

SUMMER OUTDOOR DAY CAMP 2025



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

YMCA CAMP BRAZOS

DAY CAMP HANDBOOK

Camp Information

Address: 6800 Harvey Drive
Waco, TX 76710
Phone: (254) 776-6612
Email: aboswell@ymcactx.org
Website: www.ymcactx.org

YMCA Mission

To put Christian principles into practice through programs that build healthy spirit, mind and body for ALL.

Day Camp Mission Statement

To build stronger campers by creating opportunities in the outdoors for personal growth and character development.

Core Values

Caring, Honest, Respect, Responsibility

DAY CAMP LEADERSHIP

MICHELLE CORNELISSENS

Executive Director

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Director of Day Camp/Gymnastics

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Summer Camp

All Day Out

A NOTE FROM OUR DAY CAMP DIRECTOR

Dear YMCA Camp Brazos Families,

YMCA Camp Brazos is a place designed for KIDS. Everything that we do at camp is done intentionally, with our campers' needs in mind. We want summer camp and all day out to be more than just fun, we want it to be place where all kids can grow, learn, and connect with one another in a safe space.

We believe that kids need summer camp and all day out now more than ever. These days, kids spend so much time inside in front of a screen and not nearly enough time outdoors. At YMCA Camp Brazos, your child will spend adventurous days outside, unplugged from electronics, in a safe natural environment with our incredible, passionate staff. They will have the opportunity to make new friends, develop independence, build their self-esteem and, most importantly, PLAY.

Here at YMCA Camp Brazos, we have created an inclusive camp community where each camper is valued and celebrated for who they are. We work to ensure that every camper, regardless of income, faith, gender identity, race, ability or background has the chance to experience summer camp and all day out and all its magic.

We sincerely hope you will consider allowing your child or children to join the YMCA Camp Brazos community this summer.

See you at camp!

Sincerely,

Aimee Boswell
Day Camp Director



How Day Camp Works

Units & Group Assignments

Campers are assigned to a unit based on the school grade they will be entering in the fall of 2025. We do our best to honor buddy requests whenever possible. In order for us to accommodate a buddy request it must be a mutual request. If the two campers are not in the same unit, the older camper will always be moved down into the younger camper’s unit. Campers are NOT able to request specific counselors.

Units

| | |
|--------------------|------------|
| Kinder & 1st Grade | Tenderfoot |
| 2nd & 3rd Grade | Navigator |
| 4th – 6th Grade | Ranger |

Unit Locations Within Camp

Your camper will be rotating through different areas throughout the day, including the front classroom, auxiliary gym, sports field, outside patio and pool. If you are dropping off or picking up outside of designated hours, our helpful staff will help to locate your camper’s unit.

Camp Staff

An amazing summer camp and all day out experience doesn’t just happen by accident. It is created by our energetic and enthusiastic camp staff. Our dedicated and well-trained staff aim to make the summer camp and all day out experience memorable and magical for every camper. Each of our camp staff understands that they were chosen to be positive role models and embrace our Camper First philosophy.

All of our day camp staff are CPR and First Aid certified and are required to attend training sessions that include topics such as safety around water, behavior management, bullying prevention, child development, camp counseling techniques, and child abuse prevention.

All staff are subject to a criminal background check, drug testing, and reference checks.

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Weekly Communication

Each Friday before your camper attends, you will receive a Welcome email to inform you of the activities available at camp and important reminders for the week.

You are welcome to call or email the Camp Director at anytime if you have a question or concern. The Camp Director can be reached at 254-776-6612 or aboswell@ymcactx.org.

Camp will also utilize HeyMarket to send out text communication for parents.

Caregiver Communication & Commitment

We value the active involvement of caregivers in our program and view it as essential to the success of our program. Our goal is to partner with our camper caregivers to help build stronger campers and create an emotionally and physically safe camp environment. Cooperation with all policies, procedures and communication between staff and caregivers are crucial in order for us to achieve these outcomes.

YMCA Camp Brazos holds each parent/guardian to the expectation that they will conduct themselves appropriately at all times while at camp. Inappropriate language, conduct, or sexual harassment toward any participant or staff in our program will not be tolerated from parents, family members or other persons picking up your child. Behavior that indicates the influence of drugs or alcohol may require that Y personnel contact the authorities to ensure the safety of your children.

Emergency Procedures

YMCA Camp Brazos is fortunate to have such a beautiful and natural outdoor space where we can operate our program. Being an OUTDOOR CAMP, we plan to run activities rain or shine as long as it is safe to do so. Please know that your campers may come home dirty, tired and a little wet or muddy on rainy days. We continually monitor the weather conditions including rain, storms and heat index to properly adjust the camp program for the safety of all campers.

