Heal. Grow.
Be Wild.
Howell Nature Center

Camp Wonder
ParentGuide





Welcome!

Thank you for registering your child for Day Camp at Camp Wonder! We're over-the-moon excited to welcome your camper into a summer filled with adventure, laughter, and plenty of sunshine. Our mission is to create a magical, memorable, and truly uplifting camp experience. This guide will help you and your camper get ready for a safe, smooth, and wonderfully fun summer at Camp Wonder—where every day is an adventure!

Contacting Us

During the summer, our team is usually out adventuring with our campers, **so the best way to reach us is by email at summercamps@howellnaturecenter.org**. This is also the best contact for any registration questions, changes, or updates. We monitor this inbox Monday–Friday all year long and are always happy to help!

While we don't maintain a year-round summer camp phone line, **we do have a Day Camp phone number (810- 599-0367) when camp is in session.** This line is primarily used to let us know about early pick-ups, late drop-offs, or absences. If you call with a question, our Day Camp staff may be able to assist, but they will most likely direct you to our Summer Camps email for the quickest and most accurate response.

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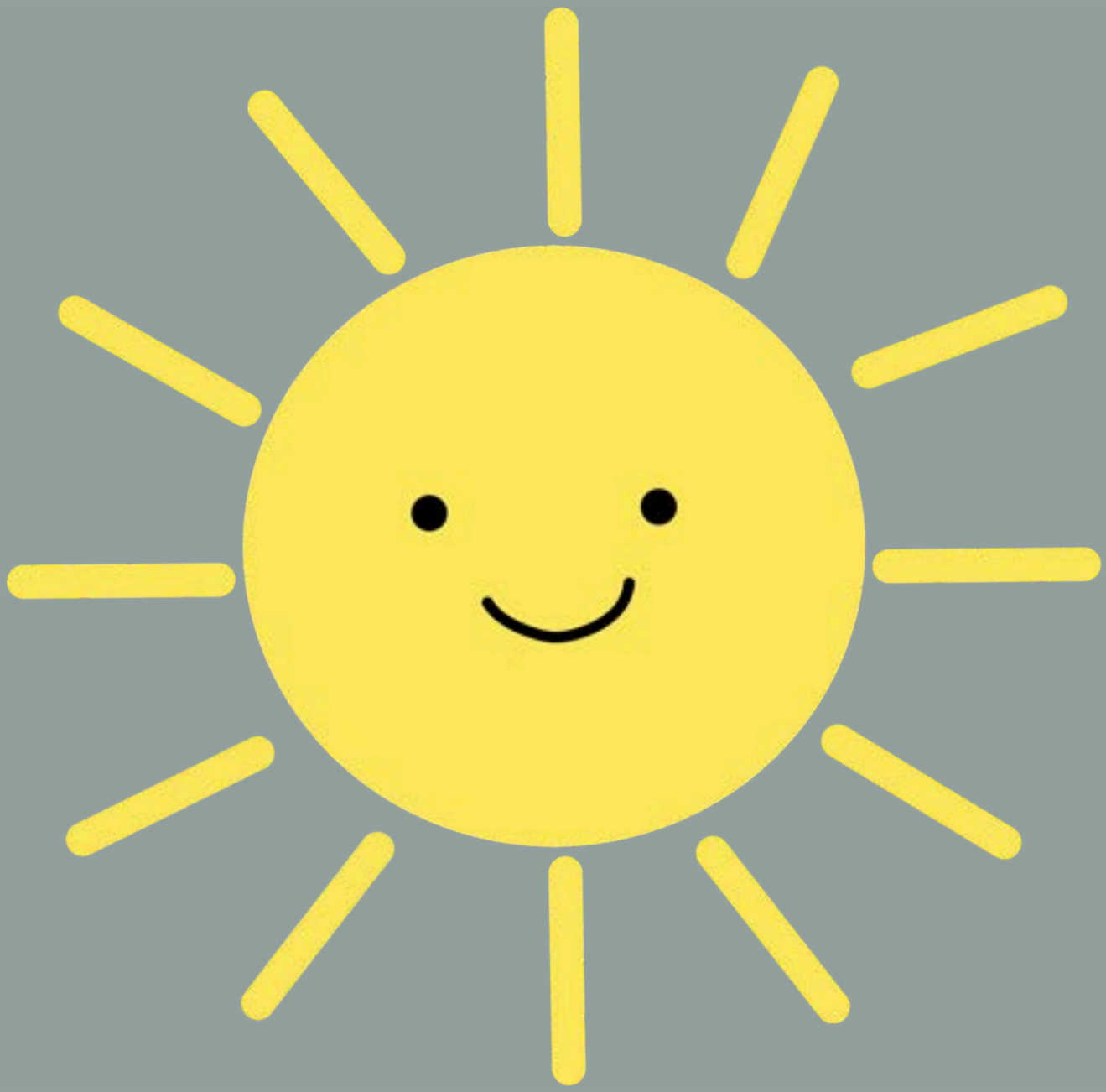
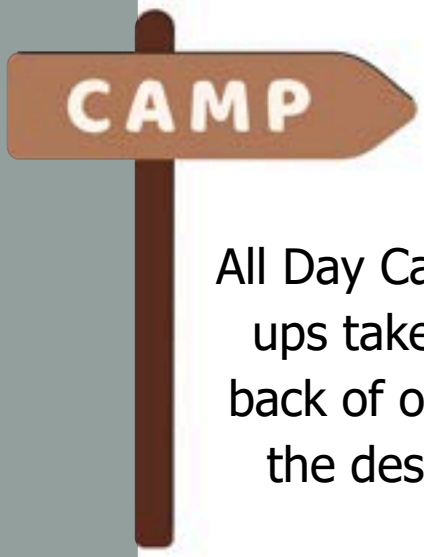
Day Camps



