

Camp Programs Frequently Asked Questions

When does summer camp registration open?

Summer Camp 2025 registration will open on Friday January 24, 2025 at 6:00pm EST for Members who are level Trailblazer and above, and Friday January 31, 2025 at 6:00pm EST for everyone.

How do I register for summer camp?

Please review the [Ijams Camps](#) webpage, and [2025 Camp Dates and Rates](#) before registering for camp. Starting on January 31st at 6:00pm [You can register here for summer camp!](#) Families can register multiple campers for multiple sessions at the same time.

How many sessions may campers attend?

Campers are welcome to attend multiple sessions, **but for 2025 we are limiting registration to four weeks per child.**

While we love seeing familiar faces each week, our camp structure and **activities are similar from week to week**, especially in **Discovery and Adventure Camps**, so campers who attend for an extended period may experience **repetition**. Limiting enrollment to four weeks helps keep the camp experience fresh, exciting, and engaging for each camper.

Preschool Camps feature **weekly themes**, but younger children attending for more than a few weeks often grow **restless, as we take time to establish routines with new groups of campers each session**. To help your child get the most out of their camp experience, we want to ensure that each week is memorable and unique.

We strive to create fun, engaging experiences all summer long and want every camper to remain excited, curious, and eager to return to camp each day!

Do you offer financial assistance or discounts for camps?

Yes! Current Ijams members at the *Explorer* level or higher receive a 5% discount on camp programs, including After Care. If you qualify, you will receive an email with a unique code to use at checkout. If you have questions about your membership status, please contact our Development Director, Cindy Hassil, at chassil@ijams.org.

We also offer a multi-child discount of \$10 off for each additional camper registered, which will be automatically applied at checkout.

Limited financial assistance for students attending a Title One or Community School is available through a scholarship application during registration. Please note that funds are extremely limited at this time, though we are actively working to secure additional support to help more families in the near future. If you are eligible to receive funding and we do not have enough to apply it to your account, you will be put on a waiting list on a first come first serve basis.

Can I make a donation to support camp scholarships?

Yes! It's easy to make a gift to help send a kid to camp! One-time gifts or recurring donations can be made [on the Ijams website](#) (please note that the gift is intended for the Camp Scholarship Fund). Gifts of any amount are deeply appreciated. Charitable contributions help to keep programs affordable so that all children may experience the joys and adventures of camp. To make a donation off-line, please contact Cindy Hassil, Development Director, at chassil@ijams.org or +1865-577-4717 ext. 117.

What is the cancellation policy?

Cancellations made more than 30 days prior to the first day of your selected week of camp are eligible for a full refund (minus a \$25 administrative fee) or the opportunity to transfer registration to a different session (subject to availability and a \$25 administrative fee).

Cancellations made between 15-30 days prior to the camp start date will be eligible for a refund equal to 50% of the full camp tuition for that week.

Participants absent at the time of camp or canceling 14 or fewer days prior to camp will not receive a refund of fees paid, and fees are not transferable to another week of camp.

All camp fees must be paid in full prior to the start of your camper's first week of camp. If fees are not paid by the start of camp, your camper may lose their spot in the program unless an alternative plan has been discussed with the Youth Programs Manager.

Is there a waitlist for camp sessions?

Yes! If a camp session is already full, you can register for that week and be placed on a waitlist at no charge.

If a spot becomes available, you will receive both an email and a phone call. The email will include a deadline for responding to secure the spot—typically three business days from when the email is sent.

If you would like the spot, simply reply to confirm your camper's enrollment. If you do not want the spot, please let the Youth Programs Manager know as soon as possible so we can offer the spot to the next family on the waitlist. Timely communication helps us ensure everyone has a fair opportunity to attend camp!

Do you offer payment plans for camp?

Yes. During registration, families will have the option to pay in a lump sum or in multiple installments. Email Kylie Preston, Youth Programs Manager, at kpreston@ijams.org with questions about payment plans.

Is Before or After Care offered?

Before Care is not offered for any Ijams summer camp. Please make arrangements to drop your camper off no earlier than 8:50 a.m. each camp day.

