

# **Early Childhood Explorers Camp & Summer Enrichment**

*2026 Parent Handbook*



**Gurnee Park District**  
ENRICHING COMMUNITY THROUGH FUN AND NATURE.

# WELCOME

Welcome to The Best Summer Ever! We are looking forward to having your child attend Explorers Summer Camp and Summer Enrichment. Explorers Camp is a wonderful opportunity for children to make new friends and renew old friendships along with summer songs, games, crafts, nature, and sprinkler water play built around a weekly theme. Both these programs are designed to give your child an opportunity to transition to preschool in the fall or bridge between preschool and kindergarten, through activities that help develop fine motor, gross motor, self-help and social emotional skills along with socialization with friends. Most of all, the children will have fun in our fenced playground or bright classroom in the care of our experienced staff.

## The Early Childhood Team

The key to an amazing summer at Gurnee Park District is our dedicated and talented staff who create a safe and positive environment for the children.

The Early Childhood Team consists of the Youth Recreation Manager, Preschool Coordinator, Site Directors, Counselors, and Volunteers. Team members are preschool teachers, adult staff, college and high school students.

Our priority is the safety and supervision of each child. The ratio of children to staff is 8:1. All staff members have attended a comprehensive training program and are required to be First Aid, CPR and AED certified. All staff are required to undergo a criminal background check. Volunteers who support our camps also go through a training program.

## Meet the Staff– Wednesday, June 3<sup>rd</sup>

Join us at your child's camp site (preschool room) between 6:00-7:00 pm.

This is a great way to reduce anxiety before the first day of camp and summer enrichment. Bring your child to meet the staff and become familiar with their camp site or enrichment classroom.

## Camp Phone Numbers

|                                   | <b>Cell Phone</b> |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------|
| Explorers Camp – Hunt Club        | 224-548-0002      |
| Summer Enrichment - Hunt Club     | 224-548-0014      |
| Summer Adventure Club – Hunt Club | 224-548-0002      |

### **Additional Numbers**

|  |              |
|--|--------------|
| Gurnee Park District Main Office       | 847-623-7788 |
| Aimee Schneider, Preschool Coordinator | 847-599-5477 |
| Sabrina Hinkens, Program Manager       | 847-599-3767 |
| Melissa Marsh, Director of Recreation  | 847-599-3756 |

## Summer Camp/Enrichment Dates and Times

|             |                                  |
|-------------|----------------------------------|
| Session I   | June 8-June 26                   |
| Session II  | June 29-July 17 (no camp July 3) |
| Session III | July 20-August 7                 |

Explorers Camp meets M/W/F and Tu/Th from 9:15-11:45 am – drop off is from 9:05-9:15a  
Summer Enrichment meets Monday-Friday and T/W/Th from 9:15-11:45 am – drop off is from 9:05-9:15a

Summer Adventure Club meets from 12:00-3:00p on various days. Children will be walked to this program from Explorers Camp or Summer Enrichment. Pick up will be at 3:00p inside the preschool hallway. If you need to pick up your child before 3:00p, please call or text the site phone number listed above.

## Camp Locations

### **Hunt Club Park Community Center: 920 N Hunt Club Road**

|                       |                           |
|-----------------------|---------------------------|
| Explorers Camp        | Preschool Rooms #2 and #3 |
| Summer Enrichment     | Preschool Room #1         |
| Summer Adventure Club | Preschool Room #1         |

Drop off and pick up takes place in the preschool rooms noted above.

Explorers Camp and Adventure Club takes place outdoors in a fenced playground area, weather permitting. This camp may leave the fenced in area to take a walk. During inclement weather the camp will use a preschool room.

Summer Enrichment will be held mainly indoors with recess time outdoors each day.

## General Information

### Explores Camp

Camp provides a wonderful opportunity for children to socialize, learn songs and games, enjoy nature, and participate in arts and crafts and water play with sprinklers. In addition, campers develop or maintain important skills such as following directions and a daily routine, sharing, taking turns, and playing cooperatively.

There is sometimes a period of adjustment after dropping off at the beginning of the camp day. It is best to give a warm and cheerful goodbye. Generally, children who are experiencing separation anxiety will become distracted when engaged in activities.

Except during inclement weather, Explorers Camp is conducted outdoors. Children should wear comfortable clothing, appropriate both for the weather and for messy camp activities and closed-toe shoes. Please do not send your child wearing Crocs or sandals as they make it difficult and sometimes dangerous to navigate play equipment and can cause campers to trip when running or playing games.

Campers will receive one camp T-shirt for each session registered. They will receive this on the first day of each session.

