



*Texas 4-H
Conference Center*

Youth Programs

PARENT HANDBOOK

“To make the best better”

All parent information is also located on our website
in printable format
under Camps, Parent Handbook.

<http://texas4hcenter.tamu.edu>

The members of Texas A&M AgriLife will provide equal opportunities in programs and activities, education, and employment to all persons regardless of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, age, disability, genetic information, veteran status, sexual orientation, or gender identity and will strive to achieve full and equal employment opportunity throughout Texas A&M AgriLife.

Brownwood, Texas

PARENT HANDBOOK

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Dear Parents:

Welcome to the Texas 4-H Conference Center! We know there are many choices when it comes to summer camp, and we thank you for choosing to send your child(ren) to the 4-H Conference Center.

PLEASE READ THIS BOOKLET! KEEP FOR FUTURE REFERENCE.

This booklet will help you understand the procedures and policies regarding your child's stay at the 4-H Conference Center. A careful reading will answer many questions and help you prepare your child for camp. Together, we can work to give your camper a positive growing experience that will last a lifetime.

IMPORTANT POINTS

To save you time and frustration, please remember:

1. All registrations require full payment thirty (30) days before their starting date of the session, unless noted otherwise.
2. Refunds will be issued if written cancellation is received within thirty (30) days of the start of the camp session; Online registration for summer camps requires a \$50 non-refundable deposit. Registrations made by April 15 are at an "early" rate, with the final balances being due thirty (30) days prior to start of camp session. If any camp or retreat registration is canceled ten (10) or more days before the start of camp/retreat, registration will be refunded minus a \$50 cancellation fee. No refunds will be given if registrations are canceled less than 10 days out.
3. Make sure to read and sign the required release forms and bring them to camp, DO NOT MAIL. Adults serving as chaperones must also complete the release forms.
4. All medications, prescription and non-prescription, must be in the original container with dosage information listed on the Health Statement, and given to the Camp Nurse upon arrival. The Camp Nurse will dispense all medications

Please review the above items. If you have any additional concerns, please feel free to contact our Program Director. Again, welcome to YOUR Texas 4-H Conference Center. We look forward to providing your child with a safe and happy outdoor experience.

5600 FM 3021, Brownwood, TX 76801 * phone: 325-784-5482
e-mail: texas4-hcenter@ag.tamu.edu web: <http://texas4hcenter.tamu.edu>

CAMPER INFORMATION and HEALTH TOPICS

Release Forms

All persons (including Adult Chaperones) participating in any activities at the Texas 4-H Conference Center must complete the Release Forms. *If registering online through Active Network, **only the Health Statement, and Insurance** needs to be brought to camp on the day of arrival. All other forms are completed as part of the online registration system. All necessary forms will be sent along with the camp welcome email.

The completed forms are to be brought to the 4-H Conference Center and presented at Registration. The forms WILL NOT be returned to the camper or to anyone else. The forms are kept on file at the 4-H Conference Center. If you or anyone needs a copy (example, camper riding with someone other than the parent) please make a copy before coming to camp.

Health and Safety

The health and safety of campers is our number one priority. During Summer Camps, a camp nurse is on duty twenty-four hours a day and is responsible for the daily health needs of campers, including dispensing of medication. At registration on opening day of any camp, all medications including over the counter and as needed medications are to be given to the Camp Nurse, along with instructions. All medications **MUST BE IN THE ORIGINAL CONTAINER and LABELED WITH THE CHILD'S NAME**. Prescriptions must be in the original container with the child's full name, date, physicians name and complete directions written in English. ALL medications are stored in a locked room and given under the camp nurse's supervision.

Certain over-the-counter medications are available at camp and are administered by the Camp Nurse. Please mark on the Release Forms those medications that may be given to your child as symptoms warrant. You are advised to send only the amount that would be needed during their camp session, in the event the child forgets to return to the Nurse's office at the end of camp to retrieve remaining medications.

Emergencies

Parents will be notified in the event of serious camper illness, injury, or emergency. If you need to contact your child in an emergency, call the 4-H Conference Center Office at (325) 784-5482 during business hours. In the evenings the phone is answered by the Health Office. If you are still unable to reach someone, please contact Melvin Atkinson at (757) 416-8788.