After Care is offered for ALL camps and can be added at the time of registration. After Care is offered from 3-5 p.m. After Care can be purchased at the time of registration or while camp is in session. Families may purchase an After Care package or may purchase After Care by the day. After Care fees are as follows:

- After Care by the day: \$35 per camper, per day
- Week-long Package: \$150 per camper, per week
- The week of July 1-3 is a 3-day camp. Aftercare for that week is \$90.

Every 10 minutes after your camper's pick-up time, \$10 will be accrued. For example, if your camper does not have After Care, your camper must be picked up by 3:15. Campers picked up between 3:16-3:25 will be charged \$10. Campers picked up between 3:26-3:35 will be charged \$20. The same fees will be charged for campers picked up after 5:00 (*applicable to After Care campers*).

What should my camper bring to camp each day?

All campers should bring the following items to camp every day:

- Weather-appropriate clothing and closed-toe shoes/boots, to allow most of each day to be spent outside.
- Day pack durable enough to hold a lunchbox, 2 snacks, change of clothes, water bottle, and any other personal items that your camper can move about comfortably in.
- A complete change of clothing for each day of camp, including an extra pair of CLOSED-TOE SHOES that can get wet. Old sneakers, water shoes, and sandals with heel straps work great! Flip-flops do not adequately protect feet.
- One pair of LONG PANTS for certain activities.
- Rain jacket or poncho (when applicable).
- Snack and lunch - Please pack plenty of food for morning and afternoon snacks as well as lunch; an ice pack is recommended. Campers eat outside picnic-style; please pack accordingly.
- Sunscreen - Please apply sunscreen to your camper before camp starts each day. Staff/campers will reapply as needed.
- Hat for sun protection; sunglasses are recommended.
- At least one filled, refillable water bottle.
- Mosquito and tick repellent is recommended. Please apply before camp starts each day if interested. Staff/campers will reapply as needed. Please check for ticks daily after camp.

Will my child get to participate in Navitat?

Anyone enrolled in preschool camp (ages 3-5) will not be participating in Navitat.

This year, Navitat will be taking up all of Discovery Camp (ages 6-9) in two groups at different times. These groups will be split by age: group 1, ages 6-7. Group 2 ages 8-9. The younger group will get the Navitat experience, but they will only be allowed to do the courses labeled as beginner. Additionally, they will have more guidance and supervision from both Navitat Staff and Summer Camp Staff to ensure that they are comfortable at all times. The age 8-9 age group will go through at least one beginner course to ensure their comfortability, and then they will be allowed to move to intermediate courses. All of Adventure Camp and Wilderness Camp will go through Navitat in one day. If you have any questions regarding camper participation in Navitat, please contact Kylie Preston, Youth Programs Manager, at kpreston@ijams.org.

Will my children be in the same group at camp?

In any given camp session, campers will spend the majority of their time in groups that are split by age. For example: Discovery Campers (Ages 6-9) will be split into groups of those ages 6-7 and ages 8-9. If two campers of different ages from the same household are registered for the same camp and week, they may not be placed in the same group. To request that campers are in the same group, please contact Kylie Preston, Youth Programs Manager, at kpreston@ijams.org or indicate this during registration. Campers in different camps will be in different physical locations.

Can My Camper participate in a camp that is not their age grouping?

If a camper is not yet 6, they must continue to participate in preschool camp until their 6th birthday due to Navitat age restrictions. Campers who are requesting to be in adventure camp instead of discovery camp will be considered on a case by case basis. Please contact Kylie Preston, Youth Programs Manager, at kpreston@ijams.org to discuss.

What are the camper to staff ratios at camp?

In preschool camp, when the campers are outside the ratio will be no less than 1:7. Most of the time, the ratio will be more like 1:5 or 1:6 during outside play. In discovery and adventure camps, the ratio will be 2:15, or 4:30.

Is there a camp for children ages 13+?

YES! This year, Ijams is offering Wilderness Camp for ages 13-15 on July 14-18 and July 21-25. Campers are welcome to be registered for either one session or both sessions.

My camper has a learning difference, limited mobility, or health concerns. Can they participate in camp?

