trips.

6. Do you provide lunch or can my child bring their lunch?

Yes, the Chicago Park District offers children lunch under the Summer Food Service Program. All children qualify but they are welcome to bring their own lunch.

7. How will park staff reach me in case of an emergency?

It is very important your Chicago Park District account information is up to date as we use the phone number and email you listed to communicate with you. Please review your account to ensure you have listed the latest contact information for yourself and for every family member before each program session begins.

8. How do I change the physical address on my Chicago Park District account?

If the address (Residential or Mailing) or Date of Birth information needs to be updated, it must be done in-person at your local park. Supporting documentation (utility bill, birth certificate, etc...) will be required to make changes to these two items.

- 9. What clothes should my child wear to camp?**
Children should be prepared to play indoors and outdoors in various environments. Please dress children in play-appropriate clothing with closed-toe athletic shoes. In the pool, children should bring a towel and proper swim attire-swim suit, swimming trunks, etc...
- 10. Is it safe for my child to participate in walking or bus field trips to other locations with the rest of the camp?**
Yes, the camp staff is trained to keep campers safe and engaged in numerous environments.
- 11. How do I find out more information on a particular park's day camp program?**
All parks host an orientation meeting for day camp particulars and to discuss additional information about camp. Contact the park your child(ren) are registered at for more details.
- 12. I registered for one camp and was just called from a waitlist at another Chicago Park District day camp. What should I do if I want to register for the camp my child is wait-listed at instead?**
Contact the Park Supervisor offering the waitlisted day camp program you want to register for and request a transfer through the Finance Department. Please be advised you will still be responsible for any difference in camp costs or camp fees that may apply. Consider contacting the Day Camp Director or Park Supervisor at the original park your child is registered at to give them a courtesy notice of your child's transfer to the other park.
- 13. Accommodation of friend requests?**
Please note preparing for day camp requires significant time and planning by our staff. As a result, most parks are unable to accommodate friend requests. While early requests may be considered at the discretion of individual parks, they cannot be guaranteed.
- 14. What if my child is sick or has a contagious disease?**
If you suspect that your child has a contagious disease, please do not bring them to camp and alert the Park Supervisor or Day Camp Director.
- 15. What if my child needs a medical or physical accommodation?**
Reach out to the Park Supervisor and request will be forwarded to the Disability Policy Office.