



GASTON COUNTY FAMILY YMCA FAMILY GUIDE

SUMMER CAMP 2026



GET READY FOR FUN

FRIENDSHIP, ACHIEVEMENT, BELONGING

Welcome to Summer Camp 2026!

We're excited to offer an unforgettable summer experience for children throughout Gaston County. Our program is designed to provide a safe and fun environment where kids can learn, grow, and explore the world around them.

Our counselors are dedicated to ensuring that every camper feels welcome, supported, and encouraged to reach their full potential. We believe in fostering a sense of community and respect, and we strive to create a positive and inclusive environment where everyone belongs.

The Y's day camp program is so much more than fun and play. Through a holistic approach to youth development, all day camp activities focus on social-emotional, cognitive or physical development that children need as they progress through childhood. Our weekly themes are designed to spark creativity, inspire curiosity, and promote learning in a fun and interactive way.

Mission Statement: To put Christian principles into practice through programs that build a healthy spirit, mind and body for all!

YMCA CORE VALUES

The Gaston County Family YMCA is committed to a value-based Character Development. The following core values are incorporated into all youth activities:

- Caring: Show a sincere concern for others
- Honesty: Be truthful in what you say and do
- Respect: Treat each other as we'd all like to be treated
- Responsibility: Be accountable for your promises and actions
- Faith: Center yourself around your own spiritual well-being

Get ready for summer!

Happy Camping,
Youth Development Team



YMCA CORE VALUES

CARING



HONESTY



RESPECT



RESPONSIBILITY



FAITH



ABOUT Y CAMP

The Y is giving campers their Best Summer Ever! By offering multiple locations throughout Gaston County the Y offers a mix of fun and educational activities to keep kids minds and muscles active during the summer months!

CHARACTER VALUES

In keeping with the YMCA Mission and Character Values of Caring, Honesty, Respect, Responsibility, and Faith, appropriate behavior is expected of all participants in YMCA programs. Respectful interactions between campers, families, and YMCA staff are at the core of the YMCA Mission and essential to having a successful program experience.

- Every person has the right to be safe and healthy within their YMCA program environment.
- Every person has the right to be respected and treated fairly.
- Every person has the right to grow in Spirit, Mind and Body and is equally valued and important to the YMCA. It is implied that these rights apply to all individuals, staff and families. If a person infringes on another's rights, the YMCA staff will practice zero tolerance and take appropriate action to resolve the situation.

CAMP FOCUS

Our hope is that every camper will experience:

- **ACHIEVEMENT - Learn and master skills that help them realize their passions, talents and potential.**
 - Experience new things
 - Experience a variety of activities - outdoor, physical and creative
 - Use their imagination
 - Experience a sense of pride in their actions, choices and projects
 - Enjoy reading through storytelling, silent reading and reading aloud
 - Learn swimming skills and safety around water, and be active
- **RELATIONSHIP - Build friendships with new friends and staff role models adding to their well-being.**
 - Make friends, have fun and enjoy being a kid
 - Develop relationships with adults who believe in them
 - Leave camp with new friendships that are long lasting
- **BELONGING - Help campers feel like they belong so they feel safe, welcome and free to express their individuality.**
 - Be apart of something bigger than them - the camp community / family
 - Experience opportunities to share and express their ideas with a group
 - Experience opportunities to make choices for themselves and the group
 - Experience the camp spirit within them and enjoy sharing it with others
 - Respect themselves, others and nature.

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

The Y is a non-profit charitable organization that strengthens the foundations of our community. Thanks to the community, members, and staff donations to the Y's Annual Giving Campaign, the Y offers financial assistance for various programs and membership to those unable to pay the full fees.



ENROLLMENT AND REGISTRATION

Enrollment must be completed for each camper participating 5 days prior to the start of the camp in which you wish to enroll. This includes registration, health history, payment, and waiver sections. There is a \$20 non-refundable deposit at the time of registration per week, per camper.

Weekly deposit fees are non-refundable. Payment of tuition is due in full at time of registration or the setup of weekly draft payments must occur for registration to be processed and accepted.