Insurance and Medical Expenses

As parent/guardian you are responsible for all medical costs incurred by your child while they are participating in the Texas 4-H Conference Center youth programs.

Updated 9/18/23.

Special Accommodations

The 4-H Conference Center strives to meet every individual need to the best of our ability. Please indicate any special accommodation needs on the registration form. Food allergies or special food preparation, especially, should be noted so that other food sources can be prepared. If you have specific concerns in this area, please call (325)-784-5482.

Dorm assignments are done by age. We understand that your camper wants to bring friends and room with them during camp. For the 2024-2025 camping season we will not be accepting roommate requests. This is not to deter campers from bringing friends, but to encourage the making of NEW friends at camp.

Dress During Camp

The 4-H Conference Center encourages parents to help us in having all youth adhere to the dress code and policies.

Items not allowed: tops with spaghetti straps, halter type tops, shirts that reveal the midriff, excessively loose-fitting pants or jeans, short shorts, or skirts, clothing advertising or referencing alcohol, drugs, violence or having sexual content.

Two-piece swimsuits are allowed but should adequately cover all body parts.

Shoes: Campers are to wear athletic, tennis type shoes or strap type sandals to all camp activities. Campers are encouraged to NOT wear flip-flops or other type of backless sandals anytime other than when they are in the dorms. Campers are advised to bring lake shoes that are closed toe and have a back or at least strap onto the foot (Teva style) and can be worn into the lake. These shoes may become wet and/or muddy. Closed toe shoes are also required for Challenge Course activities, archery, and rifle.

Staff may instruct a youth to return to their dorm and change their clothing if any items are not within the guidelines or appropriate for the activity.

Practical Jokes and Pranks

The 4-H Conference Center has a no tolerance policy on practical jokes and pranks during camp. While these may be fun, often one or just a few youths are singled out and emotional or physical damage can occur. So, please, leave the shaving cream, water balloons, and other items for pranking at home.

T-Shirt Shoppe

The 4-H Conference Center does have a gift shop where campers can purchase items such as 4-H pens, pencils, and other inexpensive trinkets. Also, there are several t-shirts, sweatshirts, flip flops, etc. available. Prices range from \$.50 to \$40.00 with the average price of a T-shirt being \$25.00.

Rather than campers keeping the money in the dorms, parents are encouraged to deposit their child's gift shop money during registration. The money will be kept in an envelope, labeled with the camper's name and dorm number, in the T-Shirt Shoppe. During those times the shop is open the camper simply selects their items for purchase and the appropriate amount of money is taken from the envelope. At the conclusion of camp, please return to the T-Shirt Shoppe for any unspent money. The shop is usually open during camp dismissal.

Mail

Campers enjoy receiving mail, even during a three-day camp! Please send mail to:

For the USPS, United States Postal Service, use the following address:

Camper's Name and Camp Session (County Camp, Prime Time, Horizons, etc.)
Texas 4-H Conference Center
5600 FM 3021
Brownwood, TX 76801

The above address will also work for UPS or Fed EX. Again, please note packages are delivered daily, but usually not until after 2:00 p.m. each day. To ensure they receive their mail, we encourage you to send the mail two weeks in advance.

If you desire your camper to write home while at camp, please prepare them with self-addressed, stamped post cards or envelopes.

SUMMER CAMP LIFE

When do I bring my child(ren) to camp?

Please refer to our pre-camp email for arrival times and other notes. Please keep in mind that several of our camp sessions run back-to-back and staff needs time to close out one camp and prepare for the next. Please **DO NOT** arrive earlier than listed. Check-in will be in our administration building (the one with the giant clover) with our camp nurse and summer staff. The camp nurse will need the participant's and chaperone's health history form, medication form (if applicable), and insurance form. After we have all the necessary paperwork, we will let you know what dorm your camper is staying in. You will then drive around the back of the dorms to drop off your camper and their luggage. Summer Staff will be around back to help.

