

NYSDEC Summer Camps

Camper Handbook

Camp Colby, Camp DeBruce, Camp Pack Forest, Camp Rushford



Welcome to an incredible summer at NYSDEC Summer Camps!

I'm thrilled that you have chosen to join our vibrant summer camp community where adventure, friendship, and a deep connection to nature take root. Whether this is your camper's first summer or their seventh, we're honored to be a part of their journey.

At NYSDEC Summer Camps, we believe in the transformative power of the outdoors. Our camps are places where kids can unplug from their daily routines and immerse themselves in the natural world. From hiking scenic trails to exploring wildlife habitats, our campers will learn not only to admire nature's beauty but also to care for it. Our focus on environmental stewardship teaches them how small actions—like recycling, composting, or planting trees—can make a lasting impact.

Of course, at the heart of our camps is the friendships that blossom here. No matter the adventure, campers find a space of acceptance where everyone can be themselves. Our highly trained staff—enthusiastic mentors with a passion for working with kids and teaching in the outdoors—are ready to ensure every child feels supported, valued, and included. Whether we are meeting your camper for the first time or welcoming them back, we're looking forward to helping them create lifelong memories.

Thank you for trusting us with your camper. We're looking forward to an unforgettable summer of laughter, learning, and adventure. If you have any questions before opening day, don't hesitate to reach out—I'm always happy to connect at EducationCamps@dec.ny.gov.

See you this summer,

Jackson Patterson

Jackson Patterson
Summer Camp Administrator

- Connect with the camp program on Facebook at "[NYSDEC Summer Camps](#)".
- Find out [more information about DEC Summer Camps](#).
- [Create an account or log in](#) to manage your Summer Camps registration account.



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Season Information: Overall and by Camp Location

Dates by Camp Location

| | Colby | DeBruce | Pack Forest | Rushford |
|-------------------------------------|---|---|--|---|
| Week 1 June 29 – July 4 | 11 – 13 year olds | 11 – 13 year olds | 11 – 13 year olds | 11 – 13 year olds <i>Hunter Safety</i> |
| Week 2 July 6 – July 11 | 11 – 13 year olds | 11 – 13 year olds <i>Hunter Safety</i> | 11 – 13 year olds <i>Bowhunter</i> | 11 – 13 year olds |
| Week 3 July 13 – July 18 | 11 – 13 year olds <i>Hunter Safety</i> | 11 – 13 year olds | 14 – 17 year olds <i>Hunter Safety</i> | 14 – 17 year olds <i>Trapper</i> |
| Week 4 July 20 – July 25 | 14 – 17 year olds <i>Trapper</i> | 11 – 13 year olds <i>Bowhunter</i> | 14 – 17 year olds <i>Adventure Week</i> | 14 – 17 year olds <i>Bowhunter</i> |
| Week 5 July 27 – August 1 | 14 – 17 year olds <i>Bowhunter</i> | 11 – 13 year olds <i>Trapper</i> | 14 – 17 year olds <i>Hunter Safety</i> | 11 – 13 year olds |
| Week 6 August 3 – 8 | 11 – 13 year olds <i>Hunter Safety</i> | 11 – 13 year olds <i>Hunter Safety</i> | 14 – 17 year olds <i>Trapper</i> | 11 – 13 year olds <i>Hunter Safety</i> |
| Week 7 August 10 – 15 | 11 – 13 year olds | 14 – 17 year olds | 11 – 13 year olds | 11 – 13 year olds |

Administrative Team

| Address <i>Same as mailing address</i> | Contact Information All Year |
|---|---|
| NYSDEC Summer Camps 625 Broadway, 3 rd floor Albany, NY 12233-4501 | Phone: 518-402-8014 Fax: 518-402-9033 General email: EducationCamps@dec.ny.gov Employment email: CampEmploy@dec.ny.gov |

Camp Colby

| Address <i>Same as mailing address</i> | Contact Information During Summer Sessions ONLY |
|--|---|
| 90 Camp Colby Road Saranac Lake, NY 12983 | Phone: 518-891-3373 Fax: 518-891-0077 Email: Colby@dec.ny.gov |

Camp Colby is in the Northern Adirondack region, about 5.5 hours north of New York City and 2.5 hours north of Albany. Camp Colby has a maximum capacity of 44 campers (22 male cabin, 22 female cabin) per week. Camp Colby is situated on the edge of the town of Saranac Lake with easy access to local mountains, and the high peaks region. Camp Colby sits along the shore of Lake Colby allowing for fishing, swimming, and boating. Many trips involve hiking and camping in the nearby mountains and paddling local rivers.

Tips and tricks for getting there: Camp Colby generally has phone service along the entire route to camp. Ahead of check-in/out you may need to park outside the gate on Pecks Corner Rd. During the summer, there is often an Iron Man Race in Lake Placid that heavily impacts traffic. The camp will send reminders ahead of any known delays.



Camp DeBruce

| Address <i>Same as mailing address</i> | Contact Information During Summer Sessions ONLY |
|--|---|
| 307 Mongaup Road Livingston Manor, NY 12758 | Phone: 845-439-4627 Fax: 845-439-4433 Email: DeBruce@dec.ny.gov |

Camp DeBruce is in the Catskill Region of the state, about 2.5 hours north of New York City and 2.5 hours south of Albany. Camp DeBruce is the only one of the four camps to not have a waterfront, instead campers and staff spend time fly fishing, playing recreational games, and exploring the nearby stream and forests. Many trips involve hiking and camping around the nearby mountains and fire towers.

Tips and tricks for getting there: On the way to and from Camp DeBruce we highly recommend downloading a local map as phone service is minimal within about a 15-minute radius of the camp property and non-existent on site.



Camp Pack Forest

| Address | Mailing Address Send Camper Mail Here! | Contact Information During Summer Sessions ONLY |
|---|--|---|
| 276 Pack Forest Road Warrensburg, NY 12885 | PO Box 777 Warrensburg, NY 12885 | Phone: 518-623-2037 Fax: 518-623-4433 Email: PackFore@dec.ny.gov |

Camp Pack Forest is in the southern portion of the Adirondack Park near Lake George, about 4 hours north of New York City and 1 hour and 15 minutes north of Albany. Camp Pack Forest is the newest of the NYSDEC Summer Camp Locations, operating since 1998. Pack Forest has a shallow lake with opportunities for fishing, swimming, and boating. Many trips involve hiking and camping in the Southern Adirondack Park and paddling the Hudson River.

Tips and tricks for getting there: Cell service is limited on site. When you search for directions, be careful! Pack Forest should be accessed from Rte. 9 to Pack Forest Rd. Sometimes apps will take folks to Old Rte. 9 where a gate will block your way. Please be careful when planning your trip. Be aware Pack Forest also has a couple miles of unpaved road between Rte. 9 and the camp property.