Check In/ Check Out



Check In: 8AM-9AM
Check Out: 4PM- 5PM

All Day Camp and Specialty Camp drop-offs and pick-ups take place at **Grindley Lodge**, located at the back of our property. You may arrive anytime within the designated check-in and check-out windows.

When you arrive, simply stay in your car and pull into one of the marked camp lanes, where a staff member will happily assist you.

If you need to **drop off late** or **pick up early**, please let us know as soon as possible by calling or texting **810-599-0367**. We're here to help!

Camper PINs

On your camper's first day of check-in, you'll receive a unique PIN assigned just for them.
This private PIN **must be shown or provided** to our check-out staff in order to pick up your camper.
Please share this code ONLY with trusted adults who are authorized to pick up your child. You're welcome to text them the PIN or send a photo for convenience.
Your camper's safety is our top priority!

Forms

Before Day Camp begins, every camper must have the following three forms completed (or updated):

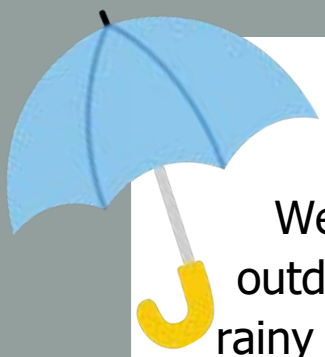
- Health Form
- Agreement to Participate Form (Waiver)
- Camper Code of Conduct Form

Health & Safety

We always have a certified Health Officer on duty to keep our campers safe and cared for throughout the day. Whether it's handling medications, offering first aid, or responding to unexpected bumps and scrapes, our Health Officer is trained, attentive, and ready to help. Your camper's well-being is our top priority!

Camper Meds

- All camper medication must be turned in to the Health Officer and must be in its original packaging.
- For emergency medications (such as EpiPens or inhalers), you may choose whether they stay at camp for the entire summer or are returned to you at the end of each week.
- Your camper's counselors will carry emergency medications with them at all times to ensure quick access if needed.
- For safety, campers are not permitted to carry any medication on their person.



Weather

We are a rain-or-shine camp! Activities will continue outdoors as long as there is no lightning or thunder. On rainy days, we recommend that campers bring a raincoat, rain boots, or an umbrella to stay comfortable.

As much as we wish every day in Michigan were sunny and 75°F, we know that stormy days—and extra hot days—are inevitable. Camp staff will monitor the weather closely and will bring campers indoors or adjust the schedule whenever needed to keep everyone safe.

On especially hot days, mandatory swim may be required. During mandatory swim, all campers must put their feet in the water for at least 15 minutes to help them cool down and stay safe in the heat.

Lost & Found

We have a Day Camp Lost & Found that is managed by our staff. If your child's belongings are labeled with their name, we'll return the item to them as soon as it's found.

Throughout the week, campers will have the opportunity to walk through the Lost & Found to check for any missing items. Parents and guardians are also welcome to look through the Lost & Found during check-in or check-out. We're here to help reunite campers with their treasures!

Behavior Policy

At Camp Wonder, we use Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) because we believe they create the strongest foundation for a successful camp experience. By offering engaging, meaningful, and fun activities, we can prevent many potential behavior issues and help every camper thrive.



