CITY OF COSTA MESA ◊ PARKS & COMMUNITY SERVICES DEPARTMENT

L.E.A.P. PROGRAM

PARENT PACKET 2026-2027

We are looking forward to having your child participate in the 2026-2027 L.E.A.P. Program and hope that each participant in our program has a positive experience. Here is some information about how the L.E.A.P. Program operates:

- The L.E.A.P. Program is a non-licensed, yearly childhood program where participants will experience active play, arts & crafts, educational circle time, language literacy, and socialization & development.

- **L.E.A.P. PROGRAM**
  - August 17, 2026 – May 21, 2027 | 8:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.
  - Arrive by 9:10 a.m. as curriculum begins at 9:15 a.m.
  - Session: Monday – Friday | 3-5 years old
  - Program Location: Balearic Community Center (1975 Balearic Drive)
  - Office: (714) 754-5175
  - L.E.A.P. Program observes the NMUSD holiday and break schedule.

- **SIGN-IN/OUT PROCEDURES**
  - Participants must be signed in and out daily by one (1) parent/guardian.
  - The sign in/out form will be located at the entrance of the room.
  - An information board will be located outside at the sign in/out area. It will be updated daily with upcoming activities and important details.
  - Gates lock at 9:10 a.m. and re-open at 1:00 p.m. If you arrive late or need to pick up early, please call (714) 754-5175 to sign in or out of the program.
  - To add to the authorized pick-up list, originally completed upon registration, please submit written consent with authorized adult's name, the date, and parent/guardian's signature. Note, authorized adults may be IDed upon the signing out of the child. If the adult does not have prior consent on the authorized form, child will NOT be dismissed.
  - **Early drop-offs before 8:00 a.m. will not be accepted. Supervision will ONLY be provided until 1:00 p.m. A $20 fee will be charged for every 15 minutes, or part thereof, for late pick-ups.**

- **STAFF AND CLASSROOMS**
  - Staff is comprised of the Parks and Community Services Department's Community Services Leaders.
  - Participants are placed in groups of no more than twenty-two (22) children in each classroom.
  - Each classroom will consist of two to three staff.
  - Staff will sanitize equipment, games, and other touched items before the program begins and at the end of each day.
  - Each participant is assigned a small cubicle called a "cubby" in which their personal and program items are stored. Please check your child's cubby daily for crafts and program related information.

- **ATTIRE**
  - Closed-toe shoes must be worn at the L.E.A.P. Program at all times.
  - Due to the recreation play and activities, play clothes are recommended.

- **PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS**
  - Parent/Guardian must provide proof of child's age to staff on or before the first day of the program.
  - Participants must be fully potty trained to participate in the L.E.A.P. Program. If a participant has a restroom accident, disciplinary action may follow.
  - Failure to comply with L.E.A.P. Program procedures may result in disciplinary action and/or removal from the program.

- **LUNCH/SNACK**
  - Each participant must bring their own water, snack, and lunch daily, labeled with their name.
  - To celebrate a birthday, the parent/guardian will need to communicate the plan with staff to arrange an appropriate time for the celebration. Some days may not be available due to previously planned events.

- **MONTHLY CALENDAR AND NEWSLETTER**
  - The newsletter and calendar will be distributed via email at the beginning of each month. Please read it closely as it contains important information about the program and upcoming events for that month.

- **PHOTOGRAPHS AND CLASS PORTRAITS**
  - Throughout the year, staff will photograph and video class activities, which may be utilized for program promotion on the Parks and Community Services social media platforms, flyers, presentations, etc.
  - Please follow us on Facebook (costamesa.recreation) and Instagram (CM_Recreation) to see current pictures and videos of the L.E.A.P. Program.
  - If you prefer your child not to be photographed, please speak to the Recreation Specialist.
  - Class portraits are taken by Lifetouch, Inc. and various packages will be available for purchase by parents. All purchases are optional.

- **REFUNDS**
  - Request for a refund must be submitted to staff, or cmrecinfo@costamesaca.gov, before or within the first week of the program month.
  - A $20 fee will apply for all refunds.
  - Requests after the first week of the month will not be approved.

- **RETURNED CHECKS**
  - A service charge of $25 will be assessed for any returned checks and must be reconciled with the Finance Department at City Hall.

- **CONTACT INFORMATION**
  - L.E.A.P. Office: (714) 754-5175
  - BCC Office: (714) 754-5158

L.E.A.P. PROGRAM

DAILY SCHEDULE

- **9:00 a.m. - 10:00 a.m. Art and Crafts/Station Play Time**
  - Children will have an opportunity to complete the art and craft project or choose from a variety of stations in the room, that may include blocks, games, dramatic play, science, and puzzles. (self-direction, choice imagination, problem-solving)

- **10:00 a.m. - 10:45 a.m. Educational Circle Time**
  - "Learning through play" is the L.E.A.P motto. Circle time is a group interactive experience that includes educational topics and weekly themes. Activities may include songs, dance, finger plays, books, and musical instruments. (Unity, movement, expression, listening, language, literacy)