Camp Rushford

| Address <i>Same as mailing address</i> | Contact Information During Summer Sessions ONLY |
|--|---|
| 8717 Rush Creek Road Caneadea, NY 14717 | Phone: 585-437-5351 Fax: 585-437-5400 Email: Rushford@dec.ny.gov |

Camp Rushford is in Western NY, about 5.5 hours west of New York City and a little over an hour southeast of Buffalo. Rushford has a small pond where we go fishing, swimming, and boating. Many trips involve hiking sections of the Finger Lakes Trail, hiking to and exploring a local bog, Rushford Lake Public Beach, and state parks like Letchworth, Stoney Brook, and Allegany.

Tips and tricks for getting there: Cell service is typically available for the whole drive. Don't pull up to camp on an empty tank of gas, it's about 15 minutes to a nearby gas station.



What to Bring

Packing List

Clothing

Pack old but functional clothes. Campers will get dirty and may tear or stain clothes.

- Long pants
- Shorts
- T-shirts
- Changes of underwear
- 7 pairs of socks including 1 pair of wool or polar fleece
- Sleep clothes (2 sets; 1 warm and 1 cold weather)
- Swimsuit
- Sweatshirt/sweater
- Warm jacket/fleece
- Hat
- Rain gear (hooded jacket and rain pants preferred; most activities will be outside even when raining)

Shoes

Do not pack new shoes. Make sure shoes fit to avoid blisters.

- Sneakers
- Additional closed-toe shoes (hiking boots, another pair of sneakers, closed-toe sandals, etc.)
- Closed-toe water shoes (will get wet!)

Bedding

No bedding is supplied by the camps. Sleeping bags will be supplied for overnight trips, if needed.

- Sleeping bag or blanket
- Twin sized sheet
- Pillow with pillowcase

Additional

- 2 bath towels and face/wash cloths
- Toiletries (soap, toothbrush, etc.) *Unscented deodorant and lotion are less likely to attract bugs!*
- 2 reusable 32-ounce water bottles
- Flashlight/headlamp
- Sunglasses
- One white 100% cotton t-shirt or bandana, pre-washed, for tie-dye.
- Sunscreen (lotion/non-aerosol only)
- Insect repellent (lotion/non-aerosol only)

Optional

- Fishing gear and archery equipment (bow and target arrows) *To be secured when not in use during programs.*
- Small backpack
- Camera
- Binoculars
- Notebook, sketchbook, journal and pen/pencil
- Internal or external frame backpack
- Camping sleeping pad
- Tent
- Musical instrument
- Book
- Shaving supplies (blades will be secured when not in use)
- Self-addressed, stamped postcards

- **Camper belongings should all be labeled with permanent marker.** It will help return items misplaced during the week before campers go home.
- Refer to the **Dress Code** on Page 13.

Laundry at Camp

There are no laundry facilities at camp except for emergencies. Please pack enough clothing for their week with additional changes in case items get dirty.

Do Not Bring to Camp

If any of these items are brought to camp they will be confiscated and returned to the authorized pick-up person during check-out. These items can be distracting, unsafe, and/or attract wildlife.

NYSDEC Summer Camps are intentionally without electronics. Please help support our goal of connecting youth with the outdoors by not allowing your camper to bring a phone. See our section *Keeping in Contact* for ways we can help you and your camper feel connected during the camp week.

- Cell phones
- Smart watches
- iPads, tablets, e-readers
- Food, gum, candy, snacks, etc.
- Money (there is no camp store)
- Hair dryer, curling iron, etc.
- Make-up, perfume, hairspray, cologne
- Valuables
- Knives, axes, hatchets
- Alcohol, drugs, tobacco, or vapes
- Pets
- Depilatories (Nair, Neet, etc.)
- Matches, lighters

Possession of illegal substances, vapes, or other items on this list may result in the child being sent home. It may also result in local authorities being notified.

Lost and Found

NYSDEC assumes no responsibility for lost personal items, although we attempt to return all such items to the campers during the week. At the end of each camp week, items left behind are placed in "lost and found." Check this area before leaving camp. Unclaimed items will be held until the end of the summer camp season, after which they will be donated to charity. To retrieve a lost item, please contact the camp's director to arrange a time to pick it up before August 17, 2025.

Generally, NYSDEC will not mail lost/forgotten items after a camper has left. You must arrange a pick-up time while camp is in session. Camps are closed from 5:00PM Fridays through noon Sunday. Staff will not be available to assist during this time.

Sunday Check-In

Timing

Camper check-in varies slightly by location but will always be Sunday afternoon. Drop-off windows will be sent via email about two weeks before your session begins. Please check your email for the time slot, reminders, and directions. If you have a preference for a drop-off time, please email EducationCamps@dec.ny.gov and we will do our best to accommodate you. Drop-off windows typically begin at 3pm and then proceed every half hour until 4:30pm.

Transportation

For safety, NYSDEC Camps do not allow campers to arrive or leave unaccompanied via public transportation. NYSDEC does not bus campers and parents/guardians must arrange their own transportation.

Early check-in

We cannot accept early check-ins. You will be directed to a parking area or be asked to stay in line in your vehicle if you arrive early. If you anticipate arriving at a time other than your assigned slot, please contact the Camp in advance to let the Director know.

Paperwork

☐ Complete all **online forms and waivers** found in the Document Center on our registration site ahead of registering for the week. **Do not bring to this paperwork to camp.**

- ✓ Accommodation Request Form
- ✓ Cabin Mate Request Form
- ✓ Camper Medical History Form
- ✓ Camper T-shirt
- ✓ Camper Ethnic Group
- ✓ Completion Acknowledgement
- ✓ Custody Information
- ✓ Dear Counselor Letter
- ✓ Model Consent
- ✓ Movies at Camp Waiver
- ✓ Off-site Swimming Waiver
- ✓ Permission to be tested for COVID-19 while participating in a NYS Summer Camp Program
- ✓ Refunds and Cancellations
- ✓ Transportation Waiver
- ✓ Permission to Shoot Waiver – Hunter Education and Adventure Week

☐ **Health Care Provider Form (HCPF) – REQUIRED to check-in**

- ✓ Upload in Document Center or bring to camp
 - **Completed and signed by a health care provider**
 - **AND signed by a parent/guardian**
- ✓ Only NYSDEC Summer Camps' form may be accepted. School physicals, patient visit summaries, etc. are not acceptable.
- ✓ Includes immunization history.
 - Camps Colby, Pack Forest, and Rushford recommend but do not require campers to be up to date with all appropriate vaccines.
 - Camp DeBruce (Sullivan County Dept. of Health) requires evidence of the following required vaccines or a valid medical exemption.

NYSDEC ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION SUMMER CAMPS Bunk # _____
 HEALTHCARE PROVIDER FORM – MUST BE COMPLETED BY A LICENSED HEALTHCARE PROVIDER
 MUST BE SIGNED BY LICENSED HEALTHCARE PROVIDER AND PARENT/GUARDIAN

This health form is for a one-week session of camp – less than 7 consecutive nights.
 No substitutions with another form will be accepted.