All tuition must be paid prior to camper's attendance. Weekly drafts are processed the Friday before the week of attendance. Weekly tuition is not prorated for any reason.

LATE PAYMENT

A \$30 return or late fee will be assessed to any returns or payments made after the due date.

CANCELLATION

Cancellation for any reason requires a written notice given to the Program Director or Registrar via email one week prior to that registered week.

We reserve the right to discontinue service if an account becomes 5 days delinquent. We understand that occasional financial situations arise; please keep the YMCA Program Director/Registrar informed as to your family's situation in advance of delinquency so we can work with you. Upon registering for the YMCA Summer Camp Program, you are responsible for payment of all program dues associated to your camper's enrollment in the program.

REFUNDS

No refunds or changes are available within one week of the start of the camp week. Registration for each camp week must be submitted by the Wednesday prior to the start of the camp week.

- Camp Fees are not prorated based on daily attendance.
- The \$20 Deposits are not refunded for any weeks you request a cancellation.

AUTHORIZED PICK UP

At the time of registration, families must provide authorized pick-up names and phone numbers. Each day at pick-up, staff will verify the adult's identity by confirming their phone number or checking a photo ID. We will only release campers to individuals whose information matches the Authorized Pick-Up list. These procedures help us protect the safety and well-being of every camper in our care.

HEALTH HISTORY

Please provide a complete and accurate medical history for your camper at the time of registration, including all required medical forms, allergies, and medications. If your camper receives 504 or IEP services, please let us know so our team can plan and provide appropriate support. Sharing this information helps us create a safe, welcoming environment where campers can learn, grow, and thrive in Y programs.

ENROLLMENT CONTACTS

- Stowe : Kelly Davis | kdavis@gastonymca.org
- Warlick: Jada Cron | jcron@gastonymca.org
- Cherryville : Crystal Baugham | cherryvilleprograms@gastonymca.org

OUR COUNSELORS

Our staff work hard to create a welcoming environment focused on group-cohesiveness and the inclusion of campers. They are expected to lead by positive example, promote caring, honesty, respect, responsibility and faith in each environment, and follow the practices of each program that keep campers happy and safe.

WHO WE ARE

We feel confident that we have the best staff in town! Our staff is as diverse as our campers and comprises men and women who want to make an impact on their community. We hire amazing staff that consist of high school students, college students, graduates and working professionals. Our staff are people who love the chance to make a positive impact on the campers in our programs. They are amazing people with good hearts!

Prior to their employment, staff members have had a criminal background check, been interviewed, and have completed 3 reference checks. All of our staff are required to be CPR and basic first aid certified within their first 90 days, and participate in program-specific training focused on providing quality services in each program area through a child-centered approach. Developmental ages and stages, behavior management techniques, positive reinforcement, and quality risk management reviews, are just a few examples of trainings our staff teams go through over the course of a year.

FAMILY INVOLVEMENT

The YMCA believes that the best way to ensure a great camp experience for your camper is for families and staff to have a relationship with the best interests of your camper in mind. We want to work together to learn about your camper. Please come to the Director with any questions or concerns. The staff treats families and visitors with professionalism, and we ask that they be treated in the same manner. Behavior that is inappropriate, disrespectful, threatening, or abusive in nature will not be tolerated.

RATIO AND SAFETY

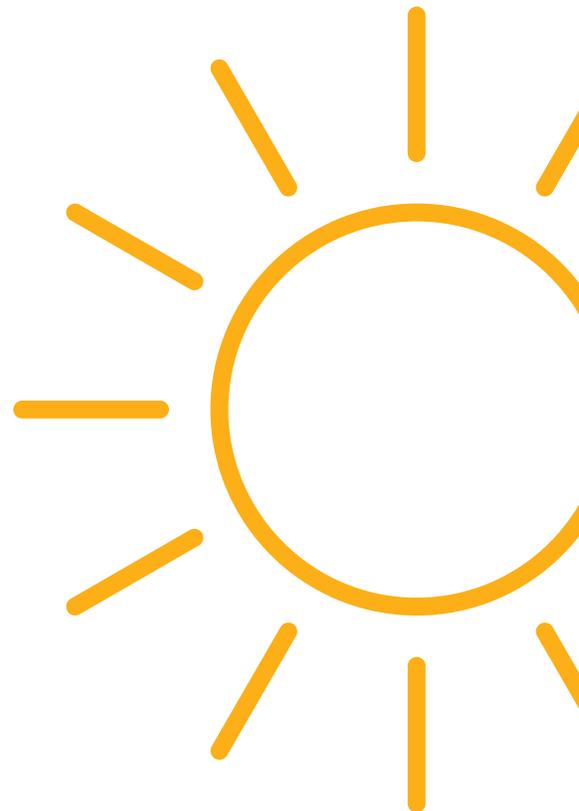
Y Childcare programs (including Afterschool, Camp, Childwatch) adhere to the following staff-to-participant ratios:

