

Summer Camp Parent Handbook

AWESIM Teens, AWESIM KIDS,
Eco-Explorers, & Coyote Kids



Summer 2024

Environmental Education Center

190 Lord Stirling Road
Basking Ridge, NJ 07920
908-722-1200 Ext. 5002
somersecountyparks.org



*Somerset County
Park Commission*





Contact Information

Front Desk

908-722-1200 Ext. 5002

AWESIM KIDS & AWESIM Teens

Christa Wood

Naturalist Ext. 5337
cwood@scparks.org

Eco-Explorers

Vanessa Darras

Naturalist Ext. 5335
vdarras@scparks.org

Coyote Kids

Rebecca Vermeesch-Hafstad

Naturalist Ext. 5334
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Starting June 24, 2024

Coyote Kids (4-6)

Monday-Friday; 9am-Noon
8 one-week sessions

Eco Explorers (7-9)

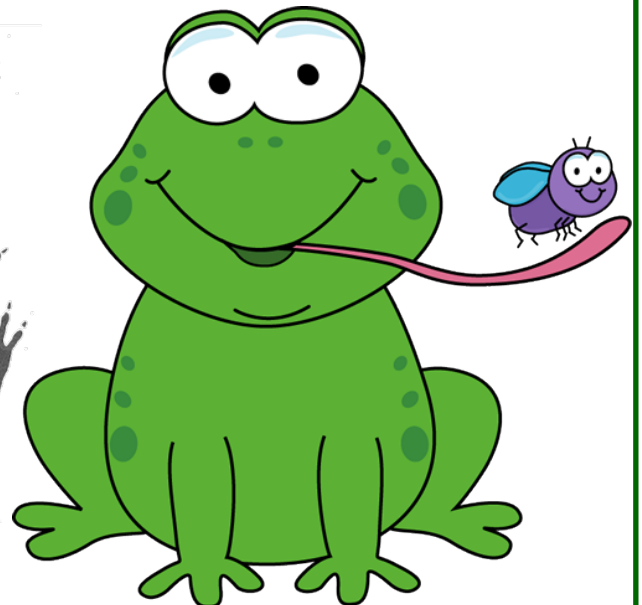
Monday-Friday; 9am-4pm
8 one-week sessions

AWESIM KIDS (10-13)

Monday-Friday; 9am-4pm
3 two-week sessions

AWESIM Teens (14-16)

Monday-Friday; 9am-4pm
1 eight-day session



PROGRAM INFORMATION

The Somerset County Park Commission Environmental Education Center's **Summer Camp Programs** are designed to promote a child's lasting curiosity and interest in the natural world. We offer hands-on learning opportunities for children to explore the natural world through fresh air lessons, activities, and games all while working independently in both small and large groups. Our days are carefully planned to meet these goals while at the same time creating a safe, educational, inspiring, and fun experience.



Program Staff

The programs are facilitated by full-time, professional Naturalists. Additional summer camp staff are selected for their enthusiasm, experience, knowledge, and ability to work with children in the outdoors.

All staff participate in training programs and are certified in First Aid, Anaphylaxis Response, and CPR.

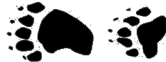
Expectation of Program Participants

These camp programs are conducted outdoors and are experiential by design. Participants are expected to participate in age-appropriate activities and lessons. Participants must be able to traverse uneven terrain without assistance. Participants must also be able to self manage bug spray and sunscreen application, snack/meal time decisions, and self entertain during transportation to/from field trip locations.

All participants must follow established behavior expectations and safety rules.



Please refer to our program eligibility requirements and behavioral expectations on pages 8 and 9.



Somerset County Park Commission welcomes everyone to participate in its programs and facilities regardless of race, color, gender, disability, age, sexual orientation, national origin or religious or political affiliation. If you have individualized needs due to a disability, please call 908 722-1200 Ext.5324 and we will be happy to arrange reasonable modifications. Six weeks notice is required to ensure that appropriate accommodations can be provided.

Be Prepared for Coyote Kids

Campers will be outside most of the time. It is important to dress in comfortable clothes that protect campers from the sun and bugs, but also keep them cool. It's almost always muddy in the swamp so boots or sneakers that can get muddy are a must! No flip flops or crocs!

Please apply sunscreen/bug spray prior to dropping your child off; staff is not allowed to assist in application of these items.

