



Theme Camp at the YMCA of Austin

Welcome to YMCA Theme Camp. Below is an overview of what will be needed for camp as well as an explanation of aspects of Y programming. We are grateful for your participation and hope this makes the start of your camp experience more enjoyable.

What can my child expect at Theme Camp? Each week is a different theme and therefore a different adventure! Each day will be filled with crafts, games, and activities geared toward a specific theme. Trained camp staff will help lead campers in character development activities, team building games, twice weekly trips to the pool, and once weekly field trips. The YMCA of Austin desires for each and every child to gain a sense of accomplishment, build relationships, and find their sense of belonging.

What do I do when I first arrive at camp? Camp opens each morning at 7:30 AM; however you are welcome to drop off your camper at any time. On the first few days of camp, campers will wear name tags. Parents are required to sign their camper in and out each day. After signing your camper in, encourage them to place their belongings in their proper place (i.e. table). The more routine, the better. Between 7:30 and roughly 8:45 am, centers will be available for all campers. Centers may include board games, manipulatives, books, and coloring sheets.

What is an Activity Plan? Each week, the Site Director will create a detailed, weekly Activity Plan listing all crafts, activities, fieldtrips, and swim times for that week of camp. The Activity Plan will also include all contact names and numbers. Look for the Activity Plan at the parent table.

What should my camper bring to camp? (Please label everything with your child's name.)

- Labeled lunch and water bottle.
- Backpack. We will be swimming twice a week and a backpack for bathing suit, towel, sunscreen, and water bottle make it a lot easier to keep belongings together.
- Hat
- Sunscreen. Please consult the Activity Plan and Field Trip calendar to view planned activities. Because many activities (including field trips, swimming, and time on the playground) occur outside, we recommend that you either apply sunscreen on your child in the morning or send your camper with sunscreen. Camp staff will always have camp sunscreen available and will apply sunscreen to campers as necessary.
- Closed toed shoes. Many of our daily activities are in the gym or outside area. Help us make sure your child's feet are protected and ready for play.

What are Opening and Closing Ceremonies? Camp opens each morning with an Opening Ceremony and closes each afternoon with a Closing Ceremony. This time is spent previewing or reviewing the camp day. This time is also used to acknowledge positive behaviors and choices by the kids. Y staff attempt to model and reward YMCA character values (respect, responsibility, honesty, faith, and caring) during all camp activities. Camp staff are trained to reward and praise generously.

What about Field Trips days? Campers will enjoy a field trip each week to a location or activity that is related to the week's theme. The address and time will be listed on the weekly Activity Plan. The Y contracts with local school districts and use their buses and drivers for transportation. Remember to dress your camper in his/her YMCA Theme Camp t-shirt.

The Y provides the snack and I provide the lunch, correct? Yes, correct. Each camp day, the Y will provide morning snack will occur around 9 AM and afternoon snack around 3:30 PM. Lunch will be around 12 noon. Please do not send microwavable food. Please inform us of any food allergies or sensitivities. This information should be listed on the campers' enrollment form, and we encourage you to remind the Site Director verbally as well. (Some camps will participate in a free lunch program through a partnership with the Central Texas Food Bank. Look for more information from your Site Director.)

How do you keep my child safe? Y staff are trained on many procedures to ensure your child's safe participation in camp and recognize that active supervision is important in all aspects of child care programs. Camp staff will divide the kids into small manageable groups and assign counselors to each group. Your child will notice that we like to count and will be conducting head counts frequently -- prior to loading and leaving the camp site, unloading, during the activity or trip, before lunch, bathroom breaks, after lunch, before loading the bus and after returning to camp. Name tags and / or bracelets may also be used on field trips.

What's the story with swimming? Every week we will have two days of free swimming. Those children wishing to swim in deeper parts of the pool will be swim tested by YMCA lifeguards. Campers will wear Coast Guard approved floatation devices if they are not swimmers. Swimming is supervised by YMCA lifeguards at all times. Additionally, camp staff will also be in the water.

Sharks `n Minnows is a theme offered at Kinder and Theme camps during the early part of the summer. Campers receive four days of swim instruction each week, provided by trained YMCA swim instructors. Because camp is in the pool and under the sun so much during these weeks, camp staff re-apply sunscreen often and watch for signs of dehydration.

Who do I talk to if I have a question about the program? Our Site Directors and Counselors are passionate about their role in your child's life while at the YMCA, and we welcome communication with parents. Please feel free to share any questions, suggestions, allergy information, etc for your child to any on-site camp staff. Additionally, the phone number and email address of the Program Director for camp will be listed on the weekly Activity Plan and available online.