



YMCA CAMP ABE LINCOLN

Parent Handbook 2026



**YMCA of the IOWA
MISSISSIPPI VALLEY**

"Building confidence, independence, and lifelong friendships since 1924"

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Welcome to YMCA Camp Abe Lincoln!

Overnight Camp and Day Camp offer incredible opportunities for children to grow and thrive in a new environment. We understand that it can also bring anxiety for parents who want to ensure their child is safe, happy, and comfortable.

We know there are many questions and "what-ifs" that come with preparing for this adventure. While we hope the information provided here gives you peace of mind, please don't hesitate to reach out if you have any additional questions—we're happy to help!

What Makes Camp Abe Lincoln Special

At Camp Abe Lincoln, we focus on helping campers grow in confidence, independence, and social connection. Our programs are designed to:

- Encourage trying new things in a supportive environment
- Build friendships and teamwork skills
- Develop independence away from home
- Create meaningful outdoor experiences

From swimming and horseback riding to group games and evening programs, each day is designed to balance fun, challenge, and personal growth.

General Information

Address: 1624 W. Front Street, Blue Grass, IA 52726

Directions: For best directions, enter our full address into GPS or Google Maps.

Contact Us:

- Call Camp Director - Meaghan Terry 563-381-3053
- Email Us: mterry@ymcaimv.org

Preparing for Camp:

A week at camp can feel overwhelming for both children and parents, especially if it's a child's first time away from home overnight. It's completely normal for campers to feel a little nervous—this is a normal and expected part of the experience.

Here are a few important things to keep in mind:

- Camp is a place for growth, and growth often comes with change. While there may be some initial uneasiness, it opens the door to valuable, long-term development.
- A week at camp helps build confidence and independence. Through new experiences, your camper will develop essential personal skills that will stay with them long after camp ends.

Tips to Prevent Homesickness

Help Your Child Have a Successful Camp Experience

- **Avoid making "rescue" promises.** Instead of promising to pick up your child if they feel homesick, focus on offering positive encouragement. Remind them how proud you'll be when they succeed and how much fun they'll have making new friends and participating in activities.
- **Reassure them about home.** Some campers feel guilty about leaving family or pets behind. Let them know you love them, that you're excited for the great experiences they'll have, and that you can't wait to hear all about it when they return.
- **Avoid suggesting phone calls.** Managing phone calls is challenging, and they often make homesickness worse. Campers should stay engaged in activities rather than focusing on calling home. If a significant concern arises, the Camp Director will contact you to create a plan.
- **Leave electronics at home.** Encouraging campers to bring a device to stay in touch can prevent them from developing independence and make homesickness worse. Instead, if you'd like to check in, reach out to the camp office via email or phone. Focusing on camp fun is the best way for your child to thrive!

Our staff are trained to support campers through homesickness and will proactively engage, encourage, and help them stay connected to their camp community.

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Telephone Calls, Cell Phones, and Mail

Camp Abe Lincoln restricts telephone use at camp for two reasons:

1. The number of camp phones is limited
2. Homesickness often increases after speaking with a family member. Parents are encouraged to call the camp office, in case of an emergency.

If your camper is experiencing significant difficulty adjusting, camp leadership will contact you to discuss next steps. Our goal is always to support campers through challenges while keeping parents informed when necessary.

Cell phones should be left at home.

First, Camp Abe Lincoln is not responsible for lost, stolen or damaged electronic items and cell phones can also become a distraction and take away from the camp experience. If camp staff finds a camper in possession of a cell phone, we will place it in our office until Check-Out.

Mail: To communicate with your overnight camper, we recommend writing letters ahead of time and giving them to staff at camper check-in. Staff will deliver them to your camper throughout the week. You may also drop letters in our drop box during check-in. If you use the U.S. Postal Service, allow three or more days for mail to arrive. Address format to follow: YMCA Camp Abe Lincoln, C/O Camper's Name, 1624 W. Front St., Blue Grass, IA 52726

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The Packing List

What to Bring

What items should I send to camp?

