

# Community Classes, Summer Camps, and Day-off Camps

## FET Learning Topic for 12/8 Meeting

### [Chat GPT](#) search for Information

This link will take you to the search. At the bottom is a list of sources.

If you're a parent of an elementary-age child in Boulder County thinking about summer camp signup, there are a few key things to know — deadlines, paperwork, cost & financial aid, availability, and planning ahead. I'll walk you through what tends to apply broadly (especially for camps run by the city, district, or common local providers).

---

#### ✓ What to expect / what to do ahead of time

##### **Registration often goes fast & fills up early**

- Many camps in City of Boulder Parks & Recreation fill quickly once registration opens. For 2026, for instance, the “summer camp guide” becomes available early each year, and registration typically starts in mid-February. ([City of Boulder](#))
- Some specialized or popular camps (arts, sports, nature, certain weeks) get fully booked, so it's smart to have a “plan B” in case your first choice gets taken.

##### **Paperwork is mandatory (health, emergency contact, immunization, permissions)**

- For most camps — whether city-run, district, or private — you'll need to complete health/medication/emergency info forms. For example, City of Boulder camps use an online system called ePACT for camper paperwork. ([City of Boulder](#))
- Until that's done, your child may not be allowed to attend. ([City of Boulder](#))

##### **Fees vary — and there are financial-aid or subsidy options**

- Some camps have different fees for residents vs. non-residents (for example, City of Boulder camps). ([City of Boulder](#))
- If you qualify (e.g. based on income, public assistance, or other criteria), you may be able to apply for support. For example, financial aid or a discount program called PLAYpass helps reduce costs for qualified families. ([PLAY Boulder Foundation](#))
- Keep in mind that some subsidies or assistance programs may have limited capacity or criteria; it's worth applying early if you might qualify.

##### **Registration usually includes deposit or full payment, and cancellation / refund policies vary**

- For City of Boulder camps, a deposit (non-refundable) is often required at registration, with the balance due by a certain time before the camp starts. ([City of Boulder](#))
- Some camps may not refund fees if you cancel after a certain date; make sure to check each camp's cancellation policy. For example, in one local private-school-based camp, refunds were not available after a cutoff date. ([bouldercountryday.org](#))

##### **There are many types of camps: daytime, enrichment, sports, nature/outdoor, excursions — pick what fits your child and schedule**

- The City of Boulder offers “general recreation camps” for kids ~5–14, with a mix of activities: arts & crafts, gym games, swimming, etc. ([City of Boulder](#))
- There are also nature-focused camps like Thorne Nature Experience — for kids ages ~5–11 — that emphasize outdoor exploration, natural science, outdoor skills and get kids outside in parks and open spaces. ([Thorne Nature Experience](#))
- Some camps offer “full summer” registration, while others offer flexible “week-by-week” or “day-camp” scheduling — which can help parents trying to mix work + summer childcare. ([Active Kids](#))

---

### What you should plan and watch out for

- **Set reminders** — Once registration windows open (often mid-Feb or early March for many programs), have your calendar ready and login credentials set so you don't miss the opening.
- **Prepare paperwork ahead** — You'll need to upload health forms, immunization records, emergency contacts, pick-up authorization, etc. Make sure your child's immunizations are up to date.
- **Know your backup plans** — Because camps fill fast, think of alternate camps / weeks to sign up for. If a camp offers wait-lists, get on them.
- **Check financial-aid availability early** — If cost is a factor, apply for subsidies / aid early (or when application windows open), as funds might be limited.
- **Read drop-off/pick-up & safety policies** — Many camps require daily sign-in/sign-out, and some charge late-pickup fees if you're not on time.
- **Check refund / cancellation policies** — Camps often require deposit + full payment by a deadline, and may not offer refunds if canceled after a certain date.

---

### Good to check but often overlooked

- **Residency vs non-resident pricing:** If you live in Boulder city — you may get a resident rate; non-residents (or those outside “city limits”) often pay more. ([City of Boulder](#))
- **Sibling / family discounts or extra fees:** Some camps offer sibling discounts or different pricing for additional children; verify cost if you have more than one child attending.
- **Transportation or shuttle availability:** For outdoor or nature camps, sometimes shuttle or transportation may be offered only if enough kids sign up. ([Wild Bear Nature Center - We Are Nature](#))
- **Special needs / medical care accommodations:** If your child needs medication, special care, or accommodations, make sure you complete and submit all required paperwork — including medical plans, allergy action plans, etc. ([City of Boulder](#))

---

Here's a “starter list” of 8–10 summer camps in or near Boulder County for elementary-age kids (roughly ages 5–12), including a variety of themes (nature, arts, STEAM, general day camp). I include what I know now about ages, structure, registration timing, and notable features. Because 2026 info is still rolling out, double-check each camp's website for updated dates/prices when registration opens.

