Camp Chanco

Typical Parent Questions and Answers

Jim Sitzler, Camp Director

Q: Is my child too young to go to a sleep away camp?
A: It depends on your child's personality and confidence level. Ask the child if they think they're ready. Ask the child's teacher. Note whether your child is comfortable having a sleepover away from you at a friend's house or a grandparent's home. You know your camper best. Another great test to see if your child is ready to go to camp is to bring them to the Spring Thaw Camp Open House at Chanco on **Sunday, April 18th from 1-5pm (free) and/or the Camp Open House and Spring Fling on Saturday May 1st from 9 am – 5 pm (free to attend; $3 per person for lunch).** Come introduce your child to camp and take a tour of the grounds. Please refer to chanco.org for more information or call 1-888-7CHANCO to make an individual appointment to visit the camp.

Q: What certifications do the summer staff that will be interacting with my child have?

A: The majority of our counseling staff is college students who were campers themselves once. The administrative staff is also comprised of several teachers who spend their summer working for Chanco. The Out Trip Coordinator, Justin Young, works for Chesapeake Public Schools and his wife, Julie Young, who has her Master's degree in Education and teaches 5th grade will be working this summer as Administrative staff. All counseling staff have certifications in the areas that they are responsible to instruct. Every staff member is first aid and CPR certified. Chanco is a certified American Camp Association (ACA) member in good standing and follows all of the national guidelines and policies. A Virginia State Police background check is done on every employee including kitchen staff and administrative staff each year. The standard ratio of staff to campers is one staff to six campers. The counselors stay in their own cabin in the campsite just feet away from the campers' cabins. You are welcome to visit Chanco's website at chanco.org to see in detail the staffing requirements and the ACA website at acavirginiascamps.org for their standards on summer staffing.

Q: Can friends stay together in campsites or cabins?

A: Yes, simply make a note on your application mentioning the other camper's name and age. Camp is about both being with old friends and making new friends. Many children do come not knowing anyone, however through the camp program and trained staff, they will leave having made many new friends.

Q: What does my child need to pack to go to camp?

A: A detailed "what to bring" sheet is sent to parents after registration is received. Please keep in mind that camp can be messy (food, arts and crafts, river water etc.) and do not pack your child's best outfits or bathing suits. Also, it is highly recommended that you label ALL of your child's belongings with their name and phone number. Campers may lose their belongings or, in a cabin

of six campers, a camper's belongings may mistakenly end up in another's trunk. If you have the clothing labeled with the camper's name and phone number, it is much easier to get clothing back where it belongs! You may use a sharpie marker to do this or there are easy iron-on labels available. One website that sells this type of label is www.irononmdlabels.com.

Q: What contact can I have with my child while he/she is at camp?

A: There are many ways to stay in touch with your camper. We give postal mail out every day at lunch, including care packages. Please know that campers have to sing for their mail when they receive three letters or a care package in one day. This is really fun and no child sings alone! There are usually at least ten children up front singing for mail and having fun daily! Chanco uses an Internet company named BunkNotes which enables parents to send one way emails to their camper. Pictures of campers are posted in the photo album section of our camp website daily. Through these photos, parents can see their kids having fun and also see firsthand all the various activities their child is enjoying while at camp.

Q: Can I call my child while at camp?

A: Practically all overnight camps choose not to encourage direct contact between campers and their parents during the camp session. Summer camp is a time to learn to be self sufficient, independent and self-reliant. Camp is a time to focus on having fun and making friends away from home. Child psychologists recommend that parents need to step back, allow their child to develop self-reliance away from home, and trust the camp they have chosen to provide positive care and support. If there is any problem, the parents are called promptly.

Q: How can I help to prevent homesickness?

Involve your camper in the camp decisions such as what he/she is packing (i.e. shoes, favorite blanket, favorite stuffed animal etc.). Make it very clear to your camper when he/she is leaving and when he/she is coming home. Allow your child to spend a weekend away at a friend's house or a grandparent's house before camp. Make it as easy as possible for your camper to write you (i.e. self addressed, stamped postcards). Mail your camper a letter before he/she leaves for camp. He/she will have a letter waiting from you on the first day! Packages are also LOVED by campers. Mail is a big deal at camp! Finally, bring your camper to a Camp Open House at Chanco in the spring (see first question for the details on this). The Open House is a great time to introduce your camper to some of the staff, the Camp Director, and to see where he/she will be sleeping, eating and having fun!

Q: What about my child's medical needs and medication while at camp?

