

# New Jersey 4-H Camp



**R** RUTGERS UNIVERSITY  
New Jersey 4-H Camp  
L.G. Cook 4-H Youth Center  
for Outdoor Education

**CAMP INFO**

**AND**

**WELCOME GUIDE**

973.948.3550

[NJ4HCAMP.RUTGERS.EDU](http://NJ4HCAMP.RUTGERS.EDU)





## JUST THE FACTS

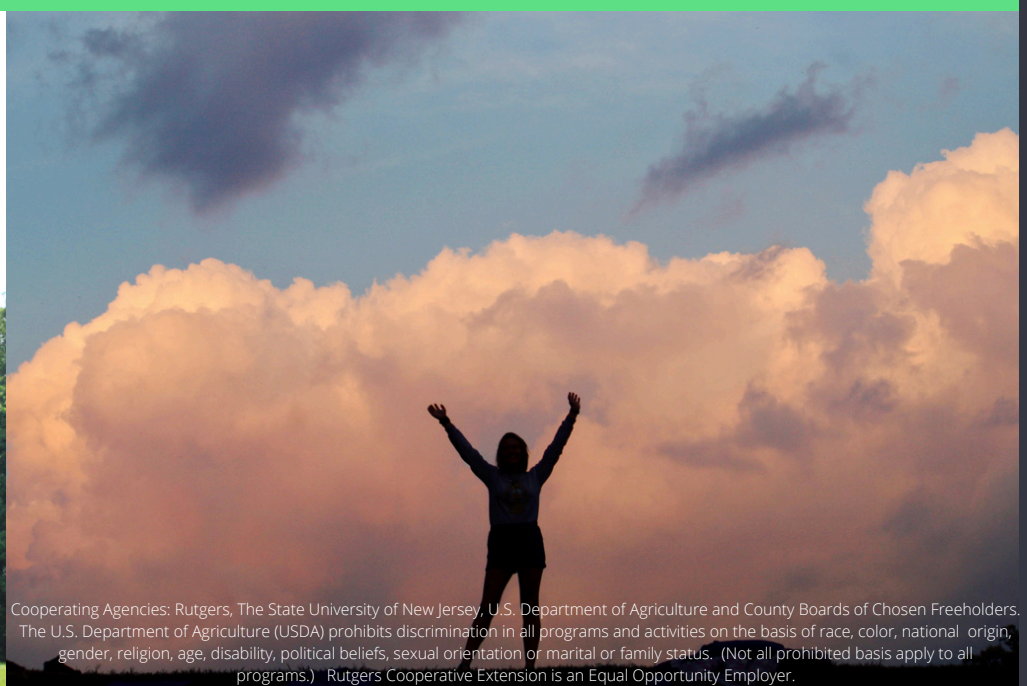
SIX DAY SESSIONS  
4 SESSIONS IN JULY  
AGES 8-16

EIGHTEEN DAY SESSION  
IN AUGUST  
AGES 10-16

OPEN ENROLLMENT: ALL YOUTH MAY APPLY

A TECH-FREE, RUSTIC SUMMER CAMP EXPERIENCE FOCUSED ON MAKING NEW FRIENDS, LAUGHING A LOT, TRYING NEW THINGS AND CREATING A COMMUNITY DEDICATED TO SIMPLY ENJOYING OUR WEEK OUT IN THE WOODS TOGETHER.

