



CAMP
SOUTHERN
GROUND

SUMMER CAMP

2026 FAMILY HANDBOOK



100 Southern Ground Parkway | Fayetteville, GA 30215
www.campsouthernground.org | (678)561-9600

Dear Camp Southern Ground Families,

Welcome to an exciting new season at Camp Southern Ground! As Camp Director, I want to personally share how honored I am that you've entrusted us with your child's camp experience. We are thrilled to welcome your family into our camp community. Our team is deeply committed to creating a supportive environment where every camper is known, cared for, and able to thrive.

We are passionate about helping each camper discover more about themselves and the world around them.

This happens each day through our "5-Character Culture" model, which guides every part of camp life. These five core values are **Curiosity, Friendship, Teamwork, Responsibility, and Independence**. These values shape not only what campers do each day, but who they are becoming.

Curiosity encourages campers to explore, ask questions, and embrace new experiences with confidence. Whether they're trying something for the first time or diving deeper into a favorite activity, we nurture a love of learning and discovery.

Friendship is woven into every moment at camp. We intentionally create opportunities for meaningful connections so that each camper feels included, valued, and supported. It's incredible to watch these friendships grow and the sense of belonging that follows.

Teamwork helps campers learn how to collaborate, communicate, and support one another. Through shared experiences, they build trust and understand the importance of working together toward common goals.

Responsibility is developed through daily routines and shared expectations. Campers learn to take ownership of their actions, care for their space, and contribute positively to their community.

Independence grows naturally as campers gain confidence in themselves. In a safe and encouraging environment, they are empowered to make choices, take healthy risks, and discover what they are capable of.

We are truly excited to meet your family and to spend this week growing and learning alongside your camper. Camp is a partnership, and we are grateful for the trust you place in us. Together, we will create an experience filled with growth, connection, and unforgettable moments. Thank you for being part of the Camp Southern Ground community. We can't wait to welcome your camper and begin this journey together.

Yours in Camp Spirit,

Sonja Dorsey
Camp Director
Camp Southern Ground



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The Basics



Counselors and Staff

Camp Southern Ground carefully selects young men and women for their interests and commitment to working with children in the outdoors. Each staff member must meet a high standard of dedication and skill. Staff go through multiple rounds of interviews and submit several references before being offered positions. 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. Staff who help run our program areas receive specialized training tailored specifically to running our program areas.

Community of Camp

Camp Southern Ground offers a secure and welcoming community. Each child 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) that will host 6 children and 2 staff members. We know that living in close quarters allows for an experience of group cohesion, which promotes life skills in sharing, cooperation, and compromise.

Campers will 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. We will do our best to honor mutual roommate requests.

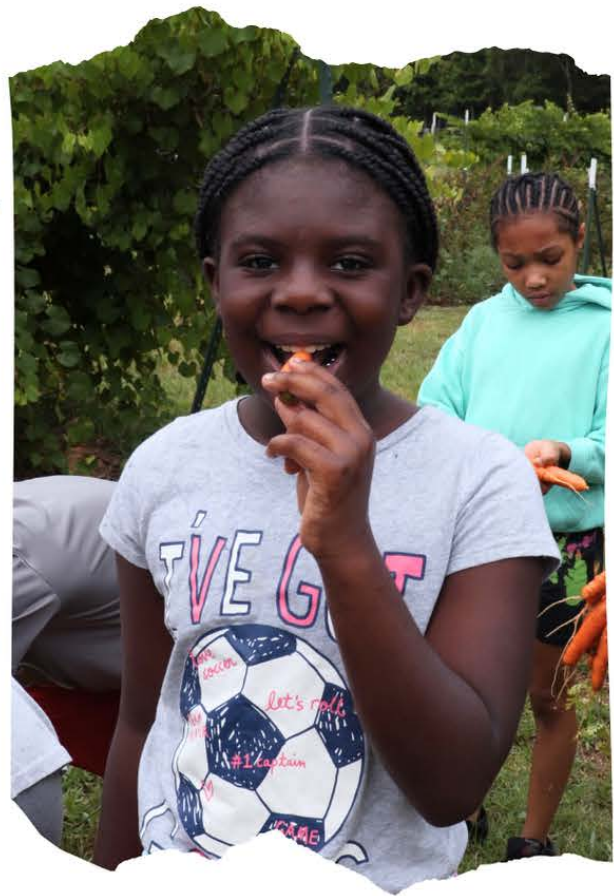


Electronics Policy

Camp Southern Ground has a no electronics policy during our all our sessions that includes cell phones, tablets, iPads, mp3 players, cameras, etc. Camp is the perfect setting for children to disconnect from technology and focus on relationship building and being 100% present at camp.

