

Camp Simchah

Parent Handbook



CAMP SIMCHAH PHILOSOPHY

Camp Simchah provides a summer of exciting experiences for young campers. Children have the opportunity to explore and interact, develop positive feelings about themselves, and to be a contributing member in a group. Skills are developed through learning activities in the classroom both indoors and out, arts and crafts, nature, and music. Campers develop traditions as they form relationships and create memories that will last for years, all in a warm culture that builds character through the development of Jewish values.

WELCOME TO CAMP SIMCHAH!

Our camp staff hopes the information contained in this manual will be helpful to you as you prepare for the summer. Please feel free to contact us at any time if we can help you in any way. Our office number is 214-239-7117. We are looking forward to an exciting summer and we hope to hear all of you singing, “I’ve Got That Camp Simchah Feeling!!”

Director of Camp Simchah Danielle Retan (dretan@jccdallas.org)

Director of Early Childhood Mindy Samples (msamples@jccdallas.org)

Office Manager Valerie Donosky (vdonosky@jccdallas.org)

JCC Camp Committee

The JCC Camp Committee is comprised of dedicated lay leaders of the Aaron Family Jewish Community Center who are involved in setting policy and improving the quality of our camps. Please feel free to contact our Committee Chair to discuss your questions or concerns – Matt Prescott.

Camp Simchah Staff

The Jewish Community Center takes pride in our Camp Staff. Camp Simchah Senior Counselors are adults who have many years experience working with young children and college graduates with camp experience. College students and other adults serve as Associate Counselors. Students in high school grades 10 or above serve as Junior Counselors at our camp. Each group at Simchah is assigned at least one Senior Counselor in combination with both Associates and Junior Counselors.

Dates, Times, & Location

Camp Simchah is a three, six, or nine week program beginning Monday, June 8, 2026. Morning Camp hours are 8:45 a.m. - 12:45 p.m. Full day camp hours are from 7:45 a.m. to 5:45 p.m. Camp Simchah is located in the Goldberg Early Childhood Center at the JCC.

SWIMMING

Swimming is an important part of the Camp Simchah program. Instruction is provided by staff trained in the Swim Right Method™ the curriculum developed by Lenny Krayzelburg. Lessons are supervised by Red Cross Certified Lifeguards and trained Camp Simchah counselors who assist in the water and on deck. Camp Simchah participants attend swim lessons several times a week, for 3- and 4-year-olds who are toilet trained.

The primary focus of the Swim Right Method™ is to teach children water safety and water independence starting with the back float. As children progress through the initial levels they begin to work on body position emphasizing good technique from the start.

We encourage you to enroll your child or children into the Lenny Krayzelburg Swim Academy at the J for instruction throughout the year. It provides a platform for good swimming and safety year-round. Please contact Lia Brown, LKSA Office Manager, at lbrown@jccdallas.org.

Important Things to Note for Swimming:

- **If your child wears ear plugs, please be sure to give them to his/her Senior Counselor before camp begins. Plan to leave them with us for the duration of camp.**
- **The walk down to the pool can be a bit rough and gets hot during the summer and though campers dry off before returning, shoes and feet often get wet in the process. Please provide swim/waterproof shoes that can be used during this swim lesson transition period.**
- **Always keep sunscreen and any other gear and/or clothing that would help to protect them from the sun in their camp bags.**

The first days of camp will be student evaluations to see where they correspond with the curriculum levels and to assess each child's comfort level in the water. Children will then be taught according to their level and will only graduate from that level once all skills are mastered. Progress reports will go home at the end of each three-week session notifying parents of progress of skills & potentially a graduation from a level.

Swim Right™ Levels

Our swimmers progress at their own pace moving through seven levels of proficiency:



Splasher – Getting wet, assisted back float, assisted basic skills



Floater – Independent back float, master basic skills



Kicker – Safety drills, kicks, deep water confidence



Streamliner – Body position drills, streamline rolls, diving skills, safety skill 1



Freestyler – Freestyle, backstroke, breaststroke, butterfly, starts & turns, safety skill 2



Glider – Freestyle, backstroke, breaststroke, butterfly, starts & turns, safety skill 3



Flyer – Freestyle, backstroke, breast stroke, butterfly, starts & turns, safety skill 4

If you have any questions about the camp swim program, please call Ethan Herdman, Aquatics Director, at 214-239-7198 or eherdman@jccdallas.org.

