

STEM Camp Guardian Guidelines





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Welcome

Huntsville Botanical Garden is thrilled that your child will be joining us for STEM Camp.

Our camps are filled with exploration, experimentation, and most importantly, fun! Below are all of the details you need to know in preparation for your child's camp experience. Please share this information with all parties who will be authorized to drop off/pick up your child from STEM Camp, so all are informed of rules and regulations.

Camper Registration Forms

All campers will need to complete **Camper Registration** via the [Huntsville Botanical Garden website](#). After campers are successfully registered for their selected camp session(s) and have paid their registration fee, you will receive an email with a link to our **Huntsville Botanical Garden STEM Camper Release Form** to complete for the current calendar year. We would prefer for you to complete and submit this new form for your camper(s) at least one week in advance of their camp to keep the check-in line running smoothly. This form will only need to be submitted once for each camper for the calendar year, unless there are any significant changes. Campers must meet the age requirements for their camp as of the first day of camp. The only exception would be birthdays within two weeks. Campers signed up for camps outside of the age requirements above are subject to removal from camp by HBG staff. All camp curriculum is tailored to the age ranges promoted.

Here are some additional clarifications to help you complete this new form:

- Please note any food allergies as some of our camp activities may include food tastings.
- Please state any known medical challenges or special needs for your child. Also state any behavioral or developmental challenges your child experiences along with tactics and/or methods that calm or assist your child.
- Immunization records are encouraged but not required and can be listed in the Additional Needs section of this form. You can also email a copy of your camper's blue card/immunization record to stemcamps@hsvbg.org.

For questions about registration, please contact:

STEM Education Programs Coordinator

(256) 830-4447 ext. 270

stemcamps@hsvbg.org



Daily Schedule Basics

STEM Camp is based outdoors at the Grisham Pavilion, located west of the Propst Guest Center at the Huntsville Botanical Garden. Camp runs daily from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., with check-in beginning at 8:30 a.m. at the pavilion. Some half-day camps take place for ages 4-5. These camps run daily from 9:00 am to 1:00 pm.

Arrival and Pick-Up Procedure

To check in or pick up your camper:

1. Enter the Garden through the main entrance at 4747 Bob Wallace Ave. SW, Huntsville, AL 35805.
2. Follow all posted camp signage to the check-in area.
3. At the roundabout, keep right to enter the Dogwood Parking Lot, located west of the Guest Center.
4. Park near the Grisham Pavilion, but do not drive up to the pavilion. For everyone's safety, parents/guardians must exit their vehicles and walk their camper to and from the pavilion each day.
5. If drop-off or pick-up locations change due to weather or Garden operations, you will be notified via Brightwheel.

Extended Care

Extended Care is available for an additional fee and can be added through the individual camp registration pages. Families may register for Extended Care until the Friday of the camp week. Please note that the fee remains the same regardless of the number of days used.

- Morning Extended Care runs from 7:30–8:30 a.m.; fee \$50; limited capacity of 30 campers.
- Afternoon Extended Care runs from 4:00–5:00 p.m.; fee \$50; limited capacity of 20 campers.
- Campers picked up after 5:00 p.m. will be subject to a late fee of \$1 per minute.

Brightwheel



The **Brightwheel** app provides a safe and secure check-in/check-out process. You will receive an email invitation for your scheduled STEM Camp from the mobile app. Any adults authorized to pick up your child must have the four-digit Brightwheel code. Please be sure that you add your emergency contact phone numbers to your profile in Brightwheel so camp administrators can access your information on-the-go from the app and call you in the unlikely event of an emergency. If you already signed up with Brightwheel during previous camps, you would not need to sign up again. Please refrain from lingering in the pavilion area after check-in or check-out to help us maintain a safe and focused camp environment.



Brightwheel is also our main source of communication with parents, including photos of campers enjoying their activities during the camp day. Be sure to check it often for weather notices, camper pick-up location changes, sick child messages, and camp reminders.

Early Pick-Up Policy

Because many camp activities take place across our 118-acre Garden, advance notice is required for early pick-up. This allows staff time to locate your camper's group and escort them safely back to the pavilion. The wait can be up to 30 minutes without prior notice. The best times for drop-off and pick-up are noted in the schedule below.