RUTGERS UNIVERSITY'S SUMMER CAMP



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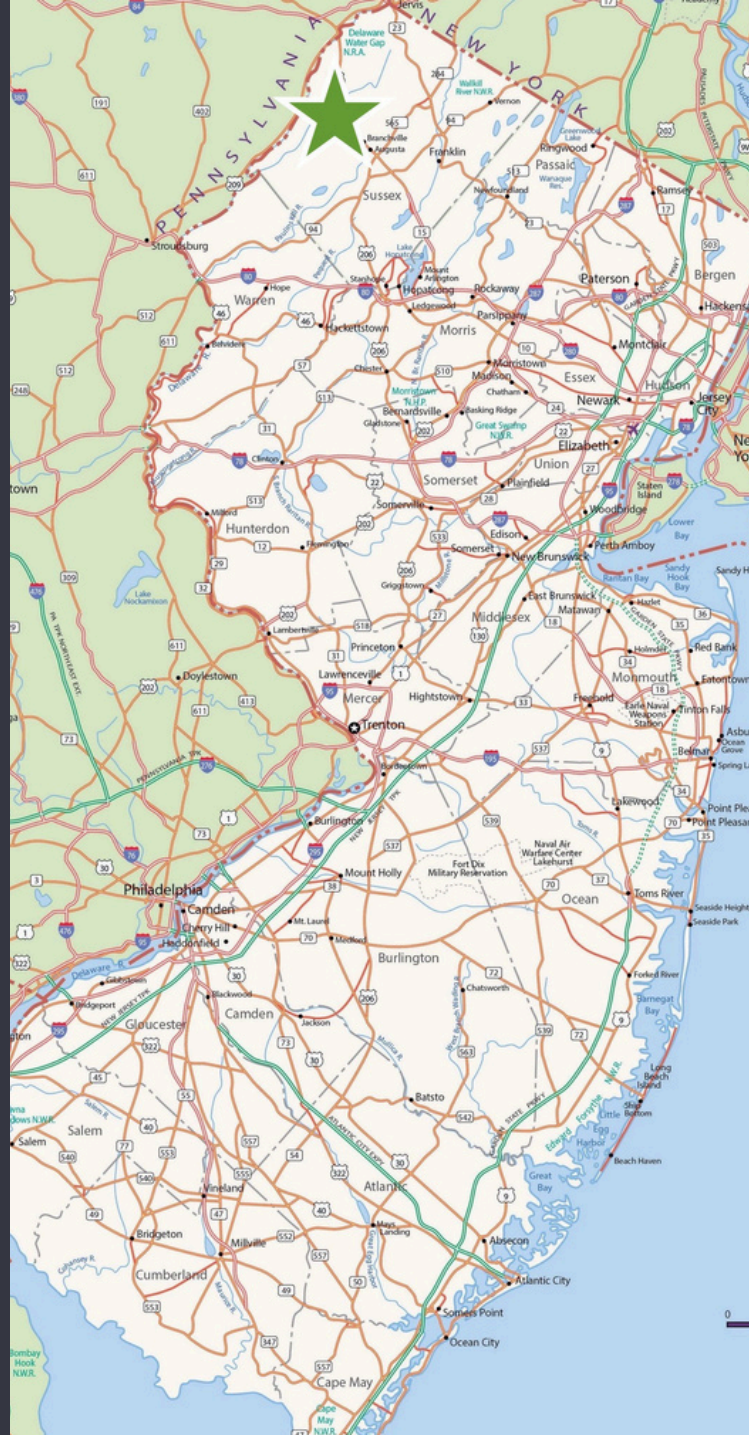
Pre-Camp  
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# NEW JERSEY'S 4-H CAMP

We are the state 4-H camp and have been running weeklong, residential summer camp sessions every summer since we opened in 1951. We're an open enrollment camp, open to all youth ages 8-16. The majority of our campers are from New Jersey and the surrounding tri-state area, but each summer we welcome campers from all over the country, and all around the world.







## **Stokes State Forest, Northwest New Jersey**

Our facility sits on 108 acres lined with hiking trails beside our own beautiful little lake, [Lake Shawanni](#). In addition to our collection of original and rustic camp buildings, 4-H Camp has archery ranges, recreation fields, campfire rings, and a ton of other areas dedicated to playing outside and enjoying the great outdoors. Though we have a giant stretch of forest to ourselves, Camp Central is quite consolidated, and all of our campers' cabins and main buildings are just a short walk from one another.





