



YUNASA EAST 2026 PARENT PACKET

Dear Yunasa East Parents,

Thank you for enrolling your child in Yunasa. This handbook is designed to acquaint you with the procedures and practical details of our program.

It is our goal for all Yunasa campers to grow socially, emotionally, intellectually, spiritually, and physically; to expand their comfort zones by taking appropriate risks; to build lasting relationships; and to celebrate their own uniqueness and the uniqueness of others.

As camp rapidly approaches, we hope that you and your camper are looking forward to Yunasa as much as we are. The following important information should assist you and your camper in preparing for camp. Please do not hesitate to e-mail me at varceo@educationaladvancement.org or call (626) 403-8900 if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Vivian Arceo
Program Coordinator

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BEFORE CAMP STARTS

FORMS

The enrollment process consists of three steps, all of which need to be completed by the deadline provided in your child's acceptance email.

1. Yunasa East/Enrollment Form, including Medical and Travel
2. Howell Nature Center Medical Form
3. Enrollment Deposit (see below)

DEPOSIT & BALANCE

A non-refundable enrollment deposit of \$350 is required to hold your place at camp. This deposit will be credited towards camp tuition. Please follow the links provided in your child's acceptance email. **If you have been granted tuition assistance, please pay the deposit amount provided in your award letter.*

Your camper's remaining tuition balance, including any travel fees, will need to be paid prior to their arrival to camp. A Final Invoice for the remaining tuition will be emailed prior to the start of camp.

CANCELLATIONS & REFUNDS

Yunasa program fees, including the \$50 application fee, \$350 enrollment deposit, and tuition are non-refundable and due by the deadlines noted on our website:

<https://educationaladvancement.org/programs/yunasa/tuition-and-aid/#cancellation>.

Up to 3 weeks before camp, campers who are no longer able to attend camp due to injury, illness, or other unforeseen circumstances may be given a refund, less application fee and enrollment deposit on case-by-case basis. Within three weeks before camp, no refunds will be granted apart from rare exceptions. If you can no longer participate, please email yunasa@educationaladvancement.org so your spot may be ceded to another camper.

There are no prorations or refunds for campers choosing to arrive late, depart early, or those dismissed from camp early due to behavioral or other challenges related to adjusting to camp, including severe homesickness. Campers who are dismissed from camp early due to breaking the code of conduct are not eligible for partial or full refunds.

HOUSING AND ACCOMMODATIONS:

Yunasa East campers reside in dormitory style cabins with other campers and a camp counselor. Campers who identify as male or female are separated into separate wings and have the use of a restroom shared with their cabinmates. Each wing is monitored by a counselor of the same gender. We will make every effort to provide gender-inclusive housing for campers who request this option, but since space is limited, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to meet every request.

Each wing will have 1-2 counselors residing with campers. Staff are assigned to housing units with

consideration given to gender identity and expression.

MONEY FOR CAMP

If your child is interested in purchasing merchandise from the Howell Nature Center store or would like to buy a Yunasa sweatshirt, campers will be able to check out their money from the Yunasa staff during Siesta Break times. We recommend sending \$45-60 with your child in cash.

HOMESICKNESS POLICY:

Part of the resident camp experience is adjusting to new situations and people. Some campers make the transition quickly, others more slowly. We know that even veteran campers get homesick. IEA staff, Fellows, and Yunasa counselors are always available throughout the week to provide a listening ear, comfort, and the knowledge that each camper is safe and cared for.

Prior to Camp:

- Avoid offering a pick-up clause. Telling your child, “I’ll come pick you up if you don’t like it” creates undue stress on campers and staff. It is better to assume a camper will make it through the brief adjustment period.
- Watch the recording from our presentation on Preparing Your Gifted or 2e Child for Summer Camp: Independence, Flexibility, and Social-Emotional Growth: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q8Qp7pi1II>
- If possible, attend Yunasa Parent Q&A session (held on Zoom about 2 weeks before camp) with your child so they can meet the Yunasa staff and ask any questions prior to their arrival to camp.

During Camp:

If your child expresses homesickness via correspondence with you, they will probably make the adjustment by the time you reply. By working together with you, we are confident your child will adjust and have a wonderful week.

However, if homesickness stays extreme as the week progresses, we will call parents to discuss the situation. We will work with the camper and parents and will do everything possible for them to make it to the end of the week with a positive experience. In some special cases, it may be the best choice for everyone for the camper to leave early.

WHAT TO PACK CHECKLIST

CLOTHING/EQUIPMENT TO BRING TO CAMP

Please pack enough clothing for one week. Please clearly mark your child's name on all items to prevent loss.

