



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

PREPARING YOUR CHILD FOR THE SUMMER OF THEIR LIFE

**A Guide to Resident Camp
for Parents, Campers and Alumni
YMCA CAMP CARSON**

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The YMCA Camp Carson Adventure

OUR MISSION: The YMCA of Southwestern Indiana, Inc., following the example of Jesus Christ, responds to community needs by serving all people, especially youth, through relationships and activities that promote healthy spirit, mind and body.

Life Skills and Values

At the core of our program is the cabin group and the lessons that come from living together with 12 other people. Through this experience, campers learn life skills and values that will serve them throughout their life. Our focus and guarantee that your child will learn more about the character values of Caring, Honesty, Respect, Faith, and Responsibility while at camp helps set us apart from other experiences.

Staff

Our Staff is comprised of young adults who complete at least one week of specialized training each year. Staff are chosen for maturity, commitment to children's growth and a love for making a difference. We also partner with international camp organizations to hire counselors from around the globe. We typically have 8-10 countries represented each Summer, and campers love learning about other cultures and countries.

Facilities

YMCA Camp Carson sits on 300 acres of property, with over 8 miles of trails that are utilized for various activities (horseback, dirt bikes, mountain bikes and hiking). However, the core camp activities are located in a central 40-acre area around Lake Seminole. This includes the Camper Cabins, Dining Hall, a staffed Healthcare facility, new Boathouse, and Lodge. Campers sleep in new, modern cabins that still have a rustic and homey feel of camp. Cabins house 12 campers and 3 staff, with a restroom in the cabin.

Affordability for all

As a YMCA, we realize families have differing abilities to pay for camp and have instituted a 3 rate pricing option. The camp program is the same regardless of the rate you choose, and we trust families to best select the rate they are able to pay. Rates B and C are subsidized by generous donors.

RATE A - The actual cost of providing a week of camp for a child. If you're able to pay this amount, please do.

Rate B - This rate offers a partial subsidy of 6% for the camper.

Rate C - This rate offers a larger subsidy of 16% for the camper.

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

It is our desire to make camp accessible to all families. Through many generous donors, funds are raised each year to provide scholarships toward a camp experience. Assistance is awarded based on income level on a sliding scale, dependent on number of persons in the household. Extenuating circumstances are also considered.

FOSTER CARE SCHOLARSHIP

A kind donor has provided funding to offer summer camp scholarships to young people in Foster Care.

C4 Military Camper Scholarship

To provide partial scholarship funds for NEW campers from Military families. These scholarships are made possible by a generous donor who established this fund for this purpose.

FENNEMAN SCHOLARSHIP

Thanks to special donors, these partial scholarships (50% off Rate A) are offered to middle income families who do not qualify for traditional financial assistance. Requirements include community service hours, good grades and a good citizenship rating at school. Available to first time Camp Carson families.

PLEASE NOTE: In order to help as many campers as possible, Scholarships are awarded for one week of camp, except for the LIT and CIT which are two week programs.

Financial Assistance applications are available at <https://www.campcarson.org/financial-assistance>.

DISCOUNTS AVAILABLE

2nd CHILD DISCOUNT - A \$20.00 discount is applied to all campers in one family except the first registered child.

REGISTRATION INFORMATION

Please see our website to register for the current summer, view session dates and program rates at [campcarson.org/summer-dates-and-rates](https://www.campcarson.org/summer-dates-and-rates).

Camp Activities

CAMPERS DESIGN THEIR ACTIVITY SCHEDULE: Our unique morning program design creates the opportunity for campers to experience the true freedom of choice on activity selection.

WATERFRONT ACTIVITIES ALL AGES 7-16

BLOB*	ZIP LINE	ROLLING LOGS	ROCKIT*
TOM SAWYER SWING	RINGS*	TRAPEZE*	KAYAKING*
SWIM SHALLOW END	WATER CANNON	WATER BASKETBALL	
CANOEING	SLIDE*	WATER GAMES	
WATER VOLLEYBALL	SAILING**	SWIMMING - DEEP END*	

Off-site Canoe trips for Ridge Top cabins.