3 years to 5 years - 1:8 ratio

6+ years - 1:12 ratio

Y Staff check restrooms before a camper goes into a restroom in a public place.

Note: Y Staff do not go into the restroom with campers. Campers must be fully potty-trained and able to use the bathroom independently. They must also be able to change in and out of their swimsuits on their own.



CHILD SAFETY & ABUSE PREVENTION

The YMCA partners with Praesidium, a national leader in abuse risk management, to ensure we meet the highest standards in child abuse prevention. With guidance from Praesidium, we use a comprehensive risk management approach that includes screening, training, supervision, monitoring, and reporting practices.

Our members, volunteers and staff are required to follow the YMCA Code of Conduct for Child Safety.

Our Code of Conduct and Commitment to Child Safety

The YMCA upholds a zero-tolerance policy for any form of child abuse, neglect, or exploitation. All staff, volunteers, members and guests share responsibility for ensuring that children are treated with dignity and respect at all times. Any behavior that jeopardizes a child's safety or well-being is strictly prohibited.

See Something, Say Something

The YMCA encourages a "See Something, Say Something" culture. If a child, parent, volunteer, or staff member observes behavior that seems inappropriate, unsafe, or inconsistent with our policies, we expect it to be reported immediately.

All concerns are taken seriously and reviewed promptly. A link to submit an anonymous report can be found on the Y website at gastonymca.org along with more details on how the Gaston County YMCA is committed to child safety.



SAFETY FIRST

HEAT, TRANSPORTATION, & EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

HEAT

During extreme heat and heat advisory days, we will adjust our schedule when possible. The safety and comfort of our campers is always our top priority and we want you to be aware of the changes we will make to our camp schedule.

- » We will limit the time we spend in direct sun.
- » We will spend more of the outside time in shady places.
- » We will take more breaks than usual to “chill out.”
- » We’ll play games that keep kids hydrated and cool (like water fun).
- » We will move activities inside when possible.
- » We will take extra water breaks and make sure water is always available.

Here are some tips to help your kids stay cool during summer fun:

- » Pack a frozen water bottle.
- » Dress campers in lightweight and light colored clothing.
- » Store lunch in an insulated, chilled lunch box.
- » Send your camper with a hat.
- » Apply sunscreen before camp.
- » Tell your camp staff if your camper has a health condition that makes them more sensitive to the heat.

TRANSPORTATION

Drivers of all YMCA vehicles are thoroughly screened and authorized by the YMCA based on experience and good driving record. Bus drivers work closely with camp counselors to ensure good behavior on the buses.

Failure to comply with bus rules may result in removal from Y programs.

EMERGENCY

In the case of an emergency while at camp, staff will follow the below steps.

1. A staff member will administer immediate basic first aid.
2. Staff will call 911 if needed. A staff person will remain with the camper until the family arrives.
 - a. Please note that 911 will be called for all serious head/neck injuries.
3. Staff will contact the family if immediate medical care is necessary.
4. Staff will stay in contact with the family with information regarding the incident and the necessary forms to be completed.

