



**Parent Handbook 2018**

# Letter from the Camp Coordinator/Director

Dear Angel Camp Family,

My name is Melissa Cotner and I am the Camp Director for Angel Camp this summer. I have worked at YMCA Day Camps for 10 years and this will be my 6<sup>th</sup> year working with Angel Camp. This will be my 4<sup>th</sup> year as Angel Camp Director and I am so excited for the summer. I have a degree in Education from Stephen F. Austin State University with a minor in Child and Family Development. I am currently a teacher in Richardson ISD and have been working in education since 2010.

I have a passion for Day Camp and firmly believe that it is an experience that is beneficial in many ways. I believe that I will be able to guide your child through an experience that will enrich their lives and empower them to do things they have not done before.

I am so excited to meet your children and create relationships with them and with their families. We have so much in store for this summer and I cannot wait to get started.

We understand that due to the nature of this camp and the camp experience parents may have several questions regarding the daily schedule or any other aspects of camp. Please do not be afraid to contact Bonnie LaVielle or myself to ask me any question you may have. You can email Bonnie at [blavielle@ymcadallas.org](mailto:blavielle@ymcadallas.org) or leave a message for me at the JER Chilton YMCA at Rockwall (972-772-9622) and I will get back to you as soon as possible.

I look forward to meeting all of you!

Melissa Cotner (Kicks)  
Angel Camp Coordinator/Director  
[angelcampjerchiltonymca@gmail.com](mailto:angelcampjerchiltonymca@gmail.com)  
972-772-9622

## **General Questions**

### **Is the YMCA Angel Camp licensed?**

Yes. All YMCA of Metropolitan Dallas Summer Camps are licensed by the Texas Department of Health and Human Services (TDSHS) or the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (TDFPS). Both regulating agencies and the YMCA of Metropolitan Dallas inspects our camp on a regular basis.

### **How are staff screened and hired?**

A professional YMCA staff interviews and screens each qualified applicant. We conduct thorough reference checks along with a state issued Criminal History Check on all applicants before hiring. All staff are over the age of 18.

### **How is the staff trained?**

Day Camp staff must go through a fifty hour training and orientation before the Summer begins. Staff are trained and certified in CPR and first-aid, child development, behavior management, safety and risk management, transportation procedures, aquatics procedures, field trip procedures, games, songs and summer programming.

### **Can parents visit their child during the day?**

Definitely. Parents are always welcome at any of our day camp sites and can join our fieldtrips with advanced notice. Due to the mobile nature of our camps during the day, we do not recommend calling to talk to children during the day unless it is an emergency. Parents wishing to volunteer must complete the proper forms and provide their own transportation to trips.

### **How much time will the children be outside?**

Many of our activities take place outside, however we attempt to balance our outside time with indoor activities to make sure that children are not over exposed. While we are outside we take several measures to ensure the safety of our children. Water is present at every activity and children are always encouraged to drink as much as they want. Sunscreen and bug spray are also applied each day before outdoor activities begin and reapplied throughout the day

### **What happens if my child becomes ill at camp?**

Any child that becomes ill at camp will stay with a staff person until an authorized release person can pick up the child. Children cannot return to camp for 24 hours and must be fever free for 24 hours without the aid of fever reducing medication.

## **Type of Camp**

**Traditional Camps:** Licensed by Texas Department of State Health Services (TDSHS). An all day experience that includes primarily outdoor activities. Each camp will also feature at least one theme based fieldtrip or event per week. Campers will participate in open swim at a minimum of once per week. Archery and Bb's are included in daily activities where available. Camps spend a minimum of 80% of the week outdoors or on fieldtrips.

## **Camp Location**

Angel Camp is located at the JER Chilton YMCA at Rockwall, 1210 N. Goliad St. The base for camp will be in the YMCA gym building with the activities taking place in various places throughout the property, from the gym to fields.

### **Sign In Procedures**

- Morning Drop off begins at 8:00am.
- Every Morning Responsible Party or Parent/Guardian must walk children in to camp. A staff person will be waiting to greet the child and sign them in.
- If the child is dropped off after 9:00am the camp day has already started and the Parent/Guardian may have to wait while a staff person walks from the current activity to the building to meet the child and sign them in.