Camper's Name: _____ Date of Birth: _____

Healthcare recommendations by licensed healthcare provider ONLY.
 I examined this individual on _____ (must be within the previous school year to be accepted)
 BP _____ Weight _____ Height _____
 In my opinion, the above camper/staff: _____ is/are not able to participate in an active camp program.
 The camper/staff is under the care of a physician for the following condition(s): _____

Any medically prescribed meal plan or dietary restrictions: _____

Known allergies to medications, food, or other (insect stings, asthma, animals, etc.): _____

Description of any limitation or restriction on camp activities (use additional sheets if necessary): _____

Additional information for healthcare staff at the camp to be aware of: _____

PLEASE NOTE THAT CAMP HEALTH DIRECTORS ARE EMTs.
 EMTs cannot do diagnostic procedures or distribute "AS NEEDED" OR "PRN" medication.
 "PRN"/"AS NEEDED" cannot be accepted. ALL MEDICATIONS, INCLUDING OVER-THE-COUNTER (OTC), MUST BE SCHEDULED.

- Please complete with patient's current regimen for scheduled medications.
- All medications must be in original container.
- All OTCs must be listed with exact dosage and schedule.
- Writing "may refuse" in the comments indicates that the camper will be offered the medication at the scheduled time but may refuse. Acceptable alternative for PRN/As Needed.
- Medications will be self-administered and witnessed by Camp staff and stored in a double locked area unless self-carry is indicated.
- Self-carry release for epi-pens, insulin pumps, and Albuterol (Proventil) or other rescue inhalers must be indicated on the chart.

| Drug Name | Route | Dosage | Schedule and Indications | Comments |
|-------------|----------|--------|--------------------------|------------|
| SAMPLE NAME | BY MOUTH | IF N/A | AT BED TIME | MAY REFUSE |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |

- Dtap/DTP/Tdap; HepB; MMR; IPV/OPV; Chickenpox; and MenACWY.
 - ✓ Includes schedule, dosage, drug names of all medications, including over-the-counter (OTC), no 'as needed' or 'PRN' will be accepted.
 - ✓ All medications are brought in original containers.
- **Health Insurance Card**
 - ✓ Upload front and back photo/scan or bring to camp to be scanned.
 - ✓ Not required. Parent/guardian must sign a release as a part of the Camper Medical History Form for camper to check-in without insurance. Without an insurance card, parents/guardians are responsible to the full cost of any care provided off-site.
 - **Health Screening Questionnaire**
 - ✓ At check-in your camper will need to complete a health screening questionnaire.
 - **Hudson Headwaters Health Network Packet** (*Camp Pack Forest Only*)
 - ✓ Complete and sign, upload in your Document Center or bring to check-in.
 - ✓ Hudson Headwaters Health Network is the closest urgent care center to Camp Pack Forest and requires this packet for campers to be seen and treated without a parent/guardian present.

Drive-through Check-In

Check-in will be drive through. Parents/guardians will be directed from station to station. Each camp will have a different route and order of stations, but all camps will have the following stops. Expect the process to take about an hour. All non-campers must be off camp property by 5:00PM so that we may begin our camp program.

- ✓ Sign-in with photo ID and signature
- ✓ Health information check with Health Director
 - Review HCPF, allergies, accommodations
 - Scan insurance card
 - Check-in all medications
- ✓ Health Screening
 - Complete questionnaire
 - COVID-19 rapid test, if needed
- ✓ Lice check
- ✓ Cabin/bunk assignments
- ✓ Receive camper t-shirt
- ✓ Gear check-in
 - Bows, target arrows
 - Fishing pole
- ✓ Tackle box
 - Ensure all hooks are covered to reduce chance of injury
 - Do not bring bait
- ✓ Hunter education homework - *only if taking a class*
- ✓ Unload luggage and see-you-laters
 - Leave contraband items in the car!
- ✓ Check-in with Director
 - Review authorized pick-up people
 - Review emergency contacts
 - Questions, comments, concerns before heading out



Friday Check-Out

Camper check-out is Friday afternoon after closing ceremony. Campers will only be released to adults on the Authorized Pick-up list and they must show photo ID.

Closing Ceremony

Closing ceremony is a NYSDEC Summer Camp tradition that closes out the week and recognizes campers' experiences from the week. Parents/guardians may observe the ceremony. Each camp has their own specific traditions. In essence, the campers are each recognized by having their name called for an award and then running around a circle of campers and staff high fiving each person. Staff will describe awards, fun moments, and read a paragraph of advice to conclude the week.

Note: If there is inclement weather, the closing ceremony will be indoors, and we are not able to accommodate parent/guardian viewing due to space restrictions. Campers would be dismissed at 4:00PM.

Picking Up Your Camper

Attending Closing Ceremony:

- ✓ Gates open *around* 3:15PM, 15 minutes before closing ceremony. Closing ceremony begins at 3:30PM.
 - Please be patient and do not open the gate without staff direction to ensure that everyone parks in the correct areas.
- ✓ Follow signs and/or staff directions for parking and walk over to the field where staff will gather the campers.
 - Please keep a distance between yourself and the campers/staff until the ceremony is over to ensure a smooth transition from activity to pick-up.
- ✓ Enjoy closing ceremony!
- ✓ Follow instructions on signing out your camper
 - Show your photo ID and physically sign-out
 - Gather all luggage and sign-out any equipment
 - Check lost and found
 - Any contraband will be returned to authorized adults
- ✓ Drive home safely!

Not Attending Closing Ceremony:

- ✓ Arrive between 4 – 4:45PM to ensure check-out is complete by 5:00PM
- ✓ Follow signs and/or staff for parking
 - Campers will be ready with their belongings
- ✓ Follow instructions on signing out your camper
 - Show your photo ID and physically sign-out
 - Gather all luggage and sign-out any equipment
 - Check lost and found
 - Any contraband will be returned to authorized adults
- ✓ Drive home safely!

Late Check-Out

The camp does not have resources to care for campers after 5:30PM on Friday. Please be on time or make arrangements by providing written instructions (during check-in or over email) to have someone else pick-up your camper.

To update or change the authorized pick-up list, you must do so in writing or at check-in.

Keeping in Contact with Your Camper

Mail and Care Packages

Please consider sending a letter about a week ahead of check-in so your child can receive it within the first few days of their stay. If you send mail during the week, it will likely arrive after your camper has returned home. Campers will be encouraged to write home throughout the week.

Do not send any food or other items on the “Do Not Bring” list. If items arrive, they will be held in the camp office until the end of the season.

Visiting

There are no visiting times during the week. Mid-week visits can cause homesickness, not only for your child but for other children as well.

Phone Calls

Each camp has only one landline phone that must be kept free for camp business and emergencies. We strongly believe that calling home prompts homesickness and interrupts the campers’ routines. If you have concerns about your child, please contact the Camp Director. If any concerns about your child come up during the week, the Director will contact you.