We have practiced emergency drills, have ample storm shelters and have taken measures to provide shade, water and cool air at camp. When weather alters the camp activity schedule, it is possible that your camper may miss a favorite activity and this is regrettably unavoidable.

In the event of inclement weather, we will communicate with parents via text.

**Our text number is
(254) 274-3616**

Drop-Off and Pick-Up



DROP-OFF AND PICK-UP MAP GREATER WACO YMCA 6800 HARVEY DR



KEY



DROP-OFF/
PICK-UP POINT

Please enter through the Sanger Ave entrance. Then loop around the YMCA, dropping off at the front entrance, and exiting at Harvey Dr.

- **Camper Drop-off runs from 7–9am.**
- **Camper Pick-up runs from 4– 6pm.**
- The camp gates are CLOSED from 9am–4pm for the safety of the campers. If you are dropping off during this time or need to pick-up before the gates open, please go to the front desk.
- Drop-off/Pick-up entrance is off of Sanger as shown in the diagram, and exit is on Harvey.
- The SPEED LIMIT through camp is 10 MPH.
- YMCA Camp Brazos uses an electronic Check-In/Check-Out system.
- Persons picking up campers must be listed in registration forms as an authorized pickup and present valid ID.

Drop-Off

7-9am

Drop-off begins each day at 7am and ends at 9am. Camp staff will greet you, check your camper(s) in electronically and give you directions to your camper's unit. Campers are dropped off on at the back gate.

We ask that parents please remain in their vehicles while dropping off and picking up campers so that traffic keeps moving.

PLEASE follow all directional signs at camp and keep your vehicle speed below 10 MPH for the safety of all of our campers and their families.

Adding Authorized Pickup

If you need to add a new adult to your authorized pickup during a week of camp, log into your Daxko account and click on the Add Authorized Pickup button at the top of the page. Then please email aboswell@ymcactx.org to let us know you added an Authorized Pickup.

This adult must present a valid Driver's License at Check-In or Check-Out.

Pick-Up

4-6pm

Check-Out follows a similar procedure as Check-In.

- Only authorized individuals with a valid ID will be able to check-out a camper.
- All authorized individuals must be at least 18 years of age.
- Under no circumstances will your child be allowed to leave the program with an unauthorized person. Any change in family status which impacts authorized parties for pick-up will require official documentation from proper authorities.

Please note: It is our responsibility to see that your child leaves with the appropriate person each day. We may ask for photo identification at any time. Please do not be offended. This is done with the camper's safety in mind.

DAY CAMP



Daily Activity Schedule

| Time | Activity |
|-----------------|----------------------------|
| 7-9am | Camper Check-In & Drop-Off |
| 9-10:15am | Activity Period 1 & Snack |
| 10:15-11:30am | Activity Period 2 |
| 11:30am-12:30pm | Lunch |
| 12:30-1:45pm | Activity Period 3 |
| 1:45-3pm | Activity Period 4 |
| 3-4pm | Activity Period 5 & Snack |
| 4-6pm | Camper Check-Out & Pick-Up |

What to Bring to Camp

- Water Bottle
- Sunscreen
- Bathing Suit & Towel
(Summer Camp Only)
- Lunch
- Ice Pack for lunch
- Closed Toe Shoes
- Backpack
- Hat
- Change of Clothes

Camp Store

Campers will be able to purchase additional snacks and drinks from our Camp Store. Each item is sold for \$1.

Kona Ice Thursdays

Every Thursday the Kona Ice truck comes to camp. Please send \$5 with your camper to purchase their Kona Ice. We love ending the week with a cool treat.



Preparing for Camp

Attending day camp is exciting for both campers and their caregivers, but it can also be a bit scary. It is very natural for caregivers and children to be a bit anxious about adopting new daily routines, trying new activities and meeting new friends. We want to familiarize you and your camper with our procedures to minimize “first day anxiety”. YMCA Camp Brazos has well-trained staff that are pros at helping campers make friends and feel welcome while at camp.

Lost & Found

Our staff do their best to make sure that campers go home with everything that they brought with them. However, sometimes things go missing at Camp. Our Lost and Found will be at pick-up every day. Lost and Found items will be kept for 2-weeks and then will be donated.

Please label all of your camper’s belongings with First and Last name!

What NOT to Bring

YMCA Camp Brazos is an ELECTRONIC FREE Camp. Cell phones, handheld electronic games, and tablets are not allowed at camp. Please leave these items at home.