Any cell-phones or other forms of technology brought to camp will be confiscated and it will be the responsibility of the camper/ family to retrieve their devices at the of the session during the check-out process.

We encourage families to talk with their children about the importance of letting their counselors know how they are feeling and answer questions honestly. Camp staff will call home for urgent situations, if needed.



Food & 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 child. 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 and Camper Mail

We welcome families to send their child a small note or gifts from home. The best way to ensure your child gets their package or letters during their session is to leave them with CSG Staff during the check-in process. We ask that families send no more than one package per week and to not send any food. Nutrition is an important part of camp and your child will be fed amazingly (including snacks and sweet treats). Families will have the opportunity to send Camp Mail through our camper email address. Emails are printed and delivered every evening.

Medical

Camp Southern Ground has a team of nurses on-site 24 hours a day as well as staff who are trained in CPR and First Aid. Campers are supervised 24 hours a day and all health care and medication administration is overseen by our Medical Director and Nursing Director. The Camp Nurses 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. 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 to the nearest hospital. A member of our Leadership Team will stay with your child and act as their advocate until you are notified and can arrive to proceed with treatment decisions.

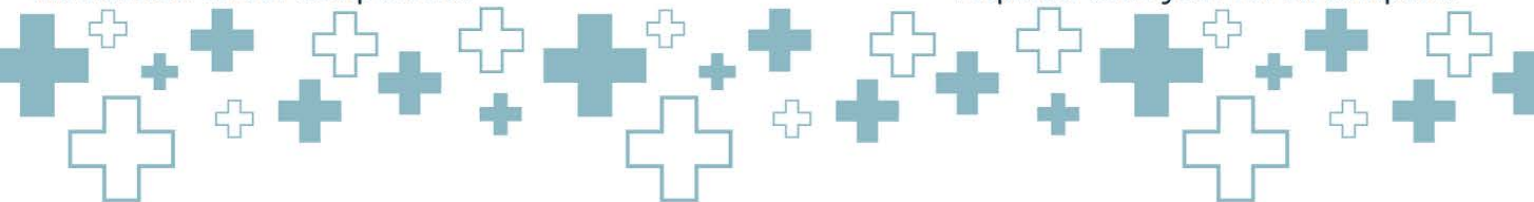


Medication Management

All medication brought to or sent to camp will be kept in the Health Center and administered by our nursing staff. Medications must be in original packaging, complete with the child's name and doctor's instructions. We ask that you only send essential medications to camp. CSG has a supply of over-the-counter (OTC) medications and can provide those 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.

Medical Costs & Forms

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. We require that all campers have up-to-date medical records on file. Basic medical forms including a form signed by your primary care physician are required each year for all campers.



Arrival & Departure from Camp

Sunday Drop-Off

Campers are to arrive between **2:00 PM and 4:00 PM** on the Sunday of their session. If your child is scheduled to attend a session and does NOT show up on the first day, we will contact you to ensure they are safely in your custody. Campers and their families will walk through a few check-in stations before saying goodbyes outside the lodge.

If you arrive early at camp, please wait on the paved road outside the gate. Please do not block access to the gate entrance and do not follow authorized vehicles through the gate. Our security staff will open the gate when it is time for check-in to begin.



Friday Check-Out

Check out for all sessions is on the Friday of each session at **11:30 AM** and families are invited to stay and attend our family luncheon that immediately follows check-out. In order to pick up your child from camp, you must be listed as an authorized pick-up (**parents included**) and have a photo ID. We will not release your child without a photo ID. All changes to the authorized pick-up list **MUST** be made in writing. We kindly ask that families contact us prior to Friday to make any changes to their child's authorized pick up list to ensure that there are no unexpected.



