



MAY LETTER 2018: Preparing for Camp

I am writing this during the very hot days at the beginning of May. This April was the coldest one in 40 years or so. Predictions for this summer I can be sure of: there will be camp! Making friends, having fun, exploring fields, forests, and waterways, creating, singing, laughing a lot, finding peaceful moments with just you and nature, holding chickens, going camping, and lots, lots more. This 'Preparing for Camp' memo will inform you about many things to know while gearing up for camp. Our 'Nitty Gritty' letter sent in June will let you know even more! As you read these guidelines to help prepare for camp, know that we too have been busily preparing for camp, and for your arrival. We can't wait to have everyone here and enjoy the magic of summer together!

Ed Bieber

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1. DATES & TIMES

The Nature Place Day Camp starts on Monday, July 2nd, and continues every weekday until Friday, August 10th, with the exception of Independence Day on **Wednesday, July 4th, 2018**, when we will be **closed**. The official camp hours are 9 am to 4 pm.

We also provide Before Camp (7:30 – 9 am) and After Camp (4 – 5:30 pm) programs with snacks, games, outdoor/indoor activities and quiet times. If you are interested in Before or After Camp care, please click [here](#) for more info.

2. CONTACT INFO

Phone: (845) 356.1234

Fax: (845) 356.9676

Email: camp@thenatureplace.com

3. BRING TO CAMP

*On the **first** day of camp please bring:*

- * A **complete change of clothes** in a clearly labeled bag, including an **old pair of sneakers**. These items remain at camp as a spare outfit. Some of our activities can get messy and/or wet!
- * Any medication (including epi pen or inhaler) your child will need while at camp. Please send the exact amount of medication that will be needed in its original container (i.e. how you received it from the pharmacy).

*For **every** day of camp please bring:*

Most campers attend The Nature Place in shorts, T-shirt, and sneakers. Appropriate footwear is necessary for campers to fully participate in our variety of activities at camp. Closed-toe shoes are a must (no flip-flops!).

Also:

- * A **swimsuit and towel** (packing this in a separate, reusable bag can be helpful)
- * **Lunch!**
- * A full **water bottle**
- * **Rain gear** (raincoat or poncho) is necessary for rainy days.

*For **day hikes** and most **camping trips**, please bring/send your child wearing:*

- * Sturdy **sneakers***
- * Light-weight, light-colored **long pants**, tucked into socks

- * Light-weight, light-colored **long-sleeved shirt** tucked into pants
- * A **hat** with brim
- * **Rain gear** (raincoat or poncho)
- * An **ample lunch** and **ample water** (multiple bottles frozen the night before are excellent).

- * Sneakers are fine for general camp footwear, day hikes and most camping trips. Some backpacking trips, especially for those ages 12 and up, may require hiking boots. We recommend that campers of this age buy and wear lightweight hiking boots now, well before camp starts, so that the boots are comfortable and broken-in before the first extended trip.

We may modify the recommended hike or camping trip garb if the weather is such that wearing tick/mosquito preventative clothing may bring about heat-related distress or illness.

4. TRANSPORTATION

For those coming to camp by car, morning drop off and afternoon pickup procedures will be described in our June letter. If you live in Manhattan or Brooklyn, or have chosen to use daily bus transportation from Bergen or Westchester County, we'll send you an email mid-June with your bus stop and pickup/drop off times.

5. SUSTAINABILITY!

At The Nature Place, we are constantly striving to live on our planet gently and sustainably, expanding and adapting our ideas of what that looks like, and creating a community of shared knowledge around these ideas.

Each summer, we challenge ourselves to be the greenest we have ever been. Over the course of this past year, we began a partnership with Green Camps, a non-profit organization that provides resources and recognition for camps who are working to reduce their environmental impact, regenerate natural systems, and be models of environmental stewardship for campers and their surrounding communities. This summer, we are excited to delve into explorations of our systems and habits, and determine how we can all become even greener, both in camp and at home. We are excited to continue to do this important work and to help your camper realize that he or she can make a difference each day.

We have also begun the exciting accreditation process (sounds like an oxymoron, but believe us, it really is exciting) of becoming a Leave No Trace Accredited Youth Program. Through focused programming, we'll bring the Leave No Trace ethos to campers in a more enhanced and expanded way, helping to ensure that we all understand how to best steward our planet.

This brings us to one of the most basic, yet impactful ways that we can each make conscious choices to reduce our impact on the planet:

Lunch

When we hear people – and we do it, too – say they are going to throw something ‘away’, we know that this isn’t actually possible. There is no such place as ‘away’ to throw to! When something is thrown ‘away’, that thing is really just somewhere else now – on, under, or above the earth – albeit often in a different form.

