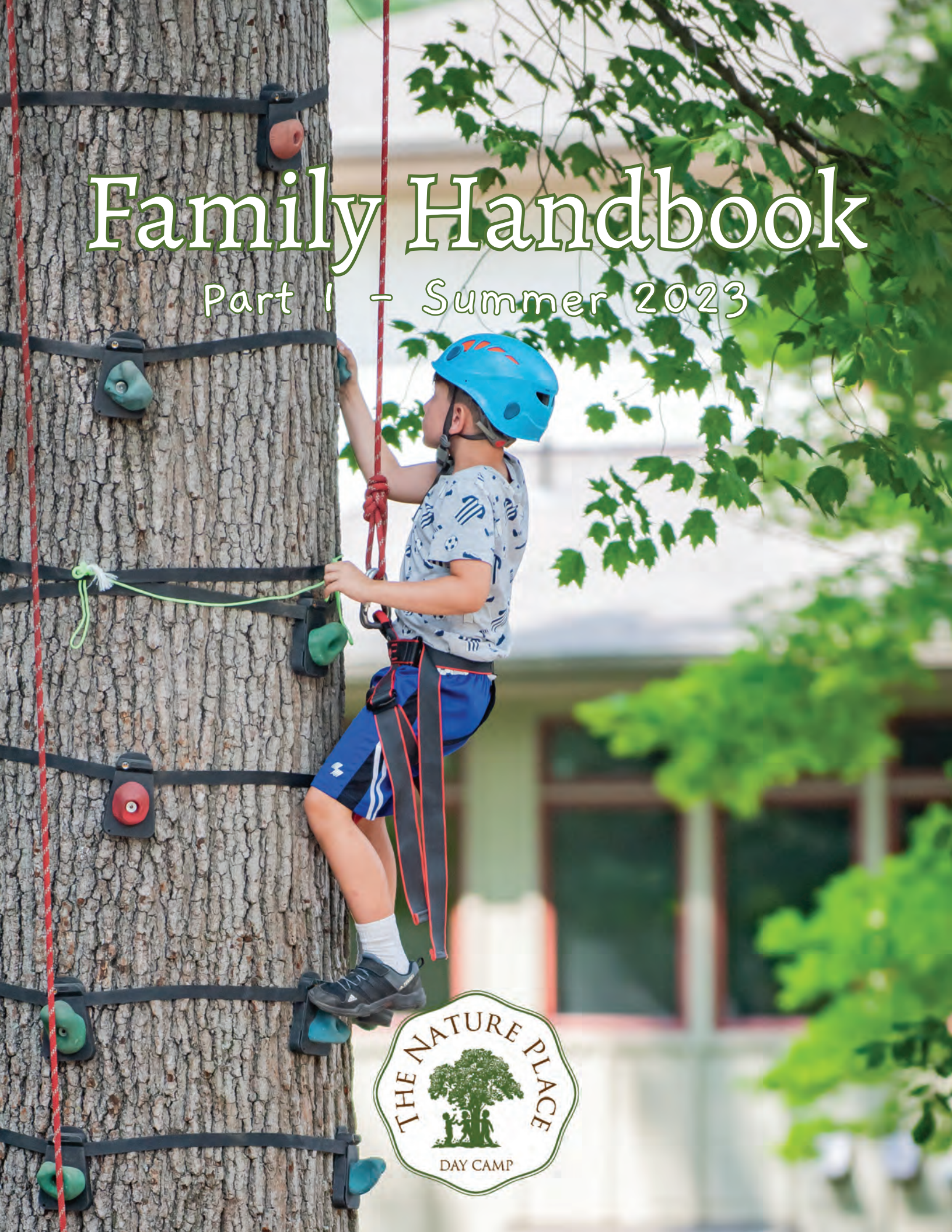


Family Handbook

Part 1 - Summer 2023





Family Handbook

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Note: There are active links in this handbook that will bring you to our website.

