



EARLY CHILDHOOD



Summer Camp 2026

PARENT MANUAL



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WELCOME

Welcome to the Downers Grove Park District's summer day camp program! Your child is about to embark on a fun-filled adventure. Our early childhood camps, Exploration Station & Pee Wee Camp, offer campers the opportunity to meet new friends, learn new things, and have fun all summer long!

This Parent Manual is designed to provide you with an overview of our policies and procedures; please read all information carefully and thoroughly. Information in this parent manual is subject to change and parents will be notified of any changes.

We are looking forward to an amazing summer!

Logan Durkin
Recreation Supervisor
630-960-2137
ldurkin@dgparks.org

PAYMENT AND REGISTRATION POLICY

It is our goal to safely accommodate as many families as possible. The Downers Grove Park District reserves the right to adjust locations based on availability of space, staff, and enrollment in order to maintain the safety, structure, and integrity of the program as a whole.

All registrations are based on program availability, proper completion of registration, payment status/history and the Park District's ability to meet any special needs the participant may have.

In order to register, each participant must:

- Complete and sign proper registration and waiver forms for each child.
- Pay all outstanding fees due to any Park District programs and remain in good financial standing with the Downers Grove Park District.
- Must register and turn in **ALL** forms, including emergency forms in ePACT, no later than the Wednesday prior to desired week of camp. **Registrations received after this point will only be considered pending availability.**

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

In an effort to provide recreation, health, and wellness opportunities to all residents, including those who are experiencing financial hardships, the Downers Grove Park District has established a Financial Assistance Program. Participants must reside within the boundaries of the Downers Grove Park District to be eligible. For eligibility requirements or to donate to the Financial Assistance Program, please visit dgparks.org/financial-assistance-program.

EPACT - CAMPER INFORMATION/EMERGENCY FORMS

The Downers Grove Park District utilizes ePACT for all camper information/emergency forms.

NEW FAMILIES:

- You will receive an email from ePACT to complete your child's participant information/emergency form.
- This email will be sent to the primary email address listed on the household account used when registering for camp.
- **You MUST use the email address the ePACT invitation is sent to when setting up your account.**
 - If you use a different email address to make your ePACT account, we will not be able to access your child's information, and you will have to go through the process again.

RETURNING FAMILIES (your child was enrolled in Summer Camp 2025 or another District program that utilized ePACT, such as preschool)

- Keep an eye out for an email from ePACT asking you to reconfirm your child's participant information.
- Any forms in ePACT that have not been updated in 9 months or more are required to go through the reconfirmation process.
- Reconfirming is an important process of ensuring the records we have on file are up to date.
- The reconfirming process should only take a few minutes as the info you previously submitted will auto-fill, and you will only need to add missing info, update anything that needs it, and then accept the waivers again for this year.

Emails for enrolling & reconfirming will come from the ePACT Network:

member.support@epactnetwork.com

The email subject will include: Downers Grove Park District - Early Childhood Programs

All forms must be completed prior to a camp session beginning in order for your camper to attend. Parents will be able to log into their ePACT account and update information at any time. Visit dgparks.org/summercamps and scroll down to "ePACT Guides" for links to helpful info regarding ePACT.

CUSTODY ORDERS

To honor specific custody orders and/or orders of protection, it is the responsibility of the parent to provide a copy of the custody order and/or order of protection. The document must be signed by the court with the legal seal present, date effective, and ending date if applicable.

WITHDRAWALS/CANCELLATIONS

Cancellation/refund requests must be submitted at least 5 days prior to the start of a camp session to receive a full s minus \$5. Any refund requests received within 5 days of a camp session beginning will only be approved if accompanied by a doctor's note due to a medical reason and will be subject to a \$10 cancellation fee. Self-cancellation prior to the deadline can be done online through your account or you can visit dgparks.org/request-a-refund to complete a refund request form. No refunds will be given for missed camps days unless cancelled by the Park District.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Drop off/Pick Up

There will be no longer be paper sign in and out sheets. Instead, we will utilize the check in and out feature through the ePACT Family App. Additionally, only those listed in your support network will be allowed to drop off or pick up your camper.

