Valparaiso Department of Parks & Recreation

Discovery Day Camp

(Children in grades Kindergarten-6)

Parent Information Guide

2012

Valparaiso Department of Parks and Recreation Announces American Camp Association Accreditation

ACA Accreditation means that Discovery Camps voluntarily submitted to a thorough (up to 300 standards) review of its operation by the American Camp Association (ACA) – from staff qualifications and training to emergency management. ACA is the only independent accrediting organization reviewing camp operations in the country.

American Camp Association collaborates with experts from the American Academy of Pediatrics, the American Red Cross, and other youth-serving agencies to assure that current practices at the camp reflect the most up-to-date, research based standards in camp operation. Discovery Camps and ACA form a partnership that promotes a summer of growth and fun in an environment committed to safety.

Valparaiso Department of Parks and Recreation
3210 N. Campbell Street
Valparaiso, IN 46385
219-462-5144
www.valpoparks.org

2012 Discovery Day Camp
Parent Informational Guide

Welcome to another fantastic summer with the Valparaiso Department of Parks and Recreation Discovery Day Camp. Our staff is ready for a fun and exciting summer. Please read this guide.

A Little Information About Our Staff…
Recreation Coordinator: Youth Sports Recreation Director, Supervisor of Discovery Camps
Contact: 219-462-5144 ext. 6310

The counselors are mature college students many with an interest in education or youth development. All staff have completed an extensive camp training in preparation for camp, including topics such as supervision and safety techniques to curriculum development, CPR and first aid training.

- ***The staff to child ratio with Kindergarten is 1:6, grades 1-4 is 1:8, and grades 5-6 is 1:10.***

Camper Forms: Health History, Personal Information, Medication forms
*Forms **must** be given to the camp director by the first day of camp. *(If the camp director does not have these forms your child will not be allowed to attend camp.)*
*Any medication needed during camp (ie: inhaler, Epipen) must have the medication form completed and given to the camp director before it is dispensed.
*Forms are available online at www.valpoparks.org on the Discovery Camps page

OUR GOAL
To help your child develop friendships, positive self-esteem and self-confidence through camp activities.

CAMP DATES

Week 1:	June 11-15	*Week 5:*	July 9-13	*Week 9:*	Aug. 6-10
Week 2:	June 18-22	*Week 6:*	July 16-20	*Week 10:*	Aug. 13-17
Week 3:	June 25-29	*Week 7:*	July 23-27		
Week 4:	July 2-6**(no camp July 4)*	*Week 8*:	July 30 - Aug. 3		

CAMP LOCATION
Rogers-Lakewood Park (5320 N. Meridan Road): *Discovery Shelter*
Rain Location: Thomas Jefferson Middle School *Transportation provided by school district

REGISTRATION
Please note your first week's payment of camp does not ensure your child's spot for the duration of camp. Camp registration is a weekly registration but you may register for more than one week at a time. All camp fees are included in the weekly registration fee (ex: *pizza day or field trip fees*).

The Registration Deadline for camp is 5:00pm the Wednesday prior to your child starting a new week of camp. Registration will be accepted after this deadline with a $5 per child late fee.

All registration payments are **only** taken at the Parks Administration Office Monday through Friday 8:00am to 5:00pm; you may register in person at the Parks Office, by phone or online at www.valpoparks.org.

AM CARE: 7:00 a.m. to 9:00 a.m.
This is available to campers in the Discovery Day and Ranger Camp programs for an additional fee. Parents should drop off their children with the staff at the Discovery Shelter *no earlier* than 7:00am. Children may bring an extra snack for this time.

STANDARD DROP-OFF GUIDELINES
Each week parents will receive a new parking pass once they have registered their child for camp. These parking passes should be presented at the main gate of Rogers-Lakewood Park each time they enter to drop off or pick up their child. Parking passes will be collected each Friday.

Parents must pull their car, *do not park in parking spaces*, all the way up to the shelter where the camp staff members will assist your child in and out of the car. All parents **must sign their child in** with the designated staff member at both drop off and pick up each day.

Please drive with caution through Rogers-Lakewood Park; two other camps are held inside the park, plus many patrons visit the park each day. If you must pick up your child at an earlier time please make arrangements with the Camp Director in advance; please **do not** drive around the barricades if you arrive early to pick up your child.