---

### Recommended Camps for Boulder County Kids (2026 & near-future)

Camp / Provider	Ages / Age Range	What's Great / Notes
Thorne Nature Experience	Ages 5–14 <a href="#">Thorne Nature Experience+2Thorne Nature Experience+2</a>	Outdoor-based day camps (Boulder, Lafayette, Longmont): nature exploration, wilderness skills, animal/eco learning, creek & forest play; good for kids who love outdoors. Registration for 2026 opens in <b>January</b> . <a href="#">Thorne Nature Experience</a>

<b>City of Boulder Youth Camps</b> (general recreation / day camps)	Ages <b>5–14</b> <a href="#">City of Boulder+1</a>	Traditional “recreation” summer camps — mix of arts/crafts, games, recreation. Use an online system for paperwork (ePACT) and offer waitlists if camps fill. <a href="#">City of Boulder</a>
<b>Steve &amp; Kate’s Camp</b> (Boulder location)	Ages <b>5–12</b> <a href="#">Steve &amp; Kate's Camp+1</a>	Flexible “drop-in / day-pass” structure (8:00 am–6:00 pm) — good for families needing unpredictable or flexible coverage. Includes meals/snacks. <a href="#">Steve &amp; Kate's Camp</a>
<b>Camp Galileo – Boulder branch</b>	Elementary ages (varies by week) <a href="#">Galileo Camps  </a>	STEAM-focused camp: hands-on projects, outdoor games, design & experiment themes — good for kids interested in science, creativity, teamwork. <a href="#">Galileo Camps  </a>
<b>Tinker Art Studio</b> (plus affiliated art-camp locations)	~ ages <b>5–12+</b> depending on camp	Art- and creativity-oriented camps (drawing, pottery, crafts, themed camps) — good for creative kids and those who enjoy arts. <a href="#">tinkerartstudio.com</a>
<b>Bear Creek Summer Camp</b> (in Bear Creek / nearby)	Ages <b>6–11</b> <a href="#">bcrec</a>	Weekly day-camp offering a mix: science experiments, arts, sports/games, pool/swim time, hikes/river play — a balanced mix of indoor/outdoor. <a href="#">bcrec</a>
<b>ABC Kids Climbing</b>	Ages <b>5–17</b> (younger campers included) <a href="#">Boulder County Kids+1</a>	For kids interested in climbing, movement, physical activity — indoor/outdoor hybrid camps, may appeal to energetic or adventurous children. <a href="#">Boulder County Kids</a>
<b>Avid4 Adventure – Explorer Camp (for youngest kids)</b>	Ages ~5–6 (entering Kindergarten or 1st grade) <a href="#">Avid4 Adventure</a>	Short (~one-week) “starter” outdoor/adventure camp — a good way to ease very young kids into camp life with high staff-to-child ratio. <a href="#">Avid4 Adventure</a>

#### ✓ What to Check / Watch Out For (for These Picks)

- **Registration windows:** For example, Thorne opens registration in **January** for the coming summer. [Thorne Nature Experience](#)
- **Paperwork required:** Many camps (especially city-run or multi-camp providers) require immunization, health, emergency contact forms, often via online systems like ePACT. [City of Boulder+1](#)
- **Flexibility vs rigid schedules:** Some camps (like Steve & Kate’s) offer flexible “day-pass / drop-in” plans — nice if your summer schedule fluctuates. [Steve & Kate's Camp+1](#)
- **Camp type matters:** If your child loves outdoors — Thorne, Bear Creek, ABC Climbing, Avid4 or climbing-type camps might suit. If they prefer art/STEAM — Tinker Art Studio or Camp Galileo may be a better fit.
- **Cost & extras vary:** Some include meals/snacks & extended hours (e.g. Steve & Kate’s), others may have additional materials fees (e.g. certain weeks at Camp Galileo). [Galileo Camps |+1](#)

## Information gathered by Fireside Families & Staff

[SAC ADventure Camps - day off camps](#)

[Lifelong Learning Classes](#) - after school at Fireside, 50% off for families with district waived fees

[Louisville Rec Center](#) - youth activities, registration for spring opens on 12/10 (day off camps), scholarships available

[Raised in the Rockies](#), Family and Parenting Guide

[BVSD Summer Summit](#) - summer school, initially by invitation only determined by student academic needs (all ELD); free of cost, month of June, M-Th, 7:50-2:50

### **Summer Camps /Summer Kids Activities in Boulder County:**

- [Avid4 Adventure](#)
- [Got Game](#)
- [Sailing Camp](#)
- [GameOn! Sports4Girls](#)
- Boulder Valley [YMCA Summer Camps](#); [Sports](#)
- Boulder JCC [Cherryvale Day Camp](#)
- [BVSD Summer Camp](#)
- [Dolphin Swim Team](#)
- [Boulder Equestrian Center](#)
- Impact Sports- [Summer Kids Camps](#)
- [Louisville Rec Center Camp](#)
- [Rocky Mt Day Camp](#)
- [Thorne Nature Summer Camps](#)
- [Sunflower Farm](#)
- The [Arts Hub](#) (Lafayette)
- [BVSD Community Connections](#)
- [BVSD Lifelong Learning Camps](#)
- [WOW Children's Museum](#) - \$10 annual pass available for families who qualify for financial assistance
- [Louisville Public Library](#); [Calendar of Events](#); [Services](#)
- [Boulder Library](#); [Maker Space](#); [Calendar of Events](#)
- [Downtown Boulder Events](#); [Bands on the Bricks](#)
- [Boulder Open Space and Mountain Parks](#)
- [Dairy Arts Center, Boulder](#)
- [ABC Climbing Gym](#)
- [Chautauqua Park](#); [Hiking information](#)
- [RTD Public Bus Service](#) - [Flatiron Flyer](#) Boulder to Denver; stops at McCaslin and 36th
- [The Colorado Mountain Ranch](#)
- [72 Summer Camps from Whitney Barnett](#)
- A [collection of flyers](#) about free summer opportunities for students with organizations like Thorne, Rocky Mountain Conservancy, Medicine Horse (and a few from Cal-Wood that cost just \$50 for a full week)
- [SCFD Free Days at Cultural Organizations](#)
- [BVSD Community Connections](#)
- [My Nature Lab](#)