Email

Each camp has an email box that is monitored daily during the summer season. You may email your camper a message and the Camp Director will print it and hand it out at mail call. Campers who are interested in getting a message home faster than a letter may handwrite a letter and Camp staff will scan and send you their message over email. We have seen this to greatly reduce stress and homesickness for campers who are more accustomed to instant connection via texts/phone calls.



Photos

Camp weeks are packed full of fun activities.

Campers may bring digital or film

cameras to capture those moments. Each camp also has at least one digital camera that will go out on various adventures. Camp staff are prioritizing spending time with their campers and pictures usually have at least a few days delay from ‘click’ to upload and share. Our Facebook page will post photo and video updates as fast as possible. **Campers must have a signed Model Consent form for any photos to be taken and shared of them by Camp staff.**



Electronics

Electronics, including cell phones, are not allowed at camp. NYSDEC Summer Camps are intentionally electronics free. Our program strives to connect youth with the outdoors as well as each other and doing that without electronic distractions is a camp tradition. Electronics are also expensive and can be lost, stolen, or broken while at camp. If campers arrive with electronics, they will have the opportunity to turn them in on the first night during cabin talks. Turned in devices will be stored securely and returned to the authorized pick-up person at check-out. We ask that you discuss the benefits of a tech-free week of camp with your camper and support the camp’s rules.

Social Networking Sites, Your Child and NYSDEC Staff After Camp

Online social networking sites can be fun and positive ways for people to interact with friends. While NYSDEC has an official Facebook page for the camps program, we cannot monitor unofficial camp pages on social networking sites. NYSDEC is not responsible for interactions among campers, volunteers, and staff after the camp season has ended except for on our official page. We recommend our camp staff not add campers on social media sites, but we cannot monitor their actions during the off-season or on sites where we have no control.

Schedules and Camp Life

NYSDEC Summer Camps have similar schedules and activities at each of our locations. Trips and weekly schedules depend on the weather, camper interests, and physical location of each of the camps. Here's an example schedule for a week of 11-13 year olds at Camp Colby.

| CAMP COLBY WEEK 2 | | | | | | | |
|-------------------|---|--|---|-----------------------------------|--------------------|-------------------------------|---|
| | Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | |
| 7:00 AM | | WAKE UP 7:00 | WAKE UP 7:00 | WAKE UP 7:00 | | WAKE UP 7:00 | |
| | | Morning Ops (7:15-7:45) | Morning Ops (7:15-7:45) | Morning Ops (7:15-7:45) | | Morning Ops (7:15-7:45) | |
| | | CIRCLE UP 7:50 | CIRCLE UP 7:50 | CIRCLE UP 7:50 | | CIRCLE UP 7:50 | |
| 8:00 AM | | Breakfast (8:00-9:00) | Breakfast (8:00-8:45) | Breakfast (8:00-8:45) | | Breakfast (8:00-8:45) | |
| | | CIRCLE UP 9:05 | CIRCLE UP 8:50 | CIRCLE UP 8:50 | | CIRCLE UP 8:50 | |
| 9:00 AM | | Swim Tests & Group-Dynamics (9:10-11:45) | Adventure 2 (9:00-10:45) | Adventure 3 (9:00-10:45) | TRIPS day 2 | Human Impacts (9:00-10:20) | |
| 10:00 AM | CIRCLE UP 10:50 | | | | | | CIRCLE UP 10:50 |
| 11:00 AM | CIRCLE UP 11:50 | | Oh DEER! (11:00-11:45) | ECO Presentation (11:00-11:45) | | BOMBARDIER (10:30-11:45) | |
| | | CIRCLE UP 11:50 | CIRCLE UP 11:50 | CIRCLE UP 11:50 | | | |
| 12:00 PM | Staff Meeting (12:00-1:30) | Lunch & LOPS Sign-Up (12:00-12:45) | Lunch (12:00-12:45) | Lunch (12:00-12:45) | | | Lunch (12:00-12:45) |
| 1:00 PM | Prep for... (1:30-2:00) | Cabin Time (12:45-1:45) | Cabin Time (12:45-1:45) | Packing | | | Pack & Bring Belongings Down (12:50-1:55) |
| 2:00 PM | Staggered Registration (2:00-4:00) | Adventure 1 (2:00-3:45) | LOPs (2:00-5:20) | TRIPS | | Clean Up Camp! (2:00-2:55) | |
| 3:00 PM | | | | | CIRCLE UP 1:50 | CIRCLE UP 1:50 | Slide Show (3:00) |
| | | CIRCLE UP 3:50 | | | CIRCLE UP (3:15) | Ceremony (3:30-4:00) | |
| 4:00 PM | Intro, Rules, & Sneeches (4:00-4:45) | Pred/Prey Game (4:00-5:20) | | | | De-gear and Clean (4:00-5:20) | Camper Send-Off (4:00-5:00) |
| 5:00 PM | Hazards Tour and Cabin Expectations (4:45-5:30) | Wrap Up (5:25-5:35) | CIRCLE UP (5:25) | | CIRCLE UP (5:25) | | |
| | First Circle Up (5:35) | CIRCLE UP (5:40) | Dinner (5:30-6:15) | | Dinner (5:30-6:30) | | |
| 6:00 PM | Dinner & Fire Drill (5:45-6:45) | Dinner & Overnight Sign Ups (5:45-6:30) | CIRCLE UP 6:20 | Games & Skit Practice (6:45-7:30) | | | |
| | Health & Waterfront Chats (6:50-7:25) | SHOPS (6:40-7:45) | Get to Know Your Overnight & Pack (6:25-7:15) | Circle Up (7:40) | | | |
| 7:00 PM | All Camp Game (7:30-8:15) | Changing (7:50-8:00) | Outdoor Skills (7:20-8:50) | Changing (7:50) | | | |
| 8:00 PM | Circle Up (8:20-8:30) | Camp Olympics (8:05-9:30) | Changing (8:50) | Closing Campfire (8:00-9:40) | | | |
| | Opening Campfire (8:30-9:30) | | NOPS (9:00-9:45) | | | | |
| 9:00 PM | Bed Time (9:45) | Showers | Bed Time (9:45) | Bed Time (9:45) | | | |

Glossary of Camp Terms (in order of appearance)

Sneeches: Staff skit about bullying

Ops: Optionals; campers choose what activity either by ranked choice or out of a number of options

LOPS: Long Optionals; referring to the length of time spent in the activity

SHOPS: Short Optionals

Group Dynamics: Team building and get to know you games

Adventures (1,2,3): Staff-lead, fun lessons on environmental topics

Pred/Prey: Game exploring limiting factors in ecosystems

Oh Deer!: Game about habitat and wildlife populations

ECO Presentation: Presentation from a NYSDEC Environmental Conservation Officer

Trips: Overnight trips either off or on-site

Human Impacts: Round robin of activities about human environmental impacts

Schedules and Camp Life (continued)

Other Schedules

14-17 year old weeks will follow similar schedules as the 11-13 year olds. Noted differences are that the Adventures will be on ecological topics unique to that season's staff. Younger campers will all rotate through Field, Forest, Aquatic, and Wildlife Ecology lessons during their adventures.