Each day participants should pack a bag with:



- Snack
- Water in a refillable water bottle
- A complete change of clothes
- Hat for sun protection
- Rain coat if rain is forecasted



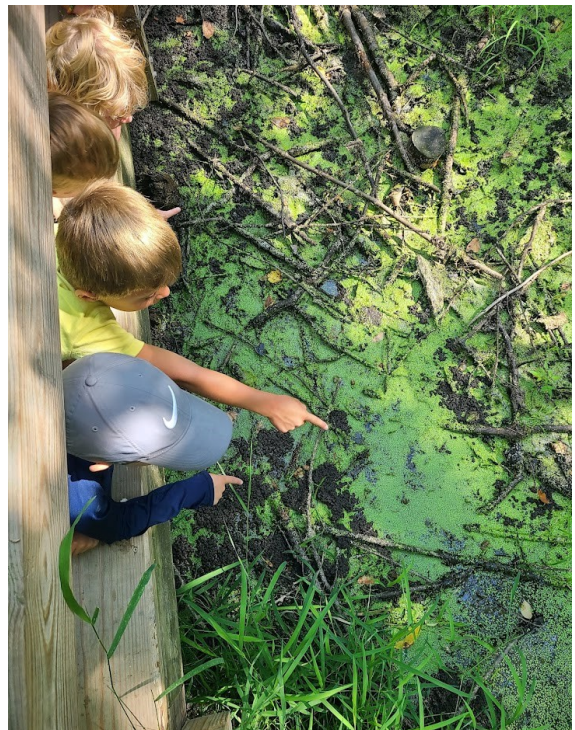
Please label all items.

We are not responsible for the loss, theft, or damage of personal items.

Daily activities will vary by group, day, and weather, but you can expect to do many of the following activities throughout your session:

- Hiking
- Exploring
- Ponding
- Outdoor play

**We encourage inquisitive minds
and a sense of adventure!**



Be Prepared for Eco-Explorers, AWESIM KIDS, & AWESIM Teens

Campers will be outside as much as possible but will be spending time inside too. It is important to dress in comfortable clothes that protect campers from the sun and bugs, but also keep them cool. It's almost always muddy in the swamp so boots or sneakers that can get muddy are a must! No flip flops or crocs!

Each day participants should pack a bag with the following items:



- Lunch and 2+ Snacks
- Water in a refillable water bottle
- A complete change of clothes
- Sweatshirt (inside can be cool!)
- Hat for sun protection
- Sunscreen
- Bug spray
- Rain coat if rain is forecasted

Please leave electronics, cell phones, gaming units, toys, etc. at home.

Please label all items. We are not responsible for the loss, theft, or damage of personal items.

Daily activities will *vary by day*, group, and weather, but you can expect your camper to do many of the following activities throughout your session:

- Hiking
- Exploring
- Water play
- Science experiments and demonstrations
- Outdoor play
- Off-site weekly trip



Our activities are guided by the participants interests. We encourage inquisitive minds and a sense of adventure!

Health Information

First Aid

In case of an emergency we will attempt to contact *parent or guardians first*, using *all the phone numbers* provided. If we are unable to reach a parent/guardian we will then call the emergency contact listed on your child's health form.

Staff are all trained in emergency first aid, CPR, and the use of an epi-pen. If your child carries an epi-pen, please contact the program coordinator to discuss your child's specific needs.

Medication

Participants are responsible for their own medications. The staff must know what they take and when they are taking it to assist in monitoring their health and well-being. A doctor's note may be necessary.

Illness

Please call the front desk at 908-722-1200 Ext. 5002 to report an absence or illness. A doctor's note may be required to return to camp. Participants must be fever-free for 24 hours, without medications to return. Covid-19 protocols will follow CDC recommendations.

Sunscreen & Bug Repellant

We do remind participants to reapply their sunscreen throughout the day. Participants must be able to apply their own sunscreen and bug repellant without additional assistance.

Ticks

It is very important to do a thorough TICK check each and every day! Tick checks are done frequently at camp and while out and about on the trails.

However, it is important to do your own tick check at home each day.

For more information visit: www.cdc.gov/ticks



Policies and Information



Cancellations

- Full payment is due at time of registration.
- Cancellations will receive an 80% refund only if the position is filled.
- A processing fee of 20% of the total amount paid for each canceled session will be retained. There will be no refund if the position is not filled.
- The Somerset County Park Commission reserves the right to cancel or modify all programs. Refunds will be provided if programs are canceled by the Somerset County Park Commission.
- A doctor's note must be provided within 5 days of illness in order to request a medical refund.

