

Common Ground Camps Summer 2012:

What to Bring, What to Wear, and Other Useful Information

Contacting us while your child is at camp

- ❑ During non-camp hours, or for messages that are not urgent: contact us at (203) 389-4333 ext 1213 or email camp@commongroundct.org. This voicemail and email will NOT be checked during camp hours, but will be checked at the start/end of each camp day and messages will be returned promptly.
- ❑ For emergencies or urgent messages that must be received during the camp day: call the camp cell phone at 203-533-9307. We try to answer each call, but if you get the voicemail, please leave a message and we will check it as soon as possible. You can also send text messages to this number (preferred when possible – it is sometimes hard to hear you when surrounded by lots of campers!)

Lunch and Snack

- ❑ Please send a bag lunch each day for all campers. **Do not pack sibling lunches in the same bag**, as campers sometimes eat in different areas, depending on the day's activities.
- ❑ Microwave ovens are not available – please do not send food that needs to be heated.
- ❑ We do not have enough refrigerator space for all camper lunches. Please use an insulated lunch bag and an icepack if your child's lunch needs to be kept cold.
- ❑ Allergies and food restrictions: You may pack any foods you wish in your child's lunch – we do not restrict any specific foods. If your child has a food allergy that could be triggered by being in the presence of a specific food, please contact us so we can discuss how to best provide for your child.
- ❑ All campers will receive a Common Ground water bottle, which will be kept at camp for the duration of their camp session. Parents may choose to send an additional beverage with lunch.
- ❑ Campers who are staying for afternoon extended day will probably want a snack. You are welcome to send additional food, and we encourage campers to leave it in their locker/cubby so that they can get it anytime during extended day.

Daily camp checklist:

- Packed lunch in an insulated bag if necessary
- Wearing sneakers or boots (no flip flops or slides)
- Dressed for mess and for the weather
- Long-lasting bug-spray and sunscreen applied (optional)
- Change of clothes in backpack or in locker at camp

Clothing

- ❑ Camp activities may involve getting dirty. Campers should wear clothes and shoes that can get mud, paint or other messes on them.
- ❑ Campers must wear sneakers or boots. Shoes must be good for running, playing, and hiking. **No sandals, no open toed shoes, and no shoes without a back (slides/clogs)!**
- ❑ A change of clothes (including underwear and socks) is a good idea. It can be put in a plastic bag with your child's name on it and left in their camp locker/cubby.

Lockers and Cubbies

- ❑ All campers will be assigned a locker or cubby where they can store their water bottle, change of clothes, hat, water shoes, bug spray, art projects, etc. Campers will not be issued and may not bring a lock.
- ❑ Lockers are to reduce our lost-and-found collection, NOT for storing valuables. Campers may bring books, snacks, or other items they might want for camp or extended day and leave them in their lockers (no electronic games, please).

Health and Safety at Camp

- ❑ **Illness at camp:** If your child is too sick to participate in normal camp activities, please do not send them to camp. If your child becomes sick at camp and cannot participate in activities a staff person will call you and we ask that you make arrangements to pick up your child as promptly as possible.
- ❑ **How we treat injuries at camp:** scrapes, cuts, and bee stings are common as we play and explore. Camp teachers are certified in CPR for the professional rescuer and in community first aid. By camp licensing regulations, we are not permitted to apply antibacterial ointment to injuries. Cuts and scrapes are washed with soap and water and covered with a clean bandage. If your child comes home with a band-aid on, please know that the cut may require further cleaning and inspection by a parent. Bumps and bee-stings are treated with ice.

In the case of a medical emergency, we will care for your camper, call 911, and call a parent immediately.

- ❑ **Handwashing:** We get into plenty of messes at camp and encourage all campers to wash their hands frequently. Hand sanitizer is available outside the gate of the chicken yard, in the children's garden, and in the hallways of the school building. Buckets of soapy water are placed at the entrance to the building each morning and are changed frequently, and campers are encouraged to use them as they come and go. All restrooms are stocked with hand sanitizer and soap. Staff remind campers to wash their hands when leaving the animal yards and before eating, and parents can reinforce that message at home.
- ❑ **Ticks, mosquitoes, and poison ivy:** Deer ticks (which can spread Lyme Disease) are found throughout Connecticut. Staff will help prevent children from encountering ticks by keeping campers out of prime tick habitat – areas of tall grass and weeds. Parents can help prevent tick (and mosquito) bites by applying bug repellent to campers each morning. For ticks, don't forget to spray shoes and socks, as they typically jump on from ground level. Campers may be sent with bug repellent to be reapplied during the day if necessary, however we recommend looking for a long-acting formula that just needs to be applied once in the morning, at home. If you are sending bug repellent with your child to camp, make sure they know how to use it properly – outside (not in the building), no spraying on the face, and wash hands after applying. Camp staff are not permitted (by licensing regulations) to remove an embedded tick, but we will call a parent right away if we notice one on your child.

Meet the Staff!

We are excited to welcome back many returning staff and to introduce some new staff in summer 2012.

We hope to have a FIELD GUIDE TO CAMP STAFF on our website by late spring – we'll send you the link when it is ready!

