



CAMP SOUTHERN GROUND

2024 SUMMER CAMP

Everything You Need
To Know About
Camp!

A Letter From our Camp Director

Dear Friends,

As I sit down to write this evening, I can hardly believe that we are less than two weeks away from welcoming our Summer Staff from around the country, and around the world! If this is not your first rodeo with us, I'd like to say welcome back and thank you for believing in Zac's dream. If this is your first go around, I want to welcome you to the Camp Southern Ground Family and share a little bit about why this place is so special in the eyes of so many.

From the very beginning, Camp Southern Ground was conceived as a place that was going to be uniquely built and dedicated to the Inclusion Model. Our mission statement reads:

Camp Southern Ground's mission is to provide extraordinary experiences for individuals to recognize and magnify the unique gifts within themselves and others to profoundly impact the world.

Our approach to the traditional summer camp experience brings together young people with varied life experiences in a community of belonging and kinship. Our founder, Zac Brown, experienced exactly that when he went off to camp as a child. He loved camp because, in his words, "For me, Camp was a place of friendship and possibility."

When Zac was 12 years old, he returned home from camp one summer and told his mother that one day he wants to start his own summer camp. In 2011 he purchased 411 acres of farmland in Fayetteville, Georgia with the intention of doing just that. Zac cast out a broad net in those first years and pulled in the best and brightest that the camp world had to offer, and the inclusion model was born. I'm happy to tell you that that original intention is not only alive and well, but growing year after year. This summer we will serve more campers than we have in all previous summers. We're adding programs for our older campers and enhancing activities across-the-board!

I've had a long career in the summer camp world, and this summer marks my 23rd year as a Camp Director. I know the impact that a positive Camp experience can have in the life of a young person, not only for a week in the summer, but stretching out across a lifetime. Now, more than ever, we need to be intentional about how we support our children as they grow. That's why we are introducing a new way to look at how we deliver the program at Camp Southern Ground. The 5-Character Culture focuses on Curiosity, Friendship, Teamwork, Responsibility, and Independence. These character traits are also chapters in each campers' journey through Camp Southern Ground. Watch your email for more on the Why, the How, and the What of the 5-Character Culture.

Finally, I want to thank you for investing in your child's present, and their future. Camp is a wonderful and wonder-filled experience that will help build confidence, competence, compassion, and character. Together we will watch the next generation grow in goodness and strength.

Yours in Camp Spirit,

Matty

Matthew Cook, MSW
Camp Director

A Parent's Guide

Table of Contents

A Note from our Camp Director

The Basics

Counselors and Staff
Community of Camp
Electronics Policy
Food and Beverage Policy
Care Packages

Medical

Medication Management
Medical Costs
Medical Forms
Routine Health/Medical Treatment

Arrival and Departure from Camp

Dropping Off at Camp
Picking Up from Camp
Travel by Air

What to Bring to Camp

Suggested Packing List
A Few Common Sense Points

Contact

How We Contact You
How You Contact Us
How You Contact Your Camper

Daily Schedule

A Typical Day at Camp

Directions to Camp Southern Ground

The Basics



Counselors and Staff

Camp Southern Ground carefully selects young men and women for their interest in, and commitment to working with children in the outdoors. Each staff member must meet a high standard of dedication and skill. Interviews are conducted and references are checked. Staff members attend staff training designed by camp professionals to prepare them for the camp experience, which emphasizes counseling skills, group dynamics, safety procedures, and activity skills. Our counselors are a strong, committed team with a single focus: a safe summer filled with fun, learning, and growth opportunities for all.

Community of Camp

Camp Southern Ground offers a secure and welcoming community. Each camper is placed in a same-gender, similar-age "tribe." Tribes sleep in our state-of-the-art lodge, with indoor bathrooms and showers. Each room contains 4 bunks (8 beds) where campers are supervised at all times. We know that living in close quarters allows for an experience of group cohesion, which promotes life skills in sharing, cooperation, and compromise. Campers try new activities, broaden their interests, make friends, express themselves, and feel a special sense of belonging. They gain the pride of being supportive members of their tribe group. We ask that you offer encouragement to your child around issues concerning the camp community, adjustments, and conflicts, should they develop. A roommate request can be made in the camper application.

