



We build strong kids, strong families, strong communities.

Dear Pioneer Trails Day Camp Parents,

Hello and welcome to Pioneer Trails Day Camp, our 55<sup>th</sup> year of camp fun! As we begin a wonderful, exciting summer experience together, allow us to share some important information with you and your family.

Prior to the start of camp, please review this Handbook to familiarize yourself and your camper with important camp information, including camp and bus safety rules. Keep this Handbook on hand to refer to this summer, and if you have any questions that are not answered here, then feel free to give us a call at 973-992-7500.

During the summer we will be sending you weekly emails which will provide you a direct link to our Pioneer Trails Day Camp page where each week's newsletter will be posted. Please refer to this web page on our website [www.westessexymca.org](http://www.westessexymca.org) throughout the summer for the latest news and information concerning the camps schedule and general information.

During this summer you will also receive online surveys pertaining to our camp. Please take a moment to respond to these surveys. Simply stated, we would not be successful without your input.

Thank you for choosing our West Essex YMCA Pioneer Trails Day Camp. We know you have a choice and we aim to earn your positive word-of-mouth support of our camp.

Looking forward to a great summer! See you all soon!

Sincerely

Joe Lani  
Camp Director  
[Jlanni@metroymcas.org](mailto:Jlanni@metroymcas.org)

# **West Essex YMCA Pioneer Trials Day Camp**

## **PARENT HANDBOOK & INFORMATION GUIDE**

### **YMCA Day Camp Program Objectives**

The purpose of YMCA day camp, as with any YMCA program, is to help participants grow spiritually, mentally and physically. By incorporating trips and special events, and by providing challenging activities in both small- and large- group settings under the guidance of caring, well-trained staff members, YMCA day camps give children an experience to last a lifetime. Our goals are to help children:

- Grow personally
- Learn values
- Improve personal and family relationships
- Appreciate diversity
- Become better leaders and supporters
- Develop specific skills
- Have fun!

Pioneer Trails Day Camp also promotes the YMCA of the USA's four character development values of caring, honesty, respect and responsibility.

### **ACCREDITATION:**

Pioneer Trails Day Camp is accredited by the American Camping Association (ACA). As such we pledge to uphold the highest standards of safety, programming and facility requirements.

### **CAMP SITE**

Pioneer Trails Day Camp takes place at Caldwell College located at 9 Ryerson Avenue in Caldwell. The school offers a wide variety of indoor and outdoor facilities, including an air conditioned cafeteria and gymnasium and outdoor playing fields and out door pool.

### **STAFF**

The key to any successful camp is its staff. Our staff is carefully selected based on maturity, education, experience, motivation and understanding of child development and program skills. All staff complete comprehensive pre-camp training covering such topics as child abuse prevention, positive child behavior management, safety and risk prevention, camp procedures and first aid.

We follow ACA staff-to-camper ratios of 1:6 for 5 year olds, 1:8 for 6 – 8 year olds and 1:10 for 9 years and over.

## **Pioneer Trails Day Camp Program**

**HOURS:** The mainframe of the camp runs from 9:00am to 4:00pm. Early drop off is available from 8:00am and extended care is available until 6:00pm at no additional cost cost.

**CAMPER DROP OFF (AM):** Please sign your child in between 7:30am – 9:00am at in the Gym. Please exercise caution when dropping off your child and do not let your child walk unattended through the parking lot into the building. You and your emergency contact people should be prepared to show identification to the Camp Staff for your child's safety.

**CAMPER PICK UP (PM):** All campers should be picked up at the Gym before 6:00pm.

***All parents must sign the Sign-Out sheet with the time when their child is leaving camp for the day.***

Please note: If anyone other than a parent is picking up your child, we require a signed note from the parent before we can release him/her. Please be sure to provide the name & phone number of the pick up person. We will ask unfamiliar people for ID before we release your child. If your child needs to be excused from camp early, please inform the Camp Director no later than the morning of that day.

**LATE PICK UPS:** If you are going to be late, please arrange for someone else who has your authorization, to pick up your child. Call the Camp office **(973) 228-6300** to inform the staff of the situation. The camp staff will stay with your child until he/she is picked up, however, there is a \$2.00 late fee charge for every minute or part thereof if you arrive after 6:00pm that must be paid before your child returns to camp. Excessive late Pick-Ups, will result in expulsion from our camp without a refund.

