

Welcome to Creative Theatre Camp!

& Gymnastics Clinic

FROM THE DIRECTOR

We are thrilled to welcome your child to our camp family! Our team has been busy preparing an exciting summer filled with activities, performances, workshops, and unforgettable experiences. We can't wait to see campers walk through our doors and dive into all the fun we have planned.

Throughout the summer, campers will participate in activities centered around our core values of Caring, Respect, Honesty, and Responsibility. We believe camp provides meaningful opportunities for growth and are committed to creating a nurturing, engaging environment for every child.

The information below serves as a guide to help you prepare for Creative Theatre Camp. For complete details about our programs and policies, please refer to the Camp Parent Handbook on our website.

How will my child benefit from attending camp?

Your child will have a safe, fun, and enriching experience at camp. In addition to building theatre skills, we aim to support growth in the following areas:

- Social Skills
- Independence
- Teamwork
- Confidence
- Curiosity
- Responsibility
- Appreciation for Nature
- Problem-Solving Confidence
- Self-Esteem

LOCATION & CONTACT

Camp Cell Phone #:

862.438.1718

Camp Site Location:

First Presbyterian and Trinity Church
111 Irvington Avenue, South Orange, NJ 07079

At Creative Theatre Camp, we place special emphasis on Confidence, Teamwork, and Social Skills through intentional activities and teaching strategies.

Theatre games and improvisation encourage communication, creativity, and social connection. Working together as a cast helps campers develop teamwork while creating the magic of a performance. We are confident your child will have an amazing summer experience and gain many of the lifelong benefits that theatre provides.

Questions? Call (973) 762-4145 or email Gailmarie Green
ggreen@metroymcas.org







COMMUNICATION

- **Emails:**
  - During the summer, we will be communicating with you through email communications. This will be our main source of communication with you so please let us know if there are any changes in your contact information. If you'd like to add an additional email to our general list, please contact kcestar@metroymcas.org. We will also be sending regular updates every week during the summer.
- **BAND:**
  - For photos and general fun announcements, we are using BAND!
  - Our band invite link is here: https://band.us/n/a6aeA5K444t8I
  - Please note that only photo-approved children will have photos added to BAND.
- **In Person:**
  - Please feel free to request to speak to your child's coordinator at any time with questions or concerns. Our team will be working very hard to make every child happy and feel included. Please understand that we are trying to limit prolonged distraction with parents at drop-off and pick-up. If you feel that you need to have a longer conversation with a coordinator- kindly ask them to call you during the afternoon when they have a chance.
- **PULSE:**
  - Our summer camp programs use Pulse, a management system where you'll input essential camper information (emergency contacts, health details, etc.). You'll receive an invitation via email to create your account. This information must be completed before your child's first day at camp.

BEFORE THE FIRST DAY

- **Talk with your children about Camp.**
  - Having pleasant, positive conversations about what will happen at camp, as well as going over the daily schedule/theme for the week and talking about friends that they will see while at camp before the week begins will help your child feel more comfortable and will hopefully excite them for camp!
- **Be sure to leave plenty of time on the first day to get ready and to eat breakfast.**
- **Have a plan.**
  - Your child may become upset when you drop them off. We have found from experience that it is best for you to have a routine with your child for drop off. Tell your child that you will be back to pick them up - or tell them who will be picking them up that day. If you are struggling, please let our staff know and we will gently help your child get involved in an activity and the tears will soon disappear.
- **Have a routine.**
  - Knowing what to expect allows your child to have less anxiety about their camp day and starts your day off right too!





ALLERGY AWARE FACILITY



- Keep in mind that we are an ALLERGY AWARE FACILITY. Please make sure your child comes to camp without any nuts, nut products or peanut butter items. Staff will check the ingredients and remove any items that may contain nuts. These items will be returned at pick-up, but we appreciate any effort to eliminate these. Any item that "may contain" peanuts or tree-nuts will not be permitted.
- Please ensure that you inform us of known food allergies on the health form and discuss strategies to minimize risks with the Camp Director, so we can inform your child's counselors.
- Please provide a Physicians Care Plan and medication as needed.