CLOTHING

t-shirts
shorts
underwear
pajamas
sweatshirts
pants
socks
rain gear
***sneakers**
1 or 2 swimsuits

DO NOT BRING

pocketknives
expensive items
laptop computer
cell phone
video games
soda
snacks/candy
pets
Weapons of any kind

BEDDING

***sleeping bag**
***pillow**
sheets & blankets
(if preferred to sleeping bag)

OPTIONAL

musical instruments
playing cards
flashlight
camera
stationary
journal
hat/visor
writing utensils
board games

TOILET ARTICLES

towels/washcloths
beach towel
toothbrush/toothpaste
brush/comb
shampoo and soap

ESPECIALLY IMPORTANT

Yoga mat (if you own one)
calamine lotion
***bug spray**
special dietary foods
***medications**
sunscreen
sunglasses
***refillable water bottle/canteen**
lip balm
nasal spray

***Mandatory item**

OPENING DAY DETAILS

Directions to Camp:

Howell Nature Center
1005 Triangle Lake Road
Howell, MI 48843

Drive into camp and follow the signs for Grindley Lodge (we will also have posted Yunasa signage).

Howell Nature Center is in the Eastern Time zone.

CHECK IN DATES:

- Graduating Leadership 2 Campers: Friday, July 10th, 2026 (*one day earlier*)
- Leadership 1 Campers & Non-Leadership Campers: Saturday, July 11, 2026

SATURDAY CHECK IN: July 11, 2026

Drive into Howell Nature Center and drive to the back of the camp, following signs for “All Housing” and “Grindley”. **Registration will take place at a tent set up in front of Grindley, where there is a large parking lot.** Directions/maps are included in this packet.

Opening Day Parent Orientation:

- Saturday, July 11th starting at 4:00pm.

ARRIVING TO CAMP:

Arrival for **DRIVING** Campers:

Arrival Time to Howell Nature Center on Saturday, July 11, 2026: 3:30pm-5:00pm.

Arrival Times for **FLYING** Campers:

Departure Times from DTW on Saturday, July 11, 2026 at 11:00am-3:00pm.

***Please note that if your camper has a flight scheduled before or after this time, we cannot guarantee transport or supervision for them. Campers who need an IEA shuttle must fly out within the time window specified.**

GRADUATING LEADERSHIP 2 CAMPERS

Arrival Time on Friday, July 10, 2026:

FLYING to Yunasa East: 11:00am-3:00pm. (IEA will provide \$50/one way shuttle from DTW)

DRIVING to Yunasa East: 3:30pm-5:00pm.

Graduating Leadership 1 and Leadership 1 campers will arrive with all other campers on Saturday, July 11, 2026.

FLYING CAMPERS & IEA SHUTTLE DETAILS:

If your camper will be flying to attend Yunasa and needs transportation to camp, you camper must fly into DTW (Detroit Metro Airport). You will be charged an additional fee of \$50/one way for IEA transportation. If your camper does not fly into or out of Detroit (DTW) within the specified time slots, IEA will not be able to provide transportation to or from the airport.

*Usually, children who are 14 and under may fly as unaccompanied minors. If flying under “**Unaccompanied Minor**” status as designated by the airline, you will be charged an additional fee of \$35/for each time used. We cannot treat any child as an unaccompanied minor (e.g. provide an IEA chaperone to meet them at their gate) if he or she is not deemed one by the airline. Please check with the airline for more information regarding their policies and fees.

Detroit Metro Airport, Detroit, MI (DTW) – *Airport Campers Will Need to Fly into for Shuttle*
(Approximately 60 miles from Howell Nature Center)

Yunasa East provides a shuttle service from Detroit Metro Airport to Howell Nature Center. Counselors and staff will be present at DTW to meet campers flying in from 11:00am-3:00pm on Saturday, July 11, 2026. The staff will escort campers to a bus that will transport campers to Howell Nature Center to check in. (There will only be one trip made from DTW to camp).

If your camper does not fly into or out of DTW within the specified time slot, IEA will not be able to provide transportation to or from the airport.

If your child will need the shuttle or unaccompanied minor pick-up service, please indicate this in the Yunasa enrollment form.

Please send flight information as soon as it is confirmed if you have not already done so. If your camper is traveling as an unaccompanied minor to DTW, we will provide all necessary information very soon regarding the individual who will pick your camper up from the airport.