1. DATES & TIMES

First day of camp is **Monday, July 3rd**, and continues every weekday until **Friday, August 12th**. NOTE: Camp will be closed Tuesday, July 4th.

The camp's hours are roughly 9 am to 4 pm.

Before & After Care could be available on a small scale. For more information, please contact the office.

2. CONTACT INFO

Phone: (845) 356.1234

Fax: (845) 356.9676 Email: camp@thenatureplace.com

3. WHO'S WHO AT CAMP

Director: Jason Samuel – jason@thenatureplace.com

Director of Programming: Scott Dunn – scott@thenatureplace.com

Assistant Director: Ricky MacGregor – ricky@thenatureplace.com

Communications Manager: Emily Angell – emilya@thenatureplace.com

Health Care Team: Jessica Lliguicota (RN) & Dan Nassimos (EMT) – camp@thenatureplace.com

Social & Behavioral Team: Tim Pellegrin, Marlie Gelu, and Gerson Lovera – camp@thenatureplace.com

4. CAMP COMMUNICATION WITH FAMILIES

We use a variety of different methods to communicate with families. Less time-sensitive information will be sent via email. Please make sure camp@thenatureplace.com is saved as an allowed email address. You may receive a call from camp from time to time. Those calls could be behavior or health-related, or we may want to let you know we saw your camper doing something kind or great. Try not to assume the worst if the camp calls you. The most time-sensitive communications will be sent via the text platform Remind. You will receive a text from The Nature Place welcoming you to our Remind communication system the week of June 19th.

As you already know, you have an [online camp account](#), which we use for camp forms and also for weekly photos, trip schedules, newsletters, and more. If you forget your password, it's easy to reset. Click Retrieve/Set Password and follow the prompts.

Follow us [@thenatureplacedaycamp](#) on Instagram and [Facebook](#) for photos and stories of the camp day!

5. COVID-19 PROTOCOLS

At this time, we don't foresee any protocols related to COVID-19

6. MEDICAL NEEDS AND FORMS

Will your camper(s) need to take any prescription medication while at camp and/or on an overnight camping trip? If so, please have your child(ren) bring in their medication in its **original container** at least **one week before it will need to be dispensed**. Please **only send the amount needed**. All medications need to be indicated and **signed for by your doctor on your child's Physician's Over-the-Counter & Prescription Medication Form** (in your online [camp account](#)).

All forms were due on June 5th.

The required camp forms are in the 'Forms' section in your online [camp account](#), if you need to make updates.

Our Registered Nurse and EMT are on site to handle any healthcare needs that arise at camp. If your child comes to the nurse's office for treatment of an illness or an injury (e.g., bee sting, fever) that requires additional medical treatment or observation, you will be contacted. If your camper goes to the health center for an ice pack for a bump or a bandage for a scrape, you may or may not be notified.

We all share the responsibility of keeping one another healthy and well. It is important, if your camper doesn't feel well or has any of these symptoms (fever of 100 degrees Fahrenheit or higher, cough, runny nose, chills, sore throat, muscle aches or fatigue), **DO NOT SEND THEM TO CAMP**. If your camper is sick, they will need to remain out of camp until they are symptom-free, without medication, for 24 hours. We know that even missing a minute of camp can be hard on our campers, but we must also care and look out for each other as a community.

7. WHAT TO WEAR AND WHAT TO BRING

Most campers attend The Nature Place in shorts, T-shirt, and sneakers. Campers must wear **closed-toe shoes** (no flip-flops or sandals!).