**Things to bring to camp** - Please label all belongings your child brings to camp.

- \* Wear comfortable clothing, easy to pull down for using the bathroom
- \* Water bottle filled with water
- \* Backpack
- \* Complete change of clothing
- \* Jacket or sweatshirt

Children must arrive at camp each day with sunscreen and insect repellent already applied and bring extra spray-on sunscreen in their backpack.

Children must be toilet trained to attend Explorers Camp. Should a messy accident occur, the parent/caregiver will be contacted to come and change the child. Please dress your child in pants/shorts that they can easily pull up/down.

You will receive a schedule of activities for the session that will include information about water play. Explorer Campers use sprinklers and pools. On water days children come to camp wearing a bathing suit under their clothing or cover up, as well as sport sandals or water shoes that can get wet. Due to the length of time camp meets and the number of children attending, it is not possible for staff to change campers into/out of bathing suits during camp. With this in mind, we do plan water activities to limit the amount of time the children are in a wet bathing suit.

## **SUMMER ENRICHMENT**

Summer Enrichment offers young children a fun indoor summer experience filled with crafts, games, and engaging weekly themes. Children will have opportunities to play, interact with peers, and build confidence in a supportive classroom setting. The program takes place in a preschool classroom and includes a 20-minute recess.

There is sometimes a period of adjustment at drop off. It is best to give a warm and cheerful goodbye and leave promptly. Generally, children who are experiencing separation anxiety generally calm down when engaged in the activities.

Children must be toilet trained to attend Summer Enrichment. Should a messy accident occur, the parent/caregiver will be contacted to come and change the child. Please dress your child in pants/shorts that children can easily pull up/down.

### **What to Bring/Wear to Summer Enrichment:** Please label all belongings

- \* Wear comfortable clothing, easy to pull down for using the bathroom
- \* A reusable water bottle filled with water
- \* Backpack
- \* A complete change of clothing

## **SUMMER ADVENTURE CLUB**

Summer Adventure Club offers a safe and engaging environment for children aged 3 to 5 to extend their camp day. Each day may include outdoor games, water play, nature walks, arts and crafts, and plenty of opportunities to play and learn alongside new friends. Children will be walked from Explorers Camp or Summer Enrichment to this program. Children will need bring a lunch and beverage each day. This program will be both indoors and outdoors and will take place in a preschool room.

### **What to Bring/Wear to Summer Adventure Club:** Please label all belongings

- \* Lunch and snack
- \* Wear comfortable clothing, easy to pull down for using the bathroom
- \* A reusable water bottle filled with water
- \* Backpack
- \* A complete change of clothing

## **GENERAL INFORMATION FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD SUMMER PROGRAMS**

### **ePACT INFORMATION FORM**

An online ePACT Information Form must be completed and submitted to the Gurnee Park District prior to your child starting. This form includes those adults authorized to pick up your child, phone numbers to reach parents, and any special needs or accommodations. Instructions on how to complete the online ePACT Information Form will be emailed to you at the beginning of May. This form needs to be updated/completed each summer. This form is similar to, but a little different from, the Growing Tree Preschool ePACT Form.

## **PICK UP/DROP OFF**

All parents will drop off/pick up their child each day at the designated preschool room found on page 3.

## **SIGNING IN and OUT**

All children must be signed in and out each day. Sign Out must be by a parent or other adult over the age of 18 authorized on the ePACT Information Form. Anyone whom the staff are not familiar with will be asked to show identification. Children may leave only with those who are listed on the ePACT Information Form.

## **ABSENCES**

If your child is absent, please call or text the cell phone (number listed on page 3) before the start of the camp day. When calling or texting in an absence, please state your child's name and the date of the absence.

## **TOILET TRAINING**

Children must be toilet trained to attend our early childhood summer programs. Should a messy accident occur, the parent/caregiver will be contacted to come and change the child. Please have your child wear clothing that can be easily pulled up/down by your child. No pull ups, belts or overalls please.

## **LATE PICK UP POLICY**

We ask that you observe the scheduled pick-up time. One warning will be given if your child is picked up after your scheduled pick-up time. Thereafter, you will be charged a \$10.00 late fee per child for every 15 minutes or fraction thereof when you or your authorized pick-up person is late, and risk having your child dismissed from the program. Please note: Should you be more than 30 minutes late for your first late pick up, you will receive a warning for the first 30 minutes, and the late fees will be assessed at \$10.00 for each 15 minutes thereafter per child.

We understand that emergencies may occur, so if you find yourself in such a situation, please call the camp cell phone found on page 3. This courtesy will alleviate anxiety on the part of the staff and your child. A late fee will still occur. We understand your required work time and respectfully ask that you respect our staff's required work time.