Electronics Policy

Camp Southern Ground is a place to celebrate and enjoy the great outdoors—to take a break from everyday life and electronics. For this reason, please don't send your camper with a cell phone, tablet, computer, camera, or iPod! (We do however encourage reading and e-readers who cannot play videos are welcome.)

We know that everyone has a cell phone today, but we request that you don't send one with your child. We want your child to make new friends, not spend camp time talking to friends back home. Also, the "photo" option on phones today poses a privacy risk to kids who are living together in a group setting. Cell phones also tend to make the

traditional "homesickness" problem worse. We welcome communication in the camp office, and if there is any significant problem, we will call you. However, cell phones and other electronics brought by students will be collected and returned at week's end.

Food and Beverage Policy

All meals are served in the Dining Hall. In order to minimize the possibility of outdoor creatures and rodents, no eating or drinking is allowed in the lodge. Help us avoid problems with animals by not sending any food, snacks, or treats with your camper. If your child has a special diet, we will accommodate those needs on a case-by-case basis. Please contact us and tell us how we can help with your child's needs.

Care Packages

If you would like to send your child notes or small gifts from home, we encourage you to do so. However, we ask that you please follow some simple guidelines:

- Please send **NO FOOD!** Nutrition is an important part of our camp. Your kids will be fed amazingly well (including snacks and some sweet treats).
- **One package per week** is more than enough. We know you love your camper, but multiple packages can become a distraction to the camper's overall experience.
- **Be POSITIVE!** Anytime you communicate with your camper, especially if they may be homesick, it is important to encourage them to be independent.
- **Send something fun!** Small toys, books, or photos from home are great items!

Medical

Camp Southern Ground has two full-time nurses on-site at all times. As well as staff trained in CPR and First Aid. Campers are supervised 24 hours a day and all health care and medication administration is overseen by the camp's nurses and Medical Director. General care and first aid are always provided. If your child requires more detailed medical treatment, you will be notified and your wishes carried out. In the event of an emergency, your child will be transported by ambulance to the nearest hospital. At the hospital, a senior staff member will stay with your child and act as their advocate until you are notified and can arrive to proceed with treatment decisions.

Communicable Disease Safety Practices – For COVID and other communicable diseases, we will remain compliant with all local safety practices. We will determine guidelines and practices for camp in correspondence with our camp doctor and local guidelines.

Medication Management

All medications brought or sent to camp will be kept in the Health Center and administered by our staff. **Medications must be in the original prescription container**, complete with doctor's instructions. We ask that you send only essential medications.

Camp Southern Ground has a supply of over-the-counter (OTC) medications and can provide those to your child with written authorization.

If your child takes medication to help them cope and excel in school settings, we strongly advise you to provide your child's medication to our camp nurse. We follow a structured schedule, so it is important that your child has all the tools necessary to succeed.

Medical Costs

In some emergency situations, there may be costs incurred for the proper care of your child. Physician care, hospitalization fees, emergency transportation, and other related expenses are your sole responsibility. and you will be billed by either Camp Southern Ground or the treating organization.

Medical Forms

We require that all campers have up-to-date medical records on file. Basic medical forms must be filled out each year.

Routine Health / Medical Treatment

The Camp Nurses (RN) treat campers under the authority of the Camp Doctor, according to "Standing Orders", which are the procedures for the treatment of reasonably anticipated illnesses and injuries. The US FDA-approved over-the-counter medications are given based on the Standing Orders which include, but are not limited to, the list provided on the Health Form.

Parents may request a copy of the Standing Orders at any time if they so wish. All health forms are reviewed by the Camp Nurse prior to administration of any over-the-counter medications to confirm parent permission.

Arrival and Departure from Camp

If your camper is registered for a session but does NOT show up on the first day, a member of the camp staff will call to ensure that they are safely in your custody.

Dropping Off at Camp:

Campers are to arrive between 2:00 and 4:00 pm on Sunday, the first day of their session.