<p>On your child's first day of camp please send them with these items to leave at camp:</p> <p>.....</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> A complete change of clothes in a clearly labeled bag (name and group letter). These items remain at camp as a spare outfit. Some of our activities can get messy or wet!<input type="checkbox"/> A pair of closed-toe water shoes or old sneakers that are OK to get wet and muddy—for mucking in the stream and other water-logged activities.<input type="checkbox"/> Any medication (including EpiPen or inhaler) your child will need while at camp. Please send only the exact amount of medication that will be needed in its original container (i.e., how you received it from the pharmacy). Please also let the camp office know that medication will be coming in so we can make sure it gets to the nurse.	<p>For every day of camp please have:</p> <p>.....</p> <p>A backpack containing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> A swimsuit and towel We recommend that campers come to camp wearing their swimsuit under their camp clothes.<input type="checkbox"/> We provide a swim bag for wet swim gear, to come back and forth between camp and home.<input type="checkbox"/> Undergarments to change into after swimming.<input type="checkbox"/> Lunch! (or order from Threefold Café – details below)<input type="checkbox"/> Snacks for the day<input type="checkbox"/> A full water bottle<input type="checkbox"/> Rain gear (raincoat or poncho), which can be kept in your camper's backpack for rainy days.
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8. WHAT NOT TO BRING TO CAMP

We are not responsible for the loss/theft of, or damage to, personal property, such as personal equipment and toys, or electronics. Please keep things that are considered valuable at home. Sandals and flip-flops are unsafe at camp and should be left at home too.

Our Electronic Device Policy

So as not to get in the way of meeting new friends and connecting with ourselves, others, and the natural world, it is critical that **ALL electronic devices be kept at home. This includes cell phones, tablets, smart watches, gaming consoles, etc.**

9. SUSTAINABILITY!

Check out our [Sustainability page](#) to see what The Nature Place is doing in our ongoing efforts to be more 'green'. One of the most basic and impactful ways that we can soften our footprint on the planet is through what and how we eat. This brings us to: lunch at camp, below.

10. WATER

Campers need to bring a water bottle to camp labeled with their name. As part of making camp more sustainable, we don't provide disposable cups. Bottle fillers and water jugs are located around camp for campers to refill their bottles. We encourage campers to continually drink water throughout the day, especially on hot days.

11. LUNCH

Campers can either bring lunch from home or purchase lunch through the Threefold Café's Camp Lunch Program.

Bringing Lunch from Home

If you'll be packing your own camp lunch, please review our notes on [Green Lunch](#) on our camp lunch page!

Other notes about packing lunch:

- * plan an ample, nutritious lunch
- * include a drink – water is the best!
- * everything from your child's lunch will go back home with them, so that you can see what (if anything) is not being eaten
- * our camp is not peanut-free, but is highly aware of peanut, tree-nut, and all food allergies

Threefold Café's Camp Lunch Program

The wonderful Chefs at the café have added more new menu items such as chicken salad and a ham and cheese muffin. That's in addition to camper favorite items like fried chicken sandwich and the camper's pasta salad to make your mornings easier. Check out [menu options and registration details!](#)

Kindly direct all Café lunch related questions to the Threefold Café: cafe@threefold.org or (845) 352.3130.

12. SNACKS

Please pack your camper(s) their own snacks for snack time each day. Campers normally have 1 snack time per day. Campers are very active; more snacks might be needed. Pack as many snacks as your camper(s) might need.

13. OUTDOOR CONSIDERATIONS

Welcome to the great outdoors! The sun, ticks, and mosquitoes are top of the mind for us, and we mitigate their risks in the following ways:

Sun – We ask that parents/guardians apply a liberal amount of sunblock (SPF 30 or higher) to their campers' exposed skin areas before camp each day and make sure your campers are dressed for sun protection (i.e., hat with brim). Each group has a supply of sunscreen for reapplying during the day. If your camper has sensitive skin or is allergic to OTC sunscreen, please indicate this on their medical form and send in their own sunscreen, labeled with their name, in a Ziploc bag.

Ticks – We are extremely vigilant about ticks. 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 (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, and at the end of each regular camp day. **Despite all measures taken at camp, it is imperative that you do a thorough tick check at home nightly.** Check out the Tick Appendix at the end of this document to ensure you know what to look for and how to safely remove a tick.