SAFETY FIRST

WATER SAFETY

SWIM SAFETY

All campers participate in a swim assessment at the beginning of each week to help lifeguards understand each camper's comfort and ability in the water. Campers demonstrate basic water skills such as:

- Floating on their back
- Swimming a short distance without assistance
- Entering the water and maintaining a safe position while treading or moving to the wall

Based on the assessment, campers receive a color band that determines where they may safely swim:

- Yellow Band - Access to shallow water areas and water features.
- Green Band - Access to all areas of the pool.

Lifeguards supervise all swim activities and make final determinations regarding swim placement and safety. Swimming activities may be adjusted due to weather, water conditions, or safety considerations. Any camper that refuses to take a swim test will have to wear a lifejacket when in or around water.

Campers must be able to change independently. We encourage practicing at home with younger campers.

LAKE SAFETY

Campers may participate in open-water activities, such as Robinwood Lake, when conditions allow.

All lake activities require a lifejacket - including swimming - and will be supervised by lifeguards as well as camp counselors. Campers that cannot abide by lakefront guidelines or refuse to wear lifejackets will not be able to participate in lake activities.

Lake activities are scheduled only when environmental conditions and water safety standards support safe participation.

CREATING A HEALTHY ENVIRONMENT FOR ALL

If a camper cannot participate in the program due to illness, the camper must be kept at home. Campers who are ill may not return until they are symptom-free for 24 hours. They must also be fever-free for 24 hours without the use of fever reducers.

If your camper becomes ill during program hours, you will be notified and requested to pick up your camper immediately.

Our staff will administer first aid for minor injuries. You will be notified if your camper needs prompt medical care.

Campers with lice, pinworm, or ringworm must use a doctor-approved treatment and be free of nits (unhatched eggs) or active infection before returning to the program.

WHEN TO STAY AT HOME

- Temperature of 100.4 degrees or greater
- Vomiting or diarrhea
- Rash (if unknown cause)
- Suspected communicable disease
- Severe cold with fever, coughing, unclear mucus
- Bronchitis or other throat infections such as strep
- Nits or lice in hair

MEDICATION AT CAMP

Prescription medication

A copy of a doctor's order (prescription) and a completed medication form must be submitted prior to the administration of all medications.

All prescription medication must be in its original container with the pharmacy label intact, including your camper's name, dosage, doctor's name and phone number, date the prescription was filled, expiration date, and specific instructions for administering and storing the medication. You may wish to ask your pharmacist to divide the medication into two bottles, one to be kept at home and one to be kept at camp. Medications will not be stored at the YMCA over the weekend and must be signed in and out each week. Any medication not picked up within two weeks after the conclusion of summer camp will be properly disposed of.

Non-prescription medicine

Over-the-counter medication will only be accepted if it's in its original container. Parents must provide detailed information on dosage from a physician and fill out the form provided by the YMCA.

All medicine must have a medication authorization form completed. Medications will be held in a locked box, supervised by Program Director only.

ALLERGIES

When filling out your campers Health History, please indicate all allergies. If your camper requires an EpiPen due to severe reactions provide at least one Non-Expired EpiPen for your camper's counselor to keep on them at all times. Families will need to follow the above Prescription medication guidelines. Families are responsible for providing up-to-date EpiPens and disposing of used EpiPens.

THE CAMP DAY

DROP OFF, PICK UP, AND WHAT TO BRING

DROP OFF/RIDES IN

For the safety of staff and campers, all campers must be dropped off and signed in with a YMCA Camp staff member. Traditional and Specialty Camp Rides In begin at 7:00 am. Please remain in your vehicle at all times and follow posted signage and staff directions for the designated drop-off location.

PICK UP/RIDES OUT

Summer Camp pick up is from 4:00 - 6:00 pm in the Rides Out line. A YMCA staff member will greet you, verify authorized pick-up using a valid photo ID, and may confirm contact information before signing your camper out and calling for them to be dismissed.

Please remain patient while we retrieve your camper from their huddle. Please remain in your vehicle at all times. If your camper needs assistance with buckling, please pull into an open parking space before assisting them. If you need to pick up prior to 4:00 pm, please call the Summer Camp phone number provided so staff can prepare your camper for early dismissal. There will be no pick-up between 3:30 pm and 4:00 pm to allow staff to prepare for rides-out.

