



Stepping Stones

# PARENT HANDBOOK

2023

# GREETINGS FROM OUR DIRECTORS

Mi-A-Kon-Da is proud of the camp experience that we provide to each and every one of our campers. We are happy to be able to provide a space where children from ages 6 - 16 can come and connect with one another, experience new adventures and spend their time outdoors all the while having fun and making memories.

More specifically, we are thrilled to offer Stepping Stones, a 3 day introductory program for young campers who are taking the terrific first step towards experiencing all of the benefits that an overnight camp has to offer.

This Stepping Stones Parent Handbook will outline all of the necessary and regular information parents and campers need, leading up to their Stepping Stones session.

The safety, health and wellbeing of all of our campers and staff will continue to remain our number one priority. We are looking forward to welcome everyone to camp this summer and provide a safe and welcoming space for children to explore the outdoors, try new adventures and connect with old and new friends.

See you in the summer!



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# PARENT CHECKLIST

## DUE BY: APRIL 1ST, 2023

- Submit clothing & paddle order via our Camp Store found [here](#).

## DUE BY: MAY 1ST, 2023

- Complete Camper Form (including tent requests), on your [CampBrain account](#)
- Review transportation requests TO CAMP, available on invoice statement
- Payment of balance ([view your invoice](#) on CampBrain in your household, under the "account tab")

## 2 WEEKS BEFORE YOUR DAUGHTER'S ARRIVAL

- Complete [Camper Medical Form](#)
- Check the [Clothing and Equipment list](#) to ensure you have everything

## RIGHT BEFORE CAMP!

- Pack with your child, referring to the clothing and equipment list. This helps her know what she is bringing to camp!

## ARRIVAL DAY

- Review assigned arrival time slot and arrival instructions

### CONTACT INFORMATION:

#### September 1st - June 15th

**Camp Mi-A-Kon-Da**  
**756 Mineral Springs Road**  
**Dundas, ON L9H 5E3**  
**Tel: 905-648-9382**  
**Email: [info@miakonda.com](mailto:info@miakonda.com)**

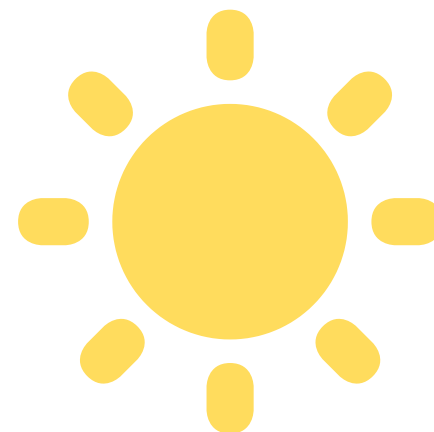
#### June 15th - September 1st

**Tel: 1-905-516-9382\***  
**Email: [info@miakonda.com](mailto:info@miakonda.com)**  
*\*Please leave a message and we will return your call as soon as possible.*

## 2023 STEPPING STONES DATE:

### Stepping Stones:

Friday, June 23rd - Sunday, June 25th



# PREPARING FOR CAMP: FORMS

The first step in preparing for your daughter's camp experience is completing **ALL** required forms! All of the forms can be found on your **CampBrain Account**.

- CAMPER FORM
- CAMPER MEDICAL FORM
- INVOICE (REVIEW TRANSPORTATION REQUESTS)

## CAMPER FORM

- Camper Forms should be completed prior to May 1st. This form can be found on your [CampBrain account](#). This form is to be completed by you, the parent/guardian. It enables Pam (Director) & Catherine (Assistant Director) to learn more about your daughter prior to her arrival so that they have the information they need to provide the best, positive camper experience. If there is anything you'd like to discuss about your daughter that you feel is better done by phone, please don't hesitate to contact us. Email us at [info@miakonda.com](mailto:info@miakonda.com) and we can set up a time to talk.
- This form is also used to track cabin requests - please complete this if you/your daughter have any requests. Cabin requests should be mutual between campers.



## INVOICE

- You can access your invoice on your [CampBrain account](#) under the "account" tab in your Household. **All camp fees are due by May 1st, 2023.**
- Payments can be made either by cheque or by E-Transfer.
- On this invoice, please confirm your transportation selection that you made upon registering. If you need to change this selection, please notify us by email: [info@miakonda.com](mailto:info@miakonda.com) and we will update your account.
- Please give 7 business days for any payments to be processed and updated on your account.
- International payments can be made by wire. Please contact the camp office for wire information.