However, if a camper is unable to follow camp policies or counselor instructions, the following 3-Strike Policy will be put into effect:

Strike 1: Camper is sent home for the remainder of the day (no refund)

Strike 2: Camper is sent home for the remainder of the week (no refund)

Strike 3: Camper is sent home for the rest of the summer (no refund)

These guidelines help ensure a safe, respectful, and enjoyable environment for everyone.

Dress Code

Camp mirrors most school dress codes. Campers must wear closed-toed shoes for safety. We also highly recommend bringing a change of clothes each day to stay comfortable during outdoor activities.

Packing List



Essentials:

- Backpack
- Lunch
- Refillable water bottle
- Swimsuit (water shoes are optional for swim times)
- Towel
- Change of clothes
- Sunscreen & bug spray
- Rain gear
- Hat & sunglasses

Please Do NOT Bring:

- Electronic devices (cell phones, tablets, video games, etc.)
- Weapons of any kind, including pocket knives

Tips:

- Label everything with your camper's name to help us return lost items.
- Note: We are not responsible for lost or damaged items.

Daily Schedule

8:00-9:00 AM	Check In
9:00-9:15 AM	Morning Meeting
9:15-10:30 AM	Activity #1
10:45- 2:00 PM	Activity #2
12:15-12:45 PM	Lunch
1:00-2:15 PM	Activity #3
2:30-3:45 PM	Activity #4
3:45-4:00 PM	Snack & Gather Belongings
4:00-5:00 PM	Check Out

We make sure every activity is age-appropriate and packed with a thrilling mix of wildlife exploration, high-adventure challenges, nature discoveries, sports, games, arts, and more!



Each day, one of the four activities is always free swim in our lake, giving campers a safe, supervised chance to splash and cool off.



Day Camp FAQs

If I need to change or cancel my campers' registration, what do I do?

- The best way to make registration adjustments is to e-mail us at: summercamps@howellnaturecenter.org. While we don't maintain a year-round summer camp phone line, we do have a Day Camp phone number (810- 599- 0367) when camp is in session. This line is primarily used to let us know about early pick-ups, late drop-offs, or absences. If you call with a question, our Day Camp staff may be able to assist, but they will most likely direct you to our Summer Camps email for the quickest and most accurate response.

Do I need to send lunch with my camper?

- Yes! You will need to send lunch with your camper. It's recommended to pack it in an insulated lunch box with cold packs or ice packs, as we don't have enough refrigerator space for everyone's lunch. You're welcome to pack items that contain nuts, but we do ask that campers do not share food with others.

Are snacks provided by Camp Wonder?

- Yes! Campers will receive a snack around 3:30 PM each day before check out. If your camper has a food allergy, please be sure to list it on our health form during registration so our Camp Health Officers can arrange for an appropriate snack.

Day Camp FAQs



What should I be sending with my camper?

- Please refer to the packing list in our Parent Guide online for the full list of what to bring. The essentials include items like a backpack, lunch, water bottle, swimsuit, towel, sunscreen, and a change of clothes. And please make sure to label everything with your child's name so we can easily return any misplaced items.

What happens if the weather is bad, does camp still run?

- Yes. We make every effort to ensure that our campers spend time outdoors, but when the weather goes down we've got it covered. We are a rain-or-shine camp! Activities will continue outdoors as long as there is no lightning or thunder. On rainy days, we recommend that campers bring a raincoat, rain boots, or an umbrella to stay comfortable.

My camper doesn't know how to swim yet. Should I send a life jacket with them?

- Every child will take a swim test conducted by our certified Red Cross lifeguards and will be assigned a swim section based on their skill level. However, if you would like your child to wear a life jacket during swim time, we are more than happy to accommodate that request. Just include it in the camper notes section during registration or let the day camp staff know upon arrival. Please note that life jackets are required on our fishing dock, during any boating activity, and while using our aqua toys and will be supplied to your child.



Day Camp FAQs

I need to pick my camper up early from camp, what should I do?

- For early pickup or late drop off, please call the camp hotline at 810-599-0367 or call the Welcome Center at 517-376-9733 to make arrangements.

Can my camper be put in the same group as their friends?

- We're happy to accommodate friend requests as long as the campers are in the same age group. During registration, you'll find a section where you can list any friends your camper would like to be grouped with. Please note that if behavioral issues arise, our day camp staff may need to separate certain friend groups for the well-being of the campers. If that occurs, we will communicate with parents or guardians to keep you informed.

What is the camper to staff ratio? And do you provide 1 on 1 support?