Please keep this in mind when packing:

- **Camp is not responsible for lost, stolen, or damaged items. If something is valuable or sentimental, it's best to leave it at home. Labeling the items you do bring can also help prevent mix-ups!**
- Camp life can get messy—expect mud, sand, and sweat to come home on clothing, shoes, and gear. Pack accordingly to prepare for the adventure! Here's a short list of suggested items:

Overnight Camp and Day Camp:

- **Water bottle** – Keeping hydrated is a top priority! All campers are required to have a water bottle.
- **Swimwear** – For all those trips to the pool! Campers will stop at the pool at least once a day. Please be conscientious of the swimsuits that are brought to camp. We ask that campers and staff wear modest swimsuits.
- **Towels** – Always good to stay dry.
- **Jeans/Long Pants** – Your camper will want their legs covered to go horseback riding and hiking.
- **Sunscreen** – While camp has back-up bottles, you know your camper's skincare needs. Sending your own bottle is a good plan.
- **Bug Spray** – To deet or not to deet? Another personal choice, as chemicals like bug spray can irritate both mosquitoes *and* your camper's skin. Send the spray you use at home.
- **Multiple pairs of shoes** – Camp can be dirty and it can be nice to have dry shoes to change into. Closed-toe shoes will be required for general use around camp. Shower shoes may be used at the pool and the shower house, but are not allowed outside of the pool.

Crocs or similar open-heel shoes are not permitted due to safety concerns.

Day Campers will need to bring a backpack daily to keep the above items in

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Additional items for Overnight Campers:

- **Personal Care Items** – Toothbrushes, soap, shampoo, etc. are all suggested for hygiene and cleanliness.
- **Clothes for All Weather** – Some mornings and evenings can be brisk and a

sweatshirt or jacket can be a good idea, as is a rain jacket.

- **Pajamas and shower shoes** – For the pool, showers, and inside the cabin can be nice.
- **Bedding (Sleeping Bag and Pillow)** – Camp beds have twin mattresses but no sheets or blankets. While sheets can be nice, they can also be a hassle. Sleeping bags work best for overnight campers.
- **Flashlight** – It can get dark at night at camp! Pack a hand-held light to help avoid bumps and bruises.

What Not to Bring

Any prohibited items will be confiscated and returned at check-out. In some cases, possession of prohibited items may result in dismissal from camp.

Do not bring: candy/food, electronics (handheld games, iPods, cell phones, etc.), cash, knives or other weapons, fireworks, alcohol/tobacco products or illegal substances, personal sports equipment, animals, or lighters.

Bed Bugs and Camp - We Need Your Help

Overnight Camp specific:

As a human issue, bed bugs can be brought into camp at any time by any guest. Our staff are well trained in detection and response and Camp Abe Lincoln has procedures in place in case the pests are brought in. Please help us out by following these tips:

- Wash and dry (on high heat) all items you are sending to Camp Abe Lincoln prior to packing your camper's bag.
- If you are concerned that you have an infestation, contact camp to work through how best to prepare your gear and how camp can help make sure the pests don't come with your camper.
 - When your camper returns home, leave their bags outside until everything in them can be washed and dried on high heat.
 - Don't be ashamed or embarrassed to talk about bed bugs. Having bed bugs doesn't mean you are dirty or unsanitary – it means you had the bad luck of coming in contact with them.

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Wellness & Safety

Camp Abe Lincoln Staff

Camp Abe Lincoln staff are carefully screened and selected to ensure a safe environment and the highest quality experience for your camper. Each staff member

participates in a week-long training, during which they learn safety awareness, camper relations, and programming options. Camp staff are required to have current certifications in CPR and first aid.

Camper Safety and Comfort

All campers deserve to feel comfortable at camp. If any camper chooses to inappropriately tease, bully or physically confront another camper with the intent to cause harm, they may be expelled from camp by the discretion of the Camp Director. Refunds **will not** be awarded to camp families for campers sent home for disciplinary reasons. Parents are responsible for transporting campers from camp and are expected to respond in a timely fashion.

Behavior Guidance/Discipline

Camp Abe Lincoln staff are trained to deal with inappropriate behavior in a constructive, safe and respectful manner. Campers will be held responsible for their actions in a positive manner. Whenever possible, camp staff will address behavior through redirection, coaching, and clear expectations. For ongoing or serious concerns, parents may be contacted before a decision is made to send a camper home. **Camp Abe Lincoln reserves the right to send a camper home if the camper's behavior consistently takes away from the experience of others or endangers their safety. A camper will immediately be sent home for incidences concerning violence or threats of violence. Again, parents are responsible for transporting campers from camp and are expected to respond in a timely fashion.**

Emergency & Medical Care

Camp Abe Lincoln maintains trained staff certified in CPR and first aid at all times. In the event of illness or injury:

- Minor issues are treated on-site
- Parents will be contacted if care beyond basic first aid is required
- In case of emergency, campers will be transported to the nearest medical facility.