Children may be dropped off for day camp between 8:45 - 9:00am and picked up from camp between 3:00 – 3:15pm. Drop off and pick up remain the same on inclement weather days; campers are taken to & from TJ Middle School by Valparaiso School District buses during camp.

PM CARE: 3:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.
This is available to campers in the Discovery Day and Ranger Camp programs for an additional fee. Parents may pick up their child at the Discovery Shelter *no later* than 6:00pm. Snacks are provided for the PM Care campers during this time.

RELEASE OF CHILDREN
Children will **only** be released to parents/guardians unless otherwise instructed by the parent/guardian. Please provide a written note to the Camp Director or Recreation Coordinator in advance when another person will be picking up your child from camp.

For additional people to be allowed to pick up your child, please indicate them on the completed personal information form. Any additions to the list must be provided in writing.

Please inform anyone picking up your child from your authorized list they will be asked to show a photo id for verification. This may include a parent if they do not regularly pick up the child.

If a restraining order is in place, please provide a copy to the Recreation Coordinator.

While we will always attempt to follow parental wishes regarding non-pick-up by persons, we are not legally able to stop a parent from picking up their child unless there is a restraining order in place. Please provide us with any custody information so we are aware of any problems that may arise. **ALL INFORMATION IS STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL!**

- *Also, children will **only** be released to the parent/guardian once they have signed the appropriate sign out sheet with the Camp Director.*

SUMMER SCHOOL
Children attending summer school in the morning then ride a school district bus to camp. During the summer school weeks campers may pay a half day rate for camp. **Parents must contact** the VCS Transportation Department at 219-531-3122 to arrange the bus service for your child.

WHAT YOUR CHILD WILL NEED TO BRING FOR CAMP
Please label everything your child brings to camp!
Due to the nature of day camp activities, children can sometimes get dirty. We ask that children refrain from wearing "good clothes or shoes" to camp because it may hinder their participation in some activities.

Items Needed

- Please dress children appropriately for the weather. On cold mornings, please dress your child in layers, it often gets hot by afternoon.
- Extra dry clothes for water play days
- Swimming suit and towel for boating/water play days
- Gym shoes should be worn at all times
- Hats and sunglasses are suggested to protect your child from the sun
- Bug spray/lotion and sunscreen
- Leak proof, non-breakable water bottle. Cups are not provided.
- Small backpack to keep everything in each day
- Sack lunch Monday – Thursday, Friday is pizza day

PLEASE DO NOT SEND THESE ITEMS TO CAMP:

- Money
- Personal sports equipment
- Pets of any kind
- Weapons of any kind including, but not limited to pocket knives, screwdrivers, metal nail files, lighters and/or matches.
- Drugs or alcohol
- Cell phones or electronic equipment including: **radios, ipods, mp3 players, PS3**
- Any clothing with inappropriate sayings or pictures

**If these items are taken to camp, they will be taken away by camp staff and returned to the parent at the end of the day.*

LOST AND FOUND
A lost and found box is located inside Derby Downs. If your child is missing anything please check this box. All articles left in the boxes at the end of camp will be given to a local charity.

SPECIFIC NEEDS
Please help us in preparing a great summer, where your child will be successful. If your child has any specific needs contact the Recreation Coordinator prior to your child's first day of camp. Depending on the specific need, special arrangements may be made to best serve the needs of your child. We want them to fully enjoy their summer camp experience.

FIELD TRIPS
The Discovery Day and Ranger campers will take three field trips this summer. The campers will depart from and return to the Discovery Shelter between the normal day camp hours of 9:00am and 3:00pm. The campers will be transported by school bus to the selected locations. Campers must wear the provided camp t-shirt on field trip days.

Campers must be registered for camp the week of the field trip in order to attend; the field trip fee is included in the weekly registration fee. On the field trip days all staff attend the field trip thus if your child is not interested in attending there are no camp activities held at our park site and refunds are not available for the field trips.