Campers have a lot of choice in what activities they participate in. Activities are split up by cabin group, adventure, and ranked choice (trips). Campers mix with other cabins throughout the week.

Adventure Week

Adventure Week is a chance for older campers to have a unique week that will include additional outside presenters, more challenging overnight trips, and chances to learn more about career paths in the environmental field. Adventure Week schedules vary due to presenter availability year over year.

Cabins

All NYSDEC camper cabins are long, single room, and rustic. There is no air conditioning, but we provide fans to help with temperature control and air circulation. Please do not send your camper with large fans for their cabin.

Camper belongings may be stored in their luggage, or on hooks in the cabin.

Cabins have bunk beds and campers are assigned both a cabin and bunk upon arrival. Campers may request a cabin-mate via the online Cabin Mate Request Form. Campers may be separated from one another or moved cabins if needed during the week.

All campers stay in rustic cabins, with at least one staff member assigned to each cabin. Campers are responsible for keeping their living areas neat and clean. Campers must always stay with their groups or be supervised by camp staff. While staff are trained to spot potential problems, campers should inform counselors or other staff if they have any questions or concerns.

Cabin preferences for either male or female housing are selected prior to or during registration online. We encourage families to discuss where their camper will feel most comfortable sleeping and choose housing that reflects that choice.

Bathhouses

All camps have separate female, male, and gender-neutral bathroom and shower facilities. The female and male bathhouses are typically used unless a camper or family requests use of a gender-neutral facility. Both female and male bathhouses have multiple private toilet and shower stalls and sinks. The gender-neutral facility is single occupancy. Single occupancy bathrooms may also be used for a separate space to change clothes. Each camp's Health Cabin has an ADA accessible gender-neutral bathroom that may also be used by campers, if needed.

Dress Code

Camp is a place for learning and fun in a safe environment, and campers' clothing should reflect this. Clothing must provide adequate coverage from sun and protect feet from injury. The following dress code will be enforced. If a camper chooses to dress inappropriately, they will be asked to change. A suggested packing list is provided.

- Clothing with text and/or pictures related to sexual innuendo and/or promoting unhealthy lifestyles (e.g. alcohol, profanity, gangs, violence, tobacco, or nicotine) are prohibited
- Pants and shorts must be worn at the waist
- Closed-toe shoes must be worn at all times, except at the beach or bathhouse
- Swimsuits should be modestly cut and allow for full range of movement in the water
- Swimsuits may only be worn during swimming and water-based activities

Meals

Campers may eat outside at picnic tables, inside the dining hall, or pack lunches for off-site trips. Meals are nutritionally balanced and designed to appeal to most appetites. Fruit, salad, and daily vegetarian selections are always available. If your camper has dietary restrictions, **you must inform camps administration (EducationCamps@dec.ny.gov) at least two weeks before** arrival so arrangements can be made. If anyone has a nut allergy, the kitchen will be nut-free that week. We may not be able to accommodate highly specialized diets, in which case campers may provide their own food to the camp cook, with **at least two weeks' notice**. Do not bring or mail your camper a 'care package' containing food as it can attract wildlife into camper cabins. Any food will be held by kitchen staff and returned at check-out.

Activities

Off-Site Trips

Each week campers have the opportunity to go on off-site daytrips or overnight trips. They are transported in vehicles driven by licensed, trained staff. Campers are given safety guidelines to follow while on trips. Campers are offered choices of all the trips and rank their preferences. Camp staff create the trip groups based on interest and ability. Trips are all approved by NYSDEC and the NYS Department of Health (DOH).

Example trips:

- Hike and camp out on Crane Mountain (Pack Forest)
- Section hike the Finger Lakes Trail (Rushford)
- Paddle across Lake Colby and swim at the public beach (Colby)
- Visit a local fly-fishing club and museum (DeBruce)

Campers do not need money for these trips. Gear will be provided but campers may bring their own.

Swimming and Boating

At the start of the week campers must complete a swim test to participate in either swimming or boating during their week. Swim tests are often held during check-in or within the first 24 hours of camp programming. Campers are not required to participate in swimming or boating nor the swim test. During these activities, alternative choices will be offered for any campers not swimming or boating.

Off-site swimming may be available at established beaches. There will be lifeguards at these locations and NYSDEC will provide additional lifeguards. There is no wilderness swimming at NYSDEC Summer Camps.

Swimming and boating are dependent upon securing adequate staff including lifeguards and a waterfront director.

Camp DeBruce does not offer swimming or boating. Campers will instead have the opportunity to cool off with water activities in the play field.

Archery

Each camp has an archery range. Campers may have the opportunity to participate in archery programs as an 'Optional' activity.

Arts and Crafts

Campers may create nature art, friendship bracelets, tie dye, or nature journal as an 'Optional' activity.

Hunter Education Programs

Each camp offers weeks with optional free hunter, bowhunter, or trapper education classes. You must sign-up for this activity during registration. Classes are taught by NYSDEC Hunter Education Instructors. Campers must be at least 11 years old to participate in hunter and bowhunter classes. To receive a certificate, the camper must pass a written test and demonstrate proper attitude and safety while at camp.

Campers are prohibited from bringing firearms to camp.

Campers may bring their own bow for use during the bowhunter education course or camp archery programs and will be securely stored when not in use.

All courses require the completion of homework by the camper prior to attending camp. Homework will be collected during check-in. Workbooks will be mailed 2-4 weeks prior to their week at camp. Manuals may also be found on [the NYSDEC's website](#).

Hunter education classes take a majority of one full day of camp programs. Participating campers may not have the ability to travel off-site for an overnight trip but will camp onsite instead.

Classes have a minimum number of 8 students and maximum of 20 students. To change your camper's enrollment after registration, you must email EducationCamps@dec.ny.gov.

Successful completion of one or more Hunter Education programs is required before hunters may purchase a NYS hunting license.

Fishing

Campers may participate in an I FISH NY fishing program while at camp. Campers do not need a fishing license to fish while at camp. Fishing poles and tackle will be provided. Fishing is usually offered each morning before breakfast and campers may have additional times throughout the week. Fly tying may be a part of the week depending on the camp, most often at DeBruce.

Birding

Early morning bird walks are offered most days. Campers may bring their own binoculars or borrow from the camp. Staff help campers identify birds by sound or sight often tracking how often birds are spotted throughout the week.

Camper Health and Wellness

Illness While at Camp

Please be aware that the specific details of how Camp may operate are subject to change based on the guidance from the NYS DOH and Governor's Office.

If your child becomes ill or develops symptoms such as fever, chills, cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fatigue, muscle or body aches, headache, loss of taste or smell, sore throat, congestion or runny nose, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, the Health Director will determine if they will be sent home.