NOTE: The Family App is web-based; you will NOT find it in the app store. Follow the directions linked below according to your phone's operating system to access the app & add a link to your device's home screen:

- [How to Set Up Your 'ePACT Family App' on Apple Devices](#)
- [How to Set Up Your 'ePACT Family App' on Android Devices](#)

- Anyone who has permission to drop off or pick up your child must be listed in your child's "Support Network" in ePACT.
- When adding someone to your support network, you must include a valid email address for that person: **each approved drop off/pick up person** (mom, dad, nanny, grandparents, etc.) **will need to create their own ePACT account** in order to gain access to the specific QR code assigned to your child.
- ePACT will verify the contact information you have provided and will send a message to that person so they can create their own account. Click the link below for more info/guidance:

[How do I connect my ePACT account with friends and family?](#)

If a pick up person does not have access to a computer, email address or smart phone, please contact the Recreation Supervisor to discuss alternative check in and check out procedures.

To drop off or pick up a camper:

- Log into ePACT on your mobile device
- Present the child's QR code to be scanned by Park District staff
- Please do **not** screenshot your QR code; **a picture of the QR code will not work**

Please note: we encourage all people in your support network to **add a picture to their account**, as this will help our staff verify their identity. We do still ask that anyone picking up a child from camp have photo ID readily available, just in case.

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Camp Hours of Operation

Exploration Station: 9:15am-12:15pm

Pee Wee Camp: 9:15am-11:15am

Late Pick-up Fee

A \$20 flat fee plus a \$1 a minute late fee will be implemented when a child is picked up late. The fee must be paid online or in-person at the registration desk at any of our facilities, within two days. If you are going to be late, a courtesy call would be greatly appreciated although it will not exempt you from the late fee.

CAMP EMERGENCY/URGENT PROCEDURES

Evacuation procedures for each program have been established in the event of a major emergency that would require removing children from the site. Additionally, plans have been developed for tornado procedures. By registering your child for the program you are releasing the Downers Grove Park District from all liability that may arise from the child's participation in the program.

If an individual child is injured in the program, we will take the necessary emergency steps and contact you as soon as possible. However, should the injury be more severe we will call 911 without hesitation. The parent/guardian also authorizes the Park District and its employees, to consent to medical treatment. By registering your child for the program you are releasing the Downers Grove Park District from all liability which may arise from the child's participation in the program.

In the event of an urgent/emergent situation where camp drop off may be delayed or early pick up may be required, staff will first send out an Emergency Message through ePACT. Depending on the situation, emails and phone calls may follow the ePACT message.

MEDICAL EMERGENCIES

All camp staff are CPR and First Aid certified. In the event of a serious injury that requires more than basic first aid, the following steps will be taken:

1. Staff calls EMS
2. Parent or Guardian is contacted (or listed emergency contact)
3. If necessary, paramedics will transport the injured child to the nearest hospital, accompanied by a staff member.

Guardians are responsible for any emergency medical charges. Park District Employees are not allowed to transport injured parties in Park District or in personal vehicles.

ABSENCES AND ILLNESS

Absences

If child(ren) are ill and are not going to be attending camp please call/email or text the camp phone to report your child absent. If your child has contracted a contagious illness such as COVID-19, Hand, Foot & Mouth, chicken pox, strep, flu, lice, or pink eye, you will need to report this as soon as possible to the Recreation Supervisor.

Illness

Children should be kept home if they exhibit any of the following symptoms:

- Fever of 100.4 or higher
- Sore throat
- Nausea/ vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Congestion/runny nose
- Cough
- Shortness of Breath

- Unusual Fatigue
- Body aches
- Rash
- Discharge from eyes or ears
- Red/crusty eyes

Child Ill While at Camp

- If a child becomes ill while at camp, the child will be isolated with a staff person until a designated adult arrives to pick up.
- A designated pick up person **MUST** arrive within 45 minutes of the initial call to pick up their child.
- The child will need to remain home and follow our illness policy below.

What to do if my child is not feeling well or showing illness symptoms?

- If your child has any symptoms listed above, your child should remain home from camp.
- Your child must be symptom free and fever free for at least 24 hours without the use of fever reducing medication or until a doctor indicates that your child can return to camp.

Parent Communication regarding contagious illnesses

If we are notified of a contagious illness in your child's camp, and the individual attended camp while possibly contagious, you will be notified as quickly as possible.

Please note:

Any illness policy in this manual may be modified at any time depending on changes in the State of Illinois health mitigations or due to the current community health situation. Any changes to the illness policy will be emailed to parents.

ALLERGIES

The Downers Grove Park District is dedicated and committed to providing a safe environment for all children. Please note any allergies on the camper information forms in ePACT. Please contact the Recreation Supervisor to discuss your child's personal needs, if any. We will be happy to work with you to provide reasonable accommodations that will make your child's camp experience a safe one.