Parents will always be notified as soon as possible in the event of a significant medical concern. If your child has medical, behavioral, or emotional needs, please communicate these in advance so we can best support your camper.

Medications

All medications (including any over-the-counter or "as-needed" medications) must be turned into the Camp Abe Lincoln staff during check-in for overnight campers. Day Campers will check-in medications with the counselor at the check-in site. Medications must be turned in by a parent or guardian during check-in. Campers may not keep medications in cabins. **All**

medications must come in their original bottles or packages. Prescription medications must contain original prescription information. We encourage families to include only enough doses for the week.

Medications are only distributed during meal times (8:00a.m., 12:00 p.m., and 6:00p.m.) and bedtime (9:00p.m.).

Health Screening

Overnight Camp specific:

Upon arrival at camp parents will be asked to fill out a short screening form detailing the general health of the camper. Please be honest when answering, as the health and well-being of campers is foremost on our list of priorities. Screening forms are reviewed by the Camp Director. Anything abnormal will be addressed privately with a camper's family, and in some cases a camper may be asked to attend alternate weeks.

Immunization Requirements

Every camper must have an up-to-date immunization record on file at the time of check-in. These records are required to ensure that all Camp Abe Lincoln participants are properly protected from the diseases tetanus, mumps, measles, rubella, polio, pertussis (whooping cough), and diphtheria. The only exemptions from immunization requirements are for biophysical reasons (e.g., the individual is allergic to a serum component) or personal faith. All participants must complete an "Immunization Exemption" form if they are not immunized.

Head Check

Overnight Camp specific:

At check-in, staff will perform a head lice check. This check is necessary to avoid an outbreak at camp. If lice are found, the camper will be sent home for treatment. Campers are welcome to return 24 hours later for another check. Campers will not be admitted without a clear scalp examination.

Payment/Paperwork Information

Full payment & paperwork for the current week will be required the Thursday before your registered week. Simply go to the [Online Registration](#) and sign in with your email address and password. **Deposits made to hold your spot are non-refundable.**

Cancel or Transfer a Session

Because camp programs require advance staffing, planning, and resource allocation, the following policies are in place:

Changes and cancellations to camps weeks 1-5 (6/1-7/3/2026) must be requested via [Camp change form](#) (per camper) by May 15, 2026 to avoid fees. After May 15, 2026, no refunds or credits will be made to weeks 1-5, and you will be charged in full for your registered camp(s).

Changes and cancellations to camps weeks 6-11 (7/5-8/14/2026) must be requested via [Camp change form](#) (per camper) by June 15, 2026 to avoid fees. After June 15, 2026, no refunds or credits will be made to weeks 6-11, and you will be charged in full for your registered camp(s).

No changes will be made by phone or email and exceptions to this timeframe are not allowed. No credit is given for absences within the program, including illness and injury after these dates.

Accounts will not be adjusted, and credits/refunds will not be given for non-attendance, including illness. When you enroll in our programs you are reserving space, time, and staffing whether your child attends or not.

The YMCA reserves the right to dismiss a child from the program upon notifying the parent. Refunds or credits will not be issued for dismissal from the program due to behavior (within that current week registered; any additional registered weeks will be charged the 10% fee).

Third party campers will be charged the absence fee for cancellations after the deadline.

We understand that unexpected situations arise and appreciate your understanding as we work to provide a safe and well-staffed experience for all campers.

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Cabin Mate Request

Campers may request cabin mates by completing the *Cabin Mate Request* form in the registration system (see required forms). All requests must be completed by the Monday **prior** to the arrival to camp. While we do our best to honor requests, they are not guaranteed due to group balancing and program needs. If you have multiple campers who would like to be in a cabin together, they must each request one another. Cabin mates

must be within **1 year of age, the same gender, and must be attending the same session and program.**

Check-In/ Check-Out Information

Overnight Camp:

Check-in:

When you arrive at camp, follow the signs to The Lincoln Lodge. Park in the spaces in front of the steps of the lodge, or along the far side of the road, behind the parking spots. Bring your camper and medications plus belongings inside. Head up the steps to Camp Office, for check-in. After you are checked-in you will be directed to your camper's cabin where counselors will meet you and help campers get settled in. Please say your good-byes and depart camp no later than 4:50 pm. Our check-in process is designed to ensure camper safety while providing a smooth and welcoming arrival experience.

5 Night Camp:

Check-in: Sundays 4:00-4:30 p.m.

