



## Earth Adventure Camp Parent Guide

### **Welcome!**

We're so glad you're considering our programs. We understand that getting ready for camp can lead to anxiety for both parents and children, and hope that this guide helps to put your minds at ease and figure out if this program is right for you and your child(ren).

### **Our Philosophy**

Our summer camps are run following the earth education principles of Steve Van Matre. We aim to connect children and youth to nature through the heart, head, and hands. All programs take place outdoors and are designed to provide participants with opportunities to enjoy experiential learning, science, discovery, and being active in nature. Every program has a unique theme and storyline and is filled with games, stories, creative projects, exploration, and physical activity, as well as hands-on learning related to the theme of the program. The programs are run with a small group of no more than 15 participants to ensure that each child/youth can get the most out of their camp experience.

### **Program Goals & Outcomes**

The overall goals of our Earth Adventure Camps are for children and youth to:

- experience and appreciate the values of nature through active learning and play in an outdoor setting; and
- discover outdoor leadership skills through leadership and team building initiatives, free play opportunities, and self-directed games.

Each of our Earth Adventure Camps also have their own specific set of outcomes, which fall under the following three categories:

- **Head (understanding):** gain an understanding of a basic ecological concept related to the flow of energy, the cycling of matter, the interrelating of life, and the changing of forms.
- **Heart (feeling):** gain an increased appreciation for and feeling of connection with the natural world.
- **Hands (processing/doing):** identify ways to live more harmoniously with the earth and commit to an action step to help care for the natural world.



## **COVID-19 Statement**

Coastal Action is adhering to all federal and provincial restrictions and public health guidelines during the COVID-19 pandemic and we are operating under the NS Return to Day Camp Guidelines. As Nova Scotia's response to the COVID-19 pandemic changes in the coming weeks and months, we will adapt accordingly. As such, please be aware that our guidelines will be continuously updated as we learn more about how we can safely offer our programs under these changing circumstances. We will share our most up-to-date COVID-19 Guidelines and Safety Protocol with registered families at least one week prior to the start of their camp.

## **Our Facility**

The Morton Centre is located at 310 Monk Point Road, Heckman's Island, near Lunenburg, Nova Scotia. Originally an active farm, the 99-acre property is comprised of secondary-growth mixed coniferous and deciduous forest, two large hay fields, freshwater ponds, a salt marsh, and nearly two kilometres of shoreline. A network of trails runs across the property. There is a port-o-potty and handwashing station outside for camper use.

There is a cottage, with amenities to accommodate retreat visitors and a variety of outbuildings. We do have access to the cottage to take shelter for short periods of time in the case of thunderstorms or other severe weather when we are required to stay inside for 30 minutes after the last thunder/lightning. Our programs are run entirely outdoors (rain or shine) and campers will otherwise not have access to the inside space. There are often people living at the cottage and it is used for the storage of camp materials and equipment.

If the weather is looking particularly stormy, we may decide to cancel camp for the day or end the program early. You will be notified by email and/or phone call. The decision to cancel the entire day will be made by 8 AM and the decision to end early could be made at any point. If we end early, you will be asked to pick up your child(ren) as soon as possible. If you are unable to leave work early or have no other options for childcare, campers can stay at the Morton Centre until 4 PM if absolutely necessary. However, we have limited inside space so it is not an ideal solution.

## **Registration**

As our camps are kept small, they can fill up quickly. Registration is first-come, first-serve and if a camp is full, you can be added to a waiting list. To confirm your spot, the camp fees must be paid in full within 14 days of the registration form being submitted. For example, if you register on March 22, you have until April 5 to pay. If the payment is not received within that



timeframe, your spot will go to the next person in line. Paying in full upon registering is encouraged.

If you are unable to pay in full immediately or will be receiving financial assistance (e.g., through ProKids), please let us know and we can work out a payment plan.

### **NEW: Two-Tiered Camp Prices**

Please note that this year we are implementing a two-tiered price system for our camps. This will allow us to cover the expenses associated with offering our programs, while ensuring that our camps continue to be affordable. The Tier 1 price more accurately reflects the true cost of the program, and if you are able to afford it, we encourage you to select this option. The Tier 2 price is a subsidized price for those who can't afford the true cost of our programs. You can choose the option that is most suitable for you, and we will not ask for any explanation or justification for which option you choose. If you require additional support, our camps are eligible to receive funding through ProKids.

### **How to Register**

Registration will take place online and will open on Tuesday, March 22 at 5 PM. The registration link will be found on our website. If the camp is full, you will be directed to the waitlist. If a spot opens up, you will be contacted.

### **Cancellation/Refunds**

If you cancel your registration at least one month before the start of your registered camp, all fees (minus a \$40 admin fee) will be refunded. All fees are non-refundable if you cancel less than one month before the start of your registered camp.

There are no refunds for participants that discontinue camp. In extenuating circumstances, such as an illness, injury, or a family emergency, credit may be given for the following season.

### **Health and Safety**

#### **Allergies**

Please communicate all allergies with a staff member, including symptoms, severities, and treatment.

If we do not have participants with peanut/tree nut allergies, nuts *will* be allowed at camp.