Overview of additional fees:

- IEA Shuttle: \$50/one way or \$100 (roundtrip)
- Unaccompanied Minor: \$35/one way or \$70 (roundtrip)

CLOSING DAY DETAILS

SATURDAY CLOSING PROGRAM AND CHECKOUT: July 18, 2026:

Yunasa East will culminate in a celebration in which all campers will receive a certificate of participation, and staff will present the Yunasa East 2026 slideshow. This is an exciting and emotional time for campers and staff, and if you are in the area, we invite you to share this experience with your child.

Checkout will follow the Closing Celebration. If you are picking your child up and cannot attend the closing ceremony, **please plan to arrive no later than 11:00am.**

Closing Celebration Details on Saturday, July 18th:

- Meet the Fellows (just families; campers will be packing up): Starting at 9:00am
- Closing Celebration (campers and families): Starting at 9:45am

If your child is flying home and has selected to use the IEA shuttle to the airport, they will leave camp by **11:15am**. We ask that campers' flights depart from **DTW** (Detroit airport) between **3:30pm and 6:00pm** to allow for ample time. Please also pay for any checked baggage ahead of time.

DEPARTURE FROM CAMP:

Departure for **DRIVING** Campers:

Departure Time from Howell Nature Center on Saturday, July 18, 2026: 11:00am.

Departure Times for **FLYING** Campers:

Departure Times from DTW on Saturday, July 18, 2026: 3:30pm-6:00pm.

***Please note that if your camper has a flight scheduled before or after this time, we cannot guarantee transport or supervision for them. Campers who need an IEA shuttle must fly out within the time window specified.**

A TYPICAL DAY AT YUNASA:

Time	Activity
8:00-8:10 a.m.	Call in the Directions
8:15-8:45 a.m.	Breakfast/Schedule/Word of the Day
8:45-9:30 a.m.	Yoga
9:45-10:45 a.m.	Psychosynthesis: (guided visualizations; meditation)
11:00-12:15 p.m.	SESSION I: Camper Options (e.g., low ropes, archery, kayaking, etc.)
12:30-1:30 p.m.	Lunch
1:45-2:15 p.m.	Siesta (rest, shower, quiet time)
2:30-3:00 p.m.	Elder Chat
3:00-4:30 p.m.	Fellows' Workshops (e.g., Labyrinth, Nature Hike, etc.)
4:45-5:45 p.m.	SESSION II: Camper Options (e.g., kayaking, arts and crafts, Leap of Faith, etc.)
6:00-6:45 p.m.	Dinner
6:45-7:15 p.m.	Prep for evening activity
7:30-9:00 p.m.	Evening activity (e.g., campfire, movie night, ice cream social, etc.)
9:15-9:30 p.m.	Prepare for bed
9:30 p.m.	Lights out

Note: Campers are encouraged to try new activities that will challenge them to expand their comfort zones. However, neither IEA nor the camp staff will ever force a camper to participate in an activity in which she/he does not feel comfortable.

Answers to Frequently Asked Questions

PHONE & TECHNOLOGY POLICY:

Contacting home: Use of the camp telephone is not permitted in case of an emergency. We encourage campers not to call home due to homesickness because it often causes undue stress on both the camper and the parent. Contacting family and friends during the week distracts from the opportunity to integrate into the unique community of peers at Yunasa Michigan.

Cell phone and/or Smartwatch use are not permitted for campers during the week of camp. We respect the relationship that our campers have with their families. However, Yunasa is a community that helps campers develop life skills which include independence and self-reliance.

Some of our campers use music to fall asleep at night. If this is critical for your child, please find another way for him or her to access music quietly on a device that does not also make calls. IEA will not be responsible for damage or loss of electronic devices.

If there is an emergency or a concern regarding a child's well-being, we will contact the family immediately.

We understand that many campers will use cell phones to check in with their parents when flights arrive safely. **If a camper brings a cell phone or Smartwatch to camp, it will be collected during check-in and held by IEA staff until the final afternoon of camp.** IEA will not be responsible for any damages to or loss of the cell phone, although every effort will be made to protect and keep all personal items safe. In the event of an emergency, campers will be allowed to use an IEA staff member's cell phone or the camp phone.

To contact camp: In the event of an emergency, please reach out to the following numbers below. For any non-emergencies, please e-mail Vivian Arceo at varceo@educationaladvancement.org; IEA staff will check e-mail throughout the week. Other calls should be made to the camp office at 517-546-0249 between the hours of 9:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m.; please inform the Howell Nature Center staff that you are calling regarding Yunasa, and they will contact the appropriate staff member.

Howell Nature Center Camp Office Number: (517) 546-0249

Vivian Arceo's Google Voice Number (also available for texting): (626) 344-9323

FOOD:

Please do not pack candy, cookies, sodas, or any food items that may contain peanuts or tree nuts of any kind!

