Summer Camp Parent Planner

CAMP FITCH YMCA
campfitchymca.org
Dear Families,

Thank you for signing your child up for Camp Fitch YMCA’s summer camp experience! We are proud of our 104 year old history of building strong kids, strong families and a strong community. We are counting down the days until your child arrives to share the magic of summer 2017 with the Camp Fitch Bunch!

We have spent the last nine months focused on how to make the summer camp experience special both for campers who are continuing their journey and for those who are climbing aboard for the first time. We’ve selected and hired the best staff from all over the world who have already proven their dedication by participating in hours of online orientation before they even arrive for our pre-camp week of skill building together on Lake Erie. Now, all we need is for check in Sunday to arrive!

Camp Fitch is a place where we are focused on helping campers build relationships with their peers, challenging them to overcome obstacles, and finding comfort in what becomes their home away from home, summer after summer.

Thank you for sharing your child with us. Kids need summer camp now more than ever and we know that their week at camp will help them to find the best version of themselves.

Camp Fitch Forever,

Kelly Poese
Summer Camp Director
Camper Check-In: Sunday

Check-in happens between **2 pm and 4 pm** on Sunday afternoon.

To avoid long lines and allow the younger children extra time for settling in, check-in will be organized by age groupings. If you are checking in siblings, you may check-in all siblings at the time established for the youngest sibling.

- **6 – 10 year olds** begin check-in at 2:00 pm
- **11 – 12 year olds** begin check-in at 2:30 pm
- **13 – 16 year olds** (including LITs and CITs) begin check-in at 3:00 pm

Check-in day is very exciting and very busy! Here is what you can expect upon your arrival:

- Meet with our office staff and receive your camper’s bunk number.
- Meet with our nursing staff for a brief health screening. You will also turn in medications at this time.
- Help your camper get settled into their cabin and meet their counselor and provide them with pick-up authorization information for Saturday pickup.
- Bid your camper adieu until Saturday morning!

Camper pick-up is between **9:00 and 11:00 am** on Saturday.

All campers are required to check-out at the camp store. Any unused spending money will be refunded at this time and cabin photos are distributed. This is also a great time to take a walk by the lost and found located in front of Teaberry Lodge to make sure your child hasn’t left any treasures behind!

Campers are also able to sign up for next summer. See page 6 for more details about First Mates Club Registration!

Stowaway Weekend

If your camper is registered for consecutive weeks, they are enrolled in our complimentary Stowaway Weekend!

This is a fully supervised program where campers get to enjoy some activities in a smaller group setting while waiting for our next round of campers to arrive.

To help keep your packing light, we also offer a laundry service to our stowaways. See pg.6 for cost details.

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Packing List

Having proper clothing and equipment at camp is incredibly valuable to ensuring that your child has a remarkable stay. We know that packing is no simple task, so we have assembled a comprehensive list of what to bring to help you prepare!

It is also a great idea to only send clothes you won’t mind getting dirty and to label each article sent to camp.

**Linens**
- Sleeping Bag or Blankets
- Twin size sheets (1 fitted, 1 flat)
- 1 Pillow, 2 Pillow Cases
- 2 Beach Towels
- 2 Bath Towels & Wash Cloths

**Clothing**
- T-shirts and Sweatshirts
- Shorts and Pants (long pants required for horseback riding)
- Socks and Underwear
- Pajamas
- Raincoat or Poncho
- 2 Swim Suits

**Shoes**
- 2 Pairs of Comfortable Shoes - It is very important to have a backup pair in the event that a pair gets wet. Crocs and flip flops are not recommended for all day wear.
- 1 Pair Tennis shoes or Boots (required for horseback riding)
- Water shoes or old tennis shoes (necessary for Lake Erie)

**Toiletries**
- Soap, toothpaste, toothbrush, etc - Please put toiletries in an airtight container to help keep critters away
- Comb or Hairbrush
- Insect Repellent (with DEET) & Sun Screen (at least SPF 15)
- Medication - Separated in a labeled medication dispenser along with original prescription bottle (See page 6 for more detail. This is collected during check-in, so it may be helpful to keep separate from your camper’s luggage.