Staff will teach campers to identify **poison ivy** during orientation, however we realize that many children are too young or too busy having fun to remember to look out for it. We keep the farm and campus areas as free of poison ivy as possible, and staying on trail in the woods also helps prevent campers from contacting poison ivy. If your child develops a rash that you suspect to be poison ivy, make sure to wash the clothes and shoes they wore that day in hot soapy water right away, as poison ivy can continue to spread from oils remaining on the clothes.

- ❑ **Sunburn and extreme heat:** We recommend that parents apply an all-day, waterproof sunscreen to their child at home in the morning. For most children, this is sufficient, but if your child has very sun sensitive skin, please send them with additional sunscreen (labeled with their name) and let staff know if they will need help reapplying it. On very hot days, we always start the day with a reminder for all campers and staff to drink lots of water. We talk to campers about signs that they are too hot (headache, tired, feeling sick) and tell them to let a staff person know if they are overheated (and staff receive training in recognizing and treating heat exhaustion). We take frequent water breaks and check to make sure every child has a full water bottle before starting any physical activities. On really hot days we try to stay in the shade and we get wet in the sprinkler a lot! We do NOT have air conditioning anywhere in our facility.

Weather

- ❑ Campers should come prepared for the weather. We will be outside in any weather as long as it is safe (including rain). Campers usually love rainy days – it is not so hot, and they are allowed to get all wet!

Parent and Sibling participation

- ❑ Parents are welcome to visit, observe, and participate in activities anytime. Please let us know if you would like to join your child for a specific hike or other activity, as our written schedule sometimes changes based on weather or other scheduling logistics.
- ❑ Parents and siblings may attend field trips with their camper, but will need to provide their own transportation and pay their own field trip fee (if applicable).

Field Trips

- ❑ On or before the first day of your child's camp session, you will receive a list of all field trips that will take us off-campus. Not all camps or all sessions take field trips.
- ❑ Please note that all of West Rock Park is our campus! Our hikes and forest explorations frequently take us off of the immediate farm campus. **If you need to pick-up your child early, please notify camp staff in the morning so that we can make sure your child is present on the farm campus!**

Do Not Bring to Camp

- ❑ Video games, personal music players, cell phones, or other electronic devices.
- ❑ Pocket knives or any other item that could be dangerous to camp participants.

Behavior Policy

Common Ground Camps are a safe and fun place for everyone. We have high behavioral standards and expect all campers and staff to treat each other with respect and kindness. We will help prevent problems by modeling conflict resolution skills throughout the camp session, by making sure that all campers understand rules and expectations, and by making it clear that staff are always willing and available to help sort out a problem. Significantly disruptive or dangerous behaviors may result in campers being sent home from camp for a day or more if staff and parents are not able to work out a solution with the camper. Parents will be contacted with any behavioral concerns.

Drop-off & Pick-up

Campers must be dropped off & picked up according to the camp schedule. Staff are not available to supervise children before 8:30 or after 3:00, unless they are pre-registered for the extended day program.

A note on morning drop-off:

There are LOTS of families dropping off campers between 8:30 – 9:00 each morning. We encourage car-pooling as much as possible! Please plan on at least 15 minutes for drop-off for the first few days of each session as parents and campers become familiar with the routine (it does go much faster after a few days!).

Each day, you can choose from two drop-off options:

1. Look for signs for the drive-through drop off. Drive up and drop off your camper with a waiting staff member, who will sign them in and see them safely up the driveway. Please do not park or get out of the car – we need to keep the drive through moving!
2. Park and drop-off: park your car in the lot and walk your child over to staff who are waiting by the entrance to sign your child in.

Drop-off is from 8:30 to 9:00 A.M. for all campers

(or anytime from 7:30 – 8:30 AM for campers enrolled in morning extended day)

★ Please wait at the bottom of the hill with your child until a staff member is present with the sign-in sheet.

★ If you arrive after the drop-off period, please walk your child up the hill to sign them in and make sure they find their camp counselors!

Afternoon pick-up:

Please park and walk up the driveway to sign your camper out for the day. We know that families may have many arrangements for picking up children – just let us know if your child should go home with a friend, neighbor, etc. We will call you if there is any confusion. Plan for pick-up to take about 15 minutes.

Pick-up is from 2:45 - 3:00 P.M. for all campers who are not enrolled in extended day.

Latest pick-up from extended day is promptly at 5:00 P.M. Campers in extended day may be picked up anytime between 3:00 – 5:00.

Need additional childcare?

Several camp staff are available to babysit outside of camp hours. We are happy to provide contact information, however specific arrangements, including hourly rate of pay and reference checks are to be negotiated individually with your potential babysitter. Email camp@commongroundct.org if you would like to receive the potential babysitter contact list.

We anticipate a great summer at Common Ground! Please contact us at (203) 389-4333 ext 1213 with any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

Rebecca Holcombe and Jill Herbst,
Common Ground Camp Directors

Essential Information

Location: 358 Springside Ave, New Haven, CT

Phone: (203) 389-4333 ext 1213 for non-urgent messages
(203) 533-9307 for urgent messages during camp hours

Drop off time: 8:30 – 9:00

Pick-up time: 2:45 – 3:00

Latest pick-up time from extended day: 5:00

Email: camp@commongroundct.org

Fax #: (203) 389-7458

Tax-ID for your records:

90-0773928

Due date for payments and doctor's physicals:

June 15, 2012