



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

PARENT GUIDE 2026

All parents should read this entire packet carefully, especially parents new to the Illinois Valley YMCA Summer Camp. Returning parents please read through all forms carefully since there have been updates since summer 2025.



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

Dear Parents and Campers:

Welcome to summer camp at the Illinois Valley YMCA! Thank you for the opportunity to be a part of your child's life this summer. Camp is a special place that provides positive growth experiences and teaches campers to live by the values of **Caring, Honesty, Respect** and **Responsibility**.

The Illinois Valley YMCA has a well-trained and educated staff, accustomed to making campers feel welcome. The information in this Parent Guide is very important! It is our hope that this information will help you and your child prepare for an amazing experience.

Please complete the forms enclosed in the separate registration packet. **All forms need to be returned to camp before your child's first day. Campers will not be admitted without completed paperwork.**

1. Participant Emergency Information Packet
2. Payment Policy Form
3. Sign In/Out Policy Form

Thank you for your attention to these IMPORTANT details. If you have any questions, call the Youth Development Director Maya Ahlstrom at 815.223.7904 ext. 035. We look forward to serving you and your camper!

Maya Ahlstrom
Youth Development Director

Illinois Valley YMCA
300 Walnut Drive, Peru, IL 61354
Ph: 815.223.7904 Fax: 815.223.7955
Email: maya@ivymca.org
www.ivymca.org

Registration Opens

Monday, January 5, 2026

Drop off at the front desk



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

2026 PARENT HANDBOOK

CAMP’S MISSION AND VALUES

At the Illinois Valley YMCA, we seek to provide safe, fun, creative and challenging camping opportunities that foster individual and family growth in areas of self-worth, responsibility, self-expression, independence, leadership, environmental awareness and values. Our mission and the YMCA’s four core values are the foundation for all that we do here at the Illinois Valley YMCA. Both govern our day-to-day lives and are the basis for all rules and requirements established at camp. It is important that all campers and staff strive to teach, practice, and model the values of Caring, Honesty, Respect, and Responsibility each day.

CAMP OPERATIONS

HOURS OF OPERATION

- Camp Program: 7 a.m. – 5:30 p.m., Monday through Friday.
- Campers are dropped off and picked up in our Summer Camp room.
- Campers will be split into various themed activities to differentiate between ages.
- Parents/Guardians must sign in and sign out campers at check-in and check-out.
- Campers must be registered prior to being left in the camp room each day.

REGISTRATION FEE

Must be paid at the time child(ren) are registered for camp. Campers cannot be registered or attend camp until registration fees are paid. Registration fees are \$50 for individuals and \$100 per family. Registration fees cover administrative costs, hold your place, and include a T-shirt. Please allow time for shirts to be ordered.

CAMP PRICING

5 Day/Week

Member Single Child: \$180
 Member Additional Children: \$160
 Non-Member Single Child: \$235
 Non-Member Additional Children: \$215

3 Day/Week

Member Single Child: \$155
 Member Additional Children: \$135
 Non-Member Single Child: \$180
 Non-Member Additional Children: \$160

Drop In/One Day

Member \$55
 Non-Member \$66

| 2026 DAY CAMP SESSION DATES | |
|-----------------------------|------------|
| Session 1: | June -1-5 |
| Session 2: | June 8-12 |
| Session 3: | June 15-19 |
| Session 4: | June 22-26 |
| Session 5: | June 29-3 |
| Session 6: | July 6-10 |
| Session 7: | July 13-17 |
| Session 8: | July 20-24 |
| Session 9: | July 27-31 |



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

REGISTRATION, PAYMENT OF FEES, AND CANCELLATION POLICY

1. Campers must pay the registration fee to receive camp T-shirt.
2. **Cancellations must be made prior to the camp session starting.** To cancel your day camp session, email Maya Ahlstrom at mayaq@ivymca.org. Cancellations will not be accepted by staff at check-in or check-out.
3. Vouchers are issued for medical reasons only and are issued upon receipt of a licensed medical doctor's written authorized medical statement.
4. Refunds/vouchers are not issued for campers going home early due to disciplinary action or homesickness.
5. There is no reduction of fees or credit given for days not attended within your day camp session.
6. The parent/guardian who registers a child is responsible for payment of fees. If custodial payment agreements are legally in place, it is the responsibility of the parent who registers the child to see that these payment agreements are followed through upon or must personally see that fees are paid in full the first day of the camp session.
7. Failure to fulfill camp payment for two weeks (does not need to be consecutive), the child(ren) may be removed from the Day Camp program for the rest of the year.