**Equipment**
- Laundry Bag for dirty clothes
- Water Bottle
- Flashlight and Batteries
- Backpack
- Hat, Visor, and/or Sunglasses
- Watch
- Writing Supplies - pre-addressed and self stamped envelopes will help the post office greatly!
- Bible or other reading material
- Sporting Equipment (baseball glove, lacrosse stick, etc)
- Hooks - over the door hooks work great with our cabins!
- Snacks - please keep them peanut free! Any snacks brought to camp are kept at your child’s table in the dining hall
- Camera - disposable or digital
- Returning campers -- don’t forget your paddle!

**Luggage/Containers**
You’re probably wondering what the heck you should use to pack all of this stuff in.

We have found that large plastic totes and/or plastic drawer sets are great as they are slightly waterproof and stack easily. Duffel bags are also an option that will fit at the bottom or under bunks well.

Please keep in mind this is a suggested packing list. Not all equipment items are required or necessary for attendance.
Spending Account Information

The Spending Account is a “charge” account used for all purchases while at camp. You deposit money in your child’s spending account before camp in order to purchase the items described below. Campers use their name as a means of charging items throughout the week and we add it up as they go. Any funds left over are refunded via credit card at the end of the 2017 summer season. Any overages can be paid online or at check out. If your child attends multiple sessions, we roll the money over until their last week. No money should be left in the cabinet!

To Help You Plan Your Camper’s Spending:
All potential charges are explained below. The average child spends between $30 and $40 per week. The amount your child needs depends on his/her interest in these activities.

- Horseback riding - $15 per trail ride
  More information about horseback riding is on page 5.

- Craft materials - Each project costs between $.35 and $6.00, although most are under $3.00.

- Rope activities - Campers choose these skill activities and attend them for 4 one hour sessions. The cost for the activities can range from $0 to $15. Campers are given information about the cost before they sign up.

- Camp store - Campers are given a chance to shop at the camp store during the week. Items range from $.25 to $40. Items in the store may also be purchased at check-in or check-out.

- Laundry - Stowaway (multi-week) campers have the option to send laundry out for a good wash before the next session begins. This service charges $1/pound. Charges usually average $8 - $10.

- World Service - $1.00. All campers donate $1.00 from their spending money. The money collected is sent to support YMCAs around the world, especially our sister Y in Zaragoza, Spain.

Summer Photos

Your CampInTouch account is also a secure site where we post daily photos so you can see what the campers at Fitch have been up to! Viewing the photos is completely free and there is no need to purchase “camp stamps”. Please keep in mind that not seeing your child in these photos is not an indication that your camper is not having a great time! You can also send your camper “Bunk Notes”, a one-way email that is sent to camp and delivered to your child. This service does require the purchase of “camp stamps”.

Daily Schedule

Morning
7:30 Polar Bear & Flag Raising
8:30 Breakfast
9:00 Fleet Chapel
10:00 Exploratory Activity
11:00 Rope Activity
12:30 Lunch

Afternoon
1:15 Rest time & Cleanup
2:30 Ship Voyage
4:00 Rope Activity
5:30 Dinner
6:15 Exploratory Activity
7:35 Fleet Activity
9:15 Taps

Horsemanship Lessons

Campers ages 8 to 10 years old can take lessons for $25.00. The lessons include 1 un-mounted and 3 mounted lessons. Campers who would like to take horsemanship lessons during their session must sign up and pay for the lessons at least 2 weeks before their session starts (space is limited). Lesson signups can be done over the phone at 1-877-863-4824 or via email at registrar@campfitchymca.org.

Trail Rides

On the first day of each camp session, campers age 10 and up can sign up for trail rides. Trail rides are 45 minutes and are $15.00 per ride. Trail ride charges will be taken from the camper’s spending money. On a trail ride, the camper is responsible for directing and steering the horse. There are 2 staff members on each trail ride.