## MEDICAL FORM

- Medical forms should be submitted at **least 2 weeks prior** to the camper's arrival. This enables our nurse to prepare for a camper's health care needs and relay information to the counsellor and the kitchen staff as necessary.
- Please include as much detail and information as possible on your daughter's medical form. The form can be found on your [CampBrain account](#).
- Please advise us via email of any last minute changes in your daughter's health information not indicated on the Health Form.
- If your daughter is ill prior to camp, please ensure that she is back to her regular health before she comes to camp.

# CAMPER HEALTHCARE AT CAMP

Your daughter's personal well-being, safety and care is a priority at camp.

## GENERAL HEALTH INFORMATION

- Our camp Registered Nurse is on site and available 24/7 for any camper & staff needs. Camp Mi-A-Kon-Da has on call Camp Doctors.
- We recommend that campers visit their dentist shortly before arriving at camp.
- Medication must be sent in their original containers accompanied by written instructions.

## CAMPER CONDITIONS

- Campers with serious allergies and/or conditions must be sure to bring an extra supply of medications or devices. Campers with an EPI-PEN should bring a 2nd EPI-PEN.
- Campers who are sensitive to insect bites may wish to bring an anti-itch cream and antihistamine.
- Campers with asthma or a condition that requires an inhaler should bring an extra.
- Campers can also bring a fanny pack or carrying device that can be used to carry their devices at camp, if necessary.

## COVID-19 AND HEALTH CONSIDERATIONS

- All staff, CITs and campers need to arrive at camp healthy and prepared to fully participate in the daily life and tasks required on Birch Island. In order to mitigate the risk of COVID-19 being brought into camp, we ask all campers and staff to take extra caution in the 10 days prior to their arrival.

## FOOD ALLERGIES & DIETARY NEEDS

- We can accommodate a variety of food allergies at camp, please be sure to include food allergies on the health form. Special dietary examples such as: vegetarian, celiac/gluten free, no pork, lactose free, etc.
- We **can not** accommodate food preferences or dislikes. Our menu is kid friendly and each meal is well balanced and fits all nutritional needs.
- Campers are encouraged to try everything!

## LICE

- We ask that you check your daughter for head lice prior to arrival at camp.
- Head lice can spread quickly in the summer camp environment and while we can take precautions at camp, it is much more effective to have lice treated and removed BEFORE arriving at camp.
- Please make sure your daughter brings her own hairbrush, hair elastics, and understands the importance of not sharing hair brushes, hats or headbands with anyone.

## SUN SAFETY

- For protection from the sun's rays, we encourage campers to wear sunhats, sunglasses, sun-shirts over bathing suits and sunscreen with a rating of 30 SPF or higher.

# TRANSPORTATION TO CAMP

There are two transportation options that you may choose from to get to camp: **Bus or Car**. Either method of transportation will take the campers directly to our boat launch and from there, the girls will travel by boat to the island. **ALL Stepping Stones campers will depart by CAR on Sunday, we do not run a bus.**

Please check your [CampBrain Account](#) to confirm what transportation method you have chosen.

## TO CAMP (Friday, June 23rd):

### If your child is taking the bus TO camp

- Please arrive at the bus location to camp no later than 9:45am. Further details and instructions will be sent to you by email. **The bus departs at 10:30am.**
- Check in with camp staff (they will be wearing neon shirts) and they will give you further instructions.
- Parents are to remain off of the bus to ensure a positive transition for campers.
- Please label all luggage clearly with your daughter's name.
- Hand luggage (i.e. camper's backpack) should include a raincoat, a picnic lunch with a drink and a life jacket for the boat trip into camp.
- Please pack a nut safe lunch. Campers will either eat on the bus or as soon as they arrive at camp.

### Mi-A-Kon-Da bus location:

[IKEA in Vaughan \(parking lot, section G\) at Hwy 400 & Hwy 7](#)

### If your child is arriving by car

- Please arrive at Auld's landing at 2:00pm. Further details and instructions will be emailed to you prior to the start of Stepping Stones.
- There will be a series of check in points upon arrival. Please follow the instructions that our staff give you including which direction to drive and where to unload luggage.
- Please ensure that all campers have their lifejacket accessible to use for the boat ride.
- Detailed directions for how to get to camp can be found [here](#).