Fri, June 24:	Zao Island
Fri, July 22:	Cinemark Movie TBD
Fri, Aug. 5:	Potawatomi Zoo

OVERNIGHT CAMPOUTS
Children in Pioneers and Jr. Rangers may register for overnight campouts with our trained camp staff. The campouts are held at the Discovery Shelter. Children will have the opportunity to cook their dinner over a camp fire, do fun night activities and sleep in tents.

Each age group will have an overnight specifically for them; this allows for age specific activities to be planned. Children remain at camp through Thursday PM Care and Friday AM Care for the overnight campout. Tents, dinner, snacks and breakfast are provided for the children.

Thurs, June 30:	Pioneers
Thurs, July 28:	Jr. Rangers
Thurs, August 18:	Jr. Rangers & Rangers

LIP SYNC EVENT – *Thurs, August 11, 6:00pm*
Each summer Discovery Day Camp celebrates another great camp season with the traditional Lip Sync program! This program is one not to be missed as all the campers get to strut their stuff on our camp stage. Each age group of campers will perform a series of unique musical skits for the parents. Children must be registered for this week of camp to participate in the Lip Sync program.

ACCIDENTS
The staff of the VDPR Discovery Camps programs do their best to create a safe, as well as, playful environment for your child to be in each day. Sometimes there will be the occasional minor accident – a cut finger, a scrape on the knee or elbow, in which case we will administer simple first aid. We will not contact you when it occurs but will inform you at the time of pick up. In cases where the injury/incident needs more attention we will immediately contact you or your emergency contact (if you are unavailable) and your child may need to be immediately picked up. If necessary, an ambulance may also be called for serious accidents. In the event an ambulance is called a staff member will accompany your child to the hospital. This is required for your child's safety as well as the safety of other campers. We appreciate your understanding and cooperation.

HEALTH CARE POLICIES
The camp staff has the authority to refuse any child at drop off who shows signs of illness. In such cases, the camps staff's judgment is final. It is the parent's responsibility to verify their child's daily health is adequate for his/her participation in the program before bringing him/her to camp.

- **Temperature of 100 degrees:** A child who is ill or had a persistent illness may not be at camp with a fever even if controlled by medicine, as they are still contagious to other children.
- **Vomiting:** A child who vomits will be sent home immediately.
- **Strep Throat:** If a physician diagnoses Strep Throat, a child needs to be on an antibiotic for 24 hours before admittance to camp is allowed.
- **Diarrhea:** A child who experiences diarrhea more than twice in a day will be sent home.
- **Chicken Pox:** A child must remain home until **all** blisters have dried and formed scabs. This usually is 7-10 days after the pox began.
- **Ring Worm:** A child may be re-admitted after 24 hours of beginning treatment.
- **Pink Eye:** A child with pink eye or conjunctivitis will be sent home with a parent or guardian. If a physician diagnoses pink eye, the child will need to have 3 doses of drops for re-admittance.
- **Head Lice:** A child must remain at home until the first treatment is completed with no further active lice or nits seen.

Please make sure you have a plan in place for when your child gets sick while at camp. If you are not able to leave work yourself, you will need to have a plan that includes a responsible person is available to care for your child. This is for the well-being and comfort of your child as well as all of the other children.

A physician should diagnose any child who experiences symptoms of a contagious disease. A persistent fever of 101 degrees or more is a sign of infection. If you have any questions regarding an illness, please call in advance before bringing your child. A doctor's note will be required for re-admittance after the following illnesses: *Strep Throat, Ring Worm, or Pink Eye, and all others deemed necessary by Recreation Coordinator*.

MEDICATION
If your child requires medication during the time they are in our care, please notify the Camp Director. Before medication may be given to the Camp Director, the Health History and Medication forms must be completed by the first day of camp.

Both prescription and non-prescription medicines must be in their original container and clearly marked with your child's first and last name, and specific dosage directions. Pharmacists are usually very willing to provide you with the amount of medicine needed for childcare in a separate "original" container. <u>If these guidelines are not followed, no medicine will be allowed.</u>

These medicines will be kept in a secure place where the Camp Director may access it when the need arises. A staff member will verbally assist the child with taking their medication.

DAILY & WEEKLY CAMP SCHEDULES
A weekly newsletter will be given to parents at the end of the first Monday of each week. The camp staff plan themes for each week of camp. Some activities will be scheduled the same time each week and other activities will vary week to week depending on the theme.