* Must be a band swimmer, camper has passed the swim test.

** Can sail with a staff member.

LAND ACTIVITIES ALL AGES 7-16

FISHING	ARTS & CRAFTS	WOODWORKING	GAGA
ARCHERY	CLIMBING WALL	SOCCER	SAND VOLLEYBALL
NATURE	BLACK HOLE	BASKETBALL	
RIFLERY	HUMAN FOOSBALL	GIANT SWING	

POTTERY - TABLE HAND BUILDING PROJECTS

AGES 8 and up (except LIT and CIT)

- Horseback Trail Riding - available to Traditional campers at an additional fee

AGES 11 and up

- Pottery Wheel
- 55' Alpine Climbing Tower
- Mountain Bikes - Feet must be able to touch the ground while seated on the bike.
- Dirt Bike Trail Riding (Returning Dirt Bikes) - Available to Traditional and LIT campers at an additional fee, after completion of First Year Dirt Bikes at Camp Carson.

MORE THAN AN ACTIVITY

Through intentional use of things like our ACE concept, we strive to ensure that while campers are at program areas, they are learning so much more than just an activity skill.

Throughout their participation, they are also learning life skills such as teamwork, communication and problem solving. We also intentionally focus on increasing camper understanding of the YMCA core values of caring, honesty, respect, responsibility and faith.

CHALLENGE BY CHOICE AT ACTIVITIES

Our "challenge by choice" philosophy encourages campers to stretch their comfort zones and discover they can do so much more than they imagined. Campers receive lots of encouragement to "go for it" but in the end, it's always the camper's choice to take on the challenge before them.

ONGOING SKILL DEVELOPMENT OPTION

Campers can choose to participate in activities from a simply recreational perspective or work on the recognition skill development program which we track throughout their years at camp. At the end of the week, a certificate goes home for each level achieved.

GETTING TO ACTIVITIES

While camp covers a 300-acre property with over 7 miles of trails, the core camp activities are located in the heart of camp. Lots of open space makes it easy for campers to identify their destination as they move from activity to activity - spending more time "being there" not "getting there".

Campers travel from activity to activity with a "buddy" which could be another camper or a program team member. Program team members are stationed in all areas to ensure that campers find their way to their next activity destination.

FREEDOM OF CHOICE BENEFITS

Campers have complete freedom to choose the activities they wish to participate in and the amount of time they spend there. There are numerous benefits for your child with this system.

- Campers are able to explore and give lots of things a try including activities he/she may not have been aware of prior to camp.
- Campers who find interest in some activities more than others are able to spend more time there as opposed to being stuck all week at an activity he/she does not enjoy.
- Campers may come to camp with a friend but they may not be interested in all the same things. With teamwork, respect and cooperation, open schedule allows campers to pursue his/her individual interests.
- Campers who are go-getters can challenge themselves to try every activity and earn lots of skill levels, concentrate on upper levels at their favorite activities or both. For those who enjoy a more relaxed pace, they are also able to fine tune skills in focused areas of interest.
- One incentive we offer is the Carson Junior Award which is given to every camper who earns the first level at our core activity areas. The first level usually takes 20-30 minutes, and on Wednesday-Friday, they can easily move through several activity areas. We track skill levels from year to year so campers can continue to develop upper level skills and work towards the Carson Senior and Rocker awards.
- All campers will learn and exercise the important life skills of decision making and goal setting. Because they are free to explore, they will discover a lot of things about themselves and most importantly gain the confidence to keep trying new things and taking on challenges when they return home.