Well-balanced meals are provided three times a day. Extra candy and drinks might sound like

fun; however, unmonitored food might cause problems in the cabins with vermin and with potential food allergies or dietary restrictions among other campers. **All campers should bring a refillable bottle or canteen clearly labeled with their name** to fill with water, which is always available at multiple stations throughout camp. If your child has a special medical concern that requires the consumption of food at a time other than breakfast, lunch, or dinner, please let me know and we will devise a successful plan together. If your child has specific dietary needs, please inform us in advance and we will do our best to accommodate him or her.

****If your camper has a restricted diet and can only eat particular foods, you may send food items with your camper as long as they are clearly marked with your child's name.**

****Do not send any food items that may contain peanuts or tree nuts of any kind!**

MAIL:

Letters from family and friends are always welcome. Please address mail thusly:

Child's Name/**Camp Yunasa**
Howell Nature Center
1005 Triangle Lake Road
Howell, MI 48843

NOTE:

Please do not send food in the mail. Please note that you should try to mail letters to your child by Tuesday, or they may not arrive in time.

VISITORS:

Parents are free to tour Howell Nature Center from 3:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. on opening day. Otherwise, we do not schedule any visitor days during the week of Yunasa. If an emergency necessitates a visit, we will make arrangements.

MEDICATION:

Please submit IEA's and Howell Nature Center's medical forms provided in your enrollment email. If you send medication of any kind, it must be sent in its original packaging, clearly marked with your child's name. Please be sure to include the camper's full name, exact description of contents, and complete instructions for dosage. Please include sufficient dosage for the duration of camp. Please place all medications in a large plastic Zip-loc bag.

All medications (prescription and OTC) will be kept and handled by the Howell Nature Center Health Center staff for the duration of camp. Unidentified medication will not be dispensed. No medications will be permitted in the cabins. EXCEPTIONS: Campers may keep topical creams, ointments, lotions, and shampoos in their toiletry bag.

CLOTHING AND EQUIPMENT:

Please use the “What to Bring” list as a guide for packing your camper's clothing. You should avoid sending your camper’s nicest clothes to camp. Please remind your child to check for any missing clothes prior to leaving camp. **We are not responsible for any belongings left behind and are unable to send items back to a camper once they have left camp.**

SNEAKERS:

Some activities require closed-toe sneakers, and we recommend comfortable sneakers as campers’ main footwear for the week. Shoes must also have a closed heel.

CAMP STORE:

Campers may want to bring spending money to purchase souvenir items at the camp store, although camp store hours will vary, and we cannot guarantee camper access.

CAMPER ELIGIBILITY

Part of the residential camp experience is adjusting to new situations and people. Some campers make the transition quickly, others slowly.

To ensure your camper is set up for success at camp, they must meet the following eligibility requirements:

- Meet the program age range (10-15) at the time of camp, unless identified as a Leadership Camper (15-16)
- Be comfortable being away from and out of contact with family members for the duration of the program
- Be able to share a communal living space with other campers (cabins can range from 8-14 campers per space)
- Follow directions and rules from adults other than parents or familiar caregivers
- Be without access to cell phones, e-watches, or devices that can connect to the internet and/or have voice and text capabilities starting from their arrival at camp
- Operate independently, but with supportive supervision, when it comes to self-care such as hygiene, meal selection, emotional regulation, sleeping through the night, notifying an adult if feeling unwell, etc.
- Approach tools and workshop activities provided by Yunasa staff with an open mind and “challenge by choice” attitude, either trying new things or questioning/discussing them in a respectful manner.
- If experiencing anxiety, they should understand that they should let an adult know (can set up code words or signals ahead of time if this is anticipated), but their reaction to must not be to run, hide, or do anything to put themselves or others in danger

Please consider these eligibility requirements. If you feel you or your Yunasa camper may have difficulty with any of these essential functions, please reach out to yunasa@educationaladvancement.org so we can help determine if it is a good fit for your family at this time.

Health Eligibility:

If your child becomes ill with a contagious or communicable illness in the days before camp, please keep them home from camp and notify the staff immediately.

Campers **should not attend** Yunasa if:

- They have a fever of 100.4°F or higher or have had a fever within the 24 hours before traveling to camp
- They have vomited or had diarrhea within the previous 24 hours
- They have a sore throat or upset stomach beyond what is normal for their constitution
- They are coughing excessively, or their chest and nose are severely congested
- There are any signs of contagious infection such as pink eye, etc.