- We maintain a 1:10 camper-to-staff ratio across all of our groups and are not able to accommodate 1:1 support requests at this time. If your child has a paraprofessional at school or requires a 1:1 ratio, we are more than happy to help connect you with a camp that provides that level of support and is the right fit for your family.

Overnight Camps



Check In/ Check Out



Check In:
Sunday, 3PM-4:30PM

Check Out:
Thursday, 5:30PM- 6:30PM

Overnight Camp check-in and check-out will take place at **Grindley Lodge**, located at the back of our property. When you arrive, please park and follow the signs and directions from camp staff. Our team will help your camper get checked in, collect any necessary medications, and make sure they are ready to begin their overnight adventure!

Camper PINs

On your camper's first day of check-in, you'll receive a unique PIN assigned just for them.
This private PIN **must be shown or provided** to our check-out staff in order to pick up your camper.
Please share this code ONLY with trusted adults who are authorized to pick up your child. You're welcome to text them the PIN or send a photo for convenience.
Your camper's safety is our top priority!

Forms

Before Overnight Camp begins, every camper must have the following three forms completed (or updated):

- Health Form
- Agreement to Participate Form (Waiver)
- Camper Code of Conduct Form

Health & Safety

We always have a certified Health Officer on duty to keep our campers safe and cared for throughout the day. Whether it's handling medications, offering first aid, or responding to unexpected bumps and scrapes, our Health Officer is trained, attentive, and ready to help. Your camper's well-being is our top priority!

Camper Meds

- All camper medication must be turned in to the Health Officer and must be in its original packaging.
- For emergency medications (such as EpiPens or inhalers), you may choose whether they stay at camp for the entire summer or are returned to you at the end of each week.
- Your camper's counselors will carry emergency medications with them at all times to ensure quick access if needed.
- For safety, campers are not permitted to carry any medication on their person.



Weather

We are a rain-or-shine camp!

Campers should come prepared for all kinds of Michigan weather. Activities may continue outdoors during rain as long as conditions are safe, so please make sure your camper packs appropriate rain gear and clothing.

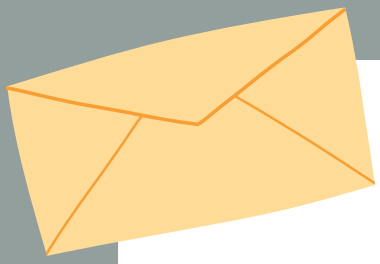
Camp staff will closely monitor the weather and will bring campers indoors or adjust the schedule whenever necessary to keep everyone safe.

Please remember that overnight campers will be outside for extended periods of time, so appropriate rain gear, a warm layer, sunscreen, and insect repellent are especially important.

Lost & Found

We have a Camp Lost & Found that is managed by our staff. If your child's belongings are labeled with their name, we'll return the item to them as soon as it's found.

Throughout the week, campers will have the opportunity to walk through the Lost & Found to check for any missing items. Parents and guardians are also welcome to look through the Lost & Found during check-in or check-out. We're here to help reunite campers with their treasures!



Camper Mail

Campers love getting mail! Families are welcome to send letters or cards to their camper during the week. Please mail items early enough to allow time for delivery.

Mail may be addressed to:

Howell Nature Center – Camp Wonder
Attn: Camper's Name
1005 Triangle Lake Road
Howell, MI 48843

Please do not send packages containing food or valuables.

Emergency Communication

If you need to reach your camper's camp staff regarding an emergency or urgent situation, please call Camp Wonder at **810-599-0367**. This phone is monitored 24 hours a day and is the quickest way to reach a member of the camp team. **Please reserve this number for emergencies and urgent situations only**. Do not call or text this number for casual communication, general questions, or routine updates. For non-urgent needs, please contact the Welcome Center or Summer Camps email.

Behavior Policy

At Camp Wonder, we use Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) because we believe they create the strongest foundation for a successful camp experience.

Our goal is to help every camper have a safe, respectful, and enjoyable experience. Campers are expected to follow camp policies, listen to counselor instructions, treat others with respect, and make safe choices throughout their stay. Behavior that threatens the safety or well-being of another camper or staff member may result in a camper being sent home immediately.



For other behavioral concerns, camp staff will communicate with parents/guardians and work to determine the appropriate next steps.

If a camper is sent home due to behavior, there will be no refund or credit for the unused portion of camp. Howell Nature Center also reserves the right to determine whether a camper is eligible to return for future camp sessions.

Dress Code

Campers should dress for an active outdoor experience and be prepared to get dirty! Closed-toe shoes are required for most activities, and campers should bring weather-appropriate clothing for outdoor activities.