A: Chanco employs full time medical personnel to oversee all health concerns and allergies. 24 hours a day, Chanco will have a staff member who holds a current EMT or higher certification.

Counseling staff are also trained in CPR and First Aid. The camp has a Risk Management Plan and the entire program is approved by a Board Certified MD. Medications are given up to 4 times a day and on an as needed basis. All medications must be in their original containers and turned into our medical staff upon arrival. The Surry Volunteer Rescue Squad EMTs and the Volunteer Fire Station are a 10 minute drive from camp. Again, Chanco's medical program is approved by the American Camp Association and is required to adhere to national medical standards. After 41 years of providing our summer camping program, Chanco knows that kids do have accidents, but we have developed the best system to keep our campers happy and healthy!

Q: Is the food good?

A: Chanco has employed a private dining service, FCG Dining Services, to provide the meals for our campers. They follow the ACA guidelines on healthy menus. The meals vary and are prepared in our commercial kitchen which is inspected by the Health Department regularly. Most meals are served in our air conditioned dinning hall, however some days there are special theme meals like a camp site cookout or a Luau on the beach! Vegetarian meals are available at every meal. Peanut butter or Peanut butter and jelly sandwiches are also available at lunch and dinner if a camper doesn't care for that particular meal. After dinner most nights, the Canteen is open so kids can get a little something sweet to snack on in the evening if they wish.

Q: Will Chanco accept campers who have food or other allergies?

A: Yes, every summer Chanco has several campers with various allergies including, but not limited to allergies to gluten, peanuts and peanut products, wheat germ and lactose intolerant campers. These allergies are recorded on the medical form turned in with the camper registration and the campsite counselors, the kitchen staff and any medical personnel are informed of the allergies. The kitchen staff will prepare food for these campers accordingly.

Q: What kind of religious experiences will my child have?

A: Chanco has its own brand of spirituality within its community life and is not a Bible camp. There are fun songs of prayer before each meal and evening prayer during chalet meetings before bedtime. On Sunday there is an outdoor service on the bluff overlooking the James River facilitated by a clergy member. Chanco also employs a full time Chaplain who facilitates a workshop involving small group discussion about the meaning of God and spirituality. Many kids are inspired by the natural beauty that surrounds them everywhere they look. A sunset on the James River, a night of stories by a golden camp fire, or a glimpse of a deer in the woods can have a peaceful and profound impact on anyone who spends time here at Chanco. The Christian experience is age appropriate and understands that campers are from many different religious backgrounds and varied denominations. Every effort is made to make all campers feel welcome, safe, and valuable members of their campsite and camp community.

Q: What is the capital improvement fee and why was that started this year?

A: The capital improvement fee is an annual fee per family (not per camper) that will be deposited to an endowed fund for camp renovations, maintenance, and improvements. For example, the dining hall needs to be enlarged and needs a new roof. Another example is the bathhouses which need re-painting and re-surfacing. Periodically, our boats on the riverfront need repair and/or replacement. This fund will help subsidize these types of improvements.

Q: What do I do on the first day and last day of camp?

A: This will be included your registration information. **Drop off is Sunday between 1 and 3 pm.** The staff will meet you at the top of the driveway and direct you where to park and where registration is taking place. There will be counseling staff to help you take your child's belongings out of the car and put it with the correct campsite at a clearly marked luggage drop off station. During registration you will need to turn in any remaining paperwork. Final payment for sessions should be made two weeks in advance of the session start date. You will be asked to identify who will be picking up your child at the end of the session to give us permission to release your child to their supervision (if different from yourself). Medical information will be reviewed by our medical staff privately with you so he/she can fully understand any important information pertaining to your child. After moving through registration, the last thing to do is meet your child's counselor and visit the camp store, the Canteen, for a great T-shirt. Pick up is always on a Friday and occurs at 9:00am-12:00pm. Visit the Canteen to collect any remaining balance on your child's account, and get a last minute snack for the trip home. Campers will only be released to the person named by the family member dropping them off. If pick up arrangements change during the course of the session, please call the office to notify us of the change. If there is an emergency during the camp session and you need to contact your child, call the camp office and Chanco staff will be ready to assist you.

We look forward to seeing you at Chanco on the James, Where Kids Come for Summer Fun!

In the Chanco Spirit,

Jim SitzlerCamp Director

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1-888-7CHANCO

Inclusion statement

Camp Chanco welcomes all campers & staff regardless of sex, race, religious creed, color, or national origin.