MEDICATION

Campers requiring any type of medication must have a signed medication consent form on file. These forms are available in ePACT. Medication cannot be administered without the consent form. If your child is taking medication, the medication must be unexpired, in its original container with the child's full name on the label and the correct dosage enclosed. Medication and instructions must be given to the site director upon the child's arrival at camp. All medication is kept in a safe and secure location.

Transfer/Possession of Medication

Transfer/possession of all medications provided to camp staff must be signed in on the first day of camp attendance and signed out on the final day of camp attendance. This is to help ensure all medications such as EpiPens, inhalers, etc. are properly returned in a safe and timely manner.

CODE OF CONDUCT

Participants, parents, and guardians are expected to exhibit appropriate behavior at all times. The following standards have been established for the benefit of our programs as a whole. The safety, structure, and integrity of the program will take priority over those of any one individual. Behavior guidelines are not limited to, but are based on, the following overall rules and apply to all participants. The term “participant” will henceforth be used to represent children, parents, and guardians.

1. Participants must show respect to all other participants, staff, property, equipment, and facilities.
2. Participants must follow the directive of staff and all program-specific rules.
3. Participants may not harass, bully, or intimidate through the use of words, foul language, gestures, body language, phones, texting or other devices, social media, or menacing behavior.
4. Participants must refrain from threatening or causing physical harm to other participants and staff.
5. Participants may not place themselves or others in dangerous situations through their actions or behavior.
6. Participants may not possess weapons, devices that may be used as a weapon, or illegal substances.
7. Participants may not demonstrate any sexual suggestiveness or sexual activity.
8. Parents/guardians may not instruct their children to disregard staff’s directions or to respond physically with violent or threatening behavior or language.
9. Parents/guardians may not direct, discipline, or instruct children other than their own.
10. Staff reserve the right to dismiss, suspend or ban any individual who represents a risk or danger from program premises (including buildings, parking lots, playgrounds, and surrounding areas).
11. Participants must keep track of their belongings. Staff is not responsible for lost, stolen, or damaged belongings including backpacks, glasses, towels, toys, cell phones, spending money, etc.

Bullying, verbal and physical abuse, threats, and disrespect will not be tolerated. Participants will be held accountable for their actions in compliance with the DGPD Code of Conduct. All threats or threatening behavior will be taken seriously and may be reported to the authorities. Participants using threats of death, violence or suicide will be immediately suspended.

The Downers Grove Park District reserves the right to dismiss a participant whose behavior endangers his or her own safety or the safety of others.

BEHAVIOR/DISCIPLINE

Behavioral Expectations

It is the goal of the summer camp program to provide each child with an environment that is safe, nurturing, and enjoyable. To meet this goal, the staff will help every child exhibit qualities and characteristics that lead to a positive environment. Summer camp participants will be expected to treat the other children, staff, facilities, and materials with respect through their words and actions. The children are encouraged to show trustworthiness by being honest and doing the right thing. They are asked to be kind, caring, and fair to themselves, others, and their environment.

The following behaviors are unacceptable at camp and may result in removal from the Summer Camp program, and may include immediate pick up from camp

1. Harming one's self, such as, but not limited to:
 - Leaving the program boundaries without permission
 - Leaving the designated group without permission
 - Failing to follow verbal instructions meant to ensure safety
2. Harming others, such as, but not limited to:
 - Fighting
 - Throwing objects at or near others
 - Bringing or using weapons (real or fake), i.e., knives, glass, sharp objects, etc.
 - Hitting, biting, spitting, or kicking others
 - Verbally abusing others, i.e., name-calling, taunting, etc.
 - Verbally or non-verbally showing disrespect
 - Physically or verbally assaulting a staff member
3. Property damage, such as, but not limited to:
 - Vandalism
 - Tantrums resulting in damage to property or materials
 - NOTE: The child's family is responsible for all damages

Behavior Management

A positive & supportive approach will be used regarding behavior management/discipline. Staff focus will be on using preventative and supportive management techniques and age-appropriate rules & expectations. Should the need arise, redirection and consequences specific to each situation will be used to help calm and support the camper. Discipline will never be used to intimidate campers. Parents will be informed by camp staff of any behavior concerns or if behaviors escalate beyond what is developmentally appropriate.

The Downers Grove Park District reserves the right to suspend or dismiss a child from the program if the staff determines that the program can no longer meet the needs of the child, if the child is a physical threat to him/herself or others, or if the child's behavior consistently impedes the normal daily functions of the group. If a child is suspended or removed from the program, no refund or proration is given.