ACTIVITY SIGN UP

- On Sunday afternoon, campers will go on a camp tour with their cabin to see all of the activities available to them. They will then go to "Activity Sign Ups" and choose activities for Monday and Tuesday morning. For these first 2 mornings, campers will stay at the activity area they have chosen for a full period.
- By Wednesday, we hope they have become comfortable at camp and are now more confident to try a new activity or pursue more skill levels at an activity they have already tried. For this reason, the Wednesday through Friday morning schedule moves to an "Open Choice" format. Open choice allows campers to move between activities at a pace of their choosing - they can stay at an activity for as little or as long as they wish. Campers sign in and out of each activity area and there are several staff available to ensure campers are able to find their way to their next activity.

ACE is at the heart of everything we do. We firmly believe that if campers feel **accepted** and know they belong, they are much more willing to stretch their comfort zones and take on the **challenges** at camp. It is our hope that self-confidence gained through these challenges will **empower** our campers to take home an awareness of how they can facilitate acceptance in daily living as well as the confidence to take on any challenge they face.

To implement ACE, we are very intentional about every aspect of camp. Whether it be at an activity area or with a cabin group, we are committed to developing young people who are caring, responsible, honest, respectful and of a strong faith.

- Campers know they are accepted and this environment enables our campers to truly stretch their comfort zones and take on new challenges without fearing embarrassment should they not reach their initial goal.
- With everyone at camp cheering for each other through thick and thin, campers discover it's OK to try and try again. With each challenge attempted, self-confidence grows stronger.
- This self-confidence leads to a tremendous feeling of empowerment which translates on to all sorts of situations - meeting new people, holding a conversation, trying out for a sport, a choir, debate team...
- Ultimately, we hope campers strive to always ensure others feel accepted, take on new challenges, grow in confidence and self-esteem and leave camp feeling empowered to take on some of the bigger challenges that they encounter in the journey of life.

Safety & Health

Our first priority is the safety and health of your camper. We have strict safety protocol at all activities, especially the waterfront. Our new Health Center is staffed through the summer by two nurses available to campers 24 hours a day. Please read below for additional detail.

CERTIFICATION AND STANDARDS

YMCA Camp Carson is certified by the American Camp Association. ACA accreditation is maintained by the camp's affirmation of continued compliance with applicable ACA standards and state and federal laws by submitting an annual Statement of Compliance, completing an annual Accreditation Report, and participates in the peer review visit at least once every five years.

CREATING A SAFE ENVIRONMENT AT CAMP

At YMCA Camp Carson, summer camp counselors are positive role models and mentors who are focused on the needs of campers both in the cabins and the activity areas. We personally interview each candidate, secure a minimum of three personal written references and perform a national background check for all new and returning counselors.

Staff training week concentrates on effective cabin leadership and includes heavy emphasis on teaching skills. Staff are required to complete 40 hours of online training and testing prior to on-site staff training. In addition to traditional camp training, all of our staff are also certified in First Aid, CPR, AED, O2. We also certify our lifeguards as Waterfront Lifeguards.

We maintain an overall staff to camper ratio of 1:4 in the cabin and 1:3 on the grounds with the inclusion of our program staff. Our high ratio ensures each camper receives positive interaction with their counselors each and every day.

We follow all Child Safety Guidelines from YMCA of Southwestern Indiana, Inc.

Hand washing and hand sanitizing stations are available throughout camp. Program supplies and equipment will follow procedures to be sanitized between uses. Camp maintenance staff cleans high-use areas throughout the day.

HEALTH CARE AT CAMP

YMCA Camp Carson takes seriously its responsibility to provide all campers with a healthy camping experience. We maintain a well-equipped health center with camp nurses on-site 24 hours a day. In addition, all of our counselors hold current certification in First Aid, CPR, Oxygen, and AED and are thoroughly trained to properly handle emergency situations. We also have arrangements with a local pediatrician and Gibson General Hospital (only 10 minutes from camp).

INJURIES AND ILLNESS AT CAMP

The majority of bumps, scrapes and bug bites are treated at camp by the camp medical staff. Parents are contacted by phone by our Health Center staff if symptoms of illness are presented.

MEDICATIONS

ALL medications (including vitamins) must be given to the nurse on opening day at check-in.