PETS ARE NOT ALLOWED, except service animals. Please leave pets at home, as it will be too hot to leave them unattended in your vehicle.

When do I pick up my camper(s)?

Please refer to our pre-camp email for pick-up times. Pick-up will be in the administration building as well. Parents are to check-in with the camp nurse to pick up any medications and be verified as authorized to pick up the participant. We will be using your required form's section of authorized people to pick up the participants to ensure safety so please be sure to fill out this section in your forms. After you have everything, you may join the camp in the auditorium for closing ceremony if you are early. If we have already dismissed everyone to their dorms, you may drive around the back of the dorms to pick up your kid(s).

Homesickness

Homesickness is usually a result of the discomfort of being in strange surroundings. The Camp Staff is trained to deal with homesickness by providing extra patience and attention and by keeping the camper active. Most campers quickly recover because they are having so much fun and meeting new people. If there is a serious problem, you will be called.

What are the Top 5 things I can do to help prepare for Camp? (Excerpt from a Summer Camp Handbook by Dr. Chris Thurber. Available at bookstores.)

1. Do not make a pick-up deal.

Promising "If you feel homesick, I'll come and get you" undermines children's confidence and dramatically intensifies homesickness. Instead, normalize their anxiety, talk positively about camp, and what they can expect to experience.

2. Double-check the camp's packing list.

Many seasons of experience have helped your child's camp directors refine the packing list to include all the essentials. So, if it says "no spaghetti strap tops" help them pack accordingly; "lake shoes" means shoes they can get muddy that will not upset mom. If it says, "no electronics", then leave the video games at home.

3. Spend practice time away from home.

Nothing builds confidence and teaches a child how to cope with time away from home better than time away from home. Send them to Grandma's without their pet or video games; pack like they were going to camp.

4. Label everything.

It is easy to lose things at camp where there are communal living quarters. Label everything if you want to be able to claim it, from the toothbrush and toothpaste to shoes and clothing. In the dorms, there will be lots of stuff; it is much easier to identify if it is labeled.

5. Double check the opening and closing dates and times.

Get a good start by arriving on the correct date at the correct time. Use a wall calendar in the months preceding camp to make an exciting count down to the big day.

And, based on my personal experience with many families coming to the 4-H Conference Center, know where you are going! This packet includes a map. Be sure to have it handy when you make the drive to Brownwood.

Behavioral Expectations and Guidelines

The Texas 4-H Youth Development Program recognizes that positive discipline teaches and encourages the healthy development of a child's self-esteem. The 4-H Conference Center does not allow the use of corporal or physical punishment. Instead, staff employ positive discipline techniques, which include praising, calling attention to appropriate behavior and acting as positive role models to influence and reinforce positive behavior. The staff sets limits that are developmentally appropriate and consistently enforced.

Staff will encourage and assist all children in following the camp rules. All campers will be given an orientation on the first day of camp. All questions will be answered, and the rules will be explained during this orientation.

At Camp, we train our staff on preventing, recognizing, and dealing with bullying. However, we need your help as the parent to help us ward off and correct bullying behavior and to get bullied children to speak up when they are bullied.

The following information is from Dr. Joel Haber, PhD, and his website, www.RespectU.com. Dr. Haber has 20+ years of experience in violence prevention.

What is it? Bullying is any intentional, repeated hurtful act including inflicting physical pain, name calling, exclusion, defacing property, hurtful pranks, and public humiliation. You can be part of the solution through awareness, insight, and action.

What can I do to help prepare my child for camp?

Bullying another child is a no tolerance policy at camp and while we do our best to detect and prevent bullying, children can be sneaky. Therefore, we ask that you coach your child in speaking out. Tell your child to find their counselor, Shelly Willis, Melvin Atkinson, or any of the 4-H Conference Center Staff and tell them if they are being bullied while at camp. Let them know we will do our best to help them resolve the problem. If they tell their counselors and still feel nothing is changing, then they must go to Shelly Willis or Melvin Atkinson. It is imperative

that the bullied child speaks out, preferably while at camp. Please do not hesitate to call us if your child waits until he/she returns home to speak out. Although this is not the best situation, we still want to help resolve the situation.