Travel by Air



Flying to Camp with Parent/Guardian:

- Our preferred option is to see campers travel to camp accompanied by a parent/guardian who will travel with them to camp and attend the check-in process with their child before departing. Transportation to/from the airport is the responsibility of the family.

Flying to Camp Independently:

- If over the age of 15, campers will navigate the airport and meet CSG Staff outside security in the baggage claim area. Families who utilize this option acknowledge that Camp Southern Ground is not responsible for your child until they find CSG staff in the designated pick-up location.
- If under the age of 15, campers will need to utilize the Unaccompanied Minor or Young Traveler program offered by most major airlines. All costs associated with these programs are at the cost of the family. With this option, CSG will meet your child at the gate and assist them through the check-in process at camp.

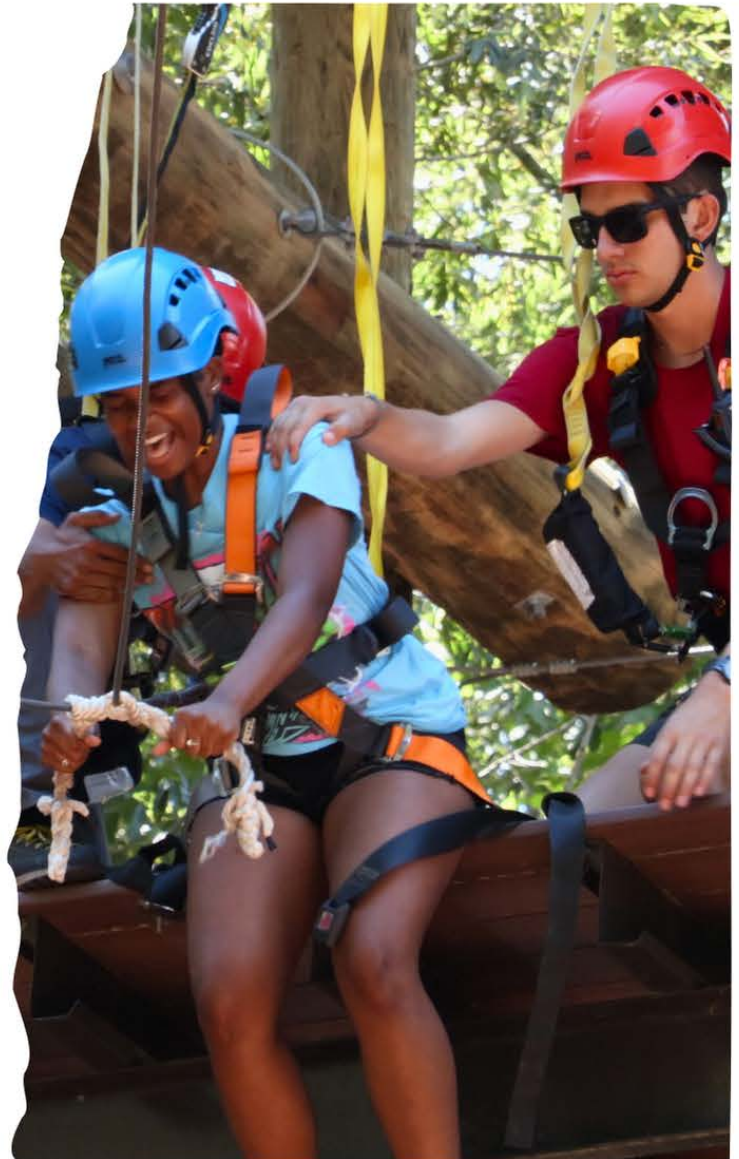
Arrival and Departure Flight Windows

Sunday Arrival: **11:00 AM - 2:00 PM**

Friday Departure: **1:00 PM - 4:00 PM**

All flights must be booked within our travel window. Travel arrangements **MUST** be finalized no later than **May 16th** to ensure that transportation can be arranged to/from the airport. Families must complete the Travel Arrangements form, found on your Family Dashboard, with all flight information

Airport Information:
Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta
International Airport