PROGRESSION – CAMP THAT GROWS WITH YOUR CAMPER

We made a few changes to Creative Theatre Camp in 2025 to expand space and be able to offer our camp to more campers! Because we want the older campers to be able to focus more on their show, T3 and T4 will not be doing regular water play or swim so that we can increase theatre-related activities for them. T3 or T4 campers who would like to swim regularly may, we will just need their parent/guardian to "opt-in" in advance via email. T4 (our middle school group) now includes an overnight per session and a "fun trip" to an amusement park or similar. T1-T3 will continue to go on a trip per session that will be different than our T4/CIT group trip. We are looking forward to continue progression for each age group that keeps camp fun, engaging, and rewarding for everyone!

EXTREME WEATHER UPDATE

On extreme heat or rainy days, drop-off and pick-up remains the same. On heavy rain days, we do not perform curbside- your camper and staff will remain inside. For drop-off on heavy rain days, you will need to park legally and walk them to the door for sign-in. For pick-up, you will park legally and come to the red doors. The weather can often change quickly in the summer, so we ask that unless we communicate a change in swim, please come prepared on swim days. We try to make the best decision close to the time as we want to get in as many swim days as possible!

Weather Monitoring:
We track conditions daily using Weather.com and the guidelines in Weather Watch. Families will be notified promptly if plans need to shift.

Questions? Call (973) 762-4145 or email Gailmarie Green
ggreen@metroymcas.org





WHERE DO I DROP OFF?

CAMPSITE LOCATION:

The campsite for Creative Theatre Camp is the First Presbyterian & Trinity Church, 111 Irvington Avenue in South Orange. We tend to experience heavy traffic at curbside drop-off and pick-up on Irvington Avenue, which is not always conducive to the flow of traffic. To allow for a staggered drop-off for all children and staff prior to entry, we will be following the schedule below to minimize wait times.

Our curbside drop-off schedule will be the following:

8:00-8:30am- Creative Theatre 1 & 2 (entering K-3rd grade)

8:30-9:00am- Creative Theatre 3 & 4 (entering 4th-9th grade)

- Core Camp Program Hours (i.e. structured, scheduled hours) are from 9am – 3:00pm. Campers may be dropped off as early as 7:30am. Campers arriving before 8:00am should walk up to the red doors and ring the doorbell for entry.
- Campers who are permitted to walk to camp and sign themselves in should arrive during the 8:30-9:00am time slot.
- If your time slot for drop-off does not work for you, please contact Gailmarie Green at ggreen@metroymcas.org to arrange an earlier time (you do not need to do this if you plan to drop off between 7:30 and 8am)!
- We ask that adults dropping off during curbside drop-off remain in the car to help with the flow. A staff member will assist your camper with leaving the car and checking in.
- If you need to speak with a Coordinator at drop-off for any reason that may take longer than a quick check-in, please legally park your car to avoid traffic build-up.
- If you are dropping off campers in both T1/T2 and T3/T4, you may drop them off at any time that works for you.

WHERE DO I PICK UP?

CAMPSITE LOCATION:

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WHERE DO I PICK UP? (continued)

Our curbside pick-up schedule will be the following:

3:00-3:30pm- Creative Theatre 1 & 2 (entering K-3rd grade)

3:30-4:00pm- Creative Theatre 3 & 4 (entering 4th-9th grade)