Daily Attendance

Children must be *personally* signed into and out of their program each day.

- If your child will be late or absent please call us 908.722.1200 Ext.5002
- If your child is ill prior to the start of the program day (fever, vomiting, and/or diarrhea) please keep them home. We do not have facilities for sick children. When your child has a fever please keep them home *until they are fever free for 24 hours*.

Drop-off begins at 9:00am for all programs.

Pick-up for Coyote Kids is at Noon; Eco-Explorers & AWESIM KIDS at 4:00pm.

Pick-up must be done by a parent, guardian or approved substitute. Pick-up occurs at a designated location. Park your car and follow the arrows from the parking lot kiosk to the designated location.

- Coyote Kids - at *96 Lord Stirling Road, Basking Ridge*
- Eco-Explorers - the Eco Room via the pond-side courtyard door
- AWESIM KIDS - via the side deck
- You will not be permitted to leave with your child unless they have been signed out.
- Please do not leave your child unattended on the grounds.

Early Pick-Up

Please let us know ahead of time or at drop off, unless it is an emergency.

Please check in at the front desk before heading to the program room.

Different Person Pick-Up

You must complete the *Different Person Pick-Up* form whenever an individual other than a parent or legal guardian is picking up your child. This includes carpool drivers, nannies, siblings, aunts, uncles, and grandparents.

Forms

The following forms must be completed by a parent or guardian and returned to your camp Naturalist by **June 17, 2024**. They can be found in this parent handbook.

- Release, Waiver and Participation Agreement
- Health Form & Emergency Medical Information
- Different Person Pick-Up (only if someone other than parent/guardian will be picking up your child)
- Epinephrine Authorization (if applicable)



Program Eligibility Requirements

Environmental Education Center



Our goal is to provide quality educational and socialization opportunities in an outdoor setting for individuals with an interest in science and nature. The Environmental Science Department maintains a low ratio of participants to staff which enables each participant to learn and play in a hands-on, immersive environment.

The eligibility requirements are designed to ensure a successful, positive experience for all program participants. Individuals who fail to meet the eligibility requirements should not register for the program. Enrolled participants who do not meet the eligibility requirements will be removed from the program with a forfeiture of fees paid.

Participants must meet the following eligibility requirements (with or without reasonable modifications) to participate.

Program Registration

- Participant must fall between the minimum and maximum age requirement at the start of the program session.
- Participant must register in advance. Spaces are filled on a first-come, first-served basis. If program is full, participant may be added to the waitlist.
- Payment must be made at the time of registration.

Attire

- Sneakers or boots. Closed-toe shoes with strap on heel. No flip flops or crocs.
- Layered clothing. Clothing appropriate for inclement weather. Some days may require bathing suits.
- Paddling activities will require wearing a properly secured life jacket (to be provided by the EEC).

Personal Care

- Independently use the toilet, change clothes, eat, drink, and apply bug spray and sunscreen.

Required Competency Skills

- Ability to engage as a member of both small groups and large groups to complete challenges, activities & tasks.
- Ability to work independently and self-entertain during free play, bus trips, and van rides.
- Ability to follow multi-step directions which are age appropriate to the specific program enrolled.
- Ability to traverse uneven terrain in an outdoor, potentially buggy environment, for an extended period of time, while maintaining the group pace.
 - Ages 4-6; hike at least one hour
 - Ages 7-9; hike at least two hours
 - Ages 10-13; hike at least 3 hours
- Ability to work successfully within the specific program's participant to staff ratio.
- Ability to communicate questions and basic needs to staff.
- Ability to sit quietly during instruction, share equipment and supplies, and participate in activities when appropriate.
- Ability to remain with staff on walks, field trips, and in group settings.
- Ability to transition between activities within a 5-minute window.
- Ability to follow all bus/vehicle safety rules and off-site rules when traveling for field trips.
- Ability to tolerate varying weather conditions.
- Ability to comply with Behavioral Expectations.

continued

Behavioral Expectations

- Arrive on time. Be picked up on time.
- Dress according to each day's weather and activities; be prepared for inclement weather as needed.
- Be respectful to staff, peers, equipment, and the surrounding environment. This includes keeping hands to oneself and sharing materials/supplies.
- Follow directions and rules as presented by staff.
- Keep cell phones and other electronic devices in backpacks or at home.
- Use appropriate language.
- Attempt to participate in each activity before saying "can't" or "won't".
- Maintain a positive, safe environment by refraining from placing oneself, or others at risk. Bullying, hitting, and threats will not be tolerated.
- A participant with a Modification Plan is not exempt from following the Behavioral Expectations.