CHECK-IN/CHECK-OUT PROCEDURES

- We reserve the right to dismiss a camper from our program who is repeatedly dropped in before camp begins.
- We reserve the right to dismiss a camper from our program who is repeatedly picked up late.
- At check-out, parent/guardian at least 18 years of age must show a valid photo ID.
- At check-out, if the parent/guardian does not have a valid photo ID, the camper cannot be released until a valid photo ID is shown to Day Camp staff member.
- Campers will not be released to the parking lot for pickup. A parent/guardian at least 18 years of age must come into the camp room for check out.

RELEASE OF CAMPERS

- Campers are not released to unauthorized adults.
- Campers are not released to authorized adults without a valid photo ID or who are not at least 18 years of age.



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

A DAY AT CAMP

SAMPLE DAILY DAY CAMP SCHEDULE

| | |
|------------------|---------------------------------|
| 7:00-8:30 a.m. | Announcements, songs, etc. |
| 8:45-9:20 a.m. | Activity #1 (Ex: Playground) |
| 9:20-9:30 a.m. | Snack (Camp provides) |
| 9:30-10:25 a.m. | Activity #2 (Ex: Arts & Crafts) |
| 10:30-11:00 a.m. | Choice Period #1 |
| 11:00-12:00 p.m. | Activity #3 (Ex: Swimming) |
| 12:00-1:00 p.m. | Lunch (Camper brings) |
| 1:00-1:30 p.m. | Activity #4 (Ex: Waterpark) |
| 1:30-2:30 p.m. | Activity #5 (Ex: Gym) |
| 2:45-3:45 p.m. | Choice Period #2 |
| 3:45-4:00 p.m. | Afternoon snack (Camp provides) |
| 4:00-5:30 p.m. | Choice Period #3/ Wrap Up |

EXAMPLE ACTIVITIES:

- Sports
- Arts & Crafts
- Games
- Drama
- 4-Square
- Teams Course
- Group Games
- Playground

** Activities are dependent on weather, age, and swim ability.*

Staff are trained to plan activities based on age, skill, and camper choice.

THEME WEEKS

Each day of camp is filled with fun activities, games, crafts, and opportunities for campers to learn, explore, and create lasting memories. This summer, our weeks are organized into special themes designed to help campers dive deeper into the YMCA’s core values of **Caring, Honesty, Respect, and Responsibility**. Through hands-on experiences and engaging programming, campers will build friendships, discover new interests, and grow in character all summer long.

- Session 1: Caring
- Session 2: Caring
- Session 3: Honesty
- Session 4: Honesty
- Session 5: Respect
- Session 6: Respect
- Session 7: Responsibility
- Session 8: Responsibility
- Session 9: Responsibility

WHAT TO BRING TO CAMP

LUNCH, SNACKS, AND DRINKS

- We ask each camper to bring a healthy lunch (nut free if possible) and drink daily.
- Please label camper’s lunch with camper’s full name.
- Lunches are not refrigerated; many parents include a cooler pack. Ice packs are the responsibility of the camper.
- Please do not send glass bottles or containers.
- Please send camper with a water bottle, labeled with camper’s full name.
- A morning/afternoon snack is provided by the camp daily
- Staff are unable to make meals for campers in the microwave.

HEALTHY KIDS PACK HEALTHY LUNCHES:

- Yogurt
- Fruit
- Veggies
- 100% Fruit Juice
- Graham Crackers
- String Cheese
- Applesauce
- Popcorn
- Animal Crackers
- Sandwich
- Pretzels
- Goldfish



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

Forgotten lunches: If your camper forgets his/her lunch, camp provides lunch for the camper for a fee of \$5. Lunches are **not** available for daily purchase. Lunch fees are added onto camper account. Payments are due at the end of each week for lunch fees.