### **Sign Out Procedures**

- Camp pick up is between 3–3:30pm. Parents must come to the camp area to sign out their camper.
- Any parent wishing to pick their child up before 2pm need to call the JER Chilton YMCA front desk so that the staff can be alerted to have the child ready to be picked up.
- A driver's license must be presented to the staff before the child can be released. Staff will become familiar with the Responsible Party or Parent/Guardian on the pick up list and not ask for I.D after the first week of camp. However, at any time staff working the sign in and out table may ask for I.D. Please be ready to present picture I.D. when asked.
- We will not release children to unauthorized persons.
- Only the person who signs enrollment form can change information on the form and must do so in writing.
- If you wish for someone to pick up your child who is not on your list you must call the front desk before the child is picked up and leave the driver's license number with the front desk.
- Persons under the age of 18 can only pick up with a signed affidavit on file.
- Camp ends promptly every day at 3:30pm. If your child is picked up after 3:30pm a late fee may be charged at the discretion of the Camp Director.

### **Attendance Policies**

- If you know that your child is going to be absent, please leave a message with the front desk to alert the camp staff.

### **Medication and Illness**

- Anytime a camper must bring medicine to camp, a medication form must be on file from the parent authorizing the distribution of the medicine.
- YMCA staff will always follow the instructions on the bottle.
- Medication must be in the original container with the child's name clearly marked.
- If a medication is prescribed, the label must contain the date, directions to administer and the name of the physician prescribing the medicine.
- All medicine must be given directly to a staff member.
- Children cannot administer medicine to themselves.
- We cannot administer over-the-counter medication without the written permission of a medical professional.
- Rescue medications for allergies and asthma can be carried by a trained staff member with written permission from the child's prescribing doctor.

### **Illness and Injury**

- If a child becomes ill or is injured at camp, an attempt will be made to notify the parents. If no parent can be reached, the staff will use their judgment as to the seriousness of the condition.
- For those injuries and illnesses requiring medical attention 911 will be called before a parent is notified. Parents will be notified of our course of action immediately after we have stabilized the child or environment or called 911, since the child's safety is our number one priority.
- In cases of illness children must be clear of fever, vomiting, and diarrhea for 24 hours without the aid of fever reducing medications before returning to camp.
- Children who are identified as having lice will not be allowed to return until they are 100% nit free and our staff will be required to do a head check at drop off the first day the child returns.

### **Field Trips and Transportation**

- Children will be transported to and from field trips by either Durham or YMCA busses and with a Durham/YMCA certified driver. All YMCA & Durham busses are equipped with Air Conditioning.
- Camp T-shirts are included and will be passed out on the first week of camp. These shirts are to be worn on every fieldtrip day.
- All campers will be provided a wristband on fieldtrip days. Wristbands include the contact information of their camp location.
- We will leave the JER Chilton YMCA on field trip days as early as 9:00am, and return by 12pm or earlier unless otherwise noted. Please be mindful of drop off and pick up times.
- We ask that children arrive at the JER Chilton YMCA at Rockwall by 9:00am on fieldtrip days.
- If you choose not to have your camper join the fieldtrip we do not provide alternative care.
- Children cannot buy their lunch or bring money on field trips unless noted.
- Busses remain at the fieldtrip location or in the area in case of emergency.

### **Sunscreen**

- The YMCA does not supply sunscreen, but requires it be provided by parents.
- Please sign the permission box in your enrollment packet to authorize our staff in assisting sunscreen application.
- Children will spend time outside and in the water. Our staff will make every effort to keep children protected from the sun but please recognize that children may still burn regardless of sunscreen application.

### **Emergency or Inclement Weather during camp day**

- Each YMCA camp location has a disaster/emergency plan. In the event of a disaster or emergency the YMCA will move to a pre-designated secure location. Program Administrators will update branch welcome centers in order to help parents trying to locate campers. We ask that parents wait to be notified before trying to call camps as the staff need to focus on the safety of the children and their environment.

- If water or electricity remains off at our camp location for more than 20 minutes we will contact each parent to pick up children as soon as possible or when available, transport them to another location until resolved.
- During heat advisory days we will take extra precaution to keep children in shaded areas and well hydrated. When possible indoor space will be utilized.
- Please update emergency contact information so that we are sure to reach you in an emergency.

### **Your Child's Files**

- Children's files must be legible and complete. The JER Chilton YMCA at Rockwall must have a copy of your child's immunization records; we need new copies of these each year. Any pertinent information regarding your child will be added to his/her file throughout the summer (ex. Child counseling forms, additional information from parents, additional pick up information).
- No one except the YMCA staff, our licensing representatives, and yourself will be able to access your child's file.
- We cannot release internal YMCA record keeping documents to any party without a court order. This includes incident reports.