Since rides are scheduled ahead of time, if your child doesn’t show up, is too late, or is dressed improperly, he/she will still be charged for the ride.

Campers do not need to have previous equestrian experience to do a trail ride as they will be given instructions at the beginning of the ride.
**Prescription Medication**

To assist the nursing staff we ask that all camper medication come to camp already organized for the week. Please have the medication organized in a daily medication dispenser, also called pill organizer, pill container or pill box.

*You will need to bring the original pharmacy containers also.*

**Sharing Your Camp Pride!**

Throughout the week there are several special events that are part of our Camp Fitch culture! Feel free to throw some extra costume elements into your trunk so you don’t miss out on the fun. **Wacky Wednesday:** from hats to socks, hair styles or tutus, anything goes... as long as it’s wacky! **Fleet Cup:** Each week, campers will participate in a variety of competitions and events to earn points towards winning the vaunted Fleet Cup. Wear your team colors!

Mackinaw Fleet (6-7) is white and blue; Sloop Fleet (8-10) is blue and black; Schooner Fleet (11-12) is red and yellow; Clipper Fleet (13-15) is blue; Leadership Fleet (LIT, CIT and Galley Crew) wears red and white.

**First Mates’ Club Registration**

Many campers know before they leave camp that they are going to attend Camp Fitch in 2018. Since weeks are filling earlier every year, we want to give returning campers first pick at 2018 dates with 2017 rates! Check out the First Mates’ Club registration at checkout, and get your free T-shirt!

**Lost and Found**

Lost and Found items are collected and displayed during check-out. We donate all lost & found items to a local charity two weeks after a session ends.

**Staying In Touch With Your Camper**

- **Mail:** Be sure to mail it early so that it is received during their stay.
  
  Your Camper’s Name
  
  CAMP FITCH YMCA
  
  12600 Abels Rd
  
  North Springfield, PA 16430

  **Great idea:** Write your letters in advance & give them to the check-in staff on Sunday. We’ll distribute them on your designated days!

- **Summer Photo Gallery Access & Bunk Notes:** See page 4 for details about this service.

  Remember to keep all contacts positive as what you say in a letter can help or hinder your child’s adjustment to camp.

**Health & Safety**

Camp Fitch is located on 450 acres on the woody shores of Lake Erie. Attending camp increases your child’s exposure to the elements in the great outdoors. While our staff is trained to help your camper navigate these potential snags, it is helpful for you to review these safety education items before heading to camp.

**Sun Safety**

Encourage your child to apply sunscreen every morning regardless of the weather, as UV rays reach the earth even during cloudy or hazy days. The product needs time to absorb into the skin (30 minutes before going outside). Pack a broad spectrum sunscreen with SPF of at least 15. Rest Period, just after lunch, is a great time to re-apply sunscreen!

**Hydration Happiness**

As your camper participates in activities and hikes around camp, he/she loses water through sweat. Remind him/her to drink water before they start to feel thirsty; this will help prevent their water level from dropping too low. There are plenty of places to refill a water bottle around camp, so make sure to pack one for them to carry.

**Tick Bites**

Just like mosquitoes, ticks are a common annoyance in NW Pennsylvania and can carry disease. Your camper can apply insect repellent containing DEET to clothing and skin, or use permethrin clothing. It is good practice for campers to do a self check at night or in the shower. Some areas such as knees, ears, and armpits should be given extra attention. If a tick is found, your child should not attempt to remove it, but should tell his/her counselor and they can get help from our nurse.

For more information about tick bites and prevention visit www.cdc.gov/lyme.

**Aquatic Safety**

Camp Fitch sports three waterfronts: Lake Erie, our inland Lake MVIMA, and a swimming pool. Our lifeguards are certified by the YMCA or Red Cross trainers and participate in weekly assessments and trainings throughout the summer. Three key members of our water safety team have collectively spent 130 seasons at camp!