- Core Camp Program Hours (i.e. structured, scheduled hours) are from 9am – 3:00pm.
- Campers who are permitted to walk home from camp and sign themselves out will be able to sign themselves out starting at 3:30pm. If you would like to request that these campers stay until a specific time, please let us know.
- If your time slot for pick-up does not work for you, please contact Gailmarie Green at ggreen@metroymcas.org to arrange an alternative time.
- Instead of parking and exiting your car during curbside pick-up, we will bring your camper to you to make it easier for sign-out.
- If you need to speak with a Coordinator at pick-up for any reason that may take longer than a quick check-in, please legally park your car to avoid traffic build-up.
- If you are picking up campers in both T1/T2 and T3/T4, please let us know which time slot you would prefer and we will ensure those campers are ready at the same time.
- Aftercare runs from 3:30-6:00pm. To pick-up aftercare campers, please park legally and ring the doorbell by the red doors.
- All adults picking up your campers must be included in their Pulse account.
- **We require a valid form of photo identification at pick-up for anyone picking up your camper.**
    - Please note that adults picking up should always have photo identification on them, as there are times when our staffing might shift and a new counselor might be signing out your camper. This helps with timing for all adults picking up and allows our staff to maintain the safety of your child.

LOST AND FOUND

CLOTHING & POSSESSIONS:

- Clearly label with your child's full name any clothing and possessions that your child brings to camp.
- "Found" items that have campers' names on them are usually returned the same day or the next day.
- If you are ever in need, our staff with help you look for a lost item.






CAMP T-SHIRT

Campers will be given their camp T-shirt (included in the cost) on the first trip day. Additional shirts can be purchased at the YMCA office for $6.00. On Trip days, campers should wear their YMCA camp T-shirt.

PROHIBITED ITEMS

Leave electronics, toys, Pokemon cards (or other trading cards), squishies/fidgets, and stuffed animals at home. Phones and smartwatches must remain off and are not to be used during camp. If a camper needs to contact a parent, they will ask a staff member.

*If your camper needs a specific tool to be successful, please reach out to Miss Gail to discuss further/request an accommodation.



ABOUT THE AUDITION PROCESS

Each group approaches auditions a bit differently. For instance, Theatre 1 (campers entering K-1st grade, what we affectionately call "T1") base their choices for main roles more on their ability to pay attention, speak clearly, and reading level (though this is absolutely not a prerequisite and we know that often children who are unable to read are wonderful at memorizing lines). And T2/T3 (entering grades 2-5) may approach casting at a higher level, asking the campers to read lines and sing for the characters they want. T4 (campers entering 6th-8th grade) has an even higher level audition process, complete with an initial audition and then typically callbacks (a second audition for roles). Sometimes, the Coordinators will give specific material that they want to see for auditions based on character, sometimes they will have the campers sing anything they'd like. This will all be explained to your campers at camp, but we get this question often, so we figured it would be good to write it out for the adults who often have to field disappoint after casting at home. As we tell the campers, "there are no small roles" and every person on stage is incredibly important to the story. Unfortunately, we can't cast everyone in the leading role- but we do our best to make sure every single one of our campers shines on stage! If you have any questions about casting before or after the fact, feel free to reach out to Miss Gail.

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CAMP CHECKLIST

BACKPACK

The following items should be in your camper's backpack.

- **Lunch**
  - Labeled with name
  - Non-spoilable food and drink (there is no refrigeration available for food)
  - No gum or nuts of any kind
- **Labeled water bottle (water fountain available at camp site for refills)**
- **T1 & T2 ONLY: Towel (Mondays & Wednesdays)**
  - T1 & T2 will be participating in swim or water play on Mondays & Wednesdays. Each camper should bring their own clean towel on those days.
- **T1 & T2 ONLY: Change of clothes (Mondays & Wednesdays, for after swim/water play)**
- **T1 & T2 ONLY: Bag for wet bathing towels and suits (Mondays & Wednesdays, for swim/water play)**
- **T1 & T2 ONLY: Swim suit and Water Shoes (Mondays & Wednesdays)**
- **T1 & T2 ONLY: Underwear Spare (Mondays & Wednesdays)**
- **T1 & T2 ONLY: Swim Cap (Mondays & Wednesdays, only if swimming)**
- **Sunscreen ** This is often a forgotten item, but incredibly important! ****
- **NO ELECTRONICS.**
  - We understand that some campers have phones and watches to communicate with parents when necessary. We ask that these items are kept away and if campers need to contact parents for any reason, they should let a camp staff member know.