- Prescription drugs must be in the original container with current dosage clearly stated on the container.
- If your camper requires any non-prescription drugs such as Zyrtec etc., these medications should also be in the original container in order to provide the camp nurse with all the appropriate medication information.

- The Health Center is stocked with basic Tylenol and Ibuprofen etc. so it is not necessary to bring these to camp. Please do not bring vitamins for the one week of camp, unless absolutely necessary.

Keeping ALL medications out of the cabin helps ensure the safety of all campers. All unused medications will be placed in your camper's luggage on closing day.

Medications are dispensed by the medical staff at breakfast, lunch, and dinner, at the Dining Hall and at bedtime at the Health Center. If your camper's medication schedule is different, please discuss with the medical staff when you turn in your camper's medications during Check In.

PREVENTIVE HEALTH MEASURES BEFORE AND DURING CAMP:

ANNUAL PHYSICALS - A completed Camp Health Examination Form must be completed for each camper. The front is completed and signed by a parent and the back is to be completed, signed and dated by a licensed physician. The physical date must fall within 24 months of the camper's arrival at camp.

HEAD LICE PREVENTION - If your child has had head lice or has been exposed through a friend or family member, please have a nurse or physician carefully check your child's scalp before opening day. The presence of head lice should be treated and then rechecked before coming to camp. Please also ask the camp nurse to check your camper's scalp prior to your departure.

ILLNESS/FEVER PRIOR TO CAMP ARRIVAL - Contagious diseases spread quickly in the camp setting. Our expectation on Opening Day is that all campers arrive in a healthy condition. If your child has a fever or is experiencing nausea or unusual pain, please delay his/her arrival time until 24 hours after illness or pain has abated and there is no elevated temperature.

MASKING - Campers may choose to wear masks at Camp.

SWIMMERS EAR PREVENTION - In order to minimize internal ear infections, swimmer's eardrops are administered after each visit to the swim lake.

SUN AND HEAT - Most activities are in shaded areas or in the water. Water bottle filling stations are available throughout camp, and Campers will fill up each morning and afternoon before leaving the cabin. ALL campers are required to apply sunscreen prior to morning and afternoon activities. Campers who need additional applications of sunscreen are reminded to do so.

Important details for parents

ACCREDITATION STATUS

YMCA Camp Carson adheres to the very highest in health and safety standards and is proud to be accredited by the American Camp Association (ACA). Developed exclusively for the camp profession, this nationally recognized program has been formulated to promote safe and professional practices in all aspects of camp operation including site, health and safety, food service, staff and program quality. YMCA Camp Carson has voluntarily submitted to this independent appraisal done by camping experts and has earned this mark of distinction.

BIRTHDAYS AT CAMP

Having a birthday while you're at camp can be pretty special. We have decorations for the camper's cabin, and sing Happy Birthday to celebrate the special camper in the Dining Hall.

CABIN MATE REQUESTS AND CABIN ASSIGNMENTS

We try to honor mutual cabin mate requests if campers are within one year of age or grade of each other. **A vital part of the camp experience is making new friends and building new relationships.** We cannot accommodate requests for more than 2 mutual cabin mates. It can be overwhelming for a camper to be in a cabin with a large group of other campers who are already friends, so we will split large groups of campers from the same school, etc.

Cabin assignments are made 2-3 days prior to check-in and are not released prior to Check-In day. You will receive an email prior to arrival if we are NOT able to meet your cabin mate request.

CANTEEN (CAMP STORE)

The Canteen is open each day at designated times. A selection of t-shirts, souvenirs, ice cream, beverages, candy and salty snacks are available. Campers are limited to 2 sugary snacks each day (sugary snacks refers to candy and soda).

Please deposit canteen money to your camper's account online prior to your camper's arrival

- Access your Parent Account
- Click on the View Accounts section
- Select your camper and click "Fund"
- Enter in an amount and your credit card information, click "Fund Account"

We recommend a \$40 deposit for snacks/drinks and camp tshirt or souvenir. For campers staying over the weekend, we recommend an \$90 deposit.