And of course; firearms, knives, fireworks, matches, lighters, alcohol, e-cigarettes and tobacco products are prohibited. The YMCA is not responsible for lost or stolen items, BUT we will do our best to keep your camper connected to the things they bring to camp.

Appropriate Dress

The camp dress code gives flexibility for hot summer fun but should also be modest so that when climbing, running, and playing, children and staff are not embarrassed. Swimsuits must be covered except when at the pool or lakefront and we have a NO flip-flops policy due to the terrain. Clothing that portrays inappropriate behavior, violence, drugs, or offensive language is also prohibited.

Packing for Camp

- Appropriate clothing for play and weather.
- Closed-toe shoes, preferably sneakers.
- (NO sandals or crocs please!)
- Swimsuit and towel. (Summer Camp Only)
- Refillable water bottle.
- Backpack to hold their items.
- Small, cooler-type lunch box with a healthy and hearty lunch.
- Sunscreen (SPF 15 or higher). Don’t forget to apply before arriving. Counselors will supervise the application of sunscreen throughout the day, but are unable to apply sunscreen unless it is in spray form.

Pro Packing Tip: Label everything with the camper’s first and last name.

Policies for Protection

Illness

If your camper is ill we implore you to keep them at home, both for their sake and for the sake of the other campers. It is our policy to send campers home that have flu-like symptoms, conjunctivitis (pink eye), head lice, fever or any other untreated communicable condition.

Accident

If an accident or injury should occur during program hours, the Camp Health Officer/Medic or Camp Director will notify the parents/guardian immediately.

Medication

Any medication to be administered to your child by the Y staff must:

- Be given to the Camp Health Officer/Medic by the parent or guardian on the first day of camp at drop-off.
- Be in the original container. The original container must be labeled with the child's name, date, directions and the physician name.
- Be accompanied by the "Camp Medication Dispensing Form" with the time and dosage medication is to be given. This form must be filled out by the parent/guardian in order for our staff to administer medication. The Camp Medication Dispensing Form will be made available at the Medic's Station.

If the medication is to go home with the child at the end of the day/week, it is the parent's responsibility to pick it up from the Medic's Station.

Behavior Management

It is our goal for counselors, children and parents to work together toward cooperative behavior and a cohesive atmosphere. Staff will always notify parents of emerging difficulties and ask for assistance in behavior management.

Camper Behavior & Camp Culture

Camp often requires an adjustment period in which our unit groups and larger camp community learn how to get along with others, learn what is acceptable (behavior, language, physical action and attitudes) and what is not, and to develop appropriate communication techniques. To facilitate this process, Camp Staff spend time having campers set "Group Expectations" so they can discuss behaviors and attitudes that will create a successful week. These expectations usually include things like: respecting private property, positive and clean language, keeping your hands to yourself, etc. Various age groups will define them differently but all will come under building an atmosphere promoting respect, responsibility, honesty and caring.



Day Camp Behavior Policies

Behavior Contract

The goal of our Day Camp program is to create an emotionally and physically safe environment where our campers can grow, make friends, have fun and develop a sense of belonging. In order for this to be possible we have set certain expectations for our campers and their behavior. Please discuss the following expected behaviors with your camper or campers.

Appropriate Language and Conversation: Campers should always use positive, clean language and have discussions that are appropriate at camp. Swear words and obscene gestures are not Camp Appropriate. If you would not feel comfortable talking to your grandmother about a topic it is most likely not Camp Appropriate.

Caring: It is important to use and care for equipment, toys and games properly so that other campers can enjoy them. We will care for the property of the YMCA, of other campers and of YMCA staff.

Play: Camp is meant to be fun. We encourage our campers to participate in all activities, but we will also respect a camper's decision to opt out of an activity if they are not feeling up to it.

Respect: We ask that campers listen to and follow the directions of the Camp Staff. Being a respectful listener is an important life skill and it helps keep everyone safe.

Sticking With Your Group: Campers need to remain with their group at all times. They should always be able to see their counselor and hear them.

Violence: YMCA Camp Brazos is violence and bully-free zone. We just don't do that here.

All campers are entitled to a positive and memorable camp experience. Therefore, the YMCA may be unable serve children who display chronic disruptive behavior. This is an unfortunate reality due to the size and nature of our program. Chronic disruptive behavior is defined as "verbal or physical activity which may involve, but is not limited to, behavior that requires constant attention from the staff, inflicts physical or emotional harm on other children, abuses the staff and/or ignores or disobeys the rules that guide behavior during the day at camp."