### **PERMISSION TO WALK**

If a parent feels their child is mature enough to walk home unsupervised from camp, then written permission is required and must be turned in to the Camp Director or YMCA office prior to the first time the camper is to walk home alone. Please see the website for the form to complete.

**ACTIVITIES:** As an American Camping Association accredited camp, safety is the primary concern as we actively engage children in a wide variety of fun, rewarding & challenging experiences. Developmentally appropriate activities include swimming, archery, sports, games, tennis, drama and arts & crafts projects. To build camp spirit, many special events will be held based on our weekly themes. Weekly field trips are also offered to add variety and enhance our program. Prior to the start of each session you will receive a general schedule of activities including theme days and special events. Please ensure that we have your email address and can keep you posted with updates to the schedule and reminders.

Pioneer Trails Day Camp will have three types of camp activity groupings:

- **Camper Group** (by grade) – activities in which the camper group engages with their peer group. Games, sports and arts and crafts are examples of camper group activities.
- **All Camp** – activities which develop a sense of camp unity and pride, as well as a chance for individuals and groups to display their talents. Carnivals, Camp Olympics and Talent Show are examples of all camp activities.
- **Club Time** – Campers choose activities based on their own interests. Program offerings may vary from session to session based on the talents of the counselors, but could include lanyards, art, sports etc.

Many of the camper group activities will be led by activity specialists. The specialists will guide the campers, with the assistance of their counselors, through a variety of activities in the specialist area. Specialist activities this summer include cooking, science, music/dance and sports.

**SWIMMING:** Recreational swimming and instructional swimming is offered at Pioneer Trails Day Camp.

The following **pool rules** must be observed at all times. Please review these rules with your child:

1. All campers must stay with their assigned group and counselors in the designated area at all times.
2. All campers must inform his/her counselors if it is necessary to leave the pool area, i.e. bathroom, snack area, forgot something.
3. All campers must sit on the side of the pool when the announcement is made for “Buddy Check.”
4. All campers must stay with their counselors when they are not in the pool.
5. All non-swimmers will be escorted to an outdoor play area and must remain with that group.

**RAINY DAYS:** In case of thunderstorms, there will be no swimming

**FIELD TRIPS:** All campers will participate in age appropriate scheduled field trips. ***Campers must wear their YMCA camp shirts on all trips.*** The Kevah Konner Bus Company provides transportation for our trips. All campers are required to wear seat belts on the bus rides. Please note that due to outside circumstances, buses may run late on trip days. You may call the Y office to see if a delay has been reported.

### BUS RULES

All counselors are to ride the buses with the campers to maintain safety and order at all times. Campers are to remain seated with their seatbelts on when the vehicle is in motion. Attendance is taken as the children board the bus, before and after every trip. The bus will not move until all campers are accounted for and seated with their seatbelts on.

The **bus safety rules** must be observed at all times. Please review these rules with your child and the importance of following the bus counselor's directions at all times:

1. Remain seated when the bus is in motion.
2. Your seat belt must be on and buckled.
3. Head and hands must remain inside the bus.
4. Food may not be eaten on the bus.
5. No drinks on the bus.
6. Keep your hands to yourself and don't bother others.
7. Be respectful to the other campers and counselors sitting around you.
8. Remember to take all of your belongings when leaving the bus.
9. Clean up any litter left on the bus.
10. In the event of an emergency, follow your counselor's instructions.

### Clothing and Possessions

Campers will be active throughout the day. Please dress campers for active play and potential weather changes. Please keep in mind the following:

- **CLOTHES CHANGING:** Camp routine includes changing clothes for swimming, so it is important that your child be dressed in clothing that he/she can easily change in and out of.
- **SNEAKERS are a must.** Sandals and Crocs are for use in pool area only.
- Clearly label with your child's full name ALL clothing, towels and possessions that your child brings to camp. A Lost & Found table will be at the site. Anything not labeled, will be discarded at the end of camp.