## **Medication**

If your child requires or may require medication during the program (including prescription medication, epi-pen, ibuprofen, antihistamine), please speak with a leader. We will get you to fill out a medication form describing when and how it is taken. A leader will keep the medication with them or safely stored in the cottage (not held by the camper) unless you recommend otherwise (e.g., epi-pen, inhaler).

## **Illness/First Aid**

All Earth Adventure Camp staff are trained in First Aid and will have a backpack with a First Aid kit, camper medical information, and any required camper medication with them at all times. Coastal Action staff members are prepared to provide First Aid treatment as necessary. In case of emergency or illness, every effort will be made to contact the parents/guardians. We will fill out an incident report detailing the events leading up to the incident, the injury, and the First Aid provided. A staff member will review it with you during pick up, and ask for your signature.

Should there be an emergency, the nearest hospital to the Morton Centre is the Fishermen's Memorial Hospital located at 14 High Street, Lunenburg, Nova Scotia. When the Fishermen's Memorial Hospital ER room is closed, the next closest hospital is the South Shore Regional Hospital, located at 90 Glen Allan Dr., Bridgewater, Nova Scotia.

## **Earth Adventure Camp Tick Policy**

We inform all participants about tick safety on the first morning of the program. If a tick is found attached to your child, we will remove it, or assist your child in removing the tick. We will save the tick in a clear plastic bag, labelled with your child's name, the location of the bite, and the date. We will give this bag to you when you pick up your child. We will fill out an incident report, review it during pick up, and ask for your signature.

## **Camper Expectations**

### **Rules & Consequences**

On the first day of camp, leaders will review the program rules and guidelines with campers, which includes (but is not limited to) the following:

1. Stay in sight
2. Come back when called
3. Listen when a leader is speaking
4. Keep feet, sticks, and rocks on the ground
5. Respect the environment, respect each other, and respect yourself



Consequences will be relevant to the infraction (e.g., if a camper wanders too far away, they will need to stay beside a leader during free time; if a camper doesn't listen when a leader is explaining a game, they will sit out during the game). If possible, we ask for the camper's input about what an appropriate consequence would be and discuss ways to prevent the issue from happening again.

Additionally, we have a 3-strike policy for more serious infractions (when there is actual or potential harm to the camper or others, if an issue is persistent with no improvement, or if they are overly disruptive to the program). Parents/guardians will be informed at pick-up time if a camper received a strike. After 3 strikes, campers will not be permitted to remain in the program. Parents/guardians will be asked to pick up the camper immediately.

With older age groups, we work with participants to create community standards – a set of rules and guidelines describing how we would like to interact with each other. This goes above the general safety guidelines to ensure that everyone can feel comfortable and safe to be their best self at camp.

### **Participation**

Campers are to participate in all scheduled events and activities. Due to the highly structured nature of the program, and the need to fulfill staff to child ratio requirements, we are unable to provide alternate arrangements for non-participating children. We ask that campers try an activity for 5 minutes, and if after the 5 minutes they still do not want to participate, they can sit out. Non-participating children are expected to stay with the group and can observe the activities. Please note that while we encourage campers to try all new activities, we will not force anyone to participate if they are scared or uncomfortable.

## **Camp Policies & Additional Information**

### **Drop-Off and Pick-Up**

Our programs typically begin at 9 AM and end at 4 PM. Please aim to arrive as close to these times as possible. If you're too early, the leaders may be caught doing some secret setup, but if you're too late it can be disruptive to the start of the program. Unfortunately, we are not able to offer early drop-off or late pick-up options at this time.

If your child(ren)/youth will be picked up by someone not listed on the registration form, please inform a camp leader ahead of time.

If your child(ren)/youth will be picked up early or dropped off late, please inform a camp leader as soon as you know this might occur. This is NOT recommended; however, we understand that things come up. We might recommend that you show up at a specific time, so it is less



disruptive to our programming. We often go for walks in the forest or along the beach and can be 10-15 minutes away from the main building. If you show up unexpectedly, there could be a delay as we return to the Morton Centre. We will not leave a child to wait for a parent alone, and please do NOT leave your child unattended while waiting for them to join the group.

### **What to Bring**

Campers are expected to show up to camp with the proper clothing to be outside all day, rain or shine. Campers must also bring their own lunch and snacks. The following list gives a general idea of what to bring to camp; however, a more specific list will be sent to registered families at least one week before the start of camp.

- Closed toed-shoes
- **Long pants are required every day**
- Sun protection (hat, sunscreen) & insect protection (bug spray or bug jacket)
- Extra change of clothing
- Extra layers of clothing, in the case of weather changes (sweater, jacket)
- A water bottle
- A morning snack, a lunch, and an afternoon snack
- Waterproof raingear

All items should be labelled with your child's name and in a backpack.

### **Toys from Home/Electronics**

Please refrain from sending your child(ren)/youth to camp with toys from home (e.g., stuffed animals, cars) or electronics (e.g., cellphones, cameras, headphones). They can be disruptive to the camp, and have the potential to be lost or damaged. Additionally, we want the Earth Adventure Camps to be a technology-free environment where participants can explore and connect to nature with minimal distractions.

We will be taking photos throughout the camp (if you have provided photo consent) and will share them with parents/guardians. If you need to get in touch with your child(ren)/youth or communicate a change in plans, the program leaders will carry cell phones with them at all times. Their numbers will be shared with parents/guardians before the start of camp.