

PACKING GUIDELINES

Label everything

- Mark all clothing, shoes, luggage and other items with the camper's name.
- Label trash bags used for dirty clothes because they can be confused with trash.

Helpful hints

- Pack a daily change of clothing at the minimum.
- Shorts and T-shirts are perfect. Sleeveless shirts and tank tops are allowed (but see the Dress Code).
- Pack older clothes that can get wet or muddy, not nice new clothes.
- Pack shorts that extend at least to mid-thigh for the high-ropes course.

About wet clothes

- Clothes will get wet, so pack extra socks and underwear – more than you would normally need.
- Blisters are a problem. Encourage campers to wear dry socks and shoes to prevent blisters.
- Wearing wet shorts and underwear will cause a painful rash. Educate your child about this.

About shoes

- Comfortable shoes or sandals are a must. Don't take new shoes or sandals to camp.
- Closed-toe shoes are required for the high-ropes course.
- Comfortable sandals with heel straps or crocs are okay if the heel strap is worn on the heel.
- Pack shoes to keep dry (tennis shoes for running around, hiking, climbing, and other times).
- Pack shoes that can get wet (old shoes, water shoes or sturdy sandals with a heel strap).
- Flip flops and sandals that are just flip flops with a thin heel strap are not allowed.

Dress Code

Dress modestly. Campers wearing clothes deemed inappropriate by chaperones will be asked to change. Here are some guidelines:

- Revealing shorts, pants, and sleep pants or boxer shorts worn on the outside are not allowed.
- Underwear must be worn and must not be visible. Briefs, boxers and bras are underwear.
- Sagging is not allowed.
- Clothing with advertising that encourages breaking the 4-H Code of Conduct is not allowed.
- Halter tops, backless shirts, ripped T-shirts, one-shoulder tops, spaghetti straps, visible midriffs and other shirts or tops that are not modest won't be allowed.
- When swimming, girls should wear a one piece or a tankini. A bikini is not acceptable at camp.
- Girls may choose to wear a dark colored T-shirt cover-up, swim trunks or modest cut-offs.
- Boys swimsuits should be shorts, swim trunks, board shorts or cut-offs; not boxers or swim briefs.

What not to pack

- No knives, firearms, fireworks or any other dangerous items. These items will be confiscated.
- No valuable jewelry, large amounts of money, smart phones or tablets. We are not responsible for lost or stolen items.
- No personal food and snacks unless prearranged for dietary needs (no snacks in the cabins).
- No prescription medications kept with a child. Meds must be turned in to Camp Leaders during Check-In.
- No alcohol, tobacco, matches, lighters or anything else that breaks the Georgia 4-H Code of Conduct

WHAT TO PACK

Clothing & Gear

- Shirts
- Shorts
- Underwear
- Socks
- Extra socks
- Swimsuit or swim trunks
- Rain jacket
- Sunglasses or eyeglasses
- Hat

Footwear

- Sandals (sturdy sandals or crocs with a heel strap) or old tennis shoes that can get wet
- Tennis shoes or other comfortable shoes to keep dry

Linens

- Sleeping bag (an inexpensive sleeping bag will work fine) or sheets & light blanket
- Pillow and pillow case (pillows are not provided)
- Towels (for showering and after swimming)
- Wash cloth and hand towels
- Laundry bag or trash bag for wet clothes. Be sure to label trash bags well.

Toiletries

- Soap and soap container
- Shampoo
- Toothbrush with protective holder
- Toothpaste
- Deodorant
- Brush, comb and hair accessories
- Shaving supplies
- Feminine supplies
- Sunscreen
- Insect repellent

Medications To Keep Separate

Plan to turn in meds to the Camp Leaders during Sunday Check-In

- Prescription medications in their correct and unexpired bottles or packages
- Over-the-counter medications in correct and unexpired bottles or packages
- A zip-lock bag labeled with the camper's name for their prescription and over the counter medication

Optional items

- Wallet or purse
- Money for the Canteen
- Flashlight (flashlights are allowed and will not be confiscated)

