



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Contact Camping Services for Questions at campings@wsymca.org

CAN I SEE THE CAMP AND/OR MEET THE DIRECTOR?

Yes! We host Open Houses at Camp Chickami and [information tables](#) at the West Suburban Y. These are great opportunities to ask questions and explore the grounds. The Camping Services Office is also open to drop-in visits from all families, and the Director is available for informational home-visits for your family and families in your neighborhood.

HOW DO I REGISTER FOR CAMP?



HOW DOES CHICKAMI WELCOME NEW CAMPERS?

Before a camper arrives, families must fill out a “Camper Confidential” form on CampSite. The responses are reviewed by the Camp Administrative Staff who notifies select staff of the needs, interests, and expectations of new (and returning) campers. When campers first arrive at camp, counselors facilitate “get-to-know-you” and “Welcome-to-Camp” activities to help campers acclimate to the pace of camp-life and integrate into the community.

HOW MANY CAMPERS ARE IN A GROUP?

Campers are placed into groups according to age, grade, gender, buddy requests, and their previous group. We are happy to work with all campers and their families to ensure that each camper is placed in the group where they feel most comfortable. Depending on a session’s demographics, groups may have between 10 and 25 campers. Groups are staffed to ratio and will have between 2-4 staff members.

CAN MY CAMPER REQUEST A FRIEND IN THEIR GROUP?

Yes! We do our best to accommodate one friend request for each camper. Requests can be made on your camper’s “Camper Confidential” form.

WHAT ARE YOUR MEDICAL AND FIRST AID ARRANGEMENTS?

Camp Chickami has a certified nurse on staff for the summer who is dedicated to working with families to serve the health needs of each individual camper. We also boast a 100% First Aid, CPR, and AED certified staff. To help ensure the best medical and first aid care for campers, families must complete CampSite medical forms for their camper(s) before attending camp.

DO I NEED TO DO ANYTHING AFTER I REGISTER?

After you register, you will receive an invitation to CampSite, our camp web app. There you will need to complete all of the required forms.

HOW DO CAMPERS GET TO CAMP?

There are two transportation options for Camp Chickami. Campers may be driven directly to camp with a target arrival time of 8:00am for Camper Care or 8:50am for the start of camp. The West Suburban YMCA also offers bus transportation from numerous different stops in Newton for an additional fee. Buses pick up campers in the morning between 8:05 and 8:40am and drop off in the afternoon between 4:20 and 4:55pm.

WHAT IS YOUR STAFF LIKE?

We seek to hire caring, responsible, and positive servant-leaders. We set the highest expectations for our staff to be the best role-models and nurture a culture of inclusion and youth development at camp. Most of our staff members were campers and L.I.T.s (Leaders-in-Training) at Camp Chickami themselves, and all of our staff undergo a thorough screening, interview process and training.

DO YOU CONSIDER YOUR ACTIVITIES TO BE COMPETITIVE?

We view our activities as immersive, impactful, and instructional! While campers compete in certain activities at varying levels, competitiveness is not a value we stress. Rather, we focus our efforts on offering dozens of creative challenges and new adventures each week and ensure that our activities are both safe and fueled by the power of imaginative play.

HOW OFTEN TO THE CAMPERS SWIM?

We offer swim lessons to every group through the Oaks and Cedars (rising 7th graders), 4 days a week. Swim lessons are part of a standardized curriculum which is used by YMCAs and YMCA camps across the country. Campers may also elect to participate in one of two free swim periods in the afternoon.

DOES MY CAMPER NEED TO KNOW HOW TO SWIM?

Your camper does not need to know how to swim. All campers are swim evaluated at the beginning of each session and assigned to a swim *level* for lessons. If your camper doesn’t yet know how to swim, they will be assigned to the most basic swim class to learn the skills. They will need to wear a floatation device in order to swim during free swim time.

WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN YOUR CAMP AND OTHER CAMPS?

Camp Chickami, with over sixty-five summers in the books, has as much tradition as any camp. We also strive to be totally inclusive and believe that any child can be a successful camper at Chickami. Our staff is made up of committed individuals, most with more than a decade of Chickami summers under their belts. Camp is a true community that fosters lasting relationships and investment in all its members.

WHAT IS A TYPICAL DAY AT CAMP LIKE?

Each day begins with an all-camp Morning Assembly, during which we announce activities, sing songs, raise the flag, and a counselor shares a thought for the day. After assembly, groups are dismissed for four morning activity periods which include swim lessons for all campers. Lunch is at 12:30pm, and afterward, afternoon electives for the older campers and special schedules for the Pines (our youngest campers) commence! At 3:30pm, we call Afternoon Assembly. There we highlight the day's activities before campers are dismissed to the buses, pick-up, and camper care. On rainy days, Chickami becomes famously muddy. Every other Friday is a special event. And every Friday, we announce the Chowder Head of the Week, an honor awarded to the goofiest goofball counselor

WHAT SHOULD MY CAMPER BRING EACH DAY?



WHAT HAPPENS WHEN IT RAINS?

It never rains at Camp Chickami! But when it does rain, please keep in mind we are an outdoor camp and we don't mind getting a little wet. Except in cases of extreme weather, activities continue as normally scheduled. In cases of extreme weather, we transition campers to indoor spaces for dry activities. Families are advised to check the weather each day and send their campers with appropriate clothing.

DO I NEED TO PROVIDE A LUNCH?

Yes! All campers must bring their own lunch. We store lunches away until lunch time, so if you pack snacks, please make sure to pack them separately from the lunch.

DOES THIS CAMP DO OVERNIGHTS OR "SLEEP UNDERS"?

Yes! At Chickami we believe that Sleep Unders and Sleep Overs are a fun and enriching experience for campers. Each week during Sessions 1-8, one of our age-group units will be invited to stay at

camp for an extended day. Campers attending Sleep Unders must be picked up by 9:00 pm by an authorized pick-up person.

ARE CELL PHONES ALLOWED AT CAMP?

Cell phone use, including calls, texting, internet, and apps (along with other electronic devices) are not permitted at camp. There are phones in the camp office (508-358-7000) for camper use at the Director's discretion. In the event that a cell phone is needed, prior approval must be obtained from the Camp Director. Any staff member who sees a cell phone in use without approval may hold on to the phone until dismissal at end of day.

HOW DO I KNOW IF CAMP IS RIGHT FOR ME?

Camp Chickami is an enthusiastic and energetic camp with something for everyone. We pride ourselves on making sure that every camper, regardless of personality or interest, finds their place at camp. In addition to our unique camp games and traditions, we offer many specialty activities including: Archery, Arts and Crafts, Drama, Nature, New Games, Sports Leagues, and Challenge Course activities. We hope you will join us at Chickami this summer!