CAMPERS’ DAILY CHECK LIST:

Please label all belongings with the camper’s first and last name.

| REQUIRED ITEMS | ITEMS TO LEAVE AT HOME |
|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Backpack | Cell phones/ Electronics |
| Play clothes – we get dirty at camp | Knives (pocket, Swiss Army, etc.) |
| Swimsuit | Jewelry/Make up/Nail polish |
| Towel | Pokémon cards |
| Gym shoes – no sandals at camp please | Water toys or guns |
| Lunch and drink | Sporting equipment/Toys/Games |

Our camp days are filled with many fun activities that keep campers busy and active. Camper’s time at camp is a chance for them to be “unplugged”. If a camper brings an item that is not allowed, the item is stored in the Day Camp Director’s office until check-out that day. Cell phones needed for emergency contacts/medical reasons are to be kept in backpacks and staff are to be informed prior to usage. **The Illinois Valley YMCA is not responsible for lost, stolen, or broken items.**

Oglesby Bus Trip Policies

Our campers will travel to THE Oglesby Pool on the following dates: **June 18, June 25, July 2, July 9, July 16, and July 23.** Dates are weather permitting.

- Campers **must arrive at the YMCA by 11:00 AM** to attend the pool trip.
- The bus will return to the YMCA at approximately **2:00 PM.**
- **There is no camper supervision at the YMCA between 11:00 AM and 2:00 PM.** All staff will be off-site with campers during this time.
- If your child cannot arrive by the designated 11:00 AM departure time, they may **join camp once we return at 2:00 PM** if afternoon supervision is needed.
- Campers are permitted to bring money for concessions at the pool.
- All money and personal belongings brought on the trip are **the camper’s responsibility.** The YMCA is not responsible for lost, stolen, or damaged items.

CAMPER HEALTH

SUNSCREEN/BUG REPELLENT

- Staff will remind campers to apply sunscreen/bug repellent throughout the day.
- Staff cannot apply sunscreen to your child unless the parent/guardian completes **Sunscreen Authorization** section in the Participant Emergency Information Packet.
- Please stress the importance of sunscreen application with your child before camp begins.
-



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

- Sunscreen should be applied to your child before they arrive at camp every morning.

HEALTH HISTORY

The **Participant Registration Packet** must be completed (front and back sides) and signed by the camper's parent/guardian.

- Campers are not permitted to check-in at camp without their signed Participant Emergency Information Packet on file.
- Indicate medical/special needs on the health history portion of the form; notify the Day Camp Director about child's non-medical special needs. This is important in order for our staff to be successful in helping your camper have a positive camp experience.
- Parent/Guardian must sign the medical release portion of the form. In the event of a medical emergency, the hospital must have a signed form before they will care for a camper.
- With each camper's welfare in mind, we ask that parents not send a camper to camp if he/she is sick and/or running a fever. If a camper becomes sick while at camp, the Day Camp Director contacts the parent/guardian or emergency contact to pick up the camper.
- Campers showing symptoms of illness are not permitted back to camp until all symptoms clear.
- All campers must be toilet trained to attend camp. We reserve the right to dismiss a camper from our program who has had repeated accidents while in attendance.

SWIMMING EVALUATIONS

All of our campers complete a swim evaluation at camp. This tells us what their swimming ability is and where they can swim in the pool. Our swim evaluation is conducted by Illinois Valley YMCA Aquatic Director/lifeguards. Any camper behaving in a dangerous manner to themselves or others will not be permitted in the pool.

CAMPER POLICIES AND REQUIREMENTS

Please read the following pages very carefully and feel free to contact the Illinois Valley YMCA with any questions.

ILLNESS

Based on best practices from "Caring for Our Children National Health and Safety Performance Standards: Guidelines for Out-of-Home Child Care Programs" written by the American Academy of Pediatrics, it is at the discretion of the Center's Director that the child(ren) be sent home. As per our policy, all children will be sent home and may not return for at least a period of 24 hours if any of the following symptoms, but not limited to, is exhibited:

- Conjunctivitis, until treated for a minimum of 24 hours with medication
- A temperature of 100.4 degrees or higher. Your child must be fever-free for



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

- at least a period of 24 hours without medication before returning to the center.
- Contagious diseases including, but not limited to Measles, Chicken Pox, Mumps, Roseola
- Undiagnosed rashes
- Vomiting or diarrhea
- Impetigo or Ring Worm until treated with medication for a minimum of 24 hours.
- Severe cold with fever, coughing, sneezing, and/ or nose drainage
- Bronchitis or other throat infections, until treated with medication for at least 24 hours.
- Pain reported in the stomach or head.
- Lice until treated with medication for a minimum of 24 hours or until no nits or eggs remain.