LATE PICK UP

In fairness to our staff and because of subsequent program demands, it is very important that your camper be picked up on time.

- A late fee will be charged for each camper not picked up by 6:00 pm. The fee will be assessed at the rate of \$1 per minute, per camper, starting at 6:00 pm.
- Staff will begin calling authorized pick-ups/emergency contacts after 6 pm.
- If contact cannot be made by 30 minutes after dismissal, the Y will contact local authorities.
- If Y Staff believes an authorized adult is intoxicated when they arrive to pick up their camper, we will keep the camper in our care until an alternate transportation plan can be arranged. Local authorities will be contacted if the individual becomes unruly or creates an unsafe environment.

AUTHORIZED PICK UP

When picking up your camper(s), you will be asked to present a valid photo ID. Your camper will only be released to individuals listed on the Authorized Pick-Up list whose identification matches the information provided. This procedure helps ensure the safety of every camper.

CUSTODY

In cases of separation or divorced parents where visitation rights are denied to one parent, we cannot deny releasing the camper to such parent unless a court decree or separation documents are in our file expressly forbidding such parent to pick the camper up from our program, or from pick up at times not allowed by court decree. The court decree must also be specific to the rights of visitation on the YMCA property during Camp. The court document must specify in writing that visitation is permitted by the non-custodial parent.

Otherwise, visitation will not be permitted.

Please call the Director if you have specific custody issues with the non-custodial parent that we need to be aware of.

If your camper's information changes, we ask that you update the information with your YMCA camp director with 24 hours.

WITHDRAWAL AT THE Y'S REQUEST

The Y has the option to withdraw a camper for any of the following reasons:

- Non-payment of fees
- Failure of parents to pick up the camper on time
- Failure to provide the YMCA with current emergency/medical information
- Unresolved disciplinary issues
- Inappropriate conduct of a family member

WHAT TO BRING TO CAMP



PLEASE ADD YOUR CAMPERS NAME TO EVERYTHING YOU BRING TO CAMP

Have your camper dress appropriately for outdoor play (no dresses/skirts/dress shoes).
We will be OUTSIDE EVERYDAY, throughout the day.

Please send your camper in CLOSED TOED SHOES everyday.
Sandals/Crocs/flip flops can only be worn at the pool/lake front.

WHAT NOT TO BRING:

- ELECTRONICS, CELLPHONES
- MONEY, VALUABLES, JEWELRY
- TOYS FROM HOME
- WEAPONS OR CONTROLLED SUBSTANCES
- TRADING CARDS (POKEMON, SPORTS, ETC.)

**All items will be confiscated
and returned to family at the
time of pick up.**

BEHAVIOR EXPECTATIONS & DISCIPLINE

The YMCA is committed to providing a safe, supportive environment where all campers feel respected and valued. Our approach to behavior is youth-centered and focused on helping campers learn positive skills such as responsibility, cooperation, and conflict resolution.

All campers are expected to:

- Treat others with caring, honesty, respect, and responsibility
- Follow staff directions and program guidelines
- Use appropriate language and behavior
- Respect equipment, facilities, and personal space
- Remain with their group and within supervised program areas

Guidance & Support

YMCA staff use positive guidance techniques to help campers be successful. These may include reminders of expectations, redirection, problem-solving, and opportunities to refocus before returning to activities. Our goal is to help each camper grow socially and emotionally while maintaining a safe and enjoyable camp experience for all.

When Additional Support is Needed

If a camper continues to have difficulty meeting expectations, the family may be contacted so we can partner together to support the camper's success. A meeting may be scheduled if needed to develop a plan for continued participation.

Maintaining a Safe Environment

The following behaviors jeopardize the safety and well-being of campers and staff and are not permitted:

- Behaviors that physically harm themselves, other campers in the program, or staff
- Behaviors that threaten the emotional safety of campers or staff
- Behaviors that cause damage to property
- Behaviors that prevent participants from learning and/or experiencing program activities
- Behaviors that violate personal boundaries or are of a sexual nature

Responses to Unsafe Behaviors

When behavior concerns occur, YMCA staff use a progressive approach to help campers understand expectations, correct behavior, and successfully return to the group. Our goal is to guide, teach, and support positive choices while maintaining a safe environment.