Please DO NOT allow campers to keep money in the cabin, and do not pack food for campers.

Canteen refund information:

A canteen summary of your camper's account can be viewed online at any time in your Parent Account. Two options are available for any remaining funds in your camper's account on Friday:

- Donate remaining funds to provide camp scholarships for children of military families
- Receive a refund back to your original credit card.

If you do not specify on your form at check-out, we will automatically designate any remaining funds to scholarships for children of military families.

CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT

It is our desire to positively influence the character of each camper we serve, and **we respect and welcome children of ALL faiths**. We accomplish this by carefully weaving the YMCA core values of Caring, Respect, Honesty, Respect and Faith throughout our programs. Living in a cabin with 14 other people, and exploring activities with new friends gives campers the opportunity to exercise these core values every day. It is our hope that campers will take these life skills with them as they return to their home, school and community relationships.

The core value of Faith is shared through morning chapel, taps talks, and cabin devotions each evening. We also hold a Body, Mind, Spirit ceremony each week in which we share with our campers the importance of each of these important areas for every individual.

EVALUATIONS - CAMPER and PARENT

Parents receive a survey request from us at the end of your camper's week. We truly value your feedback, and ask that you respond to this survey we can better serve our camp families. We welcome your feedback at any time, you are invited to call or email our office. Campers will also participate in surveys during their stay at camp. This feedback helps us continuously improve & ensure that our campers have the best experience.

HOMESICKNESS - PREPARING FOR CAMP

Preparing for the camp experience is often something that is overlooked or misunderstood. However, if you plan and discuss the camp experience with your children, it can help create a powerful set of first camp memories.

HOMESICKNESS AT CAMP

On occasion, some campers may experience homesickness. We explain to our campers that everyone at camp experiences some level of homesickness, even our staff. During the week, campers and staff quickly become a family for the week and most homesickness is resolved within a day or two. If your camper experiences a higher level of homesickness and is having unusual difficulty working through it, we will give you a call to inform you of your camper's progress and seek your advice moving forward. Historically, out of the 1200+ campers we serve, less than 1 camper per summer is unable to work through this very normal emotion of homesickness.

LAUNDRY

Please make sure campers have enough clothing for their one or two-week stay. We do not typically offer laundry service, but we will check in with our two-week campers at the end of the first week to be sure their clothes, bedding, and towels are still fresh.

LOST AND FOUND

We do everything we can to help your camper keep track of their belongings. **PLEASE** label your camper's belongings, and talk to your camper about what they are packing for camp. As stated on our application parent agreement, YMCA Camp Carson is not responsible for articles of clothing or personal belongings damaged or missing in transit, loss or theft.

MEALS, SPECIAL DIETS and FOOD ALLERGIES

All meals are served family style, and campers eat together with their cabin group. YMCA Camp Carson strives to provide balanced healthy meal options for campers. Breakfast includes a hot entree as well as a cereal, fruit and yogurt bar. A salad bar is also offered at each lunch and dinner meal. Fresh fruit is available to campers throughout the day. For those who may need a PBJ, we have Sun Butter and jelly available.

Special Diets: If your child has dietary restrictions or food allergies, please document your camper's needs in the Health History Form. Adjustments can be made for special medical diets such as gluten and other allergies. Our staff will make your camper aware of food offering that contain your camper's allergens. Menus for your camper's week can be provided to you prior to camp. If you have questions or would like to discuss specific needs, please call us at 812-385-3597 prior to Summer Camp.

PAYMENTS, CANCELLATIONS & REFUNDS

A **non-refundable** registration fee of \$100 per session is required at time of registration, and is applied to the total tuition fee. The remaining balance is due **by May 15th**. Registrations after May 15th should include the entire camp fee.