Reminders

- **PACK BAGS TOGETHER WITH YOUR CHILD** – Work with your child to pack their bags and review everything in their bags so they know what they have with them at camp.
- **PACK A PILLOW & SLEEPING BAG OR SHEETS** – Pillows and sheets are not provided. Pack a pillow and sleeping bag or twin sheets and a blanket.
- **PACK TOILETRIES** – Towels, washcloths, soap, shampoo, toothbrushes, toothpaste, deodorant...
- **MONEY FOR THE CANTEEN** – We sell souvenirs, clothing and snacks in the Canteen. Soft drinks are \$1 each. The soft drink vending machine accepts coins and \$1 and \$5 bills.
- **PACK OLD CLOTHES & SHOES** – Pack old clothes and shoes that can get dirty. Pack sandals or shoes that you don't mind getting wet and will dry quickly.
- **PLAN TO WEAR SHOES OR SANDALS** – Only good sturdy sandals with a heel strap are allowed. To prevent injury, wear shoes that will stay on your feet.
- **PACK SWIMWEAR ON TOP** – Campers will be checked for swim ability after arrival on Sunday, so their swimwear may be the first thing they need.
- **FOLLOW THE DRESS CODE** – Camp Leaders will enforce the Code of Conduct and the Dress Code.

Valuables at camp

Please do not allow children to take expensive or valuable items or electronics to camp. Your camper should keep money and valuables with them at all times. If money or valuables are left in the cabin, even if they are hidden, they can be found and stolen.

Lost and Found

We will attempt to return items while your child is still at camp. Remind your child to be responsible for their own property. Please label all items with a permanent marker for easy identification.

Call immediately if you discover that your child's belongings are missing. The more time that passes, the less likely it will be found. We are not responsible for property that is lost, stolen, damaged or left behind.

OPTIONAL SUPPLIES FOR CHAPERONES

Some adults are comfortable traveling light and others aren't. Experienced chaperones can anticipate camp but people new to this may not, so here is a big list of some of the items that adult leaders may want to include in their luggage.

- Lawn chair
- Bug spray
- Sunscreen
- Air freshener
- Small cooler (we have ice available in the Dining Hall)
- Hats
- Sunglasses
- Book to read
- Flip flops for the shower
- Alarm clock
- Electronic device cords and wall adapter (for computer, iPod, iPad, Kindle, cell phone, etc.)
- Batteries
- Disposable camera
- Flashlight
- Personal fan
- Extension cord
- Writing pen or Sharpie
- Variety of shoes and sandals
- Extra towels
- Snacks
- Beach towels
- Cash or checks for souvenirs, snacks and drinks. (We aren't set up to take credit cards.)

RULES AT SUMMER CAMP

These rules are worded positively. We believe positive statements help us advance a vision for what we want to happen.

We expect campers to show a great deal of responsibility for themselves, their behavior and their property. Both emotional and physical aggression is cause for discipline. Campers may not exert force against anyone or harm them nor may they take or damage anyone's property including the 4-H center's property.

1. Respect everyone – their body, their space, their property and their emotions.
2. Respect other living creatures including plants, snakes and other wildlife.
3. You may pick up rocks and look at them, then place them back on the ground.
4. Wear shoes or sandals at all times except when swimming in the pool or showering.
5. Sleep on pillows rather than fight with them.
6. No food is allowed in the sleeping quarters. Food inside the cabin attracts ants and mice.
7. Be waiting at the Dining Hall when the KP bell rings if it's your turn to be on KP.
8. Stay within the boundaries of the 4-H center.
9. When the bell rings, hurry to where you are expected to be.
10. Leave chewing gum at home.
11. Only go into your own cabin rather than other people's cabins.
12. Keep your money with you rather than leaving it in your cabin.
13. Throw all trash in trashcans including tiny pieces torn from candy bar wrappers.
14. Recycle cans.
15. Dress modestly.
16. Leave electronic devices at home.
17. Coffee served in the dining hall is for adults only.

WHAT TO EXPECT

It's natural to be anxious about leaving home, adopting new routines, and meeting new friends. To minimize anxiety, here is some information to help you and your child know what to expect.