### **Special Needs**

- The JER Chilton YMCA at Rockwall welcomes all children regardless of ability and adheres to all ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) provisions. We ask that parents list any special needs on camper's enrollment forms and contact our camp directors for a meeting to assess if our camps will be a place where their child can be successful.
- In determining your child's ability to be successful in our camp setting, please review the following:
  - Child must be able to participate in camp ratios of 1:10 (Traditional/Travel Camp) and 1:15 (School Based Camp - Note: Field Trip days, ratio changes to 1:10).
  - Child must be able to withstand heat, the outdoors and environmental changes.
  - Child must be able to perform toileting functions independently.
  - Child must be able to function in a large group setting.

### **Parent Conferences**

- Parent conferences are available if needed during camp and a mandatory conference between the Camp Director, child, and the parent before camp enrollment will be finalized. Conferences may also be required to problem solve and share strategies for dealing with spirited behaviors. Please contact the Camp Director to arrange for a conference if needed.

## **Aquatics and Swimming**

- Swim times and lessons are monitored and taught by trained YMCA or vendor certified lifeguards.
- Staff attend mandatory pre-service training to ensure maximum coverage during all pool times at the JER Chilton YMCA at Rockwall and off site locations.
- Lifeguards are trained and certified to operate at a 1:25 ratio or lower.
- All participants are swim tested prior to swimming. Even if your child is attending camp on multiple weeks, they will be tested every week.
- Children wear wristbands that indicate level of swim while in the pool.
- Red bands: Weak swimmers that are restricted to the shallow end of the pool and required to wear life jackets.
- Yellow bands: Intermediate level swimmers that will be allowed only in the shallow ends but not have to wear life jackets.
- Green bands: Indicates proficiency & participant can swim the length of the pool.
- Children who do not wish to swim will be allowed to sit on the pool deck. These children can bring books and activities to the pool during swim time.
- Please make sure that you pack a plastic bag for wet items. Please label all clothing to prevent lost items.

# Behavior Policies

## **Discipline**

The YMCA teaches all children the values of honesty, caring, respect and responsibility. Parents will be notified of discipline problems. The practice at the YMCA is to encourage and reward positive behavior, and redirect misbehavior. Although every attempt is made to teach proper behavior, the following behaviors will result in automatic evaluation of the child's ability to return to the program.

- Fighting and aggressive behaviors
- Running from staff and/or hiding from adults
- Any action that requires our staff to physically move or restrain a child
- Any other disruptive behaviors that a Director may deem inappropriate

## **General Rules**

- Hands, feet and objects are kept to yourself
- ALWAYS ask permission to go anywhere
- Respect counselors and follow camp rules
- Be kind and considerate to our day camp friends

## **Rewards For Good Behavior**

- Smiles and praise from the staff
- Positive phone calls to parents
- Special surprises and rewards
- Super camper awards
- Being made a “good example” for the group

## **Consequences of Breaking Rules**

- Warning - a clear message
- Reflection time
- Camp Staff takes time to discuss behavior with child
- Parents are told the facts (which rules were broken) by Camp Staff
- Program Director is called in for a conference
- Parents are called in for a conference
- For repeated offenses, child is sent home/suspended (no refunds)
- Dismissal from program

# **The YMCA's Position on Child Abuse Prevention**

We make an active effort to prevent child abuse.

Parents have the right to discipline their children, however parents must refrain from using physical or corporal punishment while on YMCA property, school grounds or program space.

For the safety of the children entrusted in our care, the YMCA conducts and requires a background check and references for all camp staff, every person employed in or by our branches and programs

Allegations or suspicions of child abuse are taken seriously and are reported to the police and state agencies for investigation.

Programs are structured and observed so that staff and volunteers are never the only adult present with children with the possible exception of emergency conditions.

Periodic interviews/evaluations are conducted with children and parents regarding day to day experiences, encouraging reports of any event out of the ordinary.

Staff are required to report all incidents and/or the disclosure of abuse.