CANCELLATION POLICY: I understand that if YMCA Camp Carson receives WRITTEN NOTIFICATION of cancellation prior to May 15, 2025, the family will receive a full refund minus the registration fee. After May 15, 2025, refunds **WILL NOT** be available.

However, there are two exceptions:

1. With a doctor-approved medical reason, with written notification.
2. IF YMCA Camp Carson can find someone from our waitlist to fill the open camper spot. Please note that the availability of campers on the wait list changes daily, and there is no guarantee of a replacement or refund.

SWIM TEST

To become a band swimmer, campers must be able to swim 25 yards with their head out of the water and no doggie paddling. Campers must also tread water for 30 seconds. Some campers struggle to pass the swim test on Opening Day due to first day jitters. Campers can take the swim test each day, but for the safety of campers, we absolutely will not pass a camper until they are able to demonstrate swimming ability.

Some waterfront activities are limited for campers who are not able to pass the swim test. Waterfront staff work with campers who do not pass the swim test to help them develop their swimming skills.

WEATHER - SEVERE WEATHER PROCEDURES

Camp carries on through the rain, but if lightning is present, campers are restricted to covered areas. In the event of a tornado warning, all campers and staff move to the basement of the Dining Hall for safety.

CAMP PHOTOS

It's always exciting to see your kid enjoying YMCA Camp Carson, and we take hundreds of photos throughout the week. You will receive information at check-in with a link to access to new photos every day. We try to get photos of each camper every day, but sometimes we are unable to catch every activity area throughout the day. Please note that Wrangler and Dirt Bike campers may not be caught on camera as often, as their program takes them out onto the trails throughout the week.

PLEASE NOTE: By making application, it is understood that permission is given to use pictures in which your child as a camper may appear in the Camp brochure, website or other promotional literature/posters used by the camp, YMCA of Southwestern Indiana Inc., American Camp Association, YMCA of the USA, or other camp affiliates.

Check-in and Check-out information

CHECK-IN

Families will receive an email with detailed instructions in advance. Please be sure all of your forms are submitted, and fees paid in full prior to arrival.

CANTEEN DEPOSITS

Please make Canteen deposits online prior to your arrival at camp through your Parent Account. Please **DO NOT** allow campers to keep money in the cabin, or pack snacks for campers. (More Canteen information on P. 10)

DROP OFF CAMPER MAIL DURING CHECK IN

Everyone loves to receive mail! Sending mail by postal service can be slow. You may leave a couple of letters with us at Check-In. Write on the envelope the camper's name, cabin name, day you want us to deliver it, and we'll deliver to your camper on that day.

Please do not mail or leave packages for campers - especially avoid food & snacks that attract critters to the cabins. Campers can buy snacks, drinks, stuffies, and shirts at Canteen.

CHECK-OUT

Families will receive an email with detailed instructions in advance.

PHOTO ID IS REQUIRED

Camp staff will check your photo ID as part of the check-out process.

PERMISSION TO LEAVE CAMP FORM

For the safety of our campers, counselors can **ONLY** release campers to **adults listed on the Permission to Leave Camp** form. You may log into your parent account to review this form & confirm the adults listed. If you need to make changes, please call the camp office at 812-385-3597.

EARLY CHECK OUT PROCEDURE

The camper experience is designed for the entire week and is intentionally programmed through a progression of relationship building, challenges, personal reflection, and growth. If you do need to pick your child up early, please email carsonoffice@ymcacampcarson.org. It is best if we receive this email prior to check in day. If something comes up after your child is at camp, please call the camp office and follow up with an email.

ON THE RIDE HOME

We have crafted a few open ended questions as conversation starters with your child on the car ride home, for you to better understand their experience and learn more about their week:

- What are the things you are proudest of this week?
- I noticed camp has a motto, ACE – Accepted, Challenged and Empowered! Can you tell me about that?
- Tell me about your cabin mates, counselors and cabin group activities.
- What are some goals you set for yourself?
- I saw a photo of you doing _____. Tell me about that.