All children will benefit by giving those who are ill adequate time to recover and help to prevent the spreading of illness through exposure.

CAMPER DRESS

Campers' clothing should reflect good taste and concern for the values and standards of other campers. Inappropriate dress includes but is not limited to the following: Clothing promoting alcohol, drugs, or tobacco products, provocative clothing, and bare midriffs. Campers may be asked to change if their clothes are deemed inappropriate.

CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE OR CAMPER DISRUPTION

Any camper conduct, either individually or in a group, that is intentionally disruptive to or designed to be disruptive to the normal operation of the camp program may result in being sent home early from camp. Such conduct includes but is not limited to the following: destruction of camp property, or advocating such disruption or destruction, refusing to cooperate with camp staff attempting to maintain or restore order in the group and/or program activity, consistently starting fights or arguments in the group and/or harming another camper. These campers are disciplined, and parents are contacted by the Day Camp Director.

DANGEROUS WEAPONS

Items that campers bring to camp that are designed to cause bodily harm or deemed potentially harmful, are confiscated. The parents/guardians are contacted. Bringing such items to camp may result in campers being sent home early from camp. All types of knives and dangerous items MUST be kept off the camp property. Once an item is confiscated by the Day Camp Director, it is not returned to the camper but to the parent/guardian at check-out time.

DECEITFUL ACTIVITY

Any camper who lies to or deceives a camp staff person is subject to disciplinary action and removal from camp program.

FALSELY REPORTED EMERGENCY CALLS AND FIRE ALARMS

Any camper setting off a fire alarm, fire extinguisher, tampering with smoke detector or using any phone to falsely report an emergency to 911 is subject to disciplinary action.

FIGHTING



**FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY**

The Illinois Valley YMCA does not tolerate campers who harm other campers. Physical or verbal fighting, degrading, demeaning, threatening other campers or staff, or making fun of others is not allowed. Any camper involved in fighting is subject to discipline and may be sent home. The parent/guardian is contacted by the Day Camp Director.

INTIMIDATION / BULLYING

Any camper or group of campers found to be harassing, making fun of, or intimidating another camper is subject to disciplinary actions, and may be sent home.

LOST & FOUND

When sending campers to camp, please mark all belongings with his/her full name. Lost & found items at camp are put in a lost and found box located in the day camp room. Please do not only use camper's initials; please mark all belongings with camper's full name.

At the end of each session, campers (and parents/guardians during pickup) are given an opportunity to claim lost & found items. Parents/Guardians can claim lost & found items up to two weeks after their session. Lost & found items not claimed and/or without names are donated to charitable organizations.

OBSCENITY

Obscene, profane, or vulgar language written, oral, or expressed by symbols is not tolerated. Being respectful to staff and other campers is important and expected. Any camper who violates this policy is subject to disciplinary action.

CELL PHONES/TABLETS

Cell phones and Tablets have no place at camp. Campers are too busy with camp programs and activities. Please do not send these items to camp. If parents/guardians need to contact their camper during the session, they are asked to call the YMCA or talk to the Day Camp Director.

SEARCH AND SEIZURE

Illinois Valley YMCA administration staff reserve the right to search a staff or camper's property, either by themselves or with the aid of law enforcement officials, if the camp staff deem the search is necessary to maintain the integrity of the camp's environment and/or the protection of the other staff or campers.

SOCIAL CONDUCT

At camp, camper conduct should reflect concern for others. Camp is the wrong place for any type of public display of affection. Intimate physical contact is treated as a disciplinary matter.

STEALING

Stealing is a violation of Illinois law. A camper who steals camp property, another camper's belongings, or a staff person's belongings is subject to disciplinary action. Stealing may result in a camper being sent home early from camp. The Day Camp Director contacts parents/guardian immediately.

VANDALISM

Campers committing acts of vandalism or malicious mischief either against the camp property or against another camper or staff are disciplined immediately. Vandalism includes any kind of graffiti on camp walls, picnic tables, bathroom stalls, etc. The parent/guardian is contacted immediately.

Violation of this policy may result in the camper being sent home early from camp. Payment to



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

repair any damage accrued as a result of the vandalism is the responsibility of the camper's parent/guardian.