Typical Daily Schedule

- 7:30-8:30 Early Care (additional fee; register in advance)
- 8:30-9:00 Drop off at Grisham Pavilion; STEM Centers and Free Play
- 9:00-10:00 Daily welcome and Activity 1
- 10:00-10:30 Snack and Free Play
- 10:30-11:30 Activity 2
- 11:30-12:30 Lunch and Free Play
- 12:30-1:30 Activity 3
- 1:30-2:00 Snack and Free Play
- 2:00-3:00 Activity 4
- 3:00-4:00 Pick up at Grisham Pavilion; STEM Centers and Free Play
- 4:00-5:00 Late Care (additional fee; register in advance)

What to Bring and Wear

Camp T-shirts will be provided for each camper during our week-long camps. We do not provide T-shirts for our single-day or mini-break camps. Please ensure that your child is appropriately dressed to spend the entire day outdoors in close-toed shoes. Since outdoor play can be unpredictable, a full change of clothes is required for all ages. A reusable water bottle, morning snack, lunch, and afternoon snack are also required. Note that refrigeration and microwave are not available. We recommend using ice packs to keep food fresh. Due to the variety of allergies, campers will not be permitted to share food or bring celebration food for other campers.



Required Items:

- Backpack
- Weather-appropriate clothing
- Full change of clothes (all ages)
- Close-toed shoes
- Reusable water bottle
- Morning snack
- Lunch
- Afternoon snack

We recommend that parents also provide the following for each camper in their backpack:

- Spray sunscreen
- Wide-brim hat
- Bug spray
- Camera to photograph the Garden or projects only
- Towel on Friday for water play

We cannot prevent loss or damage to items brought from home. To prevent children from being upset over the loss of their treasures, we ask that the following items be left at home:

- iPads or tablets
- Gaming systems
- Toys
- Books
- Fans/Misters

Cell phones are permitted as they allow your child to contact you. Please make sure your child is aware that cell phones are to be used only for contacting parents/ guardians or taking photos of the Garden, not other campers or staff. Violation of this rule will result in phones being confiscated for the remainder of the day.

To prevent excessive items in our lost and found, please label all of your child's items with their full name. Help your child gather all belongings at the end of each day. The lost and found items will be at the check-in table. We will discard or donate unclaimed items at the end of each week.

Campers will have an optional opportunity to visit the Garden's gift shop, The Chrysalis, towards the end of their camp week to purchase items that may extend the camper's experience at home. We suggest sending your camper with \$15-20 on this scheduled day in a sealed envelope with their name on it.

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Since the Garden is cashless, we do make an exception for campers. However, coin change will not be available. For example, if their change back from the purchase should be \$1.52, they will only be given the dollar. Communication about scheduled Gift Shop days will be sent via the Brightwheel app and the camp parent letter emailed to all families the week before camp.

Full-day campers will enjoy water play time in the Wicks Family Garden on Fridays, unless otherwise noted via Brightwheel or the emailed camp parent letter. They can come dressed in clothes that can get wet and bring a change of clothes for afterwards. They must keep their shoes on, so make sure they have dry shoes to put on afterwards as well. They will also need a towel. Please make sure their name is on all of their clothing and towel items. This is our biggest lost and found day!

Outdoor Time & Weather Considerations

Our STEM Camps are primarily held outdoors. We do go indoors occasionally for restroom breaks, guest speakers, or special learning activities. We encourage frequent water and rest breaks. Campers should be prepared for all possible weather conditions.

Inclement weather may result in moving the campers to an indoor location, such as Nichols Arbor. We move campers inside if lightning is within 5 miles of the Garden, if there is significant rainfall, or an extreme heat index. In the rare circumstance of severe weather, the Garden may be required to end camp early or completely cancel camp for the day. We will notify you of any changes or cancellations through the Brightwheel app ASAP, ideally no later than 6:00 p.m. the night before.



Medication Policy

For the safety of all campers, all medications, excluding emergency inhalers and EpiPens, must be stored in a locked cabinet in the Education Office during camp hours. Campers who require medication during the day will come to the Education Office for administration. Our staff is trained to assist in the event of an emergency with an EpiPen but will not administer any other medication. A phone conference with the Manager of STEM Curriculum and Programs is required in advance to ensure a medical plan is in place. Please note this information on the Camper Registration Form. Medication must be in its original container and clearly labeled with the camper's name, the name of the medication, and directions for use. A completed **Medical Authorization Form** is required for medication each week. The form requires the signature of the child's physician and parent/guardian.

For questions and to confirm the medical plan, please contact:

Manager of STEM Curriculum & Programs
(256) 830-4447 ext. 241

Hygiene and Illness Policy

Our stay-at-home guidelines include not attending camp if your child has had a fever or vomited within 24 hours. If your camper begins to show signs of illness during the day, they may be isolated, and guardians contacted. Sanitation practices at camp include frequent handwashing, offering hand sanitizer, and cleaning shared tools and toys often.