## **SUNSCREEN POLICY**

We require that children arrive with sunscreen already applied. Staff may reapply sunscreen to the face, shoulders, arms and back only if the sunscreen is in spray form.

## **PHOTOGRAPHS**

By registering for a program or class, participating in an activity, attending an event or using district facilities or property, you authorize Gurnee Park District to use photos and videos footage for Park District promotion. All footage is property of Gurnee Park District. Media will be used without granting compensation, prior notice or permission. Local media/newspapers may also visit our camps to take pictures or write a story.

## HEALTH POLICIES

Parents will be asked to complete an information form via ePACT. This form will ask about any allergies your child may have, as well as if your child will need to be given medication during program hours (this includes an inhaler). If medication is to be given during program hours, a separate Dispense Medication Form must be completed and uploaded to the ePACT Information Form. Instructions on how to complete the ePACT Information Form will be emailed to you at the beginning of May as well as in an email the week prior to the camp session starting. Children may not attend these programs unless an ePACT Information Form is completed.

It is the responsibility of each parent to ensure that a child is fever-free and is not exhibiting any sickness or any illness before dropping off their child to Explorers Camp/Summer Enrichment. If a child is not feeling well, **do not** bring them to this program. Children who have been out due to illness may only return when they are 24-hour symptom free after taking an antibiotic, 24-hours after the last occurrence of diarrhea or vomiting, when fever free for 24-hours without the use of fever reducing medication, or with a note from their doctor stating that it is safe for them to participate in the program.

If a child displays signs of illness during the program, they will be isolated from others and a parent or authorized pick up must come within 30 minutes.

Parents should report any diagnosed case of a communicable disease such as COVID, strep throat, hand-foot-mouth disease, ringworm, pinkeye, lice, etc. to the program staff. If a child is diagnosed with a communicable disease, the child is not allowed to attend the program for any reason without a doctor's note stating that it is safe for them to do so, or they have completed their quarantine period.

## EMERGENCY INFORMATION

All Early Childhood staff are CPR, 1<sup>st</sup> Aid and AED Certified. Staff will administer first aid when necessary. If your child is injured or ill and requires more than basic first aid, we will first attempt to contact the parent/guardian, before calling any listed emergency contacts. If staff are unable to reach any contacts listed on the ePACT Information Form, staff will call 911 when the situation requires more aid than we can provide. All steps will be taken to ensure the safety and welfare of your child. **If the injury is serious, the paramedics will be called immediately.** If an injured or ill child is transported by ambulance to the local hospital, a staff member will stay with the child at all times until a parent or guardian arrives.

## Behavior Code of Conduct

Our staff strive to provide a happy and positive atmosphere for children to learn and grow. Children and parents are expected to exhibit appropriate behavior while participating in programs and activities. A positive approach to discipline for children will be used.

Children or parents who are a danger to themselves or others, use inappropriate language or actions, whose behavior negatively impacts the experience of others, who physically/verbally aggressive or threatening may be dismissed from the program. Gurnee Park District reserves the right to dismiss a participant whose behavior, or that of his/her parent, is inappropriate or endangers the safety of himself/herself or others.

## Camp/Enrichment Refund Policy

Refunds will be processed up to two weeks prior to the start of a session. A service charge of \$50 per session per child will be assessed. Camp service charges cannot be transferred. No refund will be issued if requested less than two weeks prior to the camp start date. No refunds will be given for partial attendance.

## Payment Policy

- All summer early childhood program participants may pay either a \$50 deposit or the full amount per session per child at the time of registration to hold your spot. The \$50 deposit is non-refundable.
- Once you pay the non-refundable \$50 deposit, all future payments will be set up via autopay. These payments will be charged to the card on file on the designated due dates (see dates below).
- A \$25 late fee per child will be charged for payments not received by the final due date
- Payment arrangements can be made when other financial aid by a third party is available to the participant. The \$50.00 deposit is required to process the registration. The Gurnee Park District does not accept payments for summer camp from the Child Care Assistance Program (YWCA.)
- The Gurnee Park District does offer scholarships for their summer camps. The scholarship paperwork can be found on our website or at the front desk at the Hunt Club Park Community Center. In order to guarantee a spot the \$50.00 deposit is still required.

NOTE: Registrations will be accepted up to two weeks prior to the start date of each camp session if openings are available. All registrations made less than 1 month before the start of camp must be paid in full.

## Final Balance Due Dates:

All payments will be made via autopay on the following dates:

- Session I:      Friday, May 1<sup>st</sup>
- Session II:     Friday, May 29<sup>th</sup>
- Session III:    Friday, June 19<sup>th</sup>