SNEAKERS

- We will be constantly on the move- walking between activities, playing games, dancing and jumping! For their safety, they need to have sneakers to be able to participate in all of these activities. Packing a set of dance shoes is recommended, but not required. Dressy shoes, open toed shoes, sandals and flip flops will NOT be permitted.

HATS/SUNGLASSES

- A hat is a great way to keep the sun out of your eyes and help keep you cool while outside. We ask that these items are not worn indoors.

SCRIPT

- Scripts will be given out on the first week of camp. We allow campers to take their personal script home to encourage home study, but it is imperative that they return with them.

AN OPEN MIND

- Creative Theatre is a diverse community with campers from different grades, walks of life, schools and families. Each camper has their own talents and challenges which allows for our community to be an environment where campers learn not only from the staff, but each other as well. Any type of bullying, verbal or physical, will not be tolerated and we celebrate diversity.

Questions? Call (973) 762-4145 or email Gailmarie Green
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GENERAL DAILY SCHEDULE

- Mondays of the new session will always begin with campers getting comfortable in their groups and being introduced to their show title.
- From there, they will have some meet-and-greet games and activities to start the session. This helps them acclimate to their new group of peers and counselors.
- For the rest of the session, the morning activities will include a block of rehearsal for their show. The morning will also include a rotation outside to get the kids playing, dancing and having fun in the sun.
- The first afternoon block typically includes free choice, where campers can choose their special activity. Free choice can include singing, improv, arts and crafts, theatre games, playwriting, mindfulness, stage makeup, and more.
- The second afternoon block may include some rehearsal time, theatrical arts (props, set making, costumes, etc), or dance.
- Additional special events occur in the afternoon throughout the summer, including: Theatre Workshops, Dance Parties, Themed Games and Activities, etc. We will also incorporate in-house trips once per session with an outside show like bubbles or puppets!

SAMPLE SCHEDULE:

this is just a sample daily schedule for an example, specific blocks and times may change

7:30-8:00am Morning Care

8:00am-9:00am Drop-off

9:00-9:30am Morning Round-up/Clean-up/Attendance

9:30am-10:30am Morning Block 1 (Example- Rehearsal or Casting)

10:30am-11:45am Morning Block 2 (Example- Outside Play)

11:45pm-12:30pm Handwashing, LUNCH, Handwashing

12:30pm-1:30pm Afternoon Block 1 (Example- Free Choice)

1:30pm-2:30pm Afternoon Block 2 (Example- Rehearsal)

2:30pm-3:00pm Afternoon Block 3 (Example- Dance/Choreography)

3:00pm END OF REGULAR CAMP DAY/Curbside Pick-Up Begins

3:30pm-6:00pm Aftercare (Aftercare campers will be provided snack)

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GYMNASTICS

- Our Gymnastics Half Day Clinic follows the same protocols (including drop-off/pick-up) and is at the same location as Theatre Camp.
- Gymnastics occurs in the morning (9am-12pm) the first two weeks of each session. This means that for those weeks, Gymnastics/Theatre Combo campers will not swim or go to the park.
- The third week of each session, there is no gymnastics and all campers are in Theatre Camp all day, which includes swim and outdoor play.
- On trip days, ALL campers will attend the trip and there will be no gymnastics that morning.
- If you have any Gymnastics-specific questions please email Lena at lbarnett@metroymcas.org.





We are so ready for the summer and can't wait to meet all our campers! Please don't hesitate to reach out with any further questions or comments you may have now or in the future about camp. We are always open to your suggestions and ideas.

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ggreen@metroymcas.org