



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).
- White water paddling programs require participant to wear a helmet (to be provided by 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.

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.