4-H CAMP IS OWNED, OPERATED AND MANAGED BY RUTGERS COOPERATIVE EXTENSION. THE FOUR H'S ARE THE CENTRAL PILLARS TO THE COMMUNITY WE BUILD HERE TOGETHER EACH SESSION OF THE SUMMER.



HEAD

**Head** is for our thoughtful and intentional interactions, clear thinking, and responsible decision-making.



HEART

**Heart** is for our open, welcoming environment where campers practice empathy, live together with all sorts of different people, and establish long-lasting friendships.





## HANDS

**Hands** is for the fact that 4-H Camp is a home for all of us, and we all take care of it together. Each camper and counselor strive to be a support to their whole camp family as they work to both maintain our community and keep it moving forward, always searching for ways to be of service to one another.



## HEALTH

**Health** is for the camp lifestyle: days chock-full of running, playing, exploring, eating good food, breathing in the fresh mountain air, and getting a good night's sleep surrounded by the sounds of the forest. Health is also the culmination of all the H's here at Camp, a healthy community we all benefit from and all have ownership of.





## "Classic" Camp

We've been running summer camp for 70 years, and endeavor to keep all the things that make camp great the same as they've always been. Simultaneously, each summer we look for ways to improve by adding new programs and searching to discover ways to better serve today's youth and our current population of campers.

## TECH FREE

4-H Camp is a 100% tech-free environment (no phones, no screens, the works) for both campers and staff. In what is likely their only truly tech-free week each year, our campers are able to be present in each moment and focus on getting to know the people they're with. Our campers champion our tech-free approach, with our oldest campers citing their time away from social media as one of their favorite aspects of camp.

## Tailored To Each Camper

Our staff strive to give individual attention to each and every one of our campers, providing them options and choices to ensure they have the support to succeed at Camp - while at the same time forming one, cohesive community beneficial to all campers.





There are 176 campers in a full session of summer camp. This community size is large enough that there's always new friends to meet throughout a session, yet small enough that by the end of their stay we've formed one Camp Family.



Social Education



THE CAMP COMMUNITY



While campers spend the session meeting new people in a new place, our staff work hard to support them as they face and overcome challenges, build self-confidence, and gain the tools to treat each other well and interact positively. Campers with diverse identities, backgrounds, and experiences come together in our little home in the woods and discover what we all have in common.

## Home Away from Home

4-H Camp's cardinal rules are kindness and respect. These tenets shape how we treat each other, our environment, and our community as a whole.







# L.G. COOK 4-H CAMP

## DAILY SCHEDULE



No two 4-H Camp days are ever exactly the same! But this schedule sums up what most include.

A DAY IN THE CAMP LIFE

### A JAM-PACKED SCHEDULE

Our campers love that we go-go-GO at Camp! From our optional **Morning Activities** first thing in the morning to our evening **Lights Out Programs** in each cabin, there's never a dull moment in the Camp day. **Meals, Rest Hour**, and our many laid-back activity options offer plenty of changes of pace, but there's always more to do and discover every time the bell rings and sends us off to what's next.

### ALL-CAMP ACTIVITIES

Each night (and a few other times throughout the session), we get together for a big All-Camp game or program. Many of these vary depending on theme of the week -- find out more in the **Theme** section of this guide!!

### VESPERS

There are a few exceptions to all the loud, wild, running around at 4-H Camp, like **Vespers**. Each evening, we take a quiet hike out to Vespers Island, and sit in silence for a few moments taking in the natural scenery. Then, a staff member will share a story, sing a song, or start a discussion. It's a great moment of community introspection in a busy summer camp day.

#### WAKE UP/OPTIONAL MORNING ACTIVITIES - 7:00

We have several optional morning activities that campers can choose to participate in that include Rooster Run, Polar Bear Swim, Golden Eagle Yoga, and Groundhog Gardening.

#### MORNING MEETING - 8:45

A time for the whole Camp to gather at our Lakeside Amphitheater and discuss the plan for the day and any other pressing business/pressing nonsense.