- **10:45 a.m. - 11:00 a.m. Snack Time**
  - As children enjoy snacks and lunch provided by parents, they practice table manners, as well as develop social skills while communicating with peers. (Socialization, responsibility, manners)

- **11:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. Outside Play Time**
  - Each day children enjoy the fenced outdoor playground area. Play time includes sand toys, bicycles, kites, group games, and more. (Gross motor skills, movement, socialization)

- **12:00 p.m. - 12:30 p.m. Lunch Time**

- **12:30 p.m. - 1:00 p.m. Story Time**
  - Children experience a variety of stories or dramatic plays that represent the weekly alphabet or themed topic. (Language, imagination, discovery)

Times are flexible and programing is subject to change per classroom.

TRANSITION INTO L.E.A.P.

For some of you, this is your first experience leaving your child in a group environment. It can be difficult to see your child in distress or see them anxious about a new situation.

Please know that staff are very experienced and are here to help your child adjust. Your child needs to know that they will be okay without you at our program. The longer you stay, the longer it takes for children to adjust to this new experience. Our staff enjoy having parents interact in our program, but request to wait until your child is settled into their new environment. The following are a few suggestions to help you and your child acclimate to our program.

SUGGESTIONS:

- ✓ DO familiarize your child with the new class surroundings (e.g., staff, bathrooms, cubbies).
- ✓ DO reassure them that they will have a fun time and you will pick them up after lunch.
- ✓ DO give them a big hug and kiss!
- ✓ DO let us know if you need assistance in your departure.
- ✓ DO talk to them each day about the program (e.g., what art they created, learned in story/song time, or what playtime was like, etc.).
- ✓ LIMIT how long you stay or how early you come in to observe in this adjustment/ transition time.

For any concerns or additional assistance, please call the Recreation Specialist at (714) 754-5175.

WELLNESS PRACTICE

Illnesses are common with children and sometimes it is difficult to know when your child is sick and should stay home. Our Wellness Practice was created as a guide for parents and guardians to determine if your child is sick and should refrain from attending the program. Staff are here to work with you and to provide what is best for your child and for all the children. Below are some guidelines to help decide if your child should stay home.

- ✓ If your child has a temperature of 100 degrees Fahrenheit or higher the night before.
- ✓ If your child is unable to participate in normal recreational activities.
- ✓ Excessive cough, congestion, earaches, any discharge from the throat and/or nose.
- ✓ If exposed to contagious disease within the past 2 weeks and is not feeling well.
- ✓ Vomiting or diarrhea within the previous 24 hours.
- ✓ General not feeling well, is lethargic, irritable, or experiencing unexplained crying the night before.

Rash
Any rash or skin irritation will require that child to be sent home for observation and doctor's evaluation.

Conjunctivitis (pink eye)
Children will be sent home if there appears to be an unusual amount of discharge from or irritation to their eye(s) and must stay home the next day for observation and doctor's evaluation.

- ✓ If the diagnosis is BACTERIAL CONJUNCTIVITIS children must have received at least 24 hours of treatment.
- ✓ If the diagnosis is VIRAL CONJUNCTIVITIS your child may return if there is no discharge.

Head Lice
Children will not be re-admitted until 24 hours after treatment and must be **nit free**. The Recreation Specialist will make an evaluation and determine if the child can be re-admitted.

Strep Throat
Child receives appropriate course of antibiotic and note to return from doctor.

Children with any of the above conditions must be cleared by staff prior to returning or entering our program.

Please keep your child at home for a full day after they have started an antibiotic. Inform staff immediately if your child comes down with a contagious disease.

The L.E.A.P. Program reserves the right to temporarily deny any child admittance to the school for reasons of obvious illness, or to request early departure should symptoms become apparent during the day. Any child who seems unable to participate in our program for any reason will be sent home. This is to ensure the continued good health of all children and staff.

OUR GOAL IS TO KEEP THE L.E.A.P. PROGRAM A HEALTHY ENVIRONMENT FOR EVERYONE!

DISCIPLINARY PROCESS

In most cases, the following "graduated" procedure and steps will be followed when applying discipline and/or correction to a child in the L.E.A.P. Program.

1. **Resolve** - Staff will talk with the child about the incident/behavior, and will attempt to get information, causes, and facts.

2. **Remind** - Program rules will be explained. Staff will talk about how they apply to the child and to others in the program.

3. **Re-Establish & Redirect** – Child could be placed on a time-out (approx. 30 seconds for each year of age) and/or receive a talk about different options that could help the current situation and possible solutions to redirecting the problem in the future.

4. **Reinstate** - Child is returned to the program activity.

Parents/Guardians will be notified daily by program staff about excessive time-outs, corrections, and incidents by placing a note in the cubby, verbal communication, or a phone call.

Parents/Guardians will be contacted for an immediate pick-up if a child continually exhibits behavioral troubles and/or physically hits, bites, kicks, pinches, spits, or causes any malicious harm to other children or to staff.

A disciplinary action form will