PACKING LIST

Camp Southern Ground

Clothing

- T-Shirts (7)
- Shorts (7)
- Underwear (7)
- Socks (7)
- Sweatshirt
- Light Rain Jacket
- Swimsuit (2 recommended)
- Pajamas
- Sun/Baseball Hat
- Close-toed Shoes **(Required)**
 - Sneakers, Athletic Shoes, etc.
- Flip Flops/Crocs/Water Shoes
 - Only to be worn in shower or the pool area

Other Suggested Gear

- Sunglasses
- Reading Materials (optional)
- Notebook & Pen (optional)
- Blanket and Pillow (sheets provided)
- Water bottle **(Required)**
- Flashlight (optional)
- Backpack or string bag

Toiletries

- Hairbrush or Comb
- Toothbrush & Toothpaste
- Shampoo, Conditioner, Soap
- Deodorant
- Sunscreen & Insect Repellent
- Bath Towel (for showers)
- Laundry Bag for dirty clothes

Packing Tips & Tricks

- Label all articles with your camper's first and last name.
- Pack clothes that can get dirty or messy.
- Pack outfits in ziplock bags labeled with the day of the week.
- Camp will provide separate towels for all campers at the pool.
- Leave anything of value at home, including cell-phones and cameras.
- Bring something quiet to do during KBAR (book, journal, bracelet kit, cards).
- Check the weather prior to camp and adjust your clothing as needed.



What Not to Bring to Camp

1 Food

Please do not send your child with any snacks or food to camp. We follow specific food guidelines will have a variety of food options for every meal. We also provide snack in-between meals and a few sweet treats, too. If your child has specific food considerations, please reach out to us.

2 Electronics

Camp Southern Ground operates as a tech free camp that includes cell-phones, tablets, iPads, cameras, and other electronic devices. We believe in fostering a strong sense of community and encouraging personal connections. To create an environment where campers are able to immerse themselves, we kindly ask that you do not send any electronics with your child.

3 Money and Valuables

Campers will be living in a group environment and are asked to be careful with money and valuables brought to camp. It is our recommendation that these items be kept at home. Campers will not need access to money during their time at camp and CSG is not responsible for lost or stolen items.

You may know these things already, but our ACA Accreditation requires that we let you know the following:

- 1) The use of tobacco products, e-cigarettes, vaping devices, illicit drugs, or alcohol is strictly prohibited for all adults, children, and staff while on camp property.
- 2) All sports equipment is provided by camp including basketballs, archery bows, and fishing poles. No need to pack those for camp.
- 3) Camp driving regulations require that vehicles remain on designated roads and parking areas. Please adhere to posted speed limits and drive cautiously. Passengers are not permitted to ride in the back of trucks or any area without a proper seat, and seatbelts must be worn by all occupants at all times.
- 4) Pets are not allowed at camp (no matter how cute your puppy is), however, we do welcome service animals.
- 5) Weapons of any kind are not allowed at camp, including pocket knives.

Contact

How we will contact you:

Phone calls, emails, and text messages are the main form of contact before, during, after your child's camp session (**and in the event of an emergency**). It is essential that all contact information in your Family Dashboard is up to date to ensure there is no lapse in communication from camp. Given the number of campers we serve each session, most parents will not receive phone communication from us during their child's 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 is essential for camp. Per our Essential Eligibility Criteria, a parent/guardian MUST be available and reachable 24 hours a day during your camper's session.**



How You Contact Your Camper:

Families are invited to send their child encouraging notes from home. On check-in day, you will be provided with a no-reply email address where you can send emails that are printed and delivered to your child each evening. The USPS mail delivery in our area is very inconsistent. We highly encourage families to leave letters and packages with staff at check in labeled with child's full name. You are welcome to send post cards and letters to your child at camp by using the following address:

Your Child's Name
c/o Camp Southern Ground
100 Southern Ground Parkway
Fayetteville, GA 30215

Email address for Camper Mail:
camper@campssouthernground.org

Emails

In the weeks leading up to camp and during your child's camp session, Camp Southern Ground will send out communications through the database, CampSite. Please double check your email to make sure these emails are not marked as spam. We'd hate for you to miss important updates and reminders from camp! If you need any assistance with updating your information, please reach out to us.