Please plan to wait in line during the check-in process. The safety of our campers is most important to us and we have designed our check-in procedures to address all safety needs.

Check-out: Fridays 4:30 p.m.

Only adults listed in SGA will be able to pick up your camper; they **MUST show a photo ID**, for the safety of the campers. All campers must be checked-in and checked-out. The check out spot will be the camp office, in the Lincoln Lodge, or on the front lawn of the lodge. Please visit the camp office if you are dropping off or picking up your camper outside of scheduled times.

3-Night Camp:

Check-in: Sundays 4:00-4:30 p.m. Check-out: Wednesday 4:30 p.m.

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Day Camp:

Campers can check-in and check-out at one of three locations

Bittner Family Y: 630 E. 4th Street, Davenport

Check-in 7:30 a.m.- 7:50 a.m. *

Check-out 5:00 p.m.- 5:30 p.m.

Bettendorf Family Y: 3800 Tanglefoot Lane, Bettendorf

Check-in 7:30 a.m.- 7:50 a.m. *

Check-out 5:00 p.m.- 5:30 p.m.

Camp Abe Lincoln Office: 1624 W. Front St, Blue Grass

Camp Office: 563-381-3053

Check- in 7:30 a.m.- 8:30 a.m. **(if you need to come after 8:30 a.m. please contact the director ahead of time to make arrangements)**

Check- out 3:45 p.m.-4:30 p.m.

To check out campers you will need to be listed in the *Emergency Contact* form in our registration system and you **MUST show a photo ID** for the safety of all campers.

*** 7:30 a.m. is the earliest you can check-in. If you come before 7:30 a.m. you will need to wait until a staff member arrives. You may not leave your camper unattended - they will not be able to go to camp if a parent or guardian doesn't sign them in.**

Themes for 2026

JUNE 1-5TH - BEACH DAYS!

JULY 13TH - 17TH - DOWN ON THE FARM!

JUNE 8-12TH - COLOR WEEK!

JULY 20TH -24TH - BOOT CAMP!

JUNE 15-19TH - PASSPORT TO FUN!

JULY 27-31st - SPY CAMP!

JUNE 22-26TH - MACH 1- (MULTI-ADVENTURE CHALLENGE)! AUG 3RD - 7TH - STAR WARS!

JUNE 29TH-JULY 3RD - STARS AND STRIPES!

AUG. 10TH - 14TH - FIESTA TIME!

JULY 6TH-10TH - DINOSAURS GALORE!

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Typical Day Schedule

Schedules are designed to provide a balance of structured activities, camper choice, rest, and social time. Activities may vary based on weather, group size, and program needs.

Day Camp

8:30-8:45 a.m. Arrival at Camp

9:00-9:45 a.m. Morning Circle/Snack/Bathroom

10-10:45 a.m. Activity One

11-11:45 a.m. Activity Two

- 12- 1:00 p.m. Lunch/Journal Time/Bathroom
- 1:00-1:45 p.m. Activity Three
- 2:00-2:45 p.m. Activity Four
- 3:00-3:45 p.m. Activity Five
- 3:45-4:30 p.m. Closing Circle/Clean-up/Bathroom/Afternoon Snack

Certain activities can take up two spots (hours) depending on the number of campers and where the activity is located in the campsite. Even though there are 5 activity slots your child may only do 3 or 4 activities depending on what the activity is.

Overnight Camp

- | | | | |
|------------------|--|----------------|------------------|
| 7:30-8:00 a.m. | Flag Raising (First Day) | 6:00-6:45 p.m. | Dinner |
| 8:00-8:30 a.m. | Breakfast | 7:00-8:30 p.m. | Evening Activity |
| 8:30-9:00 a.m. | Cabin Clean-up (daily) | 8:30-9:00 p.m. | Cabin Time |
| 9:00-9:30 a.m. | Morning Circle | 9:00-9:30 p.m. | Lights Out |
| 9:30-10:30 a.m. | Activity One | | |
| 10:45-11:45 a.m. | Activity Two | | |
| 12:00-1:00 p.m. | Lunch/Journal Time | | |
| 1:00-2:00 p.m. | Activity 3 - Camper Choice (campers select from available activities) | | |
| 2:15-3:15 p.m. | Activity 4 - Camper Choice (campers select from available activities) | | |
| 3:15-3:45 p.m. | Afternoon Snack | | |
| 3:45-4:45 p.m. | Swimming | | |
| 4:45-5:45 p.m. | Showers/Cabin Time | | |