Voyagers: *Kindergarten*
Voyagers is a great way to begin a child's summer day camp experience. A weekly schedule is designed specifically for their age group featuring arts and crafts, adapted sports, field games and more special activities.

Explorers: *Grades 1-2*
Continue the fun with Explorers. Children will be able to enjoy arts and crafts, adapted sports, field games and more special activities. Counselors will create a weekly schedule designed specifically for their age group.

Pioneers: *Grades 3-4*
The fun keeps getting better when a child moves up to Pioneers. Children may choose from a variety of specialty activities including boating and archery. Plus Pioneers also may participate in the overnight campouts.

Junior Rangers: *Grades 5-6*
Now it is time to start choosing some of the group activities for the cabin and core activity time. Counselors will work with the Junior Rangers in planning their activities. Junior Rangers get to continue having fun with the overnight campouts.

CAMPER'S BEHAVIOR
Does everyone want to have fun at camp? We hope so. Sometimes inappropriate behaviors can complicate this process. While families and schools are, rightfully, one of the most influential institutions for personal development, Park Department programs that supervise children for six hours a day need to be recognized as a legitimate influence in child development. By administering a consistently fair system of discipline, we hope to meet these responsibilities well.

We believe a counselor's role is one of a strong leader, helping children grow toward self-discipline and self-direction. We use cool down time as a means of allowing the child to calm down and talk to them. Please familiarize yourself and your child with the below "Character Contract" for our specific guidelines and procedures for handling inappropriate behavior.

Valpo Parks

To register visit us at:
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Discovery Camps 2012 Character Contract

Throughout the summer, we aim to help our campers develop in areas of respect, responsibility, caring and honesty. As a family, please read and discuss this Character Contract together.

__ **Appropriate Conversation**: Children will not be allowed to discuss inappropriate topics or contribute to demeaning conversations about other campers or staff.

__ **Appropriate Language**: Children must refrain from using obscene language or gestures for any reason.

__ **Respect**: When asked to do or not to do something, a camper needs to follow directions the first time given. This is for the safety of all campers. Please speak to staff and other campers with respect.

__ **Play:** Campers are asked not to engage in any horseplay with each other or with a counselor. No one will be allowed to hit, kick, push or display any type of aggressive behavior. We will use appropriate words to settle our differences; we keep our hands and feet to ourselves.

__ **Responsibility:** All campers need to remain with their group and within eyesight of their counselor. This applies while we are on Valparaiso Park grounds and off-site field trips.

__ **Caring**: It is important to use and care for equipment, toys and games properly, so that other campers can enjoy them. We will care for the property of the Valparaiso Parks Dept. of other campers and of the camp staff.

What will happen when this contract is violated:
If an incident occurs where a camper conducts himself/herself in a manner that is not in accordance with the above character areas the following steps will be taken.

1. **First violation:** *This will occur when the staff member has talked to the child on two separate occasions and behavior is continuing.* The staff member will begin a daily behavior chart to be viewed and signed by the parent each day until the behavior changes or a parent conference is warranted.
2. **Second violation:** The parent will be contacted for a parent conference the same week.
3. **Third violation:** A staff member will address the issue directly with the child. The parent or guardian will be contacted immediately to pick up their child from camp. The child will be suspended from camp for one or more days. Parents must sign the incident report at the pick up.
4. **Fourth violation:** Child will be dismissed from camp for the remainder of the program. A staff member will address and document the issue directly with the child. The parent or guardian will be contacted immediately to pick up their child from camp. Parents must sign the incident report at the time of pick up.

*Any child causing severe harm to another child or staff member will be dismissed from camp immediately.

The above rules and consequences will be interpreted by the Recreation Coordinator and Camp Director. It is at the discretion of the Camp Director to implement the discipline procedures and the discretion of the Recreation Coordinator to suspend a child in violation of the above agreement.

We welcome your comments and questions throughout the summer. Open communication between the camp staff and parents is the key to a successful and fun summer for your child! We look forward to a great summer!

Become a friend of the Valparaiso Parks Department on Facebook, visit us online to stay in touch!