



# Parent Packet

Leslie Stout, Aquarium Director

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Thank you for choosing to spend your summer with us! This parent packet is designed to give parents more information on our camp program, policies and procedures. You will receive a specific parent letter and another program release letter closer to your camp session with specific camper information.

## **Our Staff:**

- Counselors are chosen for two main reasons. Number one, they genuinely care about children and number two, they want to share their appreciation of nature with children through wildlife experiences and nature excursions.
- All counselors go through vigorous pre-camp training to ensure all campers have a fun, safe experience during their stay.
- Counselors work very closely under the Aquarium Director and Education Specialists.
- All staff members are First Aid and CPR certified.
- All staff members undergo background screenings before hire.
- Camp counselors are considered mandated reporters, meaning that we are required by law to report signs of abuse or neglect to the appropriate authorities (911 emergency line or DCFS). Educators go through training to recognize basic signs of abuse and neglect during orientation and as part of annual training.

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## **General Health Information:**

Your camper's safety is our number one concern. All staff are trained in First Aid and CPR. Throughout the campers' stay, counselors and other staff watch for signs of fatigue, dehydration, improper eating, etc... that may indicate illness. If a counselor or camper expresses health concern they are escorted to the Aquarium Director. The Aquarium Director will contact parents or emergency services as necessary. Counselors keep logs of all incidents including behavior, illness, accident, or injury and relay this information to the appropriate person. Counselors generally relay minor incidents to the pickup person. More serious issues are relayed directly to the parent/guardian immediately over the phone.

Parents will be notified immediately if a child has a fever in excess of 100.4 degrees, has been vomiting or expresses other serious symptoms. Should a child have a communicable disease, parents will be notified immediately, the camper will be taken to an isolated area to reduce the spread of disease, and parents will be called to pick up their camper as soon as possible.

## **Accident/Illness & Emergency Treatment:**

We take camper health and safety very seriously. In the case of an emergency, you and/or your emergency contact will be notified immediately if your child has a serious accident or illness or requires medical treatment by a physician. The Aquarium, and Thronateeka are located less than 10 minutes from an award winning, comprehensive hospital, Phoebe Putney, <http://www.phoebeputney.com/>.

Medical expenses incurred (doctor, hospital, prescription, etc.) are your responsibility.



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## Allergies:

Please notify us on the program release and health form if your child has any insect or food allergies.

## Medication

You do not need to bring over-the-counter medications such as acetaminophen, ibuprofen, diphenhydramine (Benadryl), Pepto Bismol, or Swimmer's Ear. Counselors will only distribute OTC medications under the direction of the Director of Education or Education Manager with specific verbal or written permission from the parent/guardian.

If you are sending your camper with prescription medication, be sure each medication has the original prescription label. If you are sending your camper with an inhaler, be sure to send the box; most often the prescription label is located on the box. All medication should be properly labeled with your child's name, name of medication, dosage and time to dispense (breakfast, lunch, dinner, bedtime, or as needed). All prescription medication should be cleared through your camper's counselor during check-in and medication dispensation form should be completed and returned to your camp counselor during check in.

Please note The Academy of Pediatrics recommends that "Elective interruptions of medications (drug holiday) should be avoided by campers on long-term psychotropic therapy or those on maintenance therapy required for a chronic medical condition" (*Pediatrics*. 2011; 127 (4): 795)

## Emergency Management

All Education staff receive emergency training for events such as weather, fire, medical emergencies, animal escapes, and missing child. Education team members participate in organization wide emergency drills.

## Behavior Management

All staff members participate in an intensive training program that prepares them to deal with all aspects of camp life. We emphasize positive, age appropriate, behavior management techniques that guide and encourage children, and at the same time establish clear behavior guidelines and expectations. At all times, staff members are guided by the principle that all children and adults deserve to be treated in a respectful and caring manner. Campers are expected to treat fellow campers and staff with respect and to abide by all camp rules.

These rules, and the consequences for not following them, are shared at the beginning of each session. At that time campers are encouraged to ask questions to ensure clear understanding of the rules. Individuals are held accountable for their actions. Staff members support campers by clearly defining and enforcing expectations and responsibilities. When behavior problems continue to arise, parents will be consulted and a plan for behavior management will be developed.

If a camper's behavior does not improve after all avenues of intervention have been explored, or when one camper's actions are detracting from the experience of others, the camper will be sent home.

Some actions require immediate dismissal from camp. These actions include, but are not limited to smoking or the use of tobacco products, consumption or possession of alcohol and/or illegal drugs, endangerment to self or others, or threats of endangerment to self or others. Campers sent home because of behavior problems will not be entitled to any refund of fees.



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Counselors are not trained to handle campers who have severe emotional/behavioral issues, demonstrate violent/aggressive behavior or who routinely violate rules and policies. If your child has severe behavioral challenges, we can refer you to programs designed to accommodate these special needs.