- **CAMP T-SHIRT:** On trip days campers are required to wear their YMCA camp T-shirt. Campers will receive their Camp T-shirt at camp on the first day that they attend. The first shirt cost is included in the camp fee. Additional shirts can be purchased at the office for \$10.00.

**VALUABLES:** Please do not send your camper with valuables like: Pokémon or similar cards, cell phones, Game Boys/DSS, iPods, toys, etc. Campers may have these items confiscated and the parent would need to pick them up. Do not send money to camp. The exception would be on trip days when a small amount of money for souvenirs would be acceptable. West Essex YMCA will not be held responsible for lost, stolen or damaged articles.

**WHAT TO BRING:** Campers need to bring daily:

- Tote bag or backpack
- Swim suit (To speed up the changing process we recommend all campers wear their bathing suit under their camp clothes when they come to camp in the morning).
- Plastic bag (for wet bathing suit)
- Towel
- Hat
- Lunch (see below for what to pack)
- Sunscreen lotion
- Plastic water bottle – separate from their lunch drink.
- Younger children may require a change of clothing (in case of an accident)

**All clothing, towels and items should be labeled with your child's name.**

**LUNCH:** Please pack your child's lunch and snack in a brown paper bag labeled with their name and grade (as of September 2011) to be put in the refrigerator with your child's camp group. **No glass bottles please!** Refrigeration is provided on non-field trip days only. For field trip days, pack only non perishable foods and drink in a labeled brown bag. Friday is Pizza Day, provided for an additional charge if \$5.00 per camper. You may go on line to order the weeks your child comes to camp.

Snacks: Parents should provide a light morning snack. Afternoon snacks will be provided at no additional cost each day and may be ice pops. We are a peanut free camp please advise the staff if there are any food restrictions for your child. You may send in a snack of your own if you wish.

## **Health Policy**

**ABSENCE:** If you are keeping your child at home for any reason, be sure to notify the YMCA camp phone at **973-228-6300** before 8:30AM (leave a message on the voice mail if no one answers). If the child has not been called in absent by their parent, the parent will be contacted to see if the child is supposed to be in camp or not.

**Please note:** if your child is absent on a particular day that he/she has been scheduled to attend, they cannot be sent as a make-up on another day.

**ILLNESS:** If your child is not feeling well or becomes ill with any of the following, please notify us immediately and keep your child at home: fever, diarrhea, unexplained rash, red or runny eyes, earache, sore throat, or chronic cough.

The YMCA will contact you to pick up your child if any of the above symptoms occur at the program or an injury of any type requiring more than a band-aid occurs. Once your child is symptom-free, or has a doctor's note, he/she may return to the Program.

**In case of a contagious disease, please notify us immediately as this is required by the NJ Department of Health.**

**MEDICATION: All of the following procedures are required by the NJ Department of Health.** The adult bringing the child to camp must turn over all medication (prescriptions and over the counter medications) directly to the Camp Director upon arrival. **Campers are not allowed to carry medications on their person or store medications in their backpacks.** The Camp First Aid Supervisor will administer the medication, which will be kept in a Lock Box. Medications must remain in their original containers. Medication will be administered at camp only with **written and signed** parent or doctor authorization and instructions. Please use the ***Authorization to Medicate*** form available on our website.

**HEALTH INFORMATION & MEDICAL RELEASE FORM:** This form must be completely filled out and returned to the YMCA before the start of camp. Emergency phone numbers, doctor's phone numbers and other requested health information must be correct. Please be sure to inform us if there are any changes in this important information during the camp season. Required immunizations must be current and recorded on this form. This is a NJ Department of Health requirement. If for religious reasons you do not have your child immunized, contact the YMCA for a waiver form. Please be sure to provide emergency phone numbers of persons other than a parent/guardian in case we are unable to contact either parent/guardian.

**SUNSCREEN LOTION AND INSECT REPELLENT:** Sunscreen lotion should be applied at home prior to camp. Many sunscreens now have multi-hour potency. However, if you wish sunscreen to be applied to your child after lunch, include sunscreen in your child's back pack and send a note to their senior counselor requesting application and the time(s) to do it. Since swimming occurs at the end of the day, reapplication then is not usually necessary.