Please note: If you arrive early at camp, please wait on the paved road on the way to Camp Southern Ground. If you are very early, call the office for some ideas of things to do around town. Please do not block the camp driveway as vehicles may need to exit and **DO NOT FOLLOW AUTHORIZED VEHICLES THROUGH THE GATE.** We will open the gate at check-in time.

Picking Up from Camp:

Check out for all sessions is at 11:30 am on the Friday of your child's session. There is a family lunch at noon that we would love you to stick around for.

In order to pick up your child you must be listed as an authorized pick-up (parents included) and have a photo ID. **WE CANNOT RELEASE YOUR CHILD TO YOU WITHOUT A PHOTO ID.**



Travel by Air

We have had some changes to our travel policy this year, but the complete policy is detailed below!

- We at Camp Southern Ground prefer to see **Campers under the age of 15 either:**

Travel to camp accompanied by a parent or legal guardian who will then travel to Camp to attend the check-in procedure with their Camper, before departing as the session gets started.

OR

We are once again accepting unaccompanied minor arrangements for all Campers. If you seek to opt out of the unaccompanied minor arrangement for a child under 15 y/o you must call Camp Southern Ground and speak with our Camp Director. **All costs associated with the unaccompanied minor will be charged back to the Camper's family** account for payment.

- **Campers aged 15 and older have the option of flying independently** and meeting Camp Southern Ground staff at baggage claim. If your camper utilizes this option, you will be required to sign a form acknowledging that Camp Southern Ground is **not** responsible for your child until they find our staff member in Baggage Claim.
- The flight arrival time will be on Sunday of your child's session (between 11:30 AM - 2:30 PM). Departure flight times will be on Friday of your child's session (between 1:00 PM -4:00 PM). We request that all flights to and from Atlanta are arranged during this window.
- We will have a more formalized "closing ceremony" on Fridays this summer and we strongly encourage you to attend, if possible. Lunch will be provided for families on

pick-up days.

- If you are flying to camp, please email Melissa at melissa@campsonthernground.org as soon as possible so we can arrange shuttle transportation. All flights must be confirmed by Monday, May 20th. If you schedule a flight after this date, we are unable to ensure transportation for your child to and from the airport. Please be sure to update the Travel Arrangements Form on your parent dashboard to reflect all flight information.
- Here are some tips for unaccompanied minors:
 - Be at the gate 30 minutes before departure
 - Tell the gate agent you are an unaccompanied minor
 - The flight attendant will take you to your seat
 - You won't be able to take off your seat belt until about 20–30 minutes after the flight has taken off
 - If you need to go to the restroom, do it in the boarding area or right when you get on the airplane

What to Bring to Camp (Packing List!)

We recommend that campers be sent with clothes to play in and have fun in! Campers will get involved in a hands-on way and their clothing may show wear and tear. Camp is not responsible for lost or damaged articles. Please label everything with your child's first and last name.

Children lose things. Clothes or items that are not labeled will be placed in our Lost and Found, which is donated at the end of the summer. If we find a lost item that does have a label, we will happily ship it out to you. Parents will be responsible for shipping fees for returned items.

Camp Checklist:

Clothing:

- T-shirts (5)
- Shorts (5)
- Underwear (7)
- Socks (7)
- Sweatshirt (1)
- Long pants (2)
- Light rain jacket
- Swimsuit (2)
- Pajamas
- Sun/ baseball cap
- Shoes
 - Tennis shoes/Sneakers
 - Water shoes (old tennis shoes or Crocs work great!)
 - Flip flops/Slides-- these may only be worn in the shower and pool area

Toiletries:

Campers will be mainly using shared restrooms, so placing these kinds of items in a separate labeled toiletry bag can be helpful! Ziploc freezer bags work great!