Behavioral Management

The Environmental Education Center staff will follow a three-tiered system of warnings designed to address any challenges which arise when a participant fails to meet the Behavioral Expectations.

First offense – gentle redirection from staff.

Second offense – discussion between the participant, staff, and a parent/guardian focusing on a commitment from all parties to re-establish positive behavior.

Third offense – discussion between the participant, staff, and a parent/guardian focusing on whether-or-not the participant may remain in the program.

There is *zero tolerance* for verbal or physical bullying, hitting, threats, inappropriate touching, etc. Participant will be sent home and possibly expelled from the program. Police will be called if necessary. Program fees will not be refunded.

Staff may ask for advice or support from a parent/guardian when feeling challenged by a particular behavior. It is helpful when families share strategies which work well for the participant.

Staff welcome discussions regarding concerns and/or potential behavioral challenges prior to the start of a program.

Reasonable Modifications

The Environmental Education Center welcomes everyone to participate in its programs. If you have individualized needs due to a disability, please call 908.722.1200 Ext. 5324 and we will be happy to arrange reasonable modifications.

Three weeks' notice is required to ensure that appropriate modifications can be provided for all general public programs. Six weeks' notice is required to ensure that appropriate modifications can be provided for all camp, trip, paddling, and off-site programs.



Somerset County
Park Commission





**Somerset County
Park Commission**

Post Office Box 5327
North Branch, NJ 08876

Nancy D'Andrea
President

Joseph Kempe
Vice President

Mark Caliguire

William Foelsch

Michael Giordano

D. J. Hunsinger

Randy Jones

Kevin McCallen

Daniel J. Hayes Jr.
Director

Geoffrey D. Soriano
Secretary

**ENVIRONMENTAL
EDUCATION CENTER**

190 Lord Stirling Road
Basking Ridge, NJ 07920

TEL: 908 722-1200
Ext.5002

FAX: 908 766-2687

www.somersetcountyparks.org

**SOMERSET COUNTY PARK COMMISSION
RELEASE, WAIVER, AND PARTICIPATION AGREEMENT
FOR MINORS/DEPENDENTS**

FOR ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS

1. **Assumption of Risk** – As the parent or guardian of the below named minor or dependent, I assume full responsibility for the decision for my child/dependent to participate in environmental education programs (including public programs, Coyote Kids, Eco-Explorers, AWESIM Kids, and Xtreme Adventures, watercraft programs, day trip, and overnight trips) (the “Programs”) of the Somerset County Park Commission. I acknowledge that participation by my dependent in the activities listed above may entail known and unanticipated risks, which could result in physical injury, death or property damage. I understand that such risks can not be eliminated without jeopardizing the essential qualities of the activity. These risks may also occur as a result of my dependent’s own actions, inactions or negligence, as well as actions, inactions or negligence of others, weather conditions, condition of equipment, condition of the facilities and grounds, natural disaster, national disaster, and any first aid emergency treatment which may be administered. There may also be other risks that are not foreseeable at this time.
2. **Release** – As part of the consideration for my dependent participating in the activity identified above, I release, discharge, and hold harmless the Somerset County Park Commission, the County of Somerset, any director, officer, employee, or any person acting in any capacity on their behalf (hereinafter collectively referred to as “SCPC”) from all demands, causes of action, suits contracts, agreements, obligations, covenants, defenses, costs, liabilities and judgments, whatsoever, known or unknown, suspected or unsuspected, in contract or in tort, in law or in equity, which I might have against the SCPC, arising from my child/dependent’s participation in the Programs.
3. **Waiver and Indemnification** - I hereby waive all claims and demands against the SCPC for any loss, damage, injury (including death) or claim of any kind arising from, related to or caused by my dependent’s participation in the Programs and agree to indemnify, defend, and hold harmless the SCPC from all loss, liability, damages, costs, and expenses (including actual attorney’s fees) arising from or related to same.
4. **Photography/Video** - In permitting my dependent to participate, I understand that my dependent’s photograph/video may appear in publicity or brochures marketing SCPC programs and facilities. I understand that there are no rights granted to me or my dependents to inspect or approve photographs/video prior to publication.
5. **Term** - I have read this Agreement and agree to be bound by its terms. This Agreement shall be effective for all environmental education activities in which my dependent participates throughout the entire **2024** calendar year. I freely execute this document.