Parents/guardians may want to spray their camper's clothing with tick spray before leaving for camp in the morning, especially on the day of a hike or camping trip. The camp will apply tick spray on campers' pants and footwear when appropriate.

The Centers for Disease Control recommends the following tips for removing ticks from clothing. We recommend following this protocol on your child(ren)'s clothing when they return from a hike or overnight:

- Tumble dry clothes in a dryer on high heat for 10 minutes to kill ticks on dry clothing after you come indoors.
- If the clothes are damp, additional time may be needed.
- If the clothes require washing first, hot water is recommended. Cold and medium-temperature water will not kill ticks effectively. If the clothes cannot be washed in hot water, tumble dry on low heat for 90 minutes or high heat for 60 minutes after washing. The clothes should be warm and completely dry.

Mosquitoes – We apply an appropriate mosquito repellent to campers when the conditions warrant it.

Repellent Use

On day hikes, we use repellent to deter ticks and mosquitoes. On camping trips, we also use repellent when the day begins to turn to dusk. At this time, we put on long-sleeved shirts and pants, and make sure that our tent zippers are zipped up tight! Please email us if you **do not** want your child's clothing to be sprayed.

The repellents we will be using this summer are:

For mosquitoes, **Repel** Plant-Based Lemon Eucalyptus Insect Repellent by WCP Brands. It contains 30% oil of lemon eucalyptus and is listed in the EPA's database as effective against mosquitos for 6 hours. This

DEET-free repellent will be applied and re-applied only when necessary and is for use on skin.

For ticks, **Ranger Ready** Bug Spray. The active ingredient is PICARADIN (20%). This spray repellent will be used only on a camper's footwear and pant legs—not on skin—and will be applied only by counselors.

14. GETTING THE MOST OUT OF CAMP

Screen Free Culture

Given that we are The Nature Place, and believe in connecting with ourselves, others, and the natural world, it is important to reiterate that **ALL electronic devices be kept at home. This includes cell phones, tablets, smart watches, gaming consoles, etc.**

Behavior Guidelines

Camp is all about community, founded on collaboration and inclusion. Our mission is to ensure children can find their place in nature, embrace their unique selves, grow relationships and new life skills, build resilience, and be inspired throughout. For these things to happen, campers need to be and feel safe (physically and emotionally) throughout all parts of the camp day.

Please go over the following behavior policy and expectations with your camper(s), including the consequences for not following them. Clarity and consistency, at camp and at home, are important for making our camp a healthy, nurturing environment for children.

Therefore, we expect all campers to:

1. Always stay with their group
2. Participate in camp activities
3. Communicate with other campers and staff members in respectful ways
4. Be supportive of other campers' needs and efforts
5. Always act in ways that are safe for themselves, as well as for all other campers
6. Treat other campers' (and the camp's) property and belongings with respect and consideration
7. Never hit, throw something at, or in any way physically hurt anyone else
8. Never threaten or imply a threat toward another camper
9. Not engage in put-downs of any type or make fun of another camper
10. Not purposefully and with ill intent exclude another camper
11. Whether in camp or out on a trip, we expect our campers to represent The Nature Place, and all expectations of our campers exist when we are out for a trip or in public.

Our goal is to help each camper have a successful summer and positive camp experience. If a camper's behavior is negatively affecting the rest of the group and/or if there is any kind of safety concern, the following consequences will be implemented. Of course, each incident will be looked at individually and in terms of degree of seriousness.

1. First Time – Camp administration will talk to the child as well as make a call home to discuss the incident with the child's parents.
2. Second Time – Parents will be contacted to set up a Zoom meeting to discuss the matter.
3. Third time – The camper will miss one day of camp in order to understand that there were better behavioral choices to be made relative to the incident.
4. Fourth time – A discussion and decision-making meeting with parents will be held in order to look at the real possibility that perhaps The Nature Place Day Camp is not a good match for the camper and their needs.