INCLUSION SERVICES/DISABILITIES

Downers Grove Park District is a member of the South East Association for Special Parks and Recreation (SEASPAR), a special recreation association that enriches lives through recreation. Inclusion provides a choice for individuals of varying abilities to experience recreation programming within their community. SEASPAR and the member entity staff work closely with the participant and family to provide enriching recreational experiences in the least restrictive environment while maintaining safety and confidentiality. If your child has any medical, physical, psychological, or emotional disabilities, or receives any special services, please list them in detail in your participant information forms.

If your child may need inclusion services from SEASPAR, please contact the Recreation Supervisor so that we can submit a request immediately. SEASPAR requires at least three weeks' advanced notice to secure assistance. Aides/assistance provided by SEASPAR is done so at no cost to the family/participant.

Lack of information will adversely affect the Park District's ability to accommodate the needs of your child. Problems resulting from withheld information may necessitate the participant's suspension from the program until appropriate accommodations can be made for a more successful camp experience.

Downers Grove Park District Essential Eligibility Requirements for Early Childhood Camps

Reasonable accommodation can be made in certain circumstances to assist a participant in meeting the essential eligibility requirements detailed below. If your participant is in need of accommodation, please reach out to the Recreation Supervisor.

Age Requirements

- Participants must be age appropriate for the camp they are enrolled in.

Participant Behavior Requirements

- Participants are expected to display appropriate behavior at all times.
 - Show respect to all participants, staff, and nature
 - Be pleasant to others and refrain from using foul/inappropriate language
 - Refrain from putting themselves and others in danger
 - Use equipment, supplies, and facilities as instructed
 - Always wear shoes and proper clothing
 - Stay with the group
 - Exhibit appropriate behavior that does not impede the flow of the camp day

Personal Needs

- Is able to manage all personal hygiene such as hand washing with minimal physical assistance or with verbal assistance
- Is able to change clothes with minimal physical assistance or with verbal assistance
- **Please see Potty Training & Bathroom Accidents Policy below**

Motor Needs

- Is able to walk on own or with assistance of a mechanical device
- Is able to perform gross motor functions and fine motor functions with reasonable guidance

BATHROOM INDEPENDENCE & BATHROOM ACCIDENTS

Campers will be allowed to use the restroom whenever needed; staff will also frequently check in with campers, especially during transitions or before going outside.

Participants in Exploration Station must be fully bathroom independent and require no assistance from staff for any toileting needs. Bathroom independence includes the ability of a child to do all of the following:

1. Recognize the urge to use the bathroom.
2. Clearly communicate to any staff member present that they need to go potty. They must be able to say the words "I have to go...(potty/pee/poop)."
3. Pull down their pants and underwear and get them back up without assistance.
4. Wipe themselves after using the toilet, including after a bowel movement.
5. Get on and off the potty by themselves. Toilets in the preschool wings and the first floor of the Lincoln Center are of an appropriate size/height, and additional step stools are available if needed.

Staff will monitor restroom usage and assist with hand washing, provide verbal coaching, etc. **Staff are not permitted to change diapers/training pants or assist with direct toileting needs (undressing, wiping, placing on toilet, etc.).**

Training pants/diapers are allowed for Pee Wee camp participants. Parents/guardians or other trusted adults listed in ePACT must be available to change or pick up their child in the event they soil their diaper/pull-up.

We understand that accidents happen, so we ask parents to send an extra pair of clothes (including socks and underwear) with their child each day. **In the event of an accident, parents may be called** if the clean-up requires more involvement than just assisting with changing clothes.

RECOGNIZING AND REPORTING CHILD ABUSE

All Downers Grove Park District staff are considered mandated reporters by the State of Illinois and are required to report suspected child abuse or neglect to the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS). Downers Grove Park District will work with DCFS and families, as appropriate to ensure the health and safety of children in the program. When a report is made, Downers Grove Park District will continue to work with and support the child and family. The report will be treated confidentially.

CONFIDENTIALITY

The Summer Camp Programs will maintain confidentiality and respect family privacy, refraining from the disclosure of confidential information. Disclosure of children's records beyond family members, program personnel and consultants having an obligation of confidentiality shall require parental/guardian consent. However, in cases of abuse or neglect, it is permissible to reveal confidential information to agencies and individuals who may be able to act in the child's interest.

TAX INFORMATION

The Downers Grove Park District tax identification number is 36-6161023. If you need a receipt, please contact the Park District at 630-960-7500.