In cases where there may be a chance of COVID-19, the child will receive a rapid antigen test:

- If the test is positive, the child will remain isolated until the designated pick-up parent or guardian arrives to take them home.
- If the test is negative, the child will be further assessed to determine if symptoms permit remaining at camp or necessitate a pick-up.

In cases where there may be a chance of gastrointestinal illness a 72-hour quarantine period is recommended by the DOH; therefore, the camp Directors will make arrangements for the child be sent home. The camp does not have the resources to isolate sick campers for an extended period of time.

The authorized pick-up parent or guardian will need to pick-up a sick camper within four (4) to six (6) hours of daytime notification or the following morning for evening or nighttime notification to remove the child in a timely manner. Please do not send a child to camp if they have had any of the previously mentioned symptoms 72 hours prior to the start of camp. This is for the health and safety of all campers and staff.

Vaccinations

Vaccination documentation is included in the Health Care Provider Form.

Camp DeBruce (Sullivan County DOH) requires evidence of the following required

vaccines or a valid medical exemption: Dtap/DTP/Tdap; HepB; MMR; IPV/OPV; Chickenpox; and MenACWY.

In accordance with the NYS DOH Camp Safety Advisory Council Summer Camp Guidelines, NYSDEC Summer Camps Colby, Pack Forest, and Rushford strongly encourage campers be up to date with all vaccines.

Safety at Camp

While our staff make every reasonable effort to minimize risks associated with camp activities, not all accidents can be avoided. By participating in our program, campers and their parents/guardians knowingly and willingly assume all risks associated with participation in a summer camp program. Even after reasonable precautions have been taken, accidents occasionally happen; parents/guardians will be notified immediately. In the event of whether emergencies, all camps have emergency plans in place that include shelters, back-up generators and evacuation routes.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion at Camp

NYSDEC Summer Camps are environmental education camps that foster a love of nature and respect for all. Each person arrives at Camp with a unique background. Camp should be a welcoming and inclusive place where anyone can learn and grow. Every staff member helps create a safe environment for campers and fellow staff.

We encourage families to contact the Camps Administrator by emailing EducationCamps@dec.ny.gov or calling 518-402-8014 to discuss our commitment to inclusion at camp and to create a plan to best welcome and support your camper(s).

We take steps to foster a safe environment for all campers, including:

- Promoting EHSTO: **Everyone Has Something To Offer.**
- Training camp staff on topics including creating a safe camp, inclusive language,

implicit bias, and camper emotional and mental health.

- Hiring staff that demonstrate a commitment to principles of diversity, equity, and inclusion.
- Gender neutral and private shower and/or changing areas available upon request.
- Encouraging campers and staff to share personal pronouns during introductions.
- Including group dynamics and team building activities throughout the week's program.
- Cabin group discussions on the first night that outline on-camp resources available to campers, respectful and inclusive communication, and behavior expectations along with other related topics.

Homesickness

Feeling homesick and missing family, friends, and pets is normal. Knowing this beforehand, your child may be more tolerant of homesick feelings. You can help facilitate a successful camp experience by preparing your camper for their stay away from home. Encourage them to help with packing and preparation. Please encourage your child to speak with a counselor or director if they have trouble adjusting to camp. Generally, campers will not be permitted to call home during the camp week as it can lead to a deeper sense of homesickness and removes them out of the program.

If you feel your child may become homesick while at camp, please talk with a camp director during check-in. Knowing your wishes regarding your child's camp experience will help us if homesickness occurs. If your child is having trouble adjusting to camp, you may be called by camp staff. In some cases, campers may not be able to stay at camp. All staff receive training on handling camper homesickness.

Camper Code of Conduct

NYSDEC Summer Camps strive to provide your child with a safe and secure environment where they can enjoy the outdoors, make friends, and learn about the natural world. We are not equipped to handle continual behavioral issues. Certain behaviors are severe enough to cause

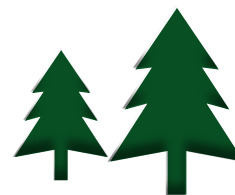
immediate expulsion from camp (e.g. physical aggression, stealing, sexual harassment, defiance of discipline code, possession or use of drugs/alcohol/nicotine/tobacco, bullying, and/or repeated incidents of inappropriate language). These behaviors will not be tolerated and, if severe enough, may warrant visitation by a law enforcement officer; parents will be immediately notified if law enforcement is involved.

If a camper is sent home for disciplinary reasons, they will not be allowed to return to camp in the future, nor will camp fees be refunded.

If a camper's actions are serious but do not warrant immediate dismissal from camp, it is the camp administration's decision whether to allow the camper to return in subsequent sessions and/or years. If your child is not permitted to return to camp, you will be notified by NYSDEC camp administration.

To promote good behavior, campers must agree to abide by the following code of conduct:

- I will be honest and respectful of peers, camp staff, and myself
- I will follow directions and rules at camp
- I will respect property belonging to the Camp, other campers, and staff members
- I will behave appropriately and use appropriate language
- I will stay within camp boundaries unless accompanied by a camp staff member
- I will treat all campers fairly and equally
- I will respect wildlife and natural space
- I will do my best to HAVE FUN!



Camper Health and Wellness (continued)

Camper Medications

NYSDEC Camp Health Directors are Emergency Medical Technicians (EMTs). EMTs are unable to perform diagnostic procedures including assessments for medications.

- All camper medications, prescription and over the counter (OTC), must be written with a schedule and dosage on the Health Care Provider Form (HCPF) by a licensed health care provider.
- No as needed “PRN” medications will be dispensed. An updated HCPF with schedule and dosage must be sent for medications to be available to campers if “PRN” or “as needed” are written on the HCPF.
- Parents may not authorize any medications including OTC medications.
- No medications may be shared by friends or siblings.
- No medications, including topicals, will be provided by NYSDEC Summer Camps.
- All medications must be turned in at check-in to the Health Director in original containers. Medications will be secured during the camp week. Medications will be returned and signed-out at check-out.
- All medications will be self-administered by campers, witnessed by camp staff, and recorded.
- Self-carry medications such as rescue inhalers or epi-pens must be included on the HCPF.
- Providers should write ‘may refuse’ in the notes of a medication for a camper to refuse. This is most often used for medications like Tylenol or Benadryl.

We strongly recommend that you meet with your child’s physician to discuss the completion of the Health Care Provider Form.



Camp Staff

NYSDEC Summer Camp staff are college students and graduates who have an interest in working with youth and the outdoors. All counselors, Directors, and Assistant Directors are either pursuing or have degrees in either Education or STEM related fields or have job experience working in summer camps or education.

In addition to standard interviews and screenings, all camp staff complete a three-week training program specific to NYSDEC camps before the opening of camp. Camp staff training includes topics on outdoors and naturalist skills, educating in the outdoors, camper mental and emotional health, scouting trips, gender and diversity, equity, and inclusion, and more. Directors and counselors all have CPR/AED and first aid certifications.