## **Babysitting and contact with YMCA staff outside of the programs**

Staff are not to fraternize, babysit or have contact with children outside of the programs hours . Staff of the YMCA must notify Administration and Human Resources of any and all pre-existing relationships or with children that are related to them with whom they may come in contact with outside of YMCA programming hours. This policy is in place for the safety of your child(ren) and our staff

## **What To Bring To Camp**

- Comfortable Closed Toed Shoes
- Labeled Change of Clothes
- Labeled Sunscreen (spray)
- Labeled Insect repellent
- Hat
- Water Bottle
- Lunch (Sack lunch on fieldtrip days) Water is preferred over sugary drinks
- Swimsuit and towel on swim days or water play
- Plastic bag for wet clothes on swim day
- On Field trip days all children will need to wear their camp T-shirt

\*Please write your child's name on everything .

\*Please dress your child in appropriate play clothing and closed toed shoes.

## **What Not To Bring To Camp**

- Electronics or video games
- Toys
- Personal items from home
- Money or other valuables

## **Clothing/Belongings/Lost and Found**

Please check Lost & Found at the end of each day for your child's missing belongings. Please note: items will be donated to local charities following the last week of camp.

## **Program Evaluation**

At the end of each session we will ask you to fill out a short survey. We ask that you are honest and thorough, as this survey will help us to learn how to better serve our community and improve our program.

# Additional Information and State Licensing Notices

## Procedures for parental notification

Parents will be notified in person, over the phone, or in writing of any special discipline problems with their child, as well as any communicable diseases at Camp.

## Meals and food service practices

We will provide a snack for your child each day.

## Immunization Requirements

Immunization records are required for all summer programs. Please submit immunization records with your Registration Form. Hearing and vision screening requirements (Pre-School Only) Hearing and vision screenings are done at the children's elementary school and are kept on file at the school. Please be sure to fill out the screening records form on the enrollment form upon registering.

## Animals

Animals are not a regular part of the summer camp program. If there is an occasion for animals to be present at the program, parents will be given written notification at least 48 hours in advance.

## Questions and concerns about the policies and procedures of Summer Camp

Questions and concerns can be directed to any of the professional camp staff at the YMCA.

## Parental/Guardian site visitation

Parent's/Guardian's, upon presentation of identification, have the right to enter and visit the day camp facility in which their children are receiving care, without advance notice to the provider. Entry and inspection is limited to normal operating hours while their children are receiving care. The law prohibits discrimination or retaliation against any child or parent/guardian exercising their rights to visit. The law authorizes the person in charge of the child care facility to deny access to the parent/guardian under the following circumstances: The parent/guardian is behaving in a way that poses a risk to the children and staff in the facility. Under no circumstances should a parent/guardian approach another child other than their own. A parent who behaves in this manner will be asked to leave the facility.

## Procedures for parents to review minimum standards and the child care center's most recent licensing report

Minimum standards are available at our sign out table at each camp site in the licensing notebook. The most recent licensing report is posted on our site information board at each site.

### Procedures for parents to participate in the Camp's operation

Parents must have a volunteer application on file and comply with minimum standards that apply to staff, including having a criminal history check completed before they can participate in the camp's operation. For more information please contact your Camp Director.

### Gang Free Zone

As a result of House Bill 2086 that passed during the 81st Legislature, Regular Session, Chapter 42 of the Human Resource Code includes section 42.064, effective September 1, 2009. This new statute requires that information about gang-free zones be distributed to parents and guardians of children in care at licensed child care centers.

A gang-free zone is a designated area around a specific location where prohibited gang related activity is subject to increased penalty under Texas law. The gang-free zone is within 1000 feet of the licensed site location.

The purpose of gang-free zones is to deter certain types of criminal activity in areas where children gather by enforcing tougher penalties.

### Discipline

In compliance with the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services, discipline must be:

- Individualized and consistent for each child;
- Appropriate to the child's level of understanding; and
- Directed toward teaching the child acceptable behavior and self-control.
- A caregiver may only use positive methods of discipline and guidance that encourage self-esteem, self-control, and self-direction, which include at least the following:
  - Using praise and encouragement of good behavior instead of focusing only upon unacceptable behavior;
  - Reminding a child of behavior expectations daily by using clear, positive statements;
  - Redirecting behavior using positive statements; and
  - Using brief supervised separation or time out from the group, when appropriate for the child's age and development, which is limited to no more than one minute per year of the child's age.

To contact the local licensing office  
Parents participating in a TDFPS childcare licensed operation may contact  
licensing at:

1-800-862-5252

Texas Abuse/Neglect Hotline 1-800-252-5400  
or view the website at <http://www.dfps.state.tx.us>

Parents participating in a TDSHS youth camp licensed operations may  
contact licensing at:

1-512-834-6600

<http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/youthcamp/>