Cell Phones

Phone calls to or from campers are not allowed. The calls tend to defeat a sense of independence and interrupt the camp environment. They can also cause homesickness as well as unspoken hard feelings. **Please do not send cell phones with your campers. Not only are the phones distracting, but the 4-H Conference Center will not be responsible for loss or damage. Cell phones may be taken from campers and will be secured in the Administration Office. It is the camper's responsibility to pick up the phone before leaving camp. If they fail to do so, mailing is at the owner's expense.**

Help us keep the 4-H Conference Center Camps UNPLUGGED!

Camp is designed to allow your child to enjoy the true feeling of childhood. It is a time for them to build strong friendships, create lifelong memories, learn from their peers and counselors, experience nature, and all the joys of camp!

Please help us by not allowing your camper to bring the following items (or similar items) to camp:

- cell phones
- Air pods/headphones
- Mp3 players/iPods
- Video games
- Any other electronic or media devices

The items are distracting and pose the potential for being lost, broken or otherwise damaged for which the 4-H Conference Center will not be responsible. Again, to reiterate our telephone policy, phone calls to or from campers are not allowed. The calls tend to defeat a sense of independence and interrupt the camp environment. They can also cause homesickness as well as unspoken hard feelings.

Staff members are not allowed to use cell phones while on duty, unless given explicit permission due to location of an activity. Please help us keep camp a special place by keeping Camp Unplugged. Remember, **you will always be contacted by a 4-H Conference Center Staff if there is the need.** We ask for your cooperation, not to keep you secluded from your child, but to encourage their personal growth and developing a sense of independence. If you do receive a call from your child, please call the Center to let staff know so that the child's issue can be addressed. We are committed to helping improve the situation.

Emergency messages will be taken at Camp, at (325) 784-5482. Phones are answered Monday - Friday during business hours (8am-5pm). In the evenings the phone is answered by the Health Office. **If it is an emergency or needs immediate attention, please call our Program Director, Alec Kiser at (325) 716-4741 or our Center Director, Melvin Atkinson at (757)-416-8788.**

**We look forward to providing your camper with the experience of a lifetime...
UNPLUGGED!**

PACKING INFORMATION

What do I bring to camp?

Please MARK EVERY ITEM with the camper's full name. Do not bring expensive items (jewelry) to camp. Pack efficiently.

Checklist of Essential Items-you may think of others, but these are the basics!

Sheets (twin) and light blanket		Beach towel for swimming	
OR sleeping bag		Sunscreen	
Pillow		Sunglasses for outdoor wear	
Bath towel and washcloth		Cap or hat for outdoor wear	
Toiletries		Socks, underwear	
Sturdy athletic type shoes (Closed Toe)		Shirts & Shorts for activities	
Shower shoes		Sleepwear	
Lake shoes		Modest Swimsuit	
Prescription or other medication(s)		Light Jacket	
Laundry bag for dirty clothes!		Money for T-shirt Shoppe (~\$40)	
Water bottle		Rock for Texas Star ceremony*	