Smoking

Smoking is prohibited anywhere at camp as well as on hikes and overnights.

Narcotics, Drugs, and Weapons

Any staff member or camper possessing a weapon, drugs, or narcotics or being under the influence of drugs (including alcohol) at camp or at any camp function throughout the year will be asked to leave camp immediately; proper law enforcement will be contacted if necessary.

Questions to Ask Your Camper about Camp

Ever ask your child how their day was, and receive responses like ‘fine’ or ‘it was good’? When you dig a little deeper, ‘what did you do today?’, do they respond with an ‘I don’t know...’ or the dreaded shrug? We know how it is! We’ve compiled a list of 10 intentional questions you can ask your camper to find out how their day at camp *really* was and give them an opportunity to reflect on and process their experiences as well. Enjoy!

1. What was the funniest thing someone did today?
2. Which activity did you enjoy most today?
3. Who did you sit next to at lunch today?
4. Who do you enjoy talking to the most?
5. If you could have any job at camp, what would you do? Why?
6. When did you feel most proud today?
7. How did you help a friend out this week?
8. What was the hardest thing you did this week?
9. Was there anything about camp today that you didn’t like/that didn’t feel good?
10. What are you most looking forward to about tomorrow?

Attendance

If your camper will not be attending camp on a given day, please contact the office **no later than 7:30 am**. If your camper is not feeling well, please let us know, along with their symptoms. If your camper is absent and we haven’t heard from you, we may call to inquire if everyone is well. There is no credit or refund given for days missed.

15. HIKES AND OVERNIGHT CAMPING TRIPS

All hikes and overnight trips are staffed, led, and scouted by our team of professional trip leaders. They are Wilderness First Aid, CPR, and EpiPen certified, carry a cell phone and first aid kit, and have a wealth of knowledge regarding our area’s flora and fauna, natural history, outdoor living skills, and so much more.

Day Hikes

All our campers will have at least two off-site hikes during the summer in or around Harriman State Park. All hikes are tailored to the age and ability of the campers, in terms of interest, mileage, and terrain. Each hike offers adventure, some challenges, plenty of rest stops, a new awareness of our environment, and a chance to explore nature. During the hikes we will learn proper hiking techniques, safety, natural and human history, Leave No Trace Principles, tick awareness, trail etiquette, and more.

For **day hikes**, please wear:

-
- Sturdy **sneakers** or broken-in hiking boots
 - Lightweight, light-colored **long pants**, tucked into long socks
 - Lightweight, light-colored **long-sleeved shirt** tucked into pants
 - A **hat** with a brim

*And bring a **backpack** with:*

- Rain gear** (raincoat or poncho)
- An **ample lunch packed from home** (the Threefold Café will be able to provide day hike lunches. not all of the menu items will be available)
- Ample **water** (anywhere from 1-3 liters depending on your child)
- Snack**

We will cancel or change the hike location/route of the hike if the weather is excessively hot, it's raining heavily, or there is a serious threat of thunderstorms. If possible, canceled hikes are rescheduled. If a hike is canceled, your camper will be scheduled for a full day of activities at camp.

Food on Day Hikes

Please remember to pack an **ample lunch and snacks** for your child's hike, as they'll be expending extra energy on the journey. If you usually purchase lunch from the Threefold Café, you'll need to make sure to order well in advance and know that not all of the menu items will be available for hike lunches.

Camping Trips

The camping program at The Nature Place is based on the philosophy of living gently and purposefully on the earth. Campers learn how to be safe and comfortable spending the night outdoors, while experiencing personal growth and group bonding.

Our camping program is progressive in the skills taught, and the trips embarked on. Our youngest campers (4-8 years old) will experience an Almost Overnight, where they get a taste of camping out but get picked up before bedtime. Onsite Overnight camping begins around age 9. Offsite Camping Trips start around age 10. From there, trips increase in length and frequency as campers get older.

