

**VERMONT
WILDERNESS
SCHOOL**
P.O. Box 2585
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VERMONT 05303

802-257-8570



Dear Parents and Caregivers,

We are very happy to have your child with us for the Art of Mentoring Youth Program! We look forward to the opportunity for your children to learn and grow with our wonderful staff of nature connection mentors from around the region.

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The Art of Mentoring is a complex cultural system with many overlapping programs for all ages. Over the years we have identified a few important guidelines for kids and their parents/caregivers that support a happy and healthy community at AoM. The intention of this letter is to share those with you.

Please read this letter and packing list thoroughly!

We are looking forward to seeing you all at Indian Brook Camp very soon!

STAFF

SAMIA ABBASS
BOB ETZWEILER
AMY HYATT
SAM STEGEMAN
ASH YOUNG

Best regards,

Dan Yacobellis, AoM Youth Programs Director
Sam Stegeman, Executive Director, Vermont Wilderness School

IMPORTANT GUIDELINES FOR PARENTS & CAREGIVERS AT AoM

Flexibility: Throughout the week slight changes in scheduling will occur. We ask in advance for your flexibility and trust. 😊

Parent Meeting: There will be a **MANDATORY PARENT/CAREGIVER MEETING** with the youth program leaders at 5:00 PM ON **MONDAY AUGUST 27 (the first evening of the program)**. Essential information will be shared at this parent meeting— please don't miss it. Staff will be on hand to play with your children during the meeting.

Communication: There will be several support structures in place for clear communication between you and the youth staff. These will be presented at our Monday 5pm meeting.

Youth Boundaries: We ask that there be no children in the presentation hall during adult program/presentation times. Children are welcome in that

space during our family programming in the evening. Kitchen and staff meeting spaces are off limits to youth.

Bedtime: We will do our best to end between 8:30 and 9:00 pm each night, creating a space for parents and children to go off to their bedtime routines. If your child needs to go to bed earlier, we request that you consciously tend to your child's needs for the sake of you, your child, and the whole community. We have found that after all day outdoors and the excitement of new friends and 200+ other people, the children may be more tired than they appear. We appreciate your effort!

Drop off and pick up: Starting Tuesday morning, there will be scheduled drop off and pick up times for the youth program. You will be required to be at the designated location at those times to deliver and receive your children.

Overnight: On Wednesday night of the program, both the adult program and youth programs will go on outdoor overnight adventures. Youth ages 7-11 (Red Squirrels) go on their own overnight, with youth program instructors. Youth ages 4-6 (Chipmunks) generally join their parents and spend the night with the adult program's campout. Children aged 0-3 (in the Oaks & Acorns Program) can also join the adult program's campout in some cases. We'll discuss the overnight in more detail during the workshop. In the meantime, please feel free to discuss any questions specific to your child with the Youth Programs Coordinator on arrival day.

Mealtimes: Meals take place in a large dining room. Children (age 12 & under), Adult Participants, Staff, and Volunteers all eat together (with one exception: the Wednesday overnight for ages 7+). Please be with your children during mealtimes.

Medical Needs: If your child has any important allergies or medical needs, please let the Youth Program Coordinator know in person on arrival day. This is **in addition** to writing it in your child's Medical Form. This will help ensure that we fully understand your child's needs.

Packing List: Please read the youth program's packing list on the next page in detail.

Youth Program - Packing List

Below is a list of clothing and equipment your child will need during the youth program sessions (2 sessions per day, plus the youth overnight).

This list is in addition to the items on the Adult Program Packing List.

Footwear

- Socks** Medium-heavy weight synthetic or wool
- Hiking boots** Waterproof and ankle high (sturdy sneakers are a poor second choice)
- Sturdy Sneakers** Or other non-waterproof shoes for dry weather days

Clothing

*Depending on the day's weather, your child may need some or all of the warm clothing listed below. Bring clothing (**earth-toned** is nice for forest games) that you don't mind getting dirty! **We may be outside in cold, wet weather**, so our clothing needs to keep us warm. **It is essential to have good raingear, waterproof boots, a warm hat, and non-cotton insulating layers** to avoid being cold and uncomfortable and to prevent dangerous chilling (hypothermia). **Cotton loses all insulating value when wet.***

- Long Underwear** Top and bottom. Synthetic, wool or silk is preferred.
- Warm Pants** Wool or fleece pants are best. Cotton with rain pants will do.
- Layers for Torso** Wool or fleece sweater, shirt, etc. **Wool or synthetic is strongly preferred over cotton or 50/50. Make sure TWO layers can fit over each other.**
- Warm Hat** Wool or synthetic.
- Jacket** A warm jacket or coat.
- Rain gear** Rain jacket or poncho.
- Day pack** Big enough to contain extra clothing, water bottle and other gear.
- Knife** Optional - if your child has experience using knives safely. Locking blade or sheathed (preferred), sturdy with a 3-4" blade

Miscellaneous

- Water bottle** Quart sized
- Towel & swim gear**
- Thermos or insulated mug** Optional
- Pencil or pen** Optional
- Pocket notebook** Optional
- Sun hat/Sun screen** Optional
- Insect Repellent** Optional

Final Weather Reminder: It can be rainy and cold in the low 50s and as warm as the high 80s in the end of August in the Green Mountains. Plan for being outside in the worst of it, and you'll be fine.