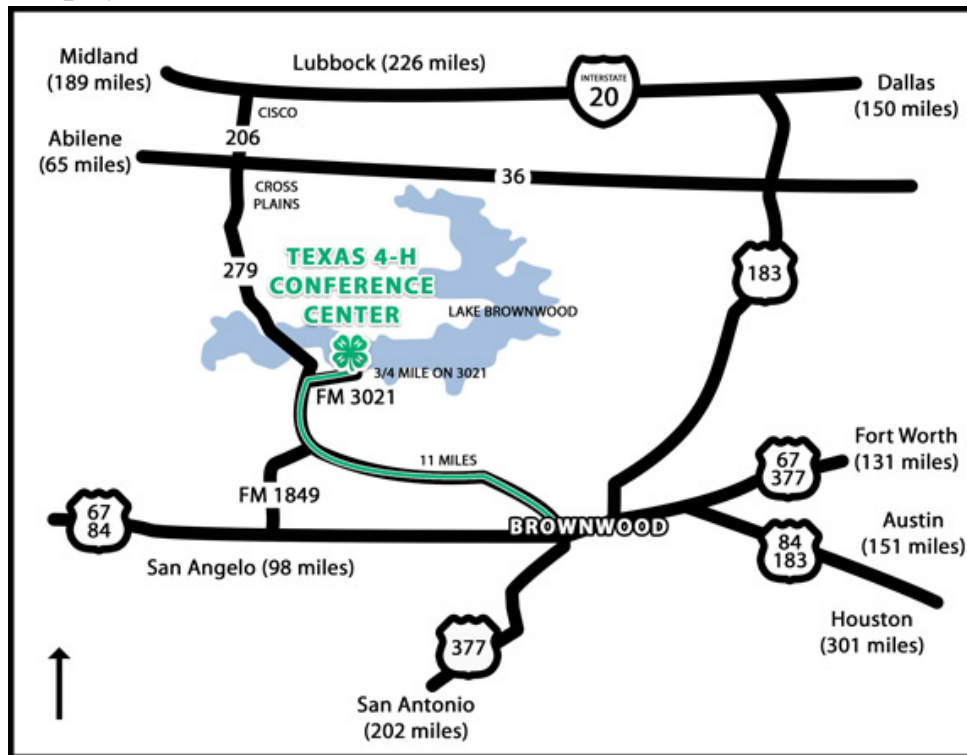
* On the final night of summer camps (weather permitting) all campers will gather at the Texas Star for the closing ceremony and to reflect on the day's activities. Campers will be allowed to place a rock from their hometown into Texas Star. This has been a 4-H Conference Center tradition since the early 70's when camp opened. Campers may paint their rocks or sign their names on it, or they may choose to leave it in its natural state. The rock size should be limited to fist-size.

Items to leave at home!

- fireworks, guns, ammunition, knives
- lots of make-up, perfumes, etc.
- candy, snacks, food
- electronic devices: cell phones, mp3 players, iPods, video games, etc.
- practical joke devices
- illegal drugs, alcohol, tobacco
- cameras (this is for legal reasons; we will be providing a photo service for all parents called Waldo where they can find pictures of their kid. More information will be in the pre-camp email)

Directions to the Texas 4-H Conference Center

physical address: 5600 FM 3021 Brownwood, TX



Directions:

- ☐ For GPS directions, plug in the following address: 5600 FM 3021, **Lake Brownwood, TX**.
- ☐ From Brownwood travel North on TX-279 11 miles. Turn right on FM Road 3021; then 3/4 mile on the left to the main gate of the Texas 4-H Center.
- ☐ From Abilene travel East on TX-36 to Cross Plains. Turn right onto TX-206. TX-206 becomes TX-279. Travel 21 miles. Turn left onto FM Road 3021; then 3/4 mile on the left to the main gate of the Texas 4-H Center.
- ☐ From Dallas/Ft. Worth travel West on Interstate 20. Exit TX-206, travel south to Cross Plains. Continue, road becomes TX-279. Travel 21 miles. Turn left onto FM Road 3021; then 3/4 mile on the left to the main gate of the Texas 4-H Center.
- ☐ From Austin travel North on US-183 to Goldthwaite. Turn left onto TX-84 West 30.5 miles. Turn left onto Early Blvd/ US-183/ US-377/ US-67/ US-84. Follow directions above from Brownwood.
- ☐ From San Antonio travel North on US-87 to Brady. In Brady at the square, turn left to go around the square then left onto US-377N. Follow US-377N 46.6 miles to Brownwood. In Brownwood turn left onto W. Austin Ave; continue onto TX-279 for 11 miles. Turn right onto FM Road 3021; then 3/4 mile on the left to the main gate of the Texas 4-H Center. From San Angelo travel North on US-67 to Santa Anna. Turn slight right onto US-67/US-84 13.8 miles (through Bangs). Turn left onto FM-1849 4 miles. Turn left onto TX-279 3 miles. Turn right onto FM Road 3021; then 3/4 mile on the left to the main gate of the Texas 4-H Center.