Expect dormitory-style lodging

Most of our cabins are a single large room of bunk beds. Everyone sleeps in bunk beds and each camper has their own bed. Campers compete for the cleanest cabin.

Expect campers to serve on KP (Kitchen Patrol)

KP is where campers are asked to set and clear the tables, and sweep the dining room. A Counselor leads campers in KP.

Expect great food!

We serve three meals per day cafeteria style. Please encourage your child to eat our meals to keep their energy up and maintain good health.

Expect special service for special diets

If campers have food allergies, observe religious dietary restrictions or have other special dietary needs, let the Camp Leaders know. We are happy to accommodate any dietary restrictions.

Expect campers to drink lots of water

Please stress the importance of drinking water to campers. The weather will be hot and we will be outside all day. Headaches, stomach aches and lack of energy are typically a sign of dehydration.

Expect campers to behave

Each camper signs the 4-H Code of Conduct. Campers should understand the rules. Failure to adhere to the rules will result in disciplinary action.

Expect chaperones to discipline appropriately

Georgia 4-H policy states that no corporal or physical punishment is allowed. We will correct minor misbehavior by having a child take an immediate time out.

Expect all camp program expenses to be covered

There are no additional or optional activities that cost extra money. Only snacks and souvenirs cost extra.

If you need to call the 4-H center, expect to talk to a staff member rather than your child

A camper's personal growth at camp is made possible by the time of extended independence that camp provides. To facilitate this growth, phone calls for campers are limited to a family emergency. Even then, expect to speak to a staff member first to coordinate follow-up phone calls with Camp Leaders to arrange a phone call with your child.

Expect to leave a voicemail when calling after hours

We check voicemail in the morning, after lunch and in the evenings before going home for the night. We will return calls or pick up the phone if it rings after hours if we are in the office. While the office phone is consistently covered during office hours, no one monitors the phone overnight.

Expect county leaders to call you if there is a need

An adult leader will call you if there are any concerns during camp such as:

NON-DISCIPLINARY CONCERNS

- Luggage or personal items that are missing, lost, potentially stolen or left behind (parents have been known to drive off with sleeping bags still in the car!)
- An emergency or injury that results in a visit to the doctor or emergency room
- Serious illness that could result in a visit to a doctor
- Severe cases of homesickness that result in physical illness or an uncooperative camper

DISCIPLINE

- Refusal to comply with the Georgia 4-H Code of Conduct
- Behavior that endangers other campers or staff
- A persistent pattern of recurring misbehavior
- Physical, verbal or psychological bullying
- Instigating social drama and interpersonal conflict
- Sexually explicit or suggestive language or behavior

It is rare to send a child home from camp for misbehavior, but it does happen. We will work with you to help your child be a successful camper.

Expect to pay for damage to the facility

The Camp Leaders will hold you responsible for intentional damage to equipment and facilities caused by a misbehaving child.

Also, occasionally, children cause minor unintentional damage for which you are responsible even though the damage was an accident. We will work with you to address incidents that result in damage fees whether they are intentional or unintentional.

Expect campers to smell springtime fresh on Friday morning

Well, probably not! Please tell your child that to shower a few times during the week of camp. Swimming in the pool does not count as a bath.

ENCOURAGING YOUR CHILD TO BE A HAPPY CAMPER

Setting an expectation in your home well before camp starts that your child will be a “happy camper” is the first step in preventing your child from being overwhelmed by missing home.

Expect campers to be overjoyed to be back home... when camp is over!

Be very intentional about the topic of missing home. Make positive comments.

For example, if I say “Don’t stand” the idea of “stand” is what a child hears even though that’s exactly the opposite of what I want. But if I say, “Please sit”, the idea I intend to communicate is the one that is expressed: Sit. It is more effective to express positive ideas.

The same is true of a parent talking to a child about missing home. Children will miss home some. That’s normal. However, to help your child handle feelings of missing home in a mature fashion, make positive comments about the great experience they will have at camp. Your comments greatly influence your child’s attitude. Therefore, use positive words and be intentional about how you discuss being at camp.