Dated: _____
Signature of Parent/Legal Guardian

Name - Please Print

Name of the Minor/Dependent





HEALTH FORM & EMERGENCY MEDICAL INFORMATION

AWESIM Teens, AWESIM KIDS, Eco-Explorers & Coyote Kids 2024

Environmental Education Center

190 Lord Stirling Road ☐ Basking Ridge, NJ 07920 ☐ 908-722-1200 Ext.5002



Somerset County
Park Commission

Name: _____
(Last) (First) (MI)

Address: _____
(Street) (City) (State) (Zip)

Home phone: _____

Parent/Guardian Name: _____ work: _____ cell: _____

Parent/Guardian Name: _____ work: _____ cell: _____

Birth Date: ____/____/____ ☐ Male ☐ Female

In the event of an injury, the local Rescue Squad will transport the injured person to the nearest hospital.

In case of an **EMERGENCY** *when a parent / guardian is not available*, who should be notified?

Name _____ Relationship _____

Phone _____ Other Phone _____

If there has been a custody decision, please list the name or names of the person **NOT** permitted to pick up the child.

(Please provide documentation, which will be kept confidential.)

Before engaging in any physical activity, it is advisable to check with a physician regarding any conditions that may limit participation.

Circle if your child has any of the following:

Allergies	Specific Food Allergies	Insect Allergies	Medication
Allergies	Diabetes	Contact Lenses	Dentures
	Seizures		

Explain in detail any circled above:

Does your child carry an epinephrine pen/kit? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Can your child self-administer their epinephrine pen? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Presently taking any medications? ☐ Yes ☐ No If yes, what?

Is there anything else about your child we should know in order for your child to be successful? Include social, educational, behavioral, etc.

This medical information is correct and complete to the best of my knowledge. I acknowledge this form may be shared with medical personnel in the event of an emergency.

Completed forms MUST be returned by June 17th, 2024.



Somerset County
Park Commission

SOMERSET COUNTY PARK COMMISSION DIFFERENT PERSON PICK UP FORM



We ask that you complete a permission form whenever an individual other than the parent or legal guardian is picking up your child. This includes any person(s) with whom you may be carpooling, as well as siblings and grandparents.

Please provide us with the name of the individual picking up your child and the date. If you need additional forms, please feel free to photocopy this form or ask for additional copies. Thank you for your assistance in helping us to provide the best care for your child.

Somerset County Park Commission Permission Slip for Different Person Pick-up

_____ has my permission to go home with
Participant's Name

Person's Name _____ Cell Phone or Other Contact Phone Number _____
on _____, 2024

Parent/Guardian Signature _____ Print Name

Somerset County Park Commission Permission Slip for Different Person Pick-up

_____ has my permission to go home with
Participant's Name

Person's Name _____ Cell Phone or Other Contact Phone Number _____
on _____, 2024

Parent/Guardian Signature _____ Print Name



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Somerset County Park Commission Epinephrine Authorization

(For youth with Epinephrine Prescriptions)

I, _____, hereby authorize the Somerset
(Please print parent/guardian name)

County Park Commission employee(s) trained in the administration of
an epinephrine auto-injector to administer the medication prescribed
for my child, _____, for anaphylaxis.

(Please print child's name)

I have provided the Somerset County Park Commission with written
orders from the physician that my child requires the administration of
epinephrine for anaphylaxis and does not have the capability for self-
administration of the medication, as well as the written instructions
from the manufacturer on the use and care of the specific epinephrine
auto-injector prescribed for my child.

I understand that I must send my child with his/her prescribed
medication to the program each day that he/she attends. The
medication must be packaged according to the manufacturer's
instructions and labeled clearly with my child's name.

I, _____, understand that if procedures as
(Please print parent/guardian name)

specified by the manufacturer on the use and care of the epinephrine
auto-injector are followed, the Somerset County Park Commission
shall have no liability as a result of any injury arising from the
administration of an epinephrine auto-injector device to my child, and
I, _____, indemnify and hold harmless the

(Please print parent/guardian name)

Somerset County Park Commission employees against any claims
arising out of the administration of the device to my child.

I understand that this permission shall be effective for the 2024
program year and shall be renewed each year upon fulfillment of the
requirements listed above.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Thank you!

We are looking forward to sharing a wonderful summer with your children!

**AWESIM Teens, AWESIM KIDS,
Eco-Explorers, & Coyote Kids**



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