Camp Volunteers

Camps host up to four camper-aged volunteers each week. Potential volunteers are selected by camp staff at the end of each session and are invited to apply as a volunteer the following summer. Campers who are selected to be volunteers are mature, enthusiastic, and very engaged in all camp activities. As volunteers, campers participate in the camp program but are also assigned to other tasks to help camp run smoothly. Assignments include helping in the kitchen, on program adventures, and being role models for campers.

During their volunteer weeks, they are evaluated based on performance, attitude, and overall helpfulness. They may be asked to return as a

volunteer, depending on how well they do during the week. After their first summer, volunteers may reapply to return each summer until they turn 18 years old.



Five-Step Discipline System

Each of our campers has a reasonable expectation to enjoy a positive camp experience. The misbehavior of one camper or more campers should not be permitted to negatively affect the camp experiences of others. NYSDEC strives to ensure all campers practice social skills that will allow them to resolve conflicts and meet their needs without resorting to harmful or destructive behaviors. When problems occur, we act promptly. All camps follow a five-step discipline system, described below. A camper's actions may warrant skipping a step or steps and going directly to Step 4 or 5. For example, hitting someone, bullying, sexual harassment, or possession of illegal substances are automatic grounds for being sent home (Step 5).

Step 1) *Verbal Warning*

The counselor speaks with the camper, identifying and describing the unacceptable behavior. The counselor offers ways to correct the behavior and describes the consequences if there is no change. The counselor notifies the Camp Director.

Step 2) *Time Out*

The counselor removes the camper from an activity. At the end of the time out, the counselor reminds the camper what is expected of them (appropriate behavior) and what the consequences will be if inappropriate behavior continues. The counselor notifies the Camp Director.

Step 3) *Meeting with the Camp Director*

The Camp Director meets with the camper. Together, they complete and sign a written 'behavior agreement' outlining acceptable behavior and acknowledging understanding of the consequences of continued unacceptable behavior. Depending on the circumstances, the Camp Director may contact a parent/guardian prior to the meeting.

Step 4) *Meeting with the Camp Director and Calling Home*

The Camp Director contacts the parent/guardian, typically with a phone call. Together, the Camp Director, camper, and parent/guardian, discuss the camper's behavior and develop a plan that allows the camper to stay at camp. It also impresses upon the camper the seriousness of the situation and the potential that they may be sent home if there is no improvement or if the unacceptable behavior is repeated.

Step 5) *Camper Sent Home*

The Camp Director contacts the parents/guardians to notify them that they must pick-up the camper. The camper may not return to NYSDEC Summer Camp.



Refunds and Cancellations

Refunds

Refunds cannot be credited back to credit or debit cards. Once requested, a check will be issued by NYSDEC and mailed by the NYS Office of the Comptroller. It may take up to 60 days to receive a check for a refund. The check will not have indication that it is from NYSDEC Summer Camps.

No refunds, partial or full, will be made for:

- Cancellations less than 23 calendar days before your child is scheduled to attend camp.
- Not showing up for a scheduled session or showing up for the wrong session/camp.
- Late arrivals
- Early dismissals, including due to homesickness.
- Dismissal due to misconduct; NYSDEC reserves the right to dismiss any camper whose influence and conduct become detrimental to the best interest of the program.

Cancellations

You may cancel your child's registration up to three weeks (23 calendar days) before the session starts to receive a refund. Refunds are not issued for cancellations with less than three weeks' notice. To cancel a registration, you must email EducationCamps@dec.ny.gov with your request. Camp staff (directors, counselors, etc.) are unable to process cancellations or refunds. You will receive an email confirmation of the cancellation. If any camp sessions are cancelled by NYSDEC for any reason, you will be fully refunded.

Medical Reasons

Refunds requested due to medical illness or injury occurring while at camp will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

If your child is unable to attend a session due to a medical reason, you may request a full refund at any time prior to the start of the camp week by providing a doctor's note. The doctor's note must state that the child is unable to participate in camp activities due to a medical reason and be signed and dated by the provider. Email the note to EducationCamps@dec.ny.gov or mail to:

NYSDEC Summer Camps Program
625 Broadway, 3rd floor
Albany, NY 12233-4501

Sponsored Campers

Sponsored campers who cannot attend their session must inform their sponsor. The parent/guardian, not Camps Administrative Staff, is responsible for informing the sponsor. Sponsors will not receive a refund if a camper does not show up or leaves camp early. Cancelled reservations before the refund deadline will automatically return funds to the sponsor's account as a credit. Sponsors need to request a refund, if needed. Refund checks are not automatically issued. If a sponsored camper cancels their registration, we are unable to swap another camper in their place.

2025 Cancellation Deadlines

| Camp Week | Camp Start Date (Sunday) | Cancellation Deadline; 4:00PM EST |
|-----------|--------------------------|---|
| Week 1 | June 29 | June 6 |
| Week 2 | July 6 | June 13 |
| Week 3 | July 13 | June 20 |
| Week 4 | July 20 | June 27 |
| Week 5 | July 27 | July 7 (due to July 4 th holiday) |
| Week 6 | August 3 | July 11 |
| Week 7 | August 10 | July 18 |

NYSDOH: [Children's Camps in New York State](#)

Please note, this information from NYSDOH and does not reflect every aspect of the NYSDEC Summer Camps Program. The DOH website can be translated into other languages.

In New York State, when a children's program qualifies as a camp, it must have a permit to operate legally and must operate in compliance with the requirements in [Subpart 7-2](#) of the State Sanitary Code. Parents are encouraged to ask the camp director if the camp has a permit from their [local health department](#). Summer day programs may also be held at childcare facilities licensed by the [New York State Office of Children and Family Services](#).

Regulated camps must be inspected twice yearly, including at least once before opening and during the time the camp is operating. Each camp is checked to make sure that the physical facilities are safe and that supervision is adequate. This page provides more information on camp regulations and responsibilities. Learn more about what you should consider before choosing a children's camp.

Staff Credentials & Supervision

What are the qualifications of the camp director?

The New York State Health Code requires that the director of an overnight camp be at least 25-years-old or hold a bachelor's degree; a day camp director must be at least 21-years-old.

All directors must have experience in camping administration or supervision. Camp directors' backgrounds are screened by the Office of Children and Family Services Central Register Database for reported incidents of child abuse and maltreatment. Their backgrounds are also screened by the local health department for criminal convictions. Only individuals who are considered to pose no risk to campers are accepted by the local health department as camp directors.

What are the qualifications of the camp counselors and how are campers supervised?

Counselors must have experience in camping and supervision of children or have completed an acceptable training course. Stringent counselor-to-camper ratios and staff qualifications are mandated for supervision of swimming, archery, riflery and camp trip activities.

