



Camp Parent Guide

Rooted in Belonging, Nature, and Holistic Child Development

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Welcome to Wellchild Niagara!

We are delighted to welcome your family to the Wellchild Niagara camp community.

Our programs nurture children’s sense of belonging, curiosity, and confidence through play-based, nature-connected, and child-led experiences.

At Wellchild Niagara, we believe that every child is capable, creative, and deserving of a space where they feel seen, safe, and valued. Our inclusive environment celebrates diverse identities, abilities, cultures, and learning styles.

Through mindfulness, creative expression, nature play, and social–emotional learning, children are supported in their holistic development — emotionally, socially, physically, and creatively.

This Parent Handbook outlines our philosophy, procedures, and policies to ensure a safe, meaningful, and joyful camp experience.

We look forward to a wonderful week of connection, learning, and adventure.



Camp Location

Our 2026 Summer Camp is hosted at:

William Hamilton Merritt Public School
114 Linwell Road
St. Catharines, Ontario

Outdoor programming and nature exploration may also take place at nearby green spaces such as **Jaycee Gardens Park**.

Camp Hours

Regular Camp Day

9:00 AM – 4:00 PM

Monday through Friday

Drop-Off Window

8:30 AM – 9:00 AM

Pick-Up Window

4:00 PM – 4:30 PM

Extended Care (Optional – Pre-Registration Required)

To support families, extended care spaces are available.

Morning Extended Care

7:00 AM – 8:30 AM

Afternoon Extended Care

4:30 PM – 6:00 PM

- Extended care must be arranged in advance.
- Additional fees apply.
- Spaces are limited to maintain safe ratios.
- Programming includes quiet play, drawing, mindfulness activities, and calm free play.

Program Overview

Wellchild Niagara camps bring together **mindfulness practices, social-emotional learning, creative expression,** and **outdoor exploration** to support the holistic development of children from kindergarten to grade 5. Our child-led, relationship-based approach empowers children to explore at their own pace and in ways that honour their unique interests and strengths.

Core Program Themes

- **Mindfulness & Well-being**
Breathing exercises, gentle yoga, grounding techniques, nature walks, sensory awareness
- **Social-Emotional Learning (SEL)**
Emotional literacy, empathy-building games, cooperation, reflection circles, journaling
- **Nature Connection**
Exploration walks, environmental stewardship, outdoor play, nature crafts, imaginative play
- **Creative Expression**
Art provocations, open-ended materials, storytelling, music, movement, loose parts play

Our programs are facilitated by experienced educators, including a **Registered Early Childhood Educator** and **Certified Children's Yoga Teacher**, with extensive backgrounds supporting children and youth across diverse settings.

We are committed to providing environments that are **inclusive, accessible, trauma-informed, culturally responsive, and grounded in kindness.**

Program Policies

Our Guiding Principles

Respect & Kindness

We encourage all children to treat themselves, others, and the natural world with care, empathy, and respect. Staff model positive communication and collaborative problem-solving.

Belonging & Inclusivity

All children are welcome—of every identity, culture, ability, learning style, and family structure. We intentionally cultivate spaces where each child feels safe, valued, and accepted.

Safety & Emotional Well-being

The physical and emotional safety of children is our top priority. Activities are designed with age-appropriateness and risk management in mind, and staff use trauma-informed, supportive guidance approaches.

Technology-Free Environment

Our camp is a device-free experience that encourages presence, connection, and engagement with peers and nature. Personal electronics should remain at home.

Child-Led Programming

Children thrive when they feel trusted, respected, and invited to explore. Throughout the day, educators offer open-ended materials, natural elements, and meaningful provocations that encourage curiosity, creativity, and self-expression.

Children may:

- Move between activities



- Engage deeply in projects
- Participate in collaborative games
- Explore independently
- Return to familiar activities or try new ones

Our role is to support, observe, and guide-not direct-so children remain in charge of their learning journey.



Registration Policy

Registration Process

- Caregivers complete the online registration form.
- Emergency contacts, medical information, and accessibility needs are required.
- A **non-refundable \$50 deposit per child** secures registration.
- Remaining fees are due two weeks before camp begins.
- 2026 Weekly Fee: **\$200**
- 10% sibling discount available.
- If cost is a barrier, please reach out - we are committed to supporting access.

Refund Policies

- **Camp cancellation by Wellchild Niagara:** full refund
- **30 days or more before camp:** full refund minus the \$50 deposit
- **10–29 days before camp:** 50% refund minus the \$50 deposit
- **Less than 10 days:** no refund will be issued

- **Medical circumstances:** refunds considered with a doctor's note

Refunds are not issued for missed individual camp days.



Health & Accessibility Information

We ask families to share any information that will help us support their child, including:

- Allergies
- Medical needs
- Neurodiversity
- Sensory supports
- Learning or behavioural needs
- Communication preferences
- Diverse family or custody considerations

This information is confidential and used only to ensure your child's comfort and safety. Our team may contact you prior to camp to discuss accommodations or strategies that will help your child thrive.

Ratios & Support

- Standard ratio: **1:8**
- Lower ratios (1:3 or 1:1) may be available where required.
- Additional staffing may involve added fees; we will work collaboratively with families whenever possible.

Drop-Off & Pick-Up Procedures

- **Location:** William H. Merritt Public School (114 Linwell Road, St. Catharines).
- A caregiver must check in with staff each morning.
- A gentle wellness check ensures your child is ready for the day.

We understand that morning transitions vary-staff are trained to support children with patience and care.

Pick-Up

- Pickup will take place at William H. Merritt Public School (114 Linwell Road, St. Catharines).
- Only individuals listed on the registration form may pick up your child.
- Photo ID is required for safety.
- If you anticipate being delayed, please notify us promptly.

What to Bring

- Weather-appropriate outdoor clothing
- Refillable water bottle
- Sunscreen (labelled)
- Healthy, nut-free snacks and lunch

- Hat and sunglasses
- A small backpack
- A change of clothing
- Clothing that can get muddy, wet, painty, or messy

What Not to Bring

- Electronic devices
- Toys or valuables
- Nuts or nut products

We embrace messy, creative, nature-rich play—please dress your child in clothing that supports exploration.

Emergency & Safety Protocols

Our team is trained in first aid, emergency response, and crisis procedures.

Emergency Contact Procedures

We will contact the primary caregiver immediately, followed by secondary contacts if necessary.

Medical Emergencies

- First aid will be administered by trained staff.
- Emergency services will be contacted when required.
- You will be notified immediately of any significant incident.

Weather & Environmental Safety

In severe weather, children will move indoors or to a sheltered location. Alternative programming will be provided as needed.

Evacuation Procedures


If evacuation is necessary, staff follow designated routes, maintain head counts, and ensure all children are safely accounted for.



Communication With Camp Staff

We value open, collaborative communication with families and strive to build strong partnerships that support your child's well-being.

Contact Information

 647-904-3543

 wellchildniagara@gmail.com

Ongoing Communication

- You will receive weekly updates with highlights and photos
- Staff are available for brief check-ins at drop-off/pick-up
- Caregivers are encouraged to reach out with questions, concerns, or support needs

If you require alternate communication formats, translation, or accessibility accommodations, please let us know—we are committed to ensuring communication is inclusive and accessible.

Thank You

Thank you for choosing Wellchild Niagara for your child's camp experience. We are honoured to share in your child's learning, joy, and growth. Together, we look forward to a meaningful and memorable week filled with nature, creativity, mindfulness, and connection.

 Warmly,
The Wellchild Niagara Team