Letters From Camp

We provide campers with everything they need to send a handwritten letter home—if they're feeling inspired! These sweet notes are totally optional, but always such a fun little surprise. If your camper decides to write, we'll scan their masterpiece and email it your way. We do our best to send these out first thing each morning so you can enjoy their update (sometimes complete with doodles!) and still have plenty of time to write back within the requested email window.

Waldo Photo Access

We are excited to continue to partner with Waldo Photos to deliver daily photos of camp to our camp families. Waldo is an optional (and free) service for families that uses facial recognition to find all of the photos your child is in and sends them straight to your phone.

A link to register and the access code will be sent to families after all campers have been checked in on the Sunday of their session. We will take your child's headshot at check-in to ensure that there is a quality photo of each camper for families to set-up the facial recognition feature.



Photo Philosophy

Our Admissions Team understands that photos are often your window into your camper's week at Camp Southern Ground. We take that responsibility seriously, and we want to be open about how we approach camp photography. Here are a few things to keep in mind:

- Inclement weather (rain, lightning, extreme heat) may require us to spend more time indoors than planned. During these times, safety is our top priority, which may result in fewer photos on those days.
- We do not set a required minimum or maximum number of photos per day or session. The number of photos will naturally vary. We do our best to upload photos each afternoon and evening.
- If your child leaves camp earlier than the scheduled departure time, they may miss their tribe or session photo. Our schedule is tight, and we're not able to adjust these group photo times for last minute changes. If we know in advance, we will do our very best to make sure your camper is included, but we cannot guarantee it.
- Camp is full of big emotions, and sometimes that shows in photos. You may occasionally see a photo where your camper isn't smiling. If your child is upset or struggling for an extended period, we will reach out directly.

The photos we capture not only provide families with a glimpse into the magic of camp—they also help us share the Camp Southern Ground experience in our year-round marketing and promotional materials.

How You Contact Us

Camp Office: (678) 561-9600

Camp Director:

Sonja Dorsey

sonja@campsonthernground

(678) 561-9602

Admissions & Inclusion Manager:

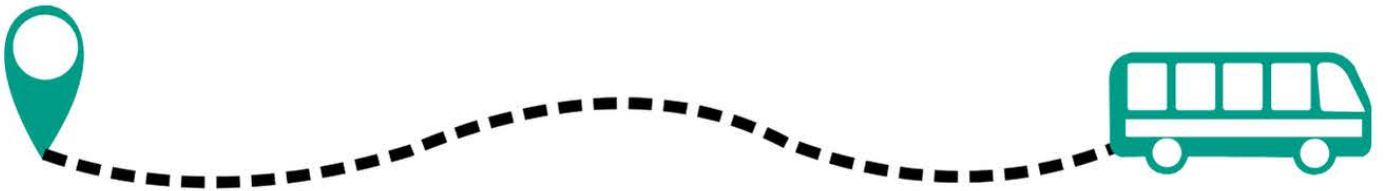
Melissa Zehe

melissa@campsonthernground.org

(404) 946-8151 (call or text)

Admission Assistant (Seasonal May-July)

admissions@campsonthernground.org



Directions to Camp



Address:

Camp Southern Ground
100 Southern Ground Parkway
Fayetteville, GA 30215

All major GPS Apps will work!

If you are lost, please give us a call
on our main phone number (678)
561-9600.

If you have arrived at our back gate on Arnold Road, please follow the road back out to Ebenezer Church Road, make a right hand turn and our driveway is the next right turn.

DAILY SCHEDULE

A TYPICAL DAY AT CAMP

Morning

8:00
AM

Breakfast



8:45
AM

Circle-Up



9:10
AM

Cabin Activity



10:40
AM

Snack Time



10:50
AM

Cabin Activity



Afternoon

12:30
PM

Lunch



1:15
PM

KBAR



2:50
PM

Elective



4:00
PM

Snack Time



4:30
PM

Elective



Evening

6:00
PM

Dinner



7:00
PM

Evening
Program



8:45
PM

Showers



9:45
PM

Lights out!