## **Discipline and Expulsion Policy**

At the YMCA, discipline is viewed as a learning experience. Through interaction with caring adults, children acquire interpersonal skills such as the ability to work cooperatively with others and manage conflict situations.

The goal of our Discipline Policy is to correct a situation in a positive manner and separate the action from the child. Our staff encourages positive behavior and seeks to redirect children to other activities before problems occur. When an incident has already occurred, our staff may take the child aside, explaining that their actions are not appropriate and suggest another way in which they could make a better choice in this particular situation. If appropriate, we may have the child take a "time-out". Our policy on the length of time-out is no longer than the child's age (For example: a five-year-old child would sit out for 5 minutes). During this period, the child will be removed from the group and remain under the supervision of staff. At the end of the time-out, our staff will discuss with the child how he/she could have made better choices and allow them to rejoin activities.

The YMCA defines the following as behavior problems:

1. Behavior on the part of the child that interferes with the safety and well being of himself/herself, or any other person.
2. Verbal disrespect of YMCA Camp Staff, Counselors or other children.
3. Lack of respect for camp property and/or the property of others.
4. Abusive language or gestures.
5. Parental interference or behavior which defies the YMCA policies, goals and objectives inclusive of, but not limited to:
  - Appropriate notification of schedule changes;
  - Lack of responsive communication;
  - Unavailability;
  - Lack of appropriate emergency contacts;
  - Not providing the YMCA with pertinent information, i.e. change of workplace, address, phone numbers, etc.

Behavior and disciplinary problems will be handled in one of the following manners dependent upon the infraction:

1. Verbal warning from the Counselor.
2. Verbal warning from the Counselor with written notice of the warning sent home for parental review.
3. Communication from the Pioneer Trails Day Camp Director requesting corrective measures at home and/or conference in our office.
4. Suspension or termination from Pioneer Trails Day Camp without refund.
5. The YMCA has a zero tolerance policy on violence of any kind. Extreme or violent behaviors by parent or child can and will warrant immediate suspension or expulsion without refund.

As per the Metro YMCA of the Oranges Staff Code of Conduct, a child will never be deprived of food, struck, name called, threatened, or ridiculed. No child will be isolated or left unsupervised at any time.

## **Camp Rules**

### **PLEASE REVIEW THESE RULES WITH YOUR CHILD PRIOR TO CAMP**

1. All campers must demonstrate respect, caring and honesty to other campers and staff and treat them as they would want to be treated. If campers are having trouble with another camper and are unable to resolve the problem between them, then they should seek help from their counselor.
2. All campers must inform their counselor of their whereabouts at all times. This includes bathroom trips.
3. The “Buddy System” will be in effect. This applies to going to the bathroom, being in the pool, during fire drills, and field trips. The “Buddy System” means you will be assigned a fellow camper in your group and you are to either be with that buddy at all times or, you are to know where your buddy is when not with you.
4. All campers must participate in clean up activities. This includes on the bus, at picnic or lunch sites, public areas used by the camp and other related locations.
5. No cigarettes, alcohol, drugs, weapons (or anything looking like a weapon) are allowed at camp.

## **Parent Responsibilities**

All applications forms, payments, and membership fees, **must be returned to the YMCA prior to your child's first day in the program or you will forfeit your child's placement and deposit.** Your child will **not** be permitted in the program without completed registration and medical forms in accordance with the American Camp Association and NJ State regulations.

**Changes in Information:** Remember to advise us of any changes in authorized persons, contact phone numbers, & change of addresses.

**Involvement:** We encourage parents to discuss any questions or concerns about the policies or practices of the Camp with us. Parents of enrolled children may visit the program at any time without having to secure prior approval. We just ask that you please let us know that you are there. Also, if during any special events held throughout the summer, you wish to volunteer or participate in any fashion, please let us know.

## **Important Phone Numbers**

West Essex YMCA 973-992-7500

Joe Lanni, Camp Director [jlanni@metroymcas.org](mailto:jlanni@metroymcas.org) email only until starting of camp

Kathie Amato, Office Manager ext. 113 [kamato@metroymcas.org](mailto:kamato@metroymcas.org)

Pioneer Trails Camp Cell Phone (during camp season only): **(973) 228-6300**