#### FIRST CLASS PERIOD - 10:45

##### BATTLE FOR THE ISLAND

On Wednesdays, we play our all-camp game, Battle for the Island, in place of first and second period classes. This capture-the-flag game is given our own Camp twist and has become a favorite of our campers throughout the years.



#### LUNCH - 12:15

#### REST HOUR - 1:00

After a healthy and delicious lunch, we like to relax in our cabins. This is a time when campers can nap, read, play some games with their cabinmates, and prepare for activities and programs later in the week.

#### CHOICE REC - 2:00



#### SECOND CLASS PERIOD - 3:30

#### WHATEVER TIME - 5:00



##### FRIDAY AFTERNOON ACTIVITY

On Friday afternoons, instead of our third period activity and rec periods, we have an all-camp game that goes with our theme of the week. This is the culmination of what the campers have been working towards all week.

#### DINNER - 6:00

#### FLAG LOWERING/VESPERS - 7:00

#### EVENING ACTIVITY - 7:30

Our evening activity changes day to day. Monday is our opening campfire where the campers get to learn about our camp, our staff and their color groups. Tuesday is Cabin Night when the campers get to choose what they want to do as a cabin. Wednesday is a theme-based all-camp activity. Thursday is for our Talent Show. And Friday is our closing campfire, honor ceremony, and Camp Schmance (our version of a dance)!



#### SHOWER TIME - 9:15

#### TAPS - 10:00



## CAMP CLASSES

Prior to their arrival, campers will sign up for TWO classes. (Our course areas are Environmental Education, Creative Arts, Recreation, Waterfront, and Community.) Classes meet three times throughout the camp week, for a total lesson plan time of about four hours. Classes are a great opportunity for campers to select a few activities that they definitely want to make a big part of their Camp session, **Check out this summer's class selection in our Course Offerings Guide!**



## WHATEVER TIME

Free time galore! We all gather in Camp Central for some mixing, some mingling, and some general hanging out. Whether it be relaxing on the shore, cards at the picnic tables, or an impromptu game of kickball, Whatever Time is purely camper driven - counselors will assist with, help create, or manage WHATEVER way our campers want to spend it.

Our classes are enthusiastically "non-academic." They focus on creativity, exploration, trying new things, building new friendships, and simply having fun outside!

## CHOICE REC

It's all in the name! Choice Rec is about exactly what each camper wants to do THAT day. In the morning they'll get to pick from a dozen activities offered that afternoon, selecting them the way all good decisions are made - by throwing a wooden nickel in a tin can.

(Choice Rec is prime time for our campers who love the waterfront to spend some time in or on Lake Shawanni!)







# Cabins and Bunkmates

Our Camp Community is spread out over 11 cabins. Each cabin houses 16 campers and a couple of counselors.



Cabins are divided by both age and gender, as indicated on the camper's registration form. Campers in a cabin together are all within about a year of the same age.



Campers are never in the cabin without counselor supervision. Check out our [Packing List](#) to learn what to bring (and not to bring) to ensure success in our communal living spaces.



Cabins are **rustic** - they've got bunks, shelves, windows, walls, doors and **no plumbing!** Our central bathhouse is just a short walk from the cabins.



## Bunkmate Requests

Campers may request the name of one friend they'd like to bunk with. Requests are guaranteed if they are **mutual**, and both campers are **within a year of the same age**.







# Our Staff is Our Heart

On average, over 70% of our summer staff attended 4-H Camp as campers and have come back summer after summer, progressing through our CIT and Junior Counselor programs. Our counselors strive to create the same transformative experience that meant so much to them when they were kids.

We maintain at least a 1:8 staff to camper ratio. However, when Camp is fully assembled in one place and we're all together, it's closer to 1:4.



The only thing that makes an exceptional summer camp is an exceptional summer camp staff.



"As a camper, I remember thinking that my counselors were so special and cool. Then, after a few summers at 4-H Camp, I realized that I was that special and cool too. I brought that happiness and confidence with me away from Camp. Now it's my turn to show all of my campers how special, funny, wild and cool they are too."