If an incident occurs where a camper conducts him/herself in a manner that jeopardizes their safety, the safety of others, or is not in accordance with the mission of YMCA Camp Brazos, the counselors will use these corrective techniques:

- Remind them of our behavior expectations and help them understand why we have these expectations.
- Value mistakes as learning opportunities.
- Redirect children to more acceptable behavior or activities.
- Make eye contact and actively listen when children talk about their feelings and frustrations.
- Guide children to resolve their own conflicts and model skills that help them to solve problems.
- Use effective praise that is immediate, sincere and specific.
- State direction in a positive fashion.

Day Camp Behavior Policies

Behavior Correction Steps

When behavior that is inconsistent with our policies and expectations occurs, the following steps are taken:

1. **Warning:** Counselors address the behavior with the camper, helping the camper to understand our expectations and to create an action plan for improvement. Unit Leadership will discuss the incident with caregivers at pick up or by phone. Together Unit Leadership and caregivers can brainstorm ways to correct the behavior. Caregivers will be made aware of next steps if behavior continues.
2. **First Violation:** The camper will meet with Camp Director and Unit Leadership. Unit Leadership will contact caregivers immediately following the incident. The camper's behavior will be documented and the camper will receive a write-up. Depending on the violation, a caregiver may be asked to pick the camper up as soon as possible.
3. **Second Violation:** The camper will receive a second write-up and a caregiver will be asked to pick the camper up as soon as possible. Depending on the violation, the camper will be suspended from camp for 1 to 3 days, without a refund.
4. **Third Violation:** If behavior persists, the camper may be removed from the program for the remainder of the summer season. Any and all terminations will be at the discretion of the Camp Director. No refunds will be provided. Depending on the severity of the incident, the camper may be suspended or terminated from camp on the first violation per the Camp Director's decision.

Our Stance on Bullying

YMCA Camp Brazos is a bully-free camp. Bullying another person verbally or physically goes against everything we are trying to accomplish in our program. Our camp philosophy is based on the belief that every camper deserves the opportunity to grow personally, develop a positive self-image, feel safe, feel confident, make new friends and go home with great memories. Bullying is counterproductive to this philosophy.

Bullying is when one or more people exclude, tease, taunt, gossip, hit, kick or put down another person with the intent to hurt them. Bullying happens when a person or group of people want to have power over another person and use this power to get their way, at the expense of someone else.

Bullying can also happen through cyber-space, through the use of emails, text messaging, instant messaging, social networks and other less direct methods. This type of bullying can also lead to a person being hurt during or between the camp seasons.

We fully feel that every camper has the right to have the best possible experience at camp, and by working as a team to identify and manage bullying, we can help ensure that all campers and staff have an incredible summer at YMCA Camp Brazos. Thank you for choosing Camp Brazos to be your partner in the summer care and education of your camper(s). If we can be of any assistance to you and your family, please feel free to contact us at 254-776-6612.

Heat Policy

We take the heat very seriously at YMCA Camp Brazos. Our medical staff monitors the heat index daily and alert staff when heat index levels change. We use a colored flag system to indicate the heat index.

Flag System Color Codes

1. GREEN
2. YELLOW
3. RED
4. BLACK

Each color indicates a variation of activity that is balanced by shade and water. When BLACK FLAG is reached, camper activity is monitored closely and may be limited. Our younger campers may move into an air-conditioned space at this time.

All Unit areas and activity areas are equipped with ice water coolers that are filled routinely throughout the camp day.

| ALERT LEVEL | EVENT CONDITIONS | RECOMMENDED ACTIONS |
|-----------------|---|---|
| EXTREME | EVENT CANCELLED EXTREME AND DANGEROUS CONDITIONS | PARTICIPATION STOPPED FOLLOW EVENTS OFFICIAL INSTRUCTION |
| HIGH | POTENTIALLY DANGEROUS CONDITIONS | SLOW DOWN/OBSERVE COURSE CHANGES/FOLLOW EVENT OFFICIAL INSTRUCTION CONSIDER STOPPING |
| MODERATE | LESS THAN IDEAL CONDITIONS | SLOW DOWN/BE PREPARED FOR WORSENING CONDITIONS |
| LOW | GOOD CONDITIONS | ENJOY THE EVENT/ BE ALERT |

Water Activities

- Outdoor Pool
- Slip-N-Slide
- Inflatable Water Slide
- Sprinkler Fun
- Water Games

Beat the Heat

We ask that campers bring a few items from home to help them beat the heat:

- Water Bottle
- Hat
- Sunscreen

Counselors remind campers continuously to drink water and to fill up their water bottles. We will also take frequent breaks so campers can reapply sunscreen.

PRO TIP #1: Apply sunscreen before arriving to camp each day.

Pro Tip #2: Show your camper where the Sunscreen is in their bag.