- Comb / Hairbrush
- Toothbrush & paste
- Shampoo, soap, lotion
- Sunscreen
- Insect repellent
- Bath towel

Other Adventure Gear:

- Flashlight
- Sunglasses
- Reading material
- Notebook & pen
- Pillow
- Sleeping bag or blanket (sheets are provided)
- Hard plastic/metal water bottle

What Not To Bring to Camp:

Food

Please don't bring any snacks, we have a very strict food policy at camp. All meals will have a variety of options and plenty of food for your child to enjoy. We also provide snacks between meals.

Money and Valuables

Campers will be living in a group environment and are asked to be careful with money and valuables brought to camp. Please speak to your child about putting their valuables in a special compartment of their duffle or they may ask that a staff member keep it for them in an envelope with the child's name.

As a reminder, no electronics may be sent to camp

Items like cell phones, iPads, cameras, or video games are both a distraction and a potential cause of serious issues. If you would like your child to have any of these items during their travel time, they may check them in with the director upon arrival and be checked out when they leave. Camp Southern Ground is not responsible for lost or stolen items at camp.

You may send "low tech" options like e-readers (without video or internet browsing capabilities).

You know these things already, but our ACA standards require that we let you know the following:

- 1) Adults and children are NOT allowed to use any tobacco products, e-cigarettes, Vape, illicit drugs, or alcohol when on camp property.
- 2) Sports equipment is provided, so campers do not need to bring anything, like a basketball, for example.
- 3) Driving on camp - Vehicles at camp are restricted to roads and parking areas - Please drive slowly. No one is allowed to ride in the back of a truck, or anywhere without a seat, and everyone must wear a seatbelt.
- 4) Pets are not allowed at camp (no matter how cute your puppy is). Allergies and other factors require that only certified service animals are allowed on Camp.
- 5) Weapons are not allowed at camp, including pocket knives.

Contact

How We Will Contact You (in case of emergency or other need)

Phone calls, emails, and text messages are the main form of contact. You MUST ensure that the contact information in your campsite account is up to date and accurate.

Email:

We use several services to help us communicate better with our parents. For email, we use a service called CampSite. Please make sure that you do not have our email blocked; important information is sent through our emails.

Phone:

Given the number of campers we have each session, most parents will not receive phone communication from us during their campers' session. If you do not receive a phone call from us, assume that everything is going great and your camper is thriving at camp.

If we do contact you, don't panic, we often call with small updates we want to loop you in on or questions about how best to serve your camper.

Emergency contact with parents is essential for camp. Please make sure you include all numbers where you and your secondary contact may be reached day and night. Home, work, cell, and email are all important in the event of an emergency.

How You Contact Us

Camp Office: (678) 561-9600

Matthew (Matty) Cook, Camp Director

Direct Line: 678-561-9605

Email: matty@campssouthernground.org

Melissa Zehe, Registration and Inclusion Manager

Direct Line: 404-946-8151

Email: melissa@campssouthernground.org

How You Contact Your Camper

Closer to Camp's opening day we will provide you with an email address where you can send letters to your camper that will be printed and delivered daily. You will also receive photos of your camper through our "Waldo" system. [Details are available at Camper check-in.](#)

Send letters to:

Your Camper's name

% Camp Southern Ground

100 Southern Ground Parkway

Fayetteville, GA 30215

Daily Schedule

This sample schedule is a basic format around which programs are designed. You will get a detailed schedule when you drop off your child, but we want to keep a few surprises! This will give you a general idea of your child's daily routine while at Camp Southern Ground.

A TYPICAL DAY AT CAMP

7:20 am Wake up

8:00 am Breakfast

9:00 am Activity Period #1

10:20 am Morning Snack

10:45 am Activity Period #2
12:00 pm Transition
12:30 pm Lunch
1:15 pm Rest Time
2:45 pm Activity Period #3
4:00 pm Afternoon Snack
4:25 pm Activity Period #4
6:00 pm Dinner
7:00 pm Evening Activity
8:30 pm Campfire
9:00 pm Lodge Time/Night Time Routine
10:00 pm Lights Out

Directions

Camp Southern Ground
100 Southern Ground Parkway
Fayetteville, GA 30215

[All major GPS Apps Will Work!](#)

We're here to help!

If you're lost, just give us a call at our main number: 678-561-9600