-Erika,  
4-H Camp Counselor

Hiring is competitive, and we look for the most enthusiastic, responsible, funny, empathetic, and caring young role models we can find to join our team. All staff must be at least 18 years old and complete a Rutgers University Background check and protection of minors training. All staff are certified in First Aid and CPR and go through an intensive, weeklong pre-summer 4-H Camp staff training and orientation.



# THE EXCITEMENT OF THE ONE-WEEK SESSIONS

For the month of July, we run four of our classic one-week Camp sessions.

Campers arrive Monday morning and depart Saturday morning.



We cram an entire summer of Campy fun (a whole June-July-and-August!) into our One-Week Sessions.



Six days is short enough to keep up our energetic pace, but long enough that we can never quite believe how much can fit into a single camp week.





## More Time for Community

Our longer session allows even more opportunities for bonding between cabin mates and leisurely lakeside conversations with new friends. We always say "there's no strangers at 4-H Camp", and the whole community gets to know each other, bond, and become one Camp Family better than ever during our new BIG session.

## A Different Pace

We slow down the Camp schedule a bit for our BIG session, giving our campers plenty of time to just enjoy LIVING at 4-H Camp. Our big classes give the opportunity to really take a deep dive into one of their favorite Camp subjects, and though we're still tech-free and away from it all, campers get the chance to contact home mid-session (via our classic phone booth).



**MORE CAMPI!**

**THE BIG SESSION**  
18 DAYS OF  
SUMMER CAMPI

**NEW JERSEY  
4-H CAMP**

**WEDNESDAY EVENING -  
SATURDAY MORNING**

DESIGNED FOR CAMPERS WHO HAVE  
ALREADY ENJOYED ONE WEEK  
SESSION PREVIOUS SUMMERS. AGES  
10-16.

ACTIVITIES INCLUDE NEW BIG CLASSES  
(20 HOURS OF LESSONS). ALL THEMED  
ACTIVITIES FROM THE PREVIOUS 4  
SESSIONS. AND BRAND-NEW STUFF WE'VE  
NEVER HAD TIME FOR BEFORE

LAUNDRY SERVICE PROVIDED MID-SESSION

MORE CABIN TIME, MORE ACTIVITY  
TIME, MORE SLEEP TIME, MORE  
COMMUNITY TIME, MORE BONDING TIME,  
MORE FREE TIME, MORE DOWN TIME.  
MORE CAMP TIME!

**New Jersey 4-H Camp**  
U.S. 4-H Youth Center  
for Student Education

## The Little BIG Session

The Little BIG Session will start with the BIG Session and run 9 days until Halfway Day. Very limited spots available.



# 3 Square Meals A Day

Meals are served family style, and campers assigned as KPs (Kitchen Patrol) bring the food to the table. Each meal features an entree and several side dishes. A fully stocked salad bar (or breakfast bar) is also available for every meal, as well as a few "picky eater" options. Check out a [sample menu](#) on our website.



Our Camp Kitchen is entirely nut-free.

Every meal we offer vegetarian, vegan, dairy-free and gluten-free options.



Fresh fruit is available each afternoon, and we have an evening snack as well. (And our campers would surely want us to mention our signature desserts served after dinner every night.)

Campers get to pick their own seat in our Dining Hall each meal. The way campers mix and match, the same table never sits together twice. We also enjoy a few scenic outdoor meals on the shores of Lake Shawanni.

## CAMP NURSE AND THE INFIRMARY

Our Infirmary is staffed by our Camp Nurses, who are certified EMTs or First Responders. They are on hand 24 hours a day to help our campers through any bumps, bruises, or bug bites.

For campers with medication needs, we have Med Call in mornings, evenings, and at all meals (or as needed). All medications must be in the original prescription bottle or packaging and will be given to our Camp Nurse at check-in.