DISMISSAL POLICY:

The reasons for a camper's dismissal from Yunasa generally fall into three categories: serious behavior issues; chronic physical, mental, social, or emotional un-preparedness for camp; or injury/illness occurring while at camp. All Yunasa staff members are trained in the field of gifted education and understand the characteristics and needs of this population. The expectations for camper behavior stem from the idea that each camper's actions, statements, and attitudes should demonstrate respect for self, others, and the world around us.

If a camper's actions, statements, or attitudes negatively impact the community, or if a camper is physically, mentally, socially, or emotionally unprepared for camp activities, Yunasa staff will intervene. A Counselor, Fellow, and/or Program Coordinator will meet with the camper to discuss the issue(s), outline more appropriate behaviors, and set goals.

If an issue continues to have an impact on the camper or camp community, parents/guardians will be contacted. Yunasa staff will inform parents/guardians of the situation and ask them for any suggestions they may have to improve the behavior or address the issue. If the issue or inappropriate behavior continues, the camper will be dismissed. Parents/guardians will be contacted to make travel arrangements for their child's immediate departure from Yunasa. No refund will be issued, and parents/guardians will be responsible for all travel costs. This includes the travel costs of removing a camper from Howell Nature Center. If a camper is dismissed, he or she may be ineligible to return the following year.

The possession and/or use of tobacco, alcohol, illegal drugs, or dangerous weapons are grounds for immediate dismissal. Additionally, a camper who behaves in such a manner that jeopardizes his/her health and safety or the health and safety of others will be sent home.

MEDICAL VOLUNTARY OR INVOLUNTARY WITHDRAWAL FROM CAMP:

If it is necessary for a camper to withdraw from camp due to injury or illness, parents will be contacted by the Program Coordinator. Parents/guardians will be responsible for all travel

costs, including the travel costs of removing a camper from Howell Nature Center. No refund will be granted in case of voluntary withdrawal from camp, and the family will be responsible for transportation costs incurred. Refer to Cancellation and Refunds section on page 3 for further details on our policy.

Yunasa Fellows & Facilitators

Yunasa faculty includes the President and Co-Founder of the *Institute for Educational Advancement* and several Yunasa Fellows, all of whom are nationally known experts in the field of gifted education. Yunasa West 2026 Fellow bios will be made available soon! For a look at our Yunasa 2025 and former Fellows over the years, visit <https://educationaladvancement.org/programs/yunasa/about-yunasa/yunasa-fellows/>

Yunasa Staff

Nicole Fugette



Nicole started teaching for IEA's Academy program in 2016 and joined the staff full-time in fall 2017. Since then, and now as a Senior Program Coordinator, she's enjoyed getting to know IEA's amazing students and watching them grow toward their full potential. Nicole has a bachelor's degree in Biology and completed her master's degree in Science Writing from Johns Hopkins University. When not working, Nicole enjoys learning new things through books and podcasts, experiencing live music, and spending time outdoors.

Vivian Arceo



Vivian Arceo graduated from Santa Clara University with a B.A. in Communication. She has previous experience with nonprofit organizations, working as both a summer camp counselor and program director before joining IEA. She is passionate about fostering community and seeks to create positive social change. Outside of work, Vivian enjoys catching up on her latest novel, discovering new food spots with friends, and stress watching her favorite sport teams.

LOCAL HOTEL ACCOMMODATIONS

Although parents are not involved in the week's activities, some of our parents choose to stay in the area. In the past, some have made it a family vacation. Whatever the reason may be, here is a list of hotel accommodations in the Howell area that may interest you:

Howell/Brighton Area Hotels:

(Under 20 minutes from Howell Nature Center)

Holiday Inn Express Hotel & Suites Brighton

7850 Nemco Way

Brighton, MI 48116

810-225-0600

Candlewood Suites

151 Library Dr

Brighton, MI 48116

810-220-1200

Hampton Inn

8068 Challis Rd

Brighton, MI 48116

810-225-8363

Detroit Area Hotels:

(60 minutes from Howell Nature Center)

Atheneum Suite Hotel

1000 Brush Avenue, Detroit, MI 48226

313-962-2323

CAMP MAP/DIRECTIONS

Site Map

Day-Use Area open 10AM-5PM Daily
Alexandria's Naturescape Open May to October



Heal. Grow.
Be Wild.

Howell Nature Center

Connect to Nature with us!
@howellnaturecenter



YUNASA EAST CONTACT LIST

Howell Nature Center (Emergency only)	(517) 546-0249
Yunasa Staff: Vivian Arceo and Nicole Fugette	yunasa@educationaladvancement.org varceo@educationaladvancement.org nfugette@educationaladvancement.org Google Voice Number (also available for texting): (626) 344-9323
Institute for Educational Advancement Office	(626) 403-8900