VISITORS

When well-meaning parents and friends "drop by" to visit their child, the camper, other campers, and the camp programs may be disrupted. Please contact the Day Camp Director to arrange a time to visit.

BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT POLICY

The Illinois Valley YMCA Behavior Management Policy compliments our program by assuring that each camper is safe, learns, grows, and has FUN! The Behavior Management Policy encourages appropriate behavior by positively reinforcing good behaviors. Discipline is carried out in a way that helps a camper develop self-control and assume responsibility for his/her own behavior. The discipline balances firmness and kindness. The policy is based on three overall rules:

1. A camper may not disturb or hurt others; verbally, physically.
2. A camper may not damage equipment or camp property.
3. A camper may not place himself/herself in a dangerous situation.

The Behavior Management Policy is limited to a few techniques of discipline. The first technique is rationalization and education. This technique allows the camper to problem solve and the staff to assist with choices for more appropriate behavior. Another technique is removal of a camper from a problem situation in a time out. Removal gives the camper time to calm down, reflect on his/her actions and the staff a chance to discuss with the camper what happened. The staff are trained to use a combination of the techniques to encourage the best behavior. The Camp does not tolerate campers teasing or making fun of other campers.

In the event of a major infraction of the rules, the Day Camp Director will contact parents/guardian and the camper may be sent home. **Refunds are not given for campers sent home for disciplinary reasons.**

Behavior is reported and filed using behavioral reports. Participant guardians are sent a copy of reports. Three reports result in a camper suspension. Suspensions last one week. Issues following suspension may result in removal from camp or further suspension.

Please note that receiving three behavior reports will result in a suspension from the YMCA program. The length of the suspension may vary, depending on the severity and circumstances. Families will be notified by the Youth Director prior to the start of the suspension.

CHARACTER COUNTS: CREATING COMMUNITY

Camper rules are rooted in the four core values that we feel everyone can practice and model: CARING, HONESTY, RESPECT, AND RESPONSIBILITY



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

CARING

- We care about each other's feelings. **We do not tease or make fun!**
- We take care of camp equipment so that others can enjoy it too.
- We care for the YMCA property by keeping it litter free.
- We care for others by keeping hands and feet to ourselves. We do not hit, kick, push, or horseplay.

HONESTY

- We try our best to always tell the truth.
- We treat each other fairly.
- We are honest with ourselves and ask for help when we need it.
- We try to do the right thing without being told or asked.

RESPECT

- We listen to our counselors and other staff members.
- We follow directions the first time given when asked to do something.

- We speak to each other nicely and with respect.
- We ask before touching or taking someone else's belongings.

RESPONSIBILITY

- We come to camp prepared by bringing what we need.
- We leave money, video games, radios, gum, trading cards, cell phones, MP3 players, tablets, make-up, and nail polish at home.
- We only talk about appropriate topics and use appropriate language.
- We stay with our group where our counselors can see us.
- We ask permission if we need to leave the group for any reason.

IMPORTANT FORMS TO BRING TO CAMP CHECKLIST

Please check to make sure that you have all these forms completed and turned in on or before (preferred) the first day of your camper's session. Full payment and all completed forms must be received on the first day of camp for your camper to attend.

Participant Emergency Information Packet: All campers must have a completed packet to attend camp. Please fill out the forms completely – front and back pages. Sign and date the Parents/Guardians Authorization sections. Incomplete or unsigned health forms are not accepted and may result from campers not being able to stay at camp. Carefully read through the following sections of this packet:

Authorized Adults to Pick-Up: This section needs to be completed and signed by a parent/guardian. This form indicates to whom your camper may be released. Please note we



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

cannot release campers to anyone other than those who are on this form. Parents: please don't forget to put yourselves on the Release Form.

- Health History:** These forms are confidential; only the Program Director and Day Camp Director will see these forms. Campers are not allowed to see other camper's sheets. Counselors will be informed of any medical or special needs.
- Talent Release:** Please review and sign. If you choose not to sign this section, photos/videos/etc. of your camper will not be used in any promotional material.
- Facility Use Waiver:** This is a waiver each camper needs on file to be at camp.
- Authorization for Sunscreen:** Please review and sign if you would like to authorize YMCA staff to help your child re-apply sunscreen throughout the day.
- Day Camp Sign In/Out Policy Form:** Review, sign, and return to camp.