## CAMP GOES ON IN THE RAIN!

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We do our best to make every single day at Camp as close to a perfect summer day as we can get it, and we're sure not going to let weather stand in the way!

If it's just drizzling and it's more fun to stay outside - that's exactly what we do! In a little shower, we stick to the schedule as usual.



In case of a more significant downpour, we stay in the cabins for some extended bonding time, or utilize some rainday lesson plans in our Rec Hall, Craftshop, or Nature Center. For a severe thunderstorm, we all gather in our Dining Hall for a Boardgame Bonanza or other All-Camp Rainday activities.

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**Our tools to beat the heat are simple: the lake, the shade of the trees, plenty of hydrating - and repeat!**







Every one-week session has a theme, which is just a little spice added to make each week different from all the others. The theme dictates our Wednesday and Friday All-Camp Games, the zany costumes the counselors wear, and the overall storyline of the session. (Our campers always seem to end up enjoying all of our themes pretty much equally - so pick your Camp session based on what fits your family's schedule the best.) Our BIG Session includes all of the themes from the whole summer season.



### Counselor In Training Program

Our oldest campers have the opportunity to sign up for our CIT Leadership classes. This program supports participants in growing into role models here at 4-H Camp, and being conscious of the responsibility we all have in creating a kind and caring environment.

CIT I (for 15 year old campers) focuses on learning about the intentional community we build.

CIT II (for 16 year old campers) is dedicated to studying the counselor role and beginning to work with our youngest campers.



## JUNIOR COUNSELORS

At 17, when a camper graduates the CIT program and ages out as a camper, they can apply to return as a Junior Counselor. Junior Counselors help support our youngest cabins, participate in running All-Camp games and programs, and spend time learning what goes on behind the scenes by working in the kitchen with meal-prep and dish-washing and assisting with camp-wide cleaning. This role can be a great way for former campers to volunteer and give back to the program, or the first steps to becoming a future summer staff member.





## L.G. COOK 4-H CAMP DATES AND RATES



# SUMMER 2026

Session #1: Area '51 (July 6th-11th)

Session #2: Spy Week (July 13th-18th)

Session #3: CHAOS! (July 20th-25th)

Session #4: Epic Tales of Mythic Legends (July 27th-August 1st)

**BIG Session (August 5th-22nd)**

**Little BIG Session (August 5th-13th)**

### One-Week Sessions

Polar Bear Early Registration

(11/15-12/31): \$775

Standard Summer Camp Pricing: \$825

4-H/Rutgers Discount: -\$25

### BIG Session

Polar Bear Early Registration

(11/15-12/31): \$2700

Standard Summer Camp Pricing: \$2900

4-H/Rutgers Discount: -\$75

### Little BIG Session

Polar Bear Early Registration

(11/15-12/31): \$1200

Standard Summer Camp Pricing: \$1300

4-H/Rutgers Discount: -\$25

All registration is online at our website.  
Payment in full is required for one session at the time of registration.  
Payment plans available for campers attending the BIG Session.

We believe every child should have the chance to go to sleepaway camp. If your family is facing financial hardship or difficulties, please call the Camp Office at 973-948-3550 to discuss the details of applying for a L.G. Cook 4-H Camp Campership.





# Now That You've Decided To Join Us...

The next few pages contain some helpful details and things to keep in mind as you prepare for your summer with us at 4-H Camp!



## First Time Camper Tips

Summer Camp is an adventure away from home. We encourage parents to let their campers know it might not always be easy being away, and that it's entirely normal to miss home. We also encourage parents in turn to encourage their camper's own resiliency and let them know that they can do it, and at the end of their stay they'll have an accomplishment they can be proud of. We do not recommend telling your camper that they can end their session early and come home/call home whenever they'd like; instead we find it is best to positively prepare for the whole time and frame it as something they can achieve. If a camper is having sustained difficulty acclimating as the session goes on, the Camp Office will be in touch. If you would like to discuss more strategies to prepare for your child's time away, please contact the Camp Office. We'd be happy to chat!