### The address that you must use in your GPS is:

[Auld's Landing \(99 McLennan Lane, Wahwashkesh, ON\)](#)

- Please do not enter "Camp Mi-A-Kon-Da" as this will take you to our winter office location.

# TRANSPORTATION FROM CAMP

**ALL Stepping Stones campers will depart by car on Sunday. We will not be running a bus and we invite all families over to the island for a tour of the camp.**

## FROM CAMP (Sunday, June 25th):

- Please arrive at [Auld's landing](#) at 12:15pm on Sunday, June 25th. Lunch will not be served to visitors this year. Additional details will be emailed to you prior to the start of Stepping Stones.
- There will be a series of check in points upon arrival. Please follow the instructions that our staff give you including which direction to drive and where to pick up luggage.

## GENERAL VISITING INFORMATION

- If you are bringing another child to visit, we encourage you to bring a fitted lifejacket for them. We have several adult sized lifejackets that parents are welcome to use while boating to and from the island, however we recommend that additional children visiting bring their own lifejacket.
- Dogs are welcome and must be kept on a leash at all times.
- **We have nut-free and no cell phone camp policies that we ask all visitors to respect.**

## PLACES TO STAY NEAR CAMP

- Parents frequently travel from far distances. If you are interested in overnight accommodations in the area, Parry Sound is just a 30 minute drive away and offers numerous Bed and Breakfasts, hotel & motel accommodations.
- [Click here](#) for a list of nearby accommodations.
- Please remember that this area is very busy in the summer and rooms book quickly.



**A copy of the clothing and equipment list can be found [here](#).**

- To prevent loss, every article of clothing and bedding should be clearly labeled with permanent laundry marker, iron-on or sew-on name labels. For quality, easy to use labels, visit [Mabel's Labels](#).
- There is little need to bring items not listed on the packing list.
- Camp Mi-A-Kon-Da does not accept responsibility for any clothing or equipment that is lost, broken or stolen while at camp.
- We ask that all campers and families respect our NO CELL PHONE policy. Cell phones must be left at home.
- We encourage all campers and staff to use biodegradable and phosphate-free products (shampoo, soap, toothpaste, etc.). Biodegradable products are available at many grocery stores and pharmacies.
- Please ensure that your daughter comes with at least one pair of shoes she can use for running and active activities..

## Things campers should NOT bring to camp:

- Cell phones
- iPod's & MP3 players
- Stereos/radios
- Handheld consoles
- Expensive watches
- Jewelry
- Cash
- Food



**Birch Island's remote location is unique to Mi-A-Kon-Da; we do not have regular access to electricity. The best and most effective ways to communicate with us can be found below.**

## COMMUNICATING WITH THE CAMP OFFICE

### EMAIL: [info@miakonda.com](mailto:info@miakonda.com)

- Email is the best way to connect with us throughout the summer; Pam & Catherine check their emails on a daily basis and will respond to messages as soon as they are able.
- Please keep in mind that they are not as immediately available as they are during the off season.

### PHONE: 1-905-516-9382

- This is our summer phone number; if we are in the office, we will answer the phone. However, if you can't reach us immediately, **please leave a message** and we'll get back to you as soon as possible!
- Pam & Catherine are often out of the camp office, engaging with campers and staff and supervising the camp program
- We do not permit our campers to talk to parents over the phone.

## COMMUNICATING WITH YOUR DAUGHTER

- Due to the nature of our Stepping Stones program and the shortened stay at camp, we do not encourage camper mail.
- Our program is busy and filled with a lot of activities, the campers are always moving.
- Campers may not call home during their stay at camp.
- We will be in touch with you if there is a need to be!



# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

## Can I send my daughter with snacks for camp?

- Please do not send food to camp with your daughter. We have a well balanced menu for the program and campers enjoy a child friendly meal, 3 times a day. We also have a fruit bowl available at all times and provide snacks throughout the day.
- Some campers have food allergies and food sent may cause a serious health risks.
- Food arriving at camp will be removed and disposed of.
- We are a nut free camp. PLEASE DO NOT send or bring anything to camp that contains nuts or nut products.

## Will my daughter need cash?

- No, campers do not need cash at camp. Please keep cash and all other valuables at home.