CAMP AGES/LOCATIONS

<u>Camp Name</u>	<u>Ages</u>	<u>Location</u>
Pee Wee Camp	Turning 3 by Sept. 1	Lincoln Center Room 203
Exploration Station 5-Day Camp	Turning 4 or 5 by Sept. 1	Lincoln Center Room 201
Exploration Station 3-Day Camp	Turning 4 or 5 by Sept. 1	Lincoln Center Room 204

COMMUNICATION WITH CAMP AND ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF

If you need to contact the staff to inform them of an early/late pickup or family emergency, please call the Recreation Supervisor. Participants may not use personal cell phones while at the camp unless authorized by staff.

Recreation Supervisor Logan Durkin oversees Early Childhood camps and can be reached at 630-960-2137 OR ldurkin@dgparks.org.

CAMP STAFF

Camp Counselors lead and implement the daily activities of camp, under the administration of the Park District's Recreation Supervisors. All camp staff are background checked and thoroughly trained. Early Childhood Camp staff are often also part of the school-year Preschool program.

PARENT COMMUNICATION WITH CHILDREN

Parents are to refrain from speaking with other children regarding behavioral issues. Please bring all concerns regarding conduct and behavior to the camp staff. Only Downers Grove Park District staff is permitted to manage participant conduct and behavior.

CAMPER ACTIVITIES AND SCHEDULE

Parents will receive an email by the Friday prior to each camp session with specific camp information for the upcoming week. This will include special activities or themes for the coming week, etc.

Camp format may vary at times, but will typically include:

- Welcome Time – greeting, introduction of theme
- Free Play and Themed Play Centers – in the classroom, campers will be allowed to move freely between different play centers related to the camp theme, or play with a variety of other age-appropriate toys
- Snack Break & Story – Snack time and a theme-related story (snack time is only for Exploration Station)
- Outdoor Play – group games, water play, and free play time at the playground
- Indoor Games – classroom or gym games
- Songs & Dancing – what's summer camp without silly songs?
- Projects – a theme-related craft or process art project to take home

Early Childhood campers may interact with other Early Childhood camps (e.g., 3-day Exploration Station may interact with 5-day Exploration Station) and may interact with older camps such as Kinder Camp or Adventure Camp Grade 1-2.

Early Childhood Camps primarily take place in the preschool rooms on the 2nd floor of the Lincoln Center, but we will still spend time outside. Please read the "What to Bring to Camp" section carefully to find out how to help your child stay comfortable.

WEATHER

All camps will be held rain or shine. Messages will be sent via ePACT to notify parents of changes to camp drop off or pick up locations or send out quick reminders. In cases of extreme heat, camp staff will take proper

precautions to ensure safety of the campers, such as: frequent water breaks, utilizing shade or covered spaces, limiting physical activity, or relocating to an air-conditioned location. All camps will have an indoor location available in case of inclement weather.

WHAT TO BRING/WEAR TO CAMP

Facilitating an amazing camp experience for your child is our goal. That being said, there can be mosquitos, mud, and rain, and we all know that having soggy socks and itchy elbows can take the wind out of a child's sails quickly!

What to Bring to Camp

- **Backpack**
- **Filled Water Bottle.** There will be opportunities to refill water bottles with staff assistance. No glass water bottles or juice.
- **1 Peanut & Tree Nut-Free Snack.** Only Exploration Station Camps have snack time.
- **A Change of Clothes.** Please send an appropriate change of clothes, including underwear, socks and shoes, in case your camper's clothes get muddy or wet, or they have an accident.
- **Sunscreen for reapplying.** Children will be participating in outdoor activities. We encourage you to apply sunscreen to your camper before they arrive. Staff are unable to physically apply sunscreen, but will monitor the application and verbally assist children with the process. We recommend a sunscreen stick as a great way to apply sunscreen to cheeks and noses.

What to Wear to Camp

- **Closed-toe shoes are required.** Sandals and other shoes with openings, including Crocs and Keens, are not permitted.
- **Hats** are recommended for sun protection
- **Send your child in play clothes and shoes** – things that can get muddy, wet, stained, etc.
- **Please pay attention to the weather** – weather and temperatures can be unpredictable; send a light jacket or sweater

Note: Campers can have difficulty recognizing their own jackets or remembering what they brought with them. Labeling these items helps make sure everything gets back to its rightful owner at the end of the day.

What NOT to Bring to Camp

Bringing personal belongings and toys from home is discouraged; however, we understand a personal comfort item like a stuffed animal can help ease separation anxiety. The Downers Grove Park District and its staff are not responsible for any lost, damaged, or stolen items, including but not limited to backpacks, swimsuits, towels, glasses, toys, cash, and phones. Staff may restrict or withhold inappropriate items.