The counselors are here to help! Campers should know they can go to their counselors (and any counselor on Camp) with absolutely anything they need, 24 hours a day. Often, if there's any persistent issue at Camp, it's because the counselors are not aware of it – campers should feel confident and comfortable going to their counselors for any support they require.



## How to Sign Up



Registration is entirely online. All pertinent information in regards to medical details and how we can make your camper's time as successful as possible is also gathered at this point. Once registration is complete, you're all done with paperwork and ready to show up on the first day of Camp!





# DROP-OFF AND PICK-UP



**Drop Off for our one-week sessions is on Monday mornings. Your camper will be assigned a drop-off window between 10:00-11:30 am.**

During your designated arrival window, you'll be greeted by one of our staff at our gate and sign-in. You'll then be directed to the drop-off zone closest to your campers cabin where they will go through our Health Check and you'll be able to meet with our Infirmary staff, if need be. Then, you give a quick hug and say "have a great week" and our staff will escort them and their luggage to their cabin to begin their summer camp adventure.



(For families with multiple campers, both campers may be dropped off in the arrival window for your youngest camper.)

Drop-Off for the BIG SESSION is similar, but the arrival window will be between 3:00 and 4:30 pm on Wednesday afternoon.

**During Session #1 only, an Early Sunday Evening Drop-Off option is available, with an arrival window between 6:30 and 7:30 pm.**

**Pick-Up is Saturday at 10 am!** We recommend arriving to 4-H Camp around 9:30 to give you enough time to park, sign your camper out at the Dining Hall, and see our end-of-session **Nothing Ceremony** at Camp Central. We'll share a few highlights from the week, and then you'll join your camper to go back to the cabin, collect their luggage, and hit the road! **See you next summer!**



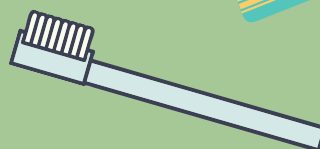
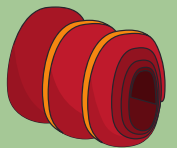


## -TO KEEP IN MIND-

- You'll need less than you think! We keep our camp days jam-packed and super active. The bare necessities will get you through a week of summer camp just fine.
- Please don't bring anything you're not willing to have come home muddy, dirty, and smelling like Camp.
- Pack for six whole days and various weather conditions.  
Extra clothes to change into are always a good idea.
- Please use luggage that is small enough to fit under a bed, or at the foot of a bunk.
- We want 4-H Camp to be comfortable for all campers. Clothing should be appropriate for our kind, respectful, active, youth-friendly environment.

## -THE "WHAT TO BRING" LIST-

- ☐ Bedding (i.e. sleeping bag, pillow, twin sized sheets, blankets)
- ☐ Socks and underwear (extra is always good too!)
- ☐ Sandals with heel straps (no flip flops)
- ☐ Sneakers or boots
- ☐ T-shirts
- ☐ Shorts
- ☐ Long pants/sweatshirts (mornings and evenings can get a bit chilly)
- ☐ 2 swim suits (so one can dry)
- ☐ 2 towels (bath and beach)
- ☐ Night wear
- ☐ Rain jacket or poncho
- ☐ Sanitary needs (toothbrush, toothpaste, soap, shampoo, deodorant, etc.)





## -THE "WHAT ELSE TO MAYBE BRING" LIST-

- ❑ Flashlight 
- ❑ Laundry Bag and Shower Caddy 
- ❑ Sunscreen/bug repellent (label and give to cabin counselor) 
- ❑ Books/journals/reading materials 
- ❑ Camera 
- ❑ Water bottle 
- ❑ Stationery, postcards, stamps (if you plan on sending a letter home)
- ❑ We have a Dinner Extravaganza on Friday night, so feel free to pack some "nicer" clothes. (But not too much nicer; it's still Camp!)