CURRICULUM HIGHLIGHTS

SOCIAL SKILLS

The largest benefit to being a part of Camp Simchah is the fabulous friendships that naturally blossom and strengthen throughout the summer. Many studies have shown that the development of social skills lays the critical foundation for future academic achievement, as well as successful relationships at home and in the community. At Camp Simchah our counselors create meaningful activities for learning and build on teachable moments that are created by the children. We help them develop a thirst for learning while guiding them through healthy relationships. Our counselors plan activities that invite campers to think, problem solve and participate in imaginative play. We also provide them with a safe environment to learn how to manage feelings, develop trust with others and learn about the world they live in. Many of the social behaviors they learn such as cooperation, self-control, confidence, independence, curiosity, empathy, generosity, and helpfulness emerge unsurprisingly through interactions with their peers. The relationships they experience at Camp Simchah will form the basis for those they have later in life!

SELF HELP SKILLS

Another area of development that we focus on during Camp Simchah is self-help skills. Self-help skills are very important in fostering both independence and confidence in a child. During camp, we focus a lot on taking care of our personal items and learning how to navigate through the many transitions camp brings. Our camp counselors help the children manage their personal items, such as their bathing suit or backpack, and make sure they use the classroom materials appropriately. They also help to keep the children involved in developmentally appropriate activities throughout the day. Another big focus of camp is helping the children with self-care tasks such as toileting, dressing, eating, and personal hygiene. Some of the other self-help activities we encourage throughout the summer are shared jobs between children, cooking experiences, tasks with multiple steps, and following directions and routine. In every situation, we focus on the learning that is taking place instead of the time it takes for a task to be accomplished.

LEARNING ABOUT THE WORLD

At Camp Simchah we spend a large amount of time interacting with the natural world on the Naturescape. It is not uncommon for the children to spend time looking for ladybugs in our garden, observing the butterflies, watching the birds in our bird-watching area, searching for the resident bunnies, playing in the recirculating stream, or making mud pies in our mud pit. For this reason, we do ask that you dress your children for success and allow them to wear comfortable clothes that can get dirty. It is through the exploration of our Naturescape that the children began to acquire scientific knowledge and begin the basis for scientific inquiry. They will build their scientific knowledge of living things, life cycles, and even weather patterns. In addition, they learn how to collect and describe information, ask questions, and suggest explanations for things they observe. Even our youngest group of campers love to search for pieces of nature!

FINE ARTS

At Camp Simchah, the children are exposed to many different forms of the arts and creative arts expression. We start each morning with singing and celebrate Shabbat every Friday. In the classrooms, our camp counselors offer music and movement experiences and may even have occasional dance parties. In addition, the children are involved in the creative expression of art through many different types of visual art. They have the opportunity to paint, glue, mold, sculpt, cut, and color. We encourage them to create their own unique masterpieces and this at times gets messy!! We also encourage the children to explore the earliest stages of theatrical art through dramatic play. The children love to act out stories and various scenarios created by the camp counselors. There are times when the classrooms are even transformed to set the stage!

SPECIALS

While we know we are not able to have all our usual special guests coming and joining us, we are working with a variety of specialists to help plan classroom activities, prepare materials and work with counselors so that these experiences can enrich the children's learning and experiences in very similar ways.

PHYSICAL FITNESS

Simchah campers will have many opportunities to develop their large motor skills while participating in movement activities set up each week in the preschool. Through a variety of non-competitive games and planned activities, campers will gain skills needed for later participation in sports.

SHABBAT CELEBRATIONS

We celebrate being Jewish each day. Shabbat is a time to celebrate with blessing over candles, wine, challah and special visitors. Each Friday we will welcome in Shabbat at Camp Simchah. We will also sing our favorite Shabbat songs. At snack time the children will enjoy challah.

ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL

1. All transportation to Camp Simchah is either a parent walking their camper to their camp group in person or dropping off in the carpool line. All adults entering the building must wear a lanyard for security reasons. You can pick yours up in the preschool office.
2. We operate a morning carpool from 7:45 – 8:00 and 8:40 – 9:05. During these times you may also park and walk your camper to their class if you prefer. If you arrive outside of the designated arrival times, you must park and walk your camper to their group.
3. Dismissal for morning only campers will begin at 12:40 p.m. The carpool line starts at the Preschool entrance and operates until 1:00 PM. You are also welcome to come into the building to pick your camper up.
4. Please display your carpool information in the window. It will help us expedite the arrival and dismissal processes.
5. No child is to go home in another carpool or with a person we do not know unless there is a dated note or e-mail from the parents. This is for the campers' protection. Anyone we do not know will be asked to show a driver's license for identification.
6. Dismissal for the full day camp is through in person pickup from the classroom only.
7. When you are bringing or taking your camper, please make sure you connect with their counselors verbally so they can sign your camper in and out for the day.
8. Our camp counselors work very hard throughout the day to ensure a great camp experience for their groups. Please make sure you are here to pick up by the end of the morning (1:00 pm) or the end of the day (5:45 pm) if you are in the full day program. ***There will be a strictly enforced late fee of \$1 per minute.***

CLOTHING FOR CAMP

Please have your child wear comfortable clothes so he/she can participate in all activities. **BE SURE TO MARK ALL CLOTHING (INCLUDING BACKPACKS) WITH YOUR CHILD'S FULL NAME.**

What to wear to camp:

Closed shoes or sneakers
Socks
Bathing suit
Cool, light T-Shirt

What to bring in camp bag:

A complete change of clothes including underwear
Towel
Kosher lunch
Sunscreen and Bugspray (to be left at camp)
Plastic Bag for wet bathing suit
Extra change of clothes for “accidents”

LUNCH FOR CAMPERS

Please send a lunch with your child Monday through Friday. All drinks and snacks will be provided.

1. Please use a lunch box clearly marked with your child's name.
2. The Center practices a Kashruth Policy
 - a. Please send EITHER a kosher meat lunch or a dairy lunch. All meats should be on pareve bread.
 - b. Do not mix dairy and meat products within the lunch you send.
 - c. Under no circumstances should you send shellfish, pork or products containing lard.
3. Lunches will be placed in your child’s cubbies when he/she arrives and kept in a cool place. However, we ask that you not send food that spoils easily, such as fish (either canned or fresh), mayonnaise or cream cheese – please use a cold pack if needed. Please do not send lunches that require preparation or heating. **We do not have space to refrigerate lunches or facilities to heat up food.**
4. Birthdays are special at Camp Simchah. You may purchase kosher baked goods from Tom Thumb at Preston & Forest or at Campbell & Coit. Baskin Robbins and Entemann's baked goods are also kosher. If you have any questions, please contact our office.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

Medical forms must be filled out by your doctor prior to the beginning of camp. We must have this form on file before camp begins. **NO CHILD WILL BE ADMITTED TO CAMP WITHOUT THE APPROPRIATE MEDICAL FORM COMPLETED BY YOUR PHYSICIAN AND RETURNED TO THE CAMP OFFICE.** The authorization on the back will enable us to give your child emergency treatment in the event that you cannot be reached. This policy is for the health and safety of all campers.

If your child has any allergies or activity restrictions, it is important that you indicate this on the medical form. Make sure that you discuss this with your counselor as well. If your child must take medication during the day, please fill out a medication form and bring the prescription bottle with complete instructions, including the name of the child, the name of the drug, dosage frequency and the reason for giving the medication. All medication must remain in the camp office. **DO NOT SEND MEDICINE WITH YOUR CHILD IN HIS/HER CAMP BAG.**

Due to concerns over COVID-19, we will be cleaning and sanitizing with increased frequency in accordance with guidance issued by the CDC and the State of Texas.

