Montana Natural History Center
Summer Camp

Information for Camp Families

Welcome to Montana Natural History Center's Summer Outdoor Discovery Day Camps!

We are looking forward to exploring nature with your camper this summer! Below, you will find information about our camps—what to pack, when to arrive, and other logistics. We hope this information helps you prepare. If you have any other questions, feel free to contact us!

Our Camp Goals
The mission of the Montana Natural History Center is to promote and cultivate the appreciation, understanding and stewardship of nature through education.

Based on our mission, our summer camps have three main goals:

1. To provide quality outdoor education experiences to all participants through exploration, guided discovery, and hands-on learning experiences.
2. To teach stewardship concepts through daily activities.
3. To provide kids with the opportunity to develop a positive, respectful, long-term relationship with nature that will stay with them throughout their lives.

Location
All camps begin and end at the Montana Natural History Center at 120 Hickory Street in Missoula. On nice days, pickup is usually located in our Nature Adventure Garden, which is located on the East end of our building along the bike path.

2018 Day Camp Program Hours
Monday - Friday, 9:30am to 3:30pm.
Extended care is available free from 8:30-9:30am and 3:30-5:30pm.
*A $1 per minute fee may apply if a child is picked up after 5:30

Absences and late arrivals
Please call our office if your child is going to be late or miss the day.

Pick-up and drop-off
Children must be signed in every morning at drop off and signed out each afternoon at pick up. Only parents and those who have been given written or electronic permission will be allowed to pick up the camper at the end of the day. You can grant permission to pick up before the camp week starts on the forms in the CampDoc registration system, or you can send a signed, written note during the week of camp.

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Emergency Phone Number
MNHC office: 327-0405. A field cell phone number will be provided at check in.

Required Forms
This year, you can complete all of your camper's emergency and medical forms through our online registration system. If you have not yet done so, please go online, log in, and complete all of the required forms. If you have any problems completing the online forms, please contact MNHC as soon as possible. **Emergency Release forms must be returned by the end of the day on the Friday before your child starts camp.**

Preparing for Adventure…
During your child's week of camp we will be exploring our local natural areas, taking field trips, playing games, using our creative talents in art activities and making all kinds of amazing discoveries! Each camp varies by theme; a specific schedule, including field trip locations and planned activities, will be available at check in on the first day of camp. Kids can expect to be outdoors most of the time and lunch is almost always eaten in the field.

What to Bring
We recommend that your child bring these items to camp each day; however, some (ie. rain gear if it's sunny) may be left in the classroom in the interests of making backpacks as light as possible! **PLEASE LABEL ALL ITEMS WITH YOUR CHILD'S NAME!**

- ☐ Outdoor clothing for the weather
- ☐ Clothing suitable for outdoor exploration, art activities, and play!
- ☐ Backpack
- ☐ Filled water bottle
- ☐ Sun hat
- ☐ Sunscreen
- ☐ Rain gear
- ☐ Lunch (including snacks) that can be eaten in the field
- ☐ Snacks to last throughout the entire camp day
- ☐ Water shoes (Something that attaches well to feet, closed toed preferred- old tennis shoes work well!)
- ☐ A complete change of clothing
- ☐ Sunscreen
- ☐ Insect repellant
- ☐ Swimsuit or other clothing that can get wet
- ☐ Towel
- ☐ For preschool/kindergarten camp, please also send a pillow/stuffed animal/blanket for our rest/nap time, if your child needs this for feeling comfortable.

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Electronics
Camp gives kids the opportunity to unplug and explore nature! Please do not send your child to camp with electronics (ipods, phones, smart watches, finger spinners, etc.) We spend most of the day outdoors, often in wet or dirty areas, and we cannot guarantee the safety of these items. Also, we want our campers to be able to "unplug" and experience the world around them! If campers bring electronics with them to camp, they will be asked to leave them in a secure location during the day. Our staff are equipped with cell phones in case of emergencies.

Please do not send expensive items to camp with your child (including music/game players)- we try our best, but things do get lost! Please do not send fidget spinners to camp.

Snacks
We'll take snack breaks throughout the day; please send your child with extra snack-able items in their lunch box to eat at snack time.

Medications
If your child is taking or needs to carry a prescription (including epi-pens and inhalers) the prescription should be labeled with the date and included in the student's back pack. The student is responsible for carrying the prescription at all times. Staff is not responsible for lost prescriptions. Parents may instruct staff as to how and when the student needs to take the prescription. Parents should note any medications on the Emergency Release Form.

Volunteer Opportunities
Parent volunteers are welcome to participate with advanced planning. Contact MNHC to let us know if you would like to attend part of camp!

Special accommodations
We hope to make Summer Outdoor Discovery Day Camps great for all kids. If your child requires special accommodations (or even if you just want to let us know more about the unique and special person they are!), we encourage you to contact Stephanie Potts at 327-0405ext.209 before camp starts so we can be best prepared for a great week of camp.

Field Trips and Activities
Our summer camps participate in a wide range of nature-based activities. Your child can expect to be outside every day. We take time to explore natural areas from the perspective of a Naturalist: a scientist, artist and writer. Each camp will also include games and time for play in the outdoors which research shows, is important for children too. Kids can expect to learn a lot while having fun!

Our camps get outside every day. All camps will walk or use our activity buses for field trips. Preschool camps can expect to stay in town for field trips but 1st-5th grade camps may travel as far as the National Bison Range, Seeley Lake, or Beavertail Pond. Specific field trip and activity information will be provided for you on your first day of camp but you may contact us with questions.

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Buses
All buses are equipped with safety belts and staff are trained, have passed required certification tests, and are evaluated for safe driving. Parents may provide a booster seat for their child though they are not required. One of our buses has a lift to accommodate wheelchair users. Campers are required to wear a seatbelt and follow bus rules and the directions of the bus driver and other staff while riding on MNHC buses.

Age Groups
Students will be divided into camp age groups based on their school grade, and content and activities will be geared towards students in a specific grade range. This allows our instructors to plan age-appropriate activities. Our age categories are **Preschool-Kindergarten**, **grades 1-2** and **grades 3-5**. Camps are designed for students *entering* grade levels noted in the fall of 2018. Preschool-Kindergarten camp participants must be age 4 or older and must be potty-trained.

Camp Family Facebook Group
Want to know the amazing stuff your kids are doing during the day?Join our Montana Natural History Center Camp Facebook page! It's a closed, invitation-only group, so parents are the only ones who can view the kids' pictures. Camp staff will post pictures and information throughout the day from the field. We will only include pictures of children who have photo releases.

To Join:

- Email Stephanie Potts, Youth Programs Coordinator at spotts@montananaturalist.org. Put "Facebook page" in the subject.
- Stephanie will invite you via email—just click on the link in your email to join the group!

Cancellations/Refund Policy
Program fee is refundable ONLY if a cancellation is made 30 days before the start of camp, **minus a $50 non-refundable administrative fee per camp**. Withdrawals after this deadline forfeit the full registration fee. Membership fees are non-refundable.

Scholarships
MNHC is able to provide a limited number of need-based partial scholarships for our summer camps. We offer a pre-registration scholarship application period, and usually award the bulk of our scholarships before camp registration opens in March. Please contact us if you are interested in learning more or applying for a scholarship.

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