All campers are screened for swimming ability on Sunday and identified so that lifeguards can give proper attention to the kids who need it most. Camp Fitch YMCA is dedicated to ensuring that all campers possess the ability to swim: non-swimmers are automatically enrolled in swim lessons as one of their “rope” activities for the week.
Frequently Asked Questions

Are there items my child should NOT bring?
Camp Fitch believes in and enforces a no cell phone policy. It is our desire to give each child the best possible experience and to help them develop the independence necessary to spend a week away from home. Camp provides the perfect environment to unplug, live in the moment and enjoy the adventure! Also, please restrict your telephone calls to the Camp Office for emergencies only. We also do not want kids to bring PIDs (Personal Isolation Devices) which includes iPods, iPads, mp3 & CD players, tablets, radios, electronic games, laptops, PDAs, etc. If packed, these items will be kept in the office until check-out. Cash should also remain at home during your camper’s stay.

Can I visit my child?
We recommend no parent visitation during a camping period. An organized weekend camping program is provided for campers staying multiple camping sessions, and parents may visit on these weekends. All visits must be coordinated with the camp directors by calling 814.922.3219.

Do you have tips for homesickness?
www.campparents.org is the American Camp Association (ACA) resource for camp parents. The “Camp Planner” includes many great articles including ones about homesickness. One of the most important things for parents to say to potentially homesick kids is that it’s normal, not strange, to feel homesick. Generally campers who feel homesick are “over it” within a day or two and go on to have a great camp experience. Camp Fitch staff is well trained to help campers adjust to life away from home. Camp Fitch requests all calls from home be restricted to emergencies.

What about campers staying multiple weeks?
Campers staying multiple weeks take part in special weekend activities! We also offer a laundry service that is usually between $7 and $10 depending on the amount of clothes washed. Charges are added to the camper’s spending account.

What about critters?
Our cabents are open air with canvas sides. Since Camp Fitch is in the woods, you can expect to be visited by the “locals.” We prohibit food in cabents to significantly cut down on critter traffic.

What are the basic rules of Camp Fitch?
Smoking, use of illegal drugs, alcoholic beverages, firearms, or fireworks, carrying or concealing a weapon or any object that may be used as a weapon, harassment or intimidation by words, gestures or body language, bullying or threatening another person verbally or physically are all prohibited at Camp Fitch. Campers who cannot adjust to the respectful and cooperative environment of camp will be sent home without a refund.

After Camp, Stay Connected!
Camp Fitch YMCA hosts a seasonal Weekend Adventure series for summer campers to come to Fitch to reconnect with summer friends and have a great time. The event is an opportunity to see what Camp looks like in the fall, winter, and spring, and if the weather cooperates try some of our winter sports like tubing and cross-country skiing!

Check our website and Facebook page for more details. The weekend is fully supervised and staffed with members of our summer crew. Great meals on Saturday and Sunday are provided, as well as special seasonal programming and a chance to relight our Candlelight Candles.

Camp Fitch, All Year Round!
Did you know that Camp Fitch YMCA is in operation all 12 months of the year? Consider us for:

- Girl Scout Campouts
- Family Reunions
- School Field Trips
- Youth Group Retreats
- Special Events
- Weekend Getaways
- Hobby Group Retreats

If you are interested in any of these programs or have a group who would enjoy time at Camp Fitch on the weekends or weekdays, please contact Hannah in our camp office or visit our website at campfitchymca.org.

Accreditation

We are accredited by the American Camp Association. To earn accreditation, a camp must meet high standards in facilities, program design, management, food service, camp operations, program quality and the health and safety of campers and staff. To learn more about the American Camp Association, please visit: www.acacamps.org and campparents.org.
Camp Fitch is dedicated to putting Christian principles into practice through overnight camping programs that build a healthy spirit, mind, and body for all.

CAMP FITCH YMCA
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