Packing List



Essentials:

- Sleeping bag
- Pillow
- At least 2 towels/washcloths
- Soap & shampoo
- Toothbrush & toothpaste
- Comb/brush
- Deodorant
- Pajamas
- Underwear
- Socks
- Pants
- Shorts
- Shirts
- Bathing suit & towel
- Refillable water bottle
- Backpack
- Tennis shoes
- Sandals/water shoes
- Hooded rain gear — VERY IMPORTANT
- Warm jacket or sweatshirt
- Insect repellent
- Sunscreen
- Clothes that can get VERY MESSY

Packing List (cont.)

Optional Items:

- Flashlight
- Book
- Sunglasses
- Camera
- Money for the camp store

Please DO NOT Bring:

- Cell phones
- Tablets, iPads, iPods, or other electronic devices
- Knives or weapons of any kind
- Blow dryers or curling irons
- Jewelry or valuables

Please write your camper's name on ALL belongings!



Daily Schedule

8:00 AM	Breakfast
9:45 AM	Cabin Activity #1
11:00 AM	Cabin Activity #2
12:30 PM	Lunch
1:30 PM	Rest Period
2:45 PM	Cabin Activity #3
4:15 PM	Beach Swim
5:45 PM	Dinner
6:45 PM	Cabin Activity #4
8:00 PM	All Camp Activity
9:15 PM	Snack/ Showers
10:30 PM	Lights Out

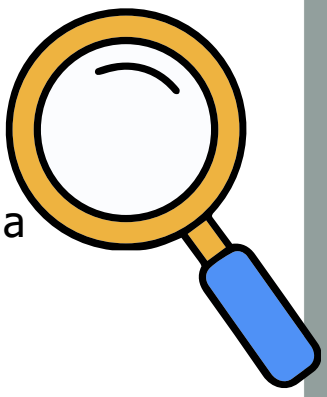
Overnight Camp FAQs

Can I pick my camper up early?

If you need to pick your camper up before the scheduled Thursday check-out, please contact the camp staff as early as possible so we can make arrangements.

Can my camper have their phone?

No. Campers are not permitted to have cell phones or other personal electronic devices during camp. This helps campers stay engaged with their group, their counselors, and the camp experience.



Can my camper bring a camera?

A simple camera may be permitted. Please do not send a camera that has cellular or internet capabilities.

Can my camper bring money?

Yes. Spending money is optional and may be used at the Camp Wonder camp store.

What if my camper takes medication?

All medication must be turned in to the Health Officer during check-in. Medication must be in its original packaging and clearly labeled with the camper's name and instructions.

Campers are not permitted to keep medication with them.

Overnight Camp FAQs

What if my camper gets homesick?

Homesickness is a normal part of the overnight camp experience, especially for campers who are away from home for the first time. Our counselors are trained to support campers, help them stay engaged, and give them opportunities to talk through their feelings.

We encourage families to send positive, encouraging letters and remind campers that they are capable of handling their overnight adventure!



What happens if the weather is bad?

Camp operates rain or shine whenever conditions are safe. Camp staff monitor weather conditions closely and will adjust activities or move indoors when necessary. Please make sure your camper packs appropriate rain gear and warm clothing.

Can my camper swim?

Campers participate in waterfront activities under the supervision of trained lifeguards and camp staff. Camp staff will provide instructions regarding swimming and waterfront safety when campers arrive, and all campers will undergo a swim test.

What happens if my camper is sick or injured?

Our Health Officer is on duty throughout the camp session and can provide first aid and respond to camper health concerns. If your camper becomes ill or is injured and requires care beyond what camp can safely provide, we will contact you or your designated emergency contact.



FAQs

What if my camper has a dietary restriction or food allergy?

Please make sure all allergies, dietary restrictions, and other important health information are accurately listed on your camper's Health Form during registration. This information allows our camp and food service staff to plan appropriately for your camper.

Can my camper be with their friends?

We will do our best to accommodate friend requests when possible. Friend requests should be submitted during registration. Please understand that cabin/group assignments are based on age, group dynamics, staffing, and the overall needs of the camp. If behavioral or safety concerns arise, staff may need to separate campers. If this occurs, we will communicate with parents or guardians as appropriate.

If I need to change or cancel my campers' registration, what do I do?

The best way to make registration adjustments is to e- mail us at: **summercamps@howellnaturecenter.org**. While we don't maintain a year-round summer camp phone line, we do have a Camp phone number (810- 599- 0367) when camp is in session. If you call with a question, our Camp staff may be able to assist, but they will most likely direct you to our Summer Camps email for the quickest and most accurate response.