If your child is exhibiting signs of illness, please keep your camper home. We will call you if your camper becomes ill at camp. Should your child come down with a contagious illness, i.e. chicken pox, head lice, etc., please let us know.

Feel free to call us to discuss any concerns or any particular needs your child may have.

SICK POLICY

Your camper must be free of symptoms of illness, i.e. elevated temperature, diarrhea, vomiting, impetigo, conjunctivitis, thick colored nasal discharge, before coming to the Camp Simchah each day, or returning to the center after an illness. If your child was sick with these symptoms at home within the past 24 hours, your child will not be admitted to the center that day. Children recovering from illness and on restricted diets of Pedialyte or similar treatments will not be admitted until they are on a regular diet and symptom-free. Fever-reducing medication will not be administered to mask this symptom to allow a child to attend the center. If your child is sent home with temperature, vomiting, or diarrhea during any day in care, she or he will not be able to return to school the next day. After that period of time has passed, your child may return if she/he has been symptom-free for 24 hours without the use of fever reducing medication.

Note: An exception for re-admission the following day when sent home with slightly elevated, low-grade temperatures related to non-contagious problems like teething in infants/toddlers, or ear infections, etc. will be considered on a case-by case basis by the Director. An exception will only be considered if supported by a written note from a doctor confirming that the child has been seen and treated by the doctor on the day sent home by the center. The doctor's written release must include a diagnosis which states: 1) what is causing the temperature, and 2) also state that the child is not contagious to others. If the doctor's note or instructions say "not contagious if

proper handwashing is followed,” this is not a case for an exception due to germs spread by contact. Employees always follow proper handwashing routines; however, this type of illness is often associated with gastroenteritis or diarrhea infections. No exception will be made for the symptom of diarrhea.

SPECIAL NOTES

If you have instructions regarding your child at any time during the camp season, please e-mail eccadmin@jccdallas.org or call Camp Simchah at 214-239-7117. If your child will be absent from camp, please call us and let us know or e-mail us at eccadmin@jccdallas.org.

Swimming pool regulations require that all Simchah campers participating in the swimming program be toilet trained. Please call the our office if you feel your child may not be ready to meet this requirement. We will communicate through e-mails so please be sure to check yours daily. Please make sure we have your correct e-mail.

INSURANCE

Camp accident insurance is provided by the JCC for all campers who attend camp. The maximum benefit is \$35,000 per injury with no deductible. Dental is treated as medical under the plan as long as the treatment pertains to the injury. This is supplemental insurance and you must submit to your own insurance company first.

SECURITY

Certain security measures have become a necessity. Our goal is to assure our children's safety. THE PRESCHOOL DOORS WILL BE LOCKED AT ALL TIMES. YOU MUST RING TO ENTER.

Please be on time to pick up your child or your carpool at the end of the day. It is important that your child be aware of any carpool changes. Assigned staff will wait until all children are picked up. **Late fee:** A late fee of \$1 per minute will be charged.

Should you have a particular custody situation that we must be aware of, please call our office. All information will be discussed in confidence.

CAMP SIMCHAH SONG

I'VE GOT THAT CAMP SIMCHAH FEELING

I've got that Camp Simchah feeling up in my head,
up in my head, up in my head.

I've got that Camp Simchah feeling up in my head,
and it's up in my head to stay.

I've got that Camp Simchah feeling down in my toes,
down in my toes, down in my toes.

I've got that Camp Simchah feeling down in my toes,
and it's down in my toes to stay.

I've got that Camp Simchah feeling deep in my heart,
deep in my heart, deep in my heart.

I've got that Camp Simchah feeling deep in my heart,
and it's deep in my heart to stay.

I've got that Camp Simchah feeling up in my head,
down in my toes, deep in my heart.

I've got that Camp Simchah feeling all over me,
and it's all over me to stay.

Camp Simchah

Camp Simchah (louder)

Camp Simchah (really loud)!!!