We will be sending out a separate communication announcing what group your child(ren) will be in along with their camping schedule. Each group's schedule will also be available in your [online camp account](#). In addition, an email, with a packing list and other pertinent details will be sent out a week prior to all overnights. [Packing lists](#) are also available on our website. Each camper group will have a pre-trip meeting with a member of our camping department to go over the list and give additional information about the trip. NOTE: The only special camp equipment needs are a sleeping bag and sleeping pad. Tents, and other camping gear, are provided by camp.

16. GEAR

Each camper will receive a Nature Place Day Camp t-shirt, and a swim bag. Check out our [Clothing & Gear Shop](#) for Nature Place flashlights, whistles, water bottles, hats, sweatshirts, fleeces, special edition T-shirts, books, and more!

17. RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

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

18. WEEKLY THEMES

Each week has a wonderful, sometimes wacky theme that is woven throughout camp's activities. Weekly themes are silly, thought-provoking, and educational – an integral part of the magic of camp. Take a look and prepare to open your mind and say, 'ahhh.'

Week 1: Taking Care

Week 2: Where?

Week 3: Water You Dewing

Week 4: Lettuce Turnip the Beet

Week 5: Flock Together

Week 6: Till We Meet Again

19. ABOUT OUR PROGRAM

We enjoy a "non-rushed" daily schedule made up of six 45-minute periods with 10 minutes to transition from activity to activity. On a typical camp day, campers will have a lunch and swim period. Swim is made up of both instructional and recreational swimming. Younger campers will have a full period to change after swimming and have a snack. The rest of the day is made up of activity periods. We want our campers to experience all our activities each week. Activities such as Mucking and Nature's Playground are added to schedules when the group has available periods. The group's schedule changes each day and every week.

Age Group Activity Eligibility

The Nature Place prides itself on having almost all our activities available to all age groups by creating curriculums that are age and developmentally appropriate with only a few exceptions. Archery is available for campers approximately 8.5 and up. While all campers can climb the rock-climbing tree, some high ropes course elements are only for campers 6 and up. Of course, our progressive camping program is already mentioned on page 8.

20. TOP 10 FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. What Group is my camper in?

You will receive an email in mid-June with your camper group.

2. What is the bus stop, or when is the drop off/pick up?

If you are riding the bus, you will receive your bus stops and times in mid-June. If you drop off/pick up your camper, you will get your drop-off location and time window when the Family Handbook – Part 2 is published in mid-June.

3. When are the campouts?

All Almost, Onsite, and Offsite overnight and backpacking trips will be sent via email in mid-June.

4. Who are the Staff?

Our staff are selected on their experience and their ability to enhance our camp culture. We pride ourselves on hiring a more experienced staff. Our Head Counselors are often teachers or those working on a graduate degree in a related field. Our counselors are typically in the college era of their lives. We don't normally hire high school students, and when we do, they are mostly former campers and Counselors in Training. Our Activity Leaders have expertise in the field they are teaching.

5. How are the staff hired?

Our staff go through an extensive hiring process that includes a lengthy interview, reference checks, and both criminal and sex offender registry checks. They also go through a full 40-hour week-long training before campers arrive.

6. Do I tip the staff?

While we do allow our staff to receive tips, they are not expected and are 100% optional. If you choose to tip and show your appreciation to your camper's counselors, it can be whatever is suitable for your family. It could be homemade cookies, a heartfelt letter, a gift card or cash. To be helpful, here are suggested amounts: Head Counselor \$50 - \$75, Counselor \$25 - \$50, Lead Bus Counselor \$40 - \$60.

7. Can I pack peanut butter?

Since families are responsible for lunch and snacks, and we eat outside by group, we allow foods with nuts. We have campers with food allergies, and we follow a strict no food sharing policy. Campers wash their hands immediately after eating a nut product.