This becomes especially relevant when we talk about food waste from our lunches at camp! At The Nature Place, we try our best to compost all of our food scraps, so that they can then be turned into usable, nutritious soil. Instead of packaging that gets thrown ‘away’ into a landfill, we encourage the use of reusable containers. Here are some more ways you can help your camper create a minimal-waste lunch:

- * bring a reusable lunch box, clearly labeled with your child’s name
- * include a cool pack within
- * pack a refillable thermos or bottle for drinks
- * buy in bulk and use refillable containers to save on packaging
- * keep a reusable knife, fork and spoon and a cloth napkin in the lunch box
- * at home, properly dispose of, recycle, reduce, reuse or compost everything in the lunch box

Other notes about lunch:

- * Plan an ample, nutritious lunch
- * include a drink – water is the best!
- * everything from your child’s lunch will go back home with him/her, so that you can see what (if anything) is not being eaten
- * encourage your camper to assist you to empty the box at home each day

Below are some resources that might prove helpful in making your camper’s lunch more eco-friendly, including lunch bags and accessories, containers, thermoses, and other helpful, reusable lunch gear:

Products, tips, info on plastic pollution: www.lifewithoutplastic.com

Food Storage: <http://www.organizeit.com/food-storage.asp>

Waste-free lunch tips and tricks: <http://wastefreelunches.org>

Waste-free lunch products: <http://www.reuseit.com/lunch-essentials.htm>

Thank you to Green Meadow Waldorf School for sharing green lunch ideas and resources.

6. SNACKS

Daily snacks are provided both at camp and away from camp on day hikes and overnight camping trips. We

provide water, fresh fruits and vegetables, frozen fruit bars, trail mix, granola bars, pretzels, salsa with chips, hummus with carrots, and more. Our camp is not peanut-free but we are peanut-aware.

7. GEAR

Each camper will receive a complementary Nature Place Day Camp t-shirt. We also have available Nature Place flashlights, whistles, water bottles, hats, sweatshirts, fleeces, special edition T-shirts, Ed's book *What Color is the Wind?*, and more!

Our gear items are fun to wear and use in and out of camp, and can help make it easier for parents to get many of the items on our overnight packing lists.

Check out our [gear!](#)

8. OUTDOOR CONSIDERATIONS

Welcome to the great outdoors! Because most activities at The Nature Place take place outside, including numerous hikes and overnight camping trips, we are especially aware of and attentive to ticks, sun, mosquitoes and more. One of our major focuses during our Staff Orientation is training our staff on our safety management plans for all areas and potential risks at camp.

We acknowledge that there are certain risks and safety concerns inherent in the operation of a summer day camp. We continue to address these areas in a proactive, clear, and efficient way through education (of staff, campers and parents) and implementation of risk management procedures.

Rabies – While outdoors, we avoid potential rabies-carrying wild animals (dead or alive) at camp and when away from camp.

Mosquitoes – We will apply an appropriate mosquito repellent to campers if we believe the conditions warrant it. Please tell us if you **do not** want us to use mosquito repellent on your child or children. Our June letter contains the repellents we use as well as their ingredients.

Sun – We ask that parents apply a liberal amount of sunblock (SPF 15 or higher) to their camper's exposed skin areas before camp each day and/or make sure your camper is dressed for sun protection, i.e. hat with brim. The camp also has a supply of sun block to use when needed. Please let the nurse know if your child is especially sensitive to the sun.

Ticks – At camp, we are extremely vigilant about ticks. This summer, we should all be especially aware and

proactive, as it's predicted to be a good summer—if you're a tick. We educate all staff and campers about ticks and tick bites, what to look for, etc. We minimize off-trail hiking, require appropriate clothing for hiking and overnight trips (i.e. long pants tucked into long socks, and a shirt tucked into pants, to deter ticks), and perform 'tick checks' throughout the day during hikes and camping trips. Parents may want to spray their camper's clothing with an appropriate tick spray before leaving for camp in the morning, especially on the day of a hike or camping trip. Check with your doctor before doing this. The camp will apply an appropriate tick spray on a camper's pants and footwear if we believe the conditions warrant it, especially on day hikes and overnight camping trips. Our June Letter will contain information on the tick repellent we have chosen based on research from the CDC and EPA. Please let us know via email or phone if you **do not** want us to spray.

9. OVERNIGHT CAMPING TRIPS

A packing list will be given to each camper prior to their group's overnight trip. Upon receiving your child's group letter and trip calendar mid-June, you can also view the packing lists that correspond to your child's scheduled trips online. If you know your child is old enough to be going on overnights this summer and you would like to get a head start on ensuring you have the appropriate gear (including sleeping bags and sleeping pads), those packing lists are available on our [website](#) now.

10. MEDICAL and OTHER FORMS

All required camp forms are available under the 'Forms and Documents' section in your online [camp account](#). These forms are due now. If you haven't already, please turn your attention to them.

11. RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The State of New York puts out a helpful document detailing your rights as camp parents and our responsibilities as camp operators. You can view that document here: [Children's Camps in New York State](#).

12. WEEKLY THEMES

Our weekly themes are a means to weave together, in fun and educational ways, many of the diverse activities at The Nature Place. Take a look and prepare to open your mind and say, 'ahhh' . . .

Week One: Taking Care
Week Two: Branch Out
Week Three: Be'an Green

Week Four: Oh Deer, There's a Whistle Pig in the Garden
Week Five: Terra-tactile
Week Six: Pond-er This...

With profound excitement,

Ed, Scott, Ayla, Emily, and Daniel

P.S. Campers enrolled in 'Farm and Garden Days', 'Art and Earth', and/or 'Passages' will receive additional information about these programs in July.

P.P.S. All enrolled camp families are eligible to become members of the Threefold Pond (our camp swimming facility)! If you would like to be part of a swim community where there are no radios, no smoking, and no crowds on weekends, but where you'll find plenty of kids, shade and sun, more nature than concrete, and like-minded families, then contact Chela Crane, Pond Manager, at chela.crane@yahoo.com for more information.

"And it was summer – Warm, beautiful summer."

-Hans Christian Andersen