## -THE "WHAT NOT TO BRING" LIST-

- ❑ Cell phones
- ❑ Laptops / Tablets
- ❑ Screens of Any Other Type
- ❑ Fireworks
- ❑ Large Fans
- ❑ Hair dryers / curling irons
- ❑ Food / candy / snacks / gum
- ❑ Cash



**ANY AND ALL MEDICATION MUST BE TURNED IN TO THE INFIRMARY AT CHECK-IN. CAMPER POSSESSION OF ANY PRESCRIPTION OR OVER THE COUNTER MEDICATION, (INCLUDING VITAMINS) IS PROHIBITED.**

Possession of the following items will be grounds for dismissal from 4-H Camp: Intoxicants, illegal drugs, cigarettes, vape products, matches, lighters, knives, weapons, cell phones

# PACKING LIST





# THE "AWAY-NESS" OF 4-H SUMMER CAMP

A central pillar to all we accomplish at 4-H Camp is our Tech-Free policy. For campers and staff alike, we endeavor for 4-H Camp to be an environment entirely devoid of screens and connective devices. We ask that all campers and parents are enthusiastic participants in this policy and pursuit.

One of the biggest components of a week of summer camp is getting away from it all: away from the routine, away from what's normal, away from phone and tablets, away from home and yes...even away from your parents!

To create this sense of "away-ness" and adventure, we do not allow any camper contact home during the week. If provided a stamped envelope, campers can certainly send letters home (though anything mailed later than Wednesday will arrive home AFTER your camper) and we encourage campers to keep a journal of their Camp time as well. Please don't tell your campers they can call home during the week if they'd like, because this won't be the case. (However, don't worry! If a camper is having trouble acclimating to Camp or is facing any out-of-the-ordinary issues, we will certainly be in touch!)

Parents can email their campers (up to once a day), and we'll print out and deliver that email at our lunch-time mail call. Parents can also call our main office and health department to check-in for a report on their campers.

If there's anything that occurs during the Camp week that we feel you should know about, we'll certainly reach out! Otherwise both your camper and yourself can enjoy the challenge of being "away" for the week, and can look forward to the joy of catching up and hearing a whole host of wild summer stories on Saturday morning.



# WHAT TO EXPECT (AND NOT TO EXPECT)

## FROM OUR CAMP BLOG

- Our Camp Blog IS a little journal we update a few times during the week to help document the wacky occurrence that is 4-H Camp. It is designed for all members of our Camp community, including 4-H Camp alumni, former staff, campers who aren't currently in session with us, and parents. The goal is to just give everyone in the world outside of L.G. Cook a glimpse at what's going on this season at Summer Camp.

- Our Camp Blog IS NOT a comprehensive photo service. It is our opinion that constant photography distracts from the pure "awayness" of the Camp experience, so we'll only snap pictures a few select times during the week. We'll feature a few dozen of these photos on the blog, but certainly nowhere near enough to feature every camper we have. The full focus of all of our staff is to create a safe and immersive summer camp experience for your camper - the Camp Blog is a nice little extra we're happy to offer on the side.

So please DO visit the Camp Blog to get a general idea as to some of the many goofy and exciting ways we're passing the summer hours- please DON'T visit expecting to definitely, positively, no-matter-what see a photo of your camper in every single post.

Thanks! We're looking forward to sharing some updates, telling some stories, and keeping you in the loop as to what's going on this summer at 4-H Camp!





*See you next summer!*

# COME VISIT!

**WE OFFER CAMP TOURS BY REQUEST SEPTEMBER-MAY.**

New Jersey 4-H Camp

100 Struble Rd

Branchville, NJ 07826

[nj4hcamp.rutgers.edu](http://nj4hcamp.rutgers.edu)

[gobacktothemountains.blogspot.com](http://gobacktothemountains.blogspot.com)

973.948.3550

[4hcamp@njaes.rutgers.edu](mailto:4hcamp@njaes.rutgers.edu)



**RUTGERS UNIVERSITY**

**New Jersey 4-H Camp**

L.G. Cook 4-H Youth Center  
for Outdoor Education