At overnight camps, 80 percent of the camps' counselors must be at least 18-years-old; up to 20 percent may be 17-years-old. There must be at least one counselor for every 10 children aged eight years or older, and one counselor for every eight children younger than eight years old.

At day camps, counselors must be 16 years of age or older. There must be a minimum of one counselor for every 12 children.

Camps that must provide at least 10 counselors may choose to use counselors-in-training (CITs) to meet 10 percent of the required number of counselors. These CITs must be at least 16 years of age at an overnight camp and 15 years of age at a day camp. They must work with senior staff, have had previous experience as a camper, and complete a training program. Ask the camp operator if any of their counselors are CITs and how they are used to supervise campers.

Ask about the camp's staff and supervision procedures, including discipline policies. Do they meet your expectations?

Health

Ask about medical coverage and when you will be notified if your child becomes ill or injured. Is a doctor or nurse in residence or on call for campers at all times?

All summer camps in New York State are required to have a health director and a written medical plan approved by the local health department. The written plan must include, among other things, provisions for medical, nursing, and first aid services. Injuries and illnesses must be reported to the local health department and are thoroughly reviewed.

Does the camp require medical records for campers?

Camps must keep current medical history reports on file for all campers. Be sure to detail your child's history of immunization, illness, disability or allergy. Specify special diets and activity restrictions. Provide instruction for any medication your child must take.

Camp Safety

Are the camp facilities and activities safe?

The camp operator must develop a written plan to include maintenance of facilities, provisions for training staff members and orientation of campers, supervision of campers, campsite hazards, emergency procedures and drills, safety procedures and equipment for program activities.

There are additional requirements for [camps enrolling campers with a physical or developmental disability](#) and for [camps with an enrollment of 20% or more campers with developmental disabilities](#).

Swimming

Are waterfront personnel qualified? Are campers always supervised while in the water?

All waterfront activities at camps in New York State must be supervised by a certified lifeguard. On site, one qualified lifeguard is required for every 25 bathers. All aquatic staff are required to be trained in cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR).

Camps that use off-site pools or beaches operated by others must make special arrangements to provide a safe activity. Even off site, the camp remains responsible for supervising campers.

Some children's camps use wilderness sites for swimming that are not inspected by local health departments. Parental permission is required in these instances, and the camp must follow established guidelines to protect campers. While campers are involved in aquatic activities on site, there must be one counselor for every 10 campers eight years or older; there must be one counselor for every eight children aged six and seven; and one counselor for every six children younger than six years old. When swimming off-site, there must be one counselor for every eight campers six years or older and one counselor for every six campers younger than six years.

Are bathing areas marked off for various swimming skills? Are campers tested to determine their level of swimming ability before participating in aquatic activities? Are non-swimmers kept in water less than chest deep? Is the buddy system used? Are campers required to wear life preservers when boating or canoeing?

New York State regulation requires that the answers to all these questions must be "yes."

Camp Trips

Are camp trips supervised by counselors who have the maturity and experience to make decisions that could affect the safety of campers?

All trips must be supervised by a trip leader who is at least 18 years old and competent in the activity.

Counselors must accompany trips and all staff must review the safety plan prior to the trip.

Counselors should have the skills and expertise in the camp activity (canoeing, rock-climbing, etc.) to handle any emergency that might arise. Ask whether the camp has conducted similar trips in the past without incident. In New York State, the drivers of camp vehicles must be licensed and at least 18-years-old. Seat belts must be worn when provided and vehicle capacities not exceeded. When transporting children in a truck, only a truck cab can be used.

Sports & Activities

How are activities in craft shops supervised, especially when campers are using dangerous tools, such as power saws and lathes? Are archery and rifle ranges at a safe distance from activity centers? Are spectators protected at baseball fields and similar areas? Do players wear protective equipment?

State regulation requires that archery, riflery, and horseback riding be supervised by counselors with special training in those activities.

Fire Safety

Are there periodic fire drills for both campers and staff? Does each floor of every building have fire exits in two different locations? Are flammable materials (gasoline, pool chemicals, etc.) stored away from activity centers and kept under lock and key? Are functioning smoke detectors located in every sleeping room?

All of the above are mandatory in New York State.

Location & Facilities

Are barriers erected against such natural hazards as cliffs and swamps? Are foot trails located away from such dangerous areas and from heavily traveled roads and highways? Do the camp facilities

(bunks, bathrooms, mess hall, recreation facilities) meet your aesthetic tastes and those of your child? Is the camp located in an area that will not aggravate your child's allergies? Will your child be required to perform chores, such as cleaning or cooking?

For information on the camp's location and facilities, visit the camp or interview the camp operator by telephone, prior to making a decision to enroll your child at the camp.

Nutrition

Are good health practices observed in the camp kitchens, dining areas and food services? Does the camp serve food your child likes?

At camps in New York State, food must be prepared from inspected sources. Food preparation and handling activities are reviewed to assure safe and sanitary practices. Kitchen employees must be healthy and follow hygienic practices. Potentially hazardous food must be maintained below 45°F or above 140°F.

Rights & Responsibilities

The regulatory program of the New York State Department of Health places specific responsibilities on camp operators, and on local health departments that enforce department regulations. The following is a summary of rights and responsibilities:

Rights of Parents and Guardians

- To be informed by the camp director, or his or her designee, of any incident involving your child, including serious injury, illness, or allegation of abuse.
- To review inspection and investigation reports for a camp, which are maintained by the local health department issuing the camp a permit to operate (present and past reports are available).
- To review the required written camp safety plans. These are on file at both the camp and the health department issuing the permit to operate.

Responsibilities of the Camp Operator

- To inform you and the local health department of any incident involving your child, including serious injury, illness, or allegation of abuse.
- To screen the background and qualifications of all staff.
- To train staff about their duties.
- To provide supervision for all campers 24 hours a day at overnight camps, and during hours of operation for day camps.
- To maintain all camp physical facilities in a safe and sanitary condition.
- To provide safe and wholesome meals.
- To have and follow required written plans for camp safety, health, and fire safety.
- To notify the parent or guardian, with the enrollment application or enrollment contract, that:
 - the camp must have a permit to operate from the New York State Department of Health or the designated permit-issuing official;
 - the camp is required to be inspected twice yearly; and
 - the inspection reports and required plans are filed (address of state, county or city health department) and available for their review.

Responsibilities of Local Health Departments

- To review and approve the required written camp plans for compliance.
- To inspect camps to assure that: (1) all physical facilities are properly operated and maintained; and (2) adequate supervision exists to provide a healthy and safe environment in accordance with the New York State Sanitary Code.
- To issue a permit to operate when the required plans and inspection results are satisfactory.
- To investigate reports of serious incidents of injury, illness, and all allegations of abuse.
- When requested, to provide parents or guardians of prospective campers an opportunity to review inspection reports and required plans.

The time and effort spent in selecting the camp your youngster will attend is important. Keep in touch, especially if it is your child's first camp experience. If possible, visit the camp before and during the camping season.