This approach may include:

- Redirecting the camper to a more appropriate behavior
- Reviewing expectations and discussing choices with the camper
- Providing a verbal reminder or warning when needed and applicable
- Applying a reasonable consequence related to the behavior
- Allowing time for the camper to refocus before returning to activities
- Families may be contacted to share information and partner on strategies to support the camper's success when concerns continue.

IS IT BULLYING?

When someone says or does something unintentionally hurtful and they do it once, that's... **RUDE.**

When someone says or does something intentionally hurtful and they do it twice, that's... **MEAN.**

When someone says or does something intentionally hurtful and they keep doing it - even when you tell them to stop or show them you're upset that's... **BULLYING.**

MORE IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Babysitting, Cell Phones, Group Assignments and more!

BABYSITTING/FRATERNIZATION

YMCA staff are not allowed to fraternize with, babysit or transport your camper outside of the YMCA program. We request that you not ask any staff to care for your camper outside of the YMCA. If a relationship exists outside the YMCA which predates the staff employment with the YMCA, staff should notify their supervisor in writing so that it can be noted in the staff's records.

CELL PHONE USAGE

Campers will not be allowed to use their cell phones during camp. If a camper is found with their cell phone, we will confiscate it. We will only return the cell phone to the authorized adult at pick-up. If you need to contact your camper during the camp day, please feel free to contact the camp phone.

GROUP ASSIGNMENTS

Group assignments (Huddles) are made based on the ages of the campers and camp enrollment. We make every effort to keep campers in the same group from session to session but this is not guaranteed. It may be necessary to make adjustments due to ratios and registration.

FAMILY COMMUNICATION

We are committed to giving camp families all the information needed to be prepared for an awesome camp experience. Weekly emails will be sent the week prior and will include information needed to prepare for the week of camp.

If you are not receiving regular emails, please contact the Program Registrar or Program Director.



SPECIAL NEEDS

Y Camp is open to all campers, and the YMCA aims to work with campers of all abilities. Families have a duty to disclose significant medical, physical, or behavioral needs at the time of enrollment. Families may be asked to complete an Individual Needs Assessment Form to help staff better understand and support their camper while participating in camp. Due to the large-group format of our summer programs, the Y is unable to provide one-on-one care. Campers must be able to participate within the stated camper/staff ratios and scheduled activities. This includes independently using the bathroom, changing clothes, and remaining within program spaces under staff supervision.

SUMMER NUTRITION PROGRAM

The Gaston County Family YMCA is happy to partner with Gaston County School Nutrition to offer summer nutrition program locations supported by our Y staff and volunteers.

Each of our YMCA Camps are participating breakfast and lunch site locations. This means that anyone 18 years and under can receive a free meal. They do not need to be registered in a Y Camp, but will need to eat meals on-site.

Dates will be available soon.

For a full list of lunch sites and information about the summer nutrition program, families can text "FOOD" to 304304. Upon receiving a prompt, submit your zip code, and you will receive a reply providing the locations available near you.

NONDISCRIMINATION

The Gaston County Family YMCA embraces values and beliefs which support and reflect the inclusion and appreciation of all individuals, regardless of race, color, physical or mental ability, religion, medical conditions, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, and age. We are proud to be an equal opportunity employer and provider of services to the community.



Mission Statement: To put Christian principles into practice through programs that build a healthy spirit, mind and body for all!

LOCATIONS

Cherryville Family YMCA

Camp Whajado
215 N Mountain St.
Cherryville, NC 28021

Stowe Family YMCA

Camp Ohana
196 YMCA Dr.
Belmont, NC 28012

Warlick Family YMCA

Camp Tuscarora
2221 Robinwood Rd.
Gastonia, NC 28054

- **CHERRYVILLE:** Crystal Baugham | cherryvilleprograms@gastonymca.org
- **STOWE:** Taylor Gibson | tgibson@gastonymca.org
- **WARLICK:** Francine Molina | fmolina@gastonymca.org