8. Are cell phones allowed for the bus ride?

We consider the bus ride a part of camp. Many campers consider the bus their second camp group to connect with others by telling stories, creating mad libs together, and more. Our no phone/screen policy extends to the bus. You have direct access to bus counselors through Remind to get updates.

9. What happens when it rains or is too hot?

On days with "liquid sunshine," we play in the rain, splash in puddles, and we can always put on a rain jacket. For a thunderstorm, groups head to their rooms with the activity leader they are scheduled with and do activities inside until the storm has passed. On excessively hot days, most of our activities take place in the forest; campers stay cool in the shade provided by nature. We may modify the schedule; an example is sending Games from the field to do water games on the white top.

10. Can I pick up early?

If you need to pick up your camper early, please contact the office as soon as possible. Please give us at least a 45-minute advance to have your camper ready. Please call the office when you arrive and remain in your car. We will escort your camper to the arrival/dismissal area where you will sign your camper out of camp. All early pick-ups must be before 2:45 for safety reasons.

Rockland County Department of Health
 Ed Day
 County Executive
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 Commissioner of Health
www.rocklandgov.com/health
 845-364-2500



SPRING/SUMMER NEWSLETTER 2019

Stopping tick bites will prevent Lyme, Babesiosis, and other tick-borne diseases.

Tick Bite Prevention

✓ Check for ticks daily.

- Check clothing and skin. This can be easily done when bathing or showering.
- Carefully check the entire body. Look at the hairline, in the scalp, on the neck, in and behind the ears, the back of the knees, the groin area, the armpits, around the waist, and legs.
- Remove attached ticks as soon as possible using a safe process.

Approximate size.



Ticks are tiny, like the size of poppy or sesame seeds.



The risk of getting Lyme disease is reduced if the tick is removed in 24-36 hours of attachment.

✓ Dress in clothes that protect.

When outdoors, dress children in light, pastel, or bright colored clothing to see ticks more easily. Wear a long-sleeved shirt and long pants. Tuck shirt into pants and tuck pant-legs into light colored socks. Wear closed-toe shoes or sneakers, not sandals. Tie back long hair or wear a hat.

✓ Avoid potential tick habitats.

Instruct your child to walk on cleared paths or in the center of well traveled trails. They should avoid places where the grass is tall, areas covered with leaves, contact with bushes, and not sit directly on the ground, rock walls, or on fallen tree trunks.

✓ Safe Tick Removal Process

- Using a pair of pointed tweezers, grab the tick near the mouth parts, as close to the skin as possible.
- Pull the tick in a steady, upward motion away from the skin until out. Do not twist or turn the tick.
- Clean bite area with soap and water.

Ticks can be taken to the Cornell Cooperative Extension in Stony Point for identification. Call 845-429-7085.



✓ Lyme Disease Early Signs & Symptoms

Symptoms of Lyme disease can start 3-30 days after the bite of an infected deer tick. Some symptoms include:

- Fatigue or Tiredness
- Chills and Low-Grade Fever
- Mild Headache
- Swollen Lymph Nodes
- Pink or Red Rash (called a "bull's-eye")
- Muscle Aches and/or Joint Pain

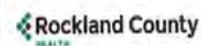
Call your doctor if your child has any of these symptoms or feels ill.



✓ Insect Repellent Information

You may decide to use a repellent (bug spray). Some repellents should never be used on the skin, only on clothing.

Carefully follow the label directions!



Use Insect Repellents Safely!

Dress to REPEL!

Don't do this Stuff

Do THIS Stuff



Don't put it on Cuts, Sunburns or Rashes!

Don't Spray your Face!

Don't Breathe Repellents!

Don't put it on Little Kids' Hands!

Don't Use it under Clothes!

Wear Light-Colored Clothing!
(so you can see bugs and ticks and remove them)

Follow the Directions
Spray only Outdoors!

Wash off Repellent when You Go Indoors!

Tuck Pants into Socks!

Distributed by the
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Patricia Schnabel Ruppert, DO, MPH, DABFM, FAAFP
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