Expect campers to work through their feelings while at camp

By pushing through feelings of missing home, campers learn a life skill and become more mature, confident and independent. They don’t have to do that all alone: The camp leaders, chaperones and Fortson’s Summer Camp Counselors are trained to handle these situations in constructive and loving ways. Counselors work to help campers overcome being overwhelmed by missing home by encouraging them to accept the feeling of missing family, friends and pets while continuing to make the most of being at camp.

WRITING CAMPERS IS A GREAT IDEA – Campers look forward to hearing from you while at camp. When writing, ask campers about camp and encourage them to be enthusiastic about the experience away from home. Be encouraging and fun. Use positive words in your sentences.

STRATEGIES TO HELP YOUR CHILD WORK THROUGH HOMESICKNESS

- Reach an agreement with your child ahead of time to honor Fortson’s no-phone-call policy.
- Don’t bribe. Linking a successful stay at camp to a material object sends the wrong message.
- Pack a personal item from home that promotes positive feelings of familiarity.
- Be confident about encouraging your child to stay at camp. For many children, camp is a first step toward independence and plays an important role in their growth and development.

HOMESICK CAMPERS HAVE TO PARTICIPATE IN PLANNED ACTIVITIES – Campers quickly get into the camp routine and don’t have much free time. Campers aren’t allowed to take naps during the day and everyone is expected to be present for activities... even if they are missing home! Homesickness can lead to discipline problems for children who refuse to cooperate because they want to be sent home.

CALLING HOME IS THE LAST RESORT – If a camper is missing home so much that they are miserable, an adult leader will call you. If you agree to allow your child to call home, a time will be set to do so. Allowing the camper to call home usually makes matters worse, so that is not the first thing we’ll do. If you talk to your child, offer calm reassurance and put the short time frame of camp into perspective. Avoid the temptation to agree to come pick up your child early.

STEPS TO PREPARING YOURSELF & YOUR CHILD FOR CAMP

1. What to say about camp months and weeks ahead of time

- Express excitement to your child about the fact that they are going to camp. Worrying aloud about being lonely may set the stage for homesickness.
- Say sincere positive things about summer camp, 4-H and the adults involved.
- Say that you know that events will be fun and safe to make your child feel secure about camp.
- Talk about the positive opportunity to experience camp.
- Tell your child that you look forward to him or her being back home at the end of the week but that you hope they have a good time at camp.
- Discuss expected camp activities in detail, including departure for camp and arrival back at home at the end of the week.
- Rather than camp being a completely separated experience, talk about the week in the context of your family's life. Even though you aren't together for camp, it is part of what you are doing to give your child a great childhood.
- If you have gone to camp, call it a tradition in your family. If not, call it a new tradition!
- Encourage children by explaining that missing home is okay but that it shouldn't stop them from participating in activities and meeting new people.
- Tell your child that many campers are a little anxious about camp at first and that they have to work at being at camp with a positive attitude.

2. One week before camp

- Be enthusiastic about camp. Again, say positive things about the opportunity to go to camp.
- Label each item your camper will take to camp and work with them to pack appropriate clothing.
- Start packing several days ahead of time.
- Work with your pharmacist to get original containers for medications. Send current and marked bottles of meds. Expired, unmarked or hand-written labels on prescription medication bottles are not allowed.
- Double check the dates, times and location of drop-off and pick-up.
- Make sure you have the forms you need to complete.

3. The night before

- Make sure your child gets a good night's sleep at home.
- Make a final check of your child's luggage.
- Make sure you have your child's paperwork filled out.
- To help your child have a positive attitude, make more positive comments about camp.

4. On Sunday

- Take forms with you to check-in if you haven't already turned them in.
- Plan to give the camp leader your child's medication.
- Arrive at the check-in location ahead of time.

5. Plan to pick up on time on Friday

- Double check the pick-up time and location for Friday.
- Be ready to pick-up a chatty kid excited about telling you all about camp!

MEALS AND ACCOMMODATIONS

Tell campers about cabins

Please encourage your child to shower, use deodorant, change clothing daily and not wear wet clothes all day. Also, they need to go to bed and sleep at scheduled times. Otherwise, they will not feel like participating in daytime activities. There are no naps in the schedule and everyone is expected to be present for all activities.