Yes! Ijams strives to make summer camp as accessible, safe, and inclusive as possible. Ijams welcome campers who are emerging multilinguals as well as campers with social, emotional, physical, cognitive, or behavioral challenges, along with their 1:1 assistant or personal care assistants. Families are required to submit detailed health information during registration. This information assists camp staff in providing a safe experience for everyone. Please be advised that some of the activities offered at camp may not be able to be modified for every need or ability. Camp staff will work to find alternative activities for campers in those scenarios. Activities

may be physically demanding, which can be exacerbated in hot summer weather. Furthermore, campers must possess the ability to work effectively with others, refrain from inappropriate or harmful behavior, and assume responsibility for personal care and hygiene for up to 8 hours per day, with minimal to no assistance. In many cases, Ijams staff are able to make modifications or adjustments to the program, and are open to feedback or ideas.

Ijams requires that all campers be able to use the toilet for all bodily functions, as well as appropriately and thoroughly clean themselves after. Pull-ups are not allowed.

Before enrolling a camper with special developmental, physical, medical, or emotional needs, please contact Kylie Preston, Youth Programs Manager, at kpreston@ijams.org, to discuss potential accommodations; disclosure of special needs will not preclude participation.

Are lunch or snacks provided for campers?

No. All campers must bring their own lunch and two snacks each day camp is in session. Please ensure your camper has enough food and at least one appropriately-sized water bottle for full, physically active days in the outdoors.

My camper has food allergies. Can they participate in camp?

Yes! Be advised that Ijams is not a nut-free facility. Ijams does not prevent campers from bringing lunches or snacks containing common food allergens. Campers will eat lunch and snacks outdoors, and can be spaced out appropriately if allergies are a concern. Campers will wash hands or use hand sanitizer before and after every meal. If your camper has an Epi-Pen for any food or environmental allergies, they must carry it on their person at all times.

What is the heat and weather policy for Ijams camps?

At Ijams, camp is rain or shine, and outdoor exploration is a core part of the experience. We encourage campers to dress appropriately for the weather and be prepared to spend time outside in a variety of conditions. However, the safety of our campers and staff is our top priority, and we have clear guidelines for when to bring campers indoors or modify activities due to weather concerns.

Heat Policy:

- When the heat index reaches 95°F to 104°F, camp will continue with significant modifications to reduce heat exposure. These include:
 - Increased indoor and shaded activities
 - Frequent hydration breaks
 - Water-based activities to help campers stay cool
 - Limiting strenuous physical activity during the hottest parts of the day
- If the heat index exceeds 105°F, we will make every effort to move camp indoors. However, due to facility space limitations, it may not be possible to accommodate all

campers inside. If camp is canceled due to extreme heat or other weather-related safety concerns, families will receive a full refund for that day only.

Severe Weather Policy:

Camp staff will bring campers indoors if any of the following conditions are present:

- An active thunderstorm with visible lightning
- Lightning within 10 miles of the site
- A tornado warning in the area
- Campers or staff showing signs of dehydration or heat-related illness
- Staff feel the weather conditions are unsafe or causing campers and staff to feel dysregulated or uncomfortable

Our goal is to ensure that camp remains a fun, safe, and engaging experience, regardless of weather conditions.

Is there anything I can do at Ijams Nature Center while my camper is participating in a summer camp program?

Yes! Ijams has 12 miles of trails for walking, hiking, and both road and mountain biking. Swimming is available at Mead's Quarry. [River Sports Outfitters](#) offers canoe, kayak, and paddleboard rentals at Mead's Quarry, and [Navitat Knoxville](#) is a great way to zip through the day while your campers are away! Check the [Ijams website](#) for hours of operation and more information.

Nearby Sevier Avenue in South Knoxville has shops, restaurants, and more, and is only a five-minute drive from Ijams.

Who will be responsible for my camper during a camp program?

All Ijams summer camps are led by trained educators and naturalists. All education staff undergo thorough background checks during the interview process. Campers will always be under the supervision of a member of Ijams' education team, with enough freedom for free play and exploration while ensuring all campers' safety and well-being. All camp staff are First Aid and CPR certified and are trained in outdoor safety and group management strategies.