

Backyard Kids Frequently Asked Questions

Why should I choose this camp?

The Morris Center YMCA has been running summer camp since the early 1900's when we were known as the Morristown YMCA. We have a long understanding of kids. We know they want to make friends, we know they want to have fun, we know they want to belong and we know that summers should be somewhat carefree because their school year is so structured. We know how to challenge kids to try new things, to grow, relax, laugh, explore, learn and just be a kid. We have a long understanding of parents too. That's why our camp is affordable, safe, well planned and we offer lunch, a healthy snack shack and early drop-off options. Our counselors are accessible and we publish a bi-weekly on-line Backyard Blurb newsletter so parents can read what their children are doing in camp. For us, it's all about our YMCA core values of Caring, Respect, Honesty and Responsibility. We put **play** in their day and take the stress out of yours.

Do you have room?

Our Backyard Kids camp typically has room for more children. If it means we may hire more staff to be within the proper ratio for campers to counselors, we will. Specialty camps however, can fill up and will be closed. When they close, it will be indicated on our website – Specialty Camp page.

Do you offer partial weeks?

Yes, we now offer partial week options. Your camper can be enrolled for either 3, 4 or all 5 days of camp. You can do any combination of days each week. The camp fee is pro-rated based on the number of days you enroll. We offer a pro-rated lunch option for partial week campers in grades 1 and up too.

What is your ratio?

Our ratio is at the state approved 1 counselor for 10 campers. We often are even better, but we are never above the state approved ratio.

Do the campers swim?

Yes! Because we have a beautiful indoor 25 meter pool, our campers swim every day! We are very strict with our swimmers because your child's safety is our top concern. Children are tested for swimming ability and then given a colored wrist band and colored cap to indicate to all staff which areas of the pool those children can swim. Second grade and younger must wear the colored cap. Older children just wear the wristband. All beginners are given a red cap to wear *regardless* of age.

Do they all swim at the same time?

We love our campers to have fun, but all in the pool at the same time would be crazy! We separate the times the campers swim. Kindergarten – 2nd grade swim first, then 3rd-4th graders and then 5th grade and up.

Do you offer swim lessons in addition to swim time?

Of course we do! We are a Y and we have taught 1,000 of kids in Morris County the life long skill of swimming. Swim lessons are an additional fee per week. Lessons are every day each week for 30 minutes during camp hours. You decide how many weeks you want. Just sign up when you register for camp. We will test your child for their proper swim class placement during the camp day so there is no need to have them pre-tested. We will walk each swimmer to their swim lesson and then retrieve them from the pool when their lesson is over. You will receive a progress report at the end of their lessons so you will know what level to which they have progressed.

Who runs the camp?

Jim Capello is back for another year as Camp Director. Jim has been a teacher for 32 years, which doesn't make him old, it means he has a lot of **experience**. Jim has been a camp director for many camps over the years and we are happy to have him with us. Jim believes camp is all about fun, but it's about SAFE first. Be prepared to have your own Joke Of The Day to tell, or you will have to hear his!

Ryan Deighan will be the Assistant Camp Director. Many of you know Ryan as Associate Director of our Youth and Family program or our After-School Program. Ryan has been a counselor at our camp for 9 years. Ryan has his undergraduate degree from Montclair State University.

What about your counselors?

Our counselors are the best! We have many returning senior counselors whom our campers love. We strive to select a diverse group of mature, caring, patient, fun and responsible counselors. Most of our counselors are either teachers, or college students. Prior to the arrival of the campers, all staff have CARI background checks, training in safety, counseling techniques, conflict resolution, and camp policies and procedures. Junior Counselors who can be juniors or seniors in high school are **always** paired with Senior Counselors.

What does this mean to the campers? A high standard, for a safe, fun, quality summer. What does this mean to parents? Peace of mind.

Where is the Backyard Kids Summer Camp?

It's in our backyard! The Y, at 79 Horsehill Rd is lucky enough to have a large backyard. We have an awesome new playground complete with climbing equipment, a fitness trail, a sand volleyball court and coming this year, a miniature golf course. We also have a large, wooded, shaded area with trails and plenty of room for exploring, fort building and playing. But it's also just the right size where we can see everyone. We also have our back lot for all our water games, Inflatable days, soccer, basketball, 4 square and of course, kick ball games.

Do the campers travel off-site?

5th grade and older travel off site almost every day in our big yellow bus. They go to local parks, baseball games, Camel Beach Water Park, Liberty Science Center, the movies, miniature golf, bowling, etc. They go to many places which vary week to week. Travel fees are included in camp. Spending money is up to you!

The younger campers, K-4th grade, travel less frequently and more locally to parks and movies. They travel once or twice a week.

When do I get my camper's t-shirt/s?

T-shirts are handed out the first day your camper attends camp.