CABINS – Campers, Teen Leaders and chaperones stay in cabins with a large room of bunk beds. Everyone sleeps in bunk beds and all campers have their own bed.

Cleaning and housekeeping

Campers are expected to clean the cabin each morning, including making their beds, putting away clothing and sweeping the cabin. They will also participate in KP duty with other campers at least once during the week. While on KP, they set and clear the tables, and sweep the dining area.

Food service

MENUS – Fortson serves three meals per day cafeteria style.

SPECIAL DIETS – If your child is allergic to any foods or requires a special diet, arrangements can be made but please let the camp leader know immediately so we can communicate your child's needs to the camp.

EATING HEALTHY – Talk with your child about the importance of eating meals rather than junk food. Eating meals keeps you healthy but eating too much junk food can lead to feeling sick.

AVOIDING DEHYDRATION – Stress to your child the importance of drinking lots of water. It will be hot and we will be outside all day. It is easy for your child to become dehydrated and get a headache or feel ill if they are not properly hydrated.

SENDING AND RECEIVING MAIL

Mail sent to campers during camp

Parents, friends and loved ones may send letters during the week of camp to Fortson's address under the camper's name and county like this:

Camper's name

Camper's county

Fortson 4-H Center

999 Fortson Rd

Hampton, GA 30223

Multiple pieces of mail

If you send multiple letters, please number them or label them with the day of the week that you would like for us to give them to your child.

Send mail early

Please put letters in the mail the week before camp starts.

What to send

Send letters, cards, toys or little gifts and, of course, lots of love. However, please do not send food. Food and candy are not allowed in the cabins.

Write encouraging letters

- If you choose to send a letter or email to your child while they are at camp, ask about camp activities, counselors, special programs and friends.
- Set a positive and encouraging tone in your letter.
- Express your confidence in the camper's maturity and ability to be away from home.
- Tell them that the adults and counselors are there to assist them if they should need anything.

Writing counselors after camp

Youth may write counselors after camp. Campers may send letters to Fortson's address listed above under a counselor's name.

INFORMATION ABOUT CHAPERONES & 4-H CENTER STAFF

Chaperones & supervision of campers

Children are well supervised: In the cabins, in classes, at mealtime, during recreation times and all the times in between. Supervision is always provided by University of Georgia Extension 4-H staff and volunteers serving as chaperones. Chaperones staying overnight have been screened by a formal background investigation, trained by UGA Extension staff and have fulfilled requirements to be Certified Georgia 4-H Overnight Chaperones.

Matching schedules for a camper and parent chaperone

GET IN LINE TOGETHER – Parents attending camp as chaperones do not have to be in the same groups or have the same schedule as their child. However, to be in the same Family Group with a particular child, adults should tell us that they want that.

CAMPER CARE-GIVER – If a parent or other chaperone needs to be with a child all day every day for any reason, please notify us ahead of time and we'll make sure that the child and adult have exactly matching assignments and schedules.

Tour of camp and check-in for adults

All adults from the county staying overnight must go on the tour with the campers upon arrival and then check in to get their nametag.

It is more important to go on the tour than it is to start unloading luggage. That can wait until after adults in charge of luggage have gone on the tour and checked in. All adults check in at the Dining Hall so that the 4-H center will have a record of everyone in attendance and a correct meal count.

4-H summer camp counselors

Counselors are screened by a formal background investigation, trained by 4-H staff at the 4-H center and certified to work with youth by the Georgia 4-H Program. They have all completed First Aid and CPR training and lifeguard training. In addition, they have extensive training by certified instructors in the use of the safety equipment used for the high-ropes elements.

Other 4-H center staff members

Campers typically will get to know other members of the 4-H center staff. Counselors will instruct campers in how to complete their duties when serving on KP and will interact with campers in the dining hall. The Center Director and Program Coordinator may also be around during some programs. All full-time and part-time staff members at the 4-H center have passed a background investigation and most have worked at the center for many years.