Incidents

While Education Program Guides will provide diligent supervision and guidance, accidents or injuries are still possible in an outdoor play program. Our staff are trained in First Aid/CPR and will have a first aid kit and communication with them at all times during the day. In the event of a minor injury, teachers can administer Band-Aids, general first aid, ice packs, and comfort. They will also document using an Incident Investigation Form and send a message to guardians on Brightwheel. In the case of a more serious injury requiring medical care, parents will be called, followed by emergency contacts if parents cannot be reached. In the rare case of an emergency, 9-1-1 will be called first, calling emergency contacts immediately after.



Bathroom Independence

All children are required to be toilet-trained and able to change their own clothes. If any bathroom accidents occur, parents will be notified immediately. Repeated occurrences will be discussed between the Manager of STEM Curriculum & Programs and guardian(s). Continuing issues may lead to possible removal from camp with no refund. Education Program Guides are strictly forbidden from assisting campers with changing clothes. We encourage parents of younger campers to practice at home taking off wet clothes, drying off, and putting on dry clothes on their own. This skill is necessary for bathroom accidents and on water play day.

Behavior Expectations & Discipline Policy

At the Huntsville Botanical Garden, we take the happiness and safety of our campers seriously. Therefore, we work very hard to create a safe and fun environment. Along with our efforts, we need the children to help us by following some simple rules. Please read these **Camper Behavior Expectations** with your child and ensure they understand our camp's behavior policies.

- I will listen to the instructor(s) and follow directions.
- I will respect other campers' belongings by not touching their things without permission.
- I will respect all property and help clean personal messes leaving areas clean.
- I will respect other campers' personal space by keeping my hands and feet to myself.
- I will act in a caring way, and I will not hit, fight, bite, tease, harass or bully others.
- I will use appropriate language, which does not include swear words or insults.

Not abiding by these rules may result in suspension or removal from the program. All incidents will be handled on a three-incident system, except hitting, fighting, and inappropriately touching another camper. Hitting, fighting, and inappropriately touching another camper will be an immediate one-day or full week suspension from the program. All other incidents will be handled as follows:

- First incident = Verbal warning
- Second incident = Communication with the Guardian; reflection time* during free time (5 minutes)
- Third incident = Conversation with the Guardian; reflection time* during free time (10 minutes)
- More than three incidents may subject the camper to dismissal from the program.

*Reflection time includes sitting out with an instructor(s) to talk about their behavior and how we can help the camper work through the problem resulting in better choices moving forward.

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Huntsville Botanical Garden management reserves the right to dismiss a child from the camp if the child's behavior is disruptive to the program and/or compromises the happiness and safety of themselves, other children, and/or staff. Children suspended or terminated from the program will not qualify for a refund.

Accommodations for Campers with Special Needs

We are happy to discuss whether HBG's STEM Camps are the right fit for your camper with special needs. The safety and well-being of all campers is our top priority. While our staff is trained to support a variety of learning styles and needs, we cannot provide one-on-one support or accommodate campers who require intensive behavioral, physical, or medical assistance. We encourage you to contact us at stemcamps@hsvbg.org to begin a conversation. Together, we can determine if our program is an appropriate and supportive environment for your child.

STEM Themes & Learning Goals

Each week of STEM Camp features a different theme, such as Backyard Science, Nature by Design, or Make a Splash! Weekly themes are listed on our website and are designed to spark curiosity and a sense of wonder about the natural world. Campers will engage in age-appropriate hands-on experiments, nature walks, garden investigations, and collaborative STEM challenges that connect to real-world science and engineering. Our goal is to provide a safe, fun, and educational experience where campers not only learn important STEM concepts through inquiry-based activities but also grow to love the outdoors and develop a lifelong commitment to caring for the earth.

Huntsville Botanical Garden guarantees a staff to student ratio of 1:10 (one instructor for every 10 campers). Our education team includes certified instructors and experienced environmental educators. A Meet the Guides document will be shared via Brightwheel each week. You can read about the qualifications and specialties of each of our Education Program Guides.

If you have any questions or concerns about the staff, please contact:

Manager of STEM Programs and Curriculum

(256) 830-4447 ext. 241

stemcamps@hsvbg.org



Camp Rescheduling/Waitlist/ Cancellation Policies

Camp registrations are booked on a first-come, first-served basis through our online registration portal. We honor camp rescheduling requests as long as there is registration availability remaining for the requested camp. Camp rescheduling requests can be made over the phone at (256) 830-4447 ext. 270 or email at stemcamps@hsvbg.org.

Camp Registration Waitlists

Our website is updated on a regular basis to indicate which camps are full. When a camp becomes fully booked, you can submit a request to us via email to add your child to the waitlist for that camp. Individuals on the waitlist will be contacted via phone and email in the order in which they were added if a spot becomes available due to a cancellation. Once the first individual is contacted, we will hold the cancelled spot for them for up to 24 hours so they can complete their child's registration and submit payment. If we do not hear back or do not receive payment within that timeframe, then we will reach out to the next individual on the waitlist to offer the spot to them. Please send all camp waitlist requests in writing to stemcamps@hsvbg.org.