## Is Stepping Stones set up like a regular Mi-A-Kon-Da camp program?

- The day schedule follows closely to a regular day at camp but there will be additional activities each day so that the girls can experience the most of the activities Mi-A-Kon-Da offers.
- There are a few differences between the programs and those decisions are made with thoughtful consideration.

## Who will be caring for my daughter while she is at camp?

- Your daughter will be in the reliable care of our experienced counsellor staff and alumni.
- The counsellor camper ratio is typically 1:2 and the counsellors stay with their assigned groups at all times.

## Where will my daughter sleep when they are at camp?

- The girls will be staying in cabins during their stay at Mi-A-Kon-Da. Each camper has their own bed, and there are typically 4 - 8 beds in each cabin. During Stepping Stones, counsellors will be staying in the cabin with the campers.



# DAILY SCHEDULE

A day at Stepping Stones starts at 7:30am with the wake up whistle and ends at 9:00pm. The program during the day varies for each small group, however every camper has the chance to try a variety of traditional camp activities and team programs!

7:30am	Wake Up Whistle
8:00am	Pajama Breakfast (Teddy Bears welcome!)
8:30am	O'Canada and Sing Song at Front Rocks
9:10am	Tidy Cabins
9:45am	Activity Period #1
10:45am	Activity Period #2
11:45am	Free Swim (optional)
12:30pm	Lunch
1:15pm	Rest Hour
2:30pm	Activity Period #3
3:45pm	Activity Period #4
5:00pm	Showers
5:45pm	Dinner
6:30pm	Getting Ready for Evening Program
7:15pm	EP (Evening Program)
9:00pm	Cabin Group Time & Lights Out

Whether your daughter arrives at camp by bus or car, she will be dropped off at our boat launch and she, along with all her new friends, will load into our camp boats that will take them over to the island. Once she arrives on the island, your daughter will be greeted by Catherine and her counsellor along with her cabinmates.

During our Stepping Stones programs, campers and counsellors travel together in their small groups - the campers will get to see the whole island!

# HOMESICKNESS

Not all children will get homesick, however it is important to talk about the potential of missing home prior to your child's arrival at camp. Homesickness can happen at any age and especially with younger children, they may not be familiar with the feeling so it's important to prepare them. Here are some tips:

## 1. REASSURANCE

Camp is a safe place, you as a family have selected this summer adventure for your child. Together, you have intentionally chosen this exciting, new adventure which means that you trust that this is a good choice. Prior to camp, talk about what your daughter's time away is going to look like and reassure her that this is a positive choice with affirmations such as:

- **"I can't wait to hear all about your time at camp, I wish I was a kid again and could do what you're doing!"**
- **"If I was going to camp, I think my favourite activity would be canoeing! What activity are you most looking forward to trying?"**

## 2. VALIDATION

The icky feeling that starts in our stomach when you're thinking about home and everything you miss. That feeling is totally normal and kids need to know that if or when that feeling starts, they have the skills and courage to address it and overcome it. Validate the fact that if she starts missing home, this is okay.

- **"You're going to have so much fun during your Stepping Stones adventure! There may be some moments when you miss home and you know what? That is okay! It is natural and normal to feel like this."**
- **If you start missing home when you're at camp, what's a good way to handle that? Who can you talk to? What can you do?"**

**As a parent, it is important that you do not tell your child that you will come and pick them up if they are feeling sad and are missing home.** This does not set your child up for success as she will believe that she can go home as soon as she starts thinking of or missing home. It is important to build a foundation for success.



**SEE YOU  
THIS  
SUMMER!**

We are looking forward to welcoming your daughter(s) to Camp Mi-A-Kon-Da this summer. We know that now, more than ever, a space like camp is exactly where children want to be. The space to explore, gain independence and build their self esteem. A place where they can connect with friends and counsellors, a space where they can be themselves.

The safety and health of our campers and staff remains our highest priority and we look forward to answer any questions you may have about our 2023 summer season.

Below, you can find a list of additional resources that you can explore as you prepare for your upcoming summer camp adventure at Mi-A-Kon-Da.

## **ADDITIONAL MATERIALS AND RESOURCES FOR PARENTS AND CAMPERS:**

- [The Benefits of Sending your Kid to Overnight Summer Camp](#)
- [Why Making Friends Is One of the Most Important Things That Happens at Summer Camp](#)
- [Canadian Summer Camp Research Project](#)
- [Today's Parent: How to Deal with a Homesick Camper](#)