EMERGENCY INFORMATION

Contact information

In the case of a family emergency, please call our main number: 770-946-3276.

Medication at camp

PRESCRIPTION MEDS – If your child is taking prescription medication during camp, complete a Medication Summary form provided on our website, which describes the medication, storage procedures, time and amount of dose. It's very important that we know if your child takes prescription medication for allergies, ADD, ADHD, asthma or anything else. These medications affect behavior and we want to make sure they get their medication on time daily.

OTC MEDS – The 4-H office has to have approval to give your child over-the-counter medication as well as prescription medication, so OTC medication needs to be on the Medication Summary as well.

Insurance information

Complete the Medical Information and Release Form and a 4-H Code of Conduct Form. In case of an emergency, your child will be taken to an appropriate doctor or hospital. A person from your county will talk to you before taking your child to a doctor. In an emergency, you will be notified if your child is taken to the hospital.

If parents need to call Fortson,

Expect to:

- Have messages delivered on the same day.
- Leave a voice mail when calling after business hours.
- Keep a child's cell phone at home.

The 4-H center location

Fortson 4-H Center is located behind the Atlanta Motor Speedway in Hampton, GA.

ACTIVITIES AT CAMP

General camp program activities

NIGHT RECREATION – Many activities are available during Night Rec including:

- *Canteen* – Campers can purchase souvenirs and snacks.
- *Soft drinks* – The soft drink vending machine is available 24-hours a day.
- *Outdoor sports* – Basketballs, volleyballs, and footballs are available.
- *Board games* – A selection of popular board games is available during Night Rec.

WET GAMES – A hot afternoon, a bunch of crazy games and lots of fun and water.

MILK RUN – Counselors end the day with an overview of the day and what to expect the following day. The counselors give inspiration quotes and talk about fitting in and working as a team. Camper mail is delivered during this time.

SWIMMING – Swim in our pool!

Color Crew Rotations (All campers have the opportunity to take all classes offered. Note that this is a representative list of classes. The final list has not been determined.)

LOW ROPES CHALLENGE COURSE – These are challenges designed to turn a group of kids into a thinking team. The low-ropes course has structures designed and built for the purpose of developing a team into an efficient and trusting group.

ARCHERY – An introduction to archery. Learn about the gear, shooting techniques and following competition-style commands. Campers have many opportunities to shoot bows and arrows during the class.

HERPETOLOGY – Students get the opportunity to handle, observe and learn about reptiles and amphibians. Characteristics and adaptations of snakes, turtles, lizards, frogs and more will be discussed. Many of the misconceptions about these beneficial, but often misunderstood, animals will also be dispelled.

ENTOMOLOGY – Students will develop a better understanding of insects through collection, classification and observation. During this 2-hour class, students will use collection devices and explore the insect life at Fortson. Concepts learned will be basic insect anatomy and the important role insects play in a healthy ecosystem.

CANOE – Paddle around our pond while learning proper strokes, parts of a canoe, and teamwork.

FARM TO PLATE - Students will learn healthy lifestyle choices. Students will also see farm animals during this class and learn about the food they provide for us. The class focuses on how food gets from the farm to the plate - the process it goes through to get there. Students will be able to collect and candle eggs, milk a goat, plant a seed, harvest fruit and vegetables and use them in a smoothie they can drink

POND ECOLOGY – A lot more than just water. Spend time at our pond and explore the wildlife habitat in the water. Campers will have the opportunity to catch small critters with dip nets.

CLIMBING WALL – Wearing a harness attached to a rope and belay system, campers face the daunting challenge of climbing a 40-foot wooden wall with nothing to hold on to but tiny, rocky handholds.

ZIP-LINE – Climb the stairs. Jump. Zip! It's easy. Campers wearing a harness attached to a belay system are transferred to the Zip-line by a counselor stationed on a platform at the top of the pole.

SPORTS AND RECREATION – While some campers are participating in the high-ropes challenges, others will be waiting. Instead of just sitting there, they will have the opportunity to participate in indoor and outdoor sports and recreation activities lead by one of our summer camp counselors.