Cancellation with Full Refund

We honor camp cancellations with a full refund if a request is sent to us in writing 14 days or more before a child's first scheduled day of camp. Please send all camp cancellation requests to stemcamps@hsvbg.org no less than 14 days before your child's first scheduled day of camp if you would like to receive a full refund.

Cancellation with Program Credit

We honor camp cancellations with a full camp program credit if a request is sent to us in writing at least one week prior to the first day of the camp. No refund or credit can be issued if cancelled within one week of the camp. When credit is issued, you can apply this full camp credit for a future program taking place within the calendar year. All individuals requesting to redeem a camp program credit are subject to the same waitlist policy guidelines in the event that their alternatively selected camp program is already fully booked. If you need to cancel your child's camp registration, send this request in writing as soon as possible to stemcamps@hsvbg.org.



STEM Camp Guardian FAQs

- **How do I find out which camps have registrations available?**
 - *The [Youth Camps webpage](#) will indicate which camps have open spots and are accepting registrations. Click on the “Learn More” button next to the camp you are interested in. If a camp date or age range is not listed, then all spots have been booked. See the Waitlist/Cancellation/Refund Policy tab for further information about our camp waitlists. Questions? Email stemcamps@hsvbg.org.*

- **How much does camp cost?**
 - *Monday-Friday Half-Day Camps*
 - *Non-Member Child: \$280.00*
 - *Member Child: \$185.00*

 - *Monday-Friday Full-Day Camps*
 - *Non-Member Child: \$400.00*
 - *Member Child: \$275.00*

 - *Tuesday-Friday Full-Day Camps (only offered the first week of summer)*
 - *Non-Member Child: \$320.00*
 - *Member Child: \$240.00*

 - *STEM Day Camp*
 - *Non-Member Child: \$100.00*
 - *Member Child: \$60.00*

 - *STEM Winter Break Camp*
 - *Non-Member Child: \$300.00*
 - *Member Child: \$180.00*

- **Do you offer any discounts or scholarships for camp registration fees?**
 - *We offer a discounted member rate for camp programs. Members should select the Member Child option to apply for this discount when registering for camp programs.*
 - *Scholarships for STEM Camps are available starting in January 2025 for families that have an EBT card. Scholarships are limited and will be announced on the Garden’s website. If you would like to be informed of scholarship opportunities, please email stemcamps@hsvbg.org.*

- **Can my child be in the same camp group as their sibling or friend?**
 - *Campers must be registered for the camp age group that is appropriate based on the age they will be on the first day of camp. If your camper is in the same age group as a sibling or friend, they will be together if both are officially registered for that camp. In some cases, we have two camps for the same theme and age group. We will send out an email asking for special placement requests during those sessions only.*

Dear Parent/Guardian,

Your written permission is required for your child to take medication at camp. Any prescription drug or over-the-counter drug sent to Huntsville Botanical Garden (HBG) STEM Camp must be in its original container and must be clearly labeled with your child's name, the name of the drug, and directions for administering the drug. A new authorization form is needed each week for each medication. HBG staff is trained to assist in the event of an emergency with an EpiPen but will not administer any other medication. My child's medication will be brought to camp on _____ (date) and picked up on _____ (date). HBG Staff are trained to assist in the event of an emergency with an EpiPen but will not administer any other medication. Campers will retrieve medication for self-medication from a manager in the Education office.

To be completed by Physician:

Child's Name _____ Date of Birth _____

Allergies _____

Name of Medication _____

Reason for Taking Medication _____

Potential Adverse Reactions and Treatment of Reactions _____

Self-medication Permitted/Recommended? ___ Yes ___ No

Do you recommend this medication be with the child at all times? ___ Yes ___ No

Dosage _____ Route _____ Frequency _____

Physician's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Parent/Guardian, please indicate Yes or No to each statement:

_____ *I authorize the HBG Education Staff to make available to my child the above-named medication at the time(s) and in the amount(s) indicated. I understand that HBG Education Staff will not administer medication for my child and that all medications must be dropped off and picked up each week at the Education Office in the Linda J. Smith Building at the Garden.*

_____ *I authorize and recommend self-medication by my child for the above medication. I also affirm that he/she has been instructed in proper self-administration of the prescribed medication by his/her attending physician. I shall indemnify and hold harmless the Huntsville Botanical Garden against any claims that may arise relating to my child's self-administration of medication.*

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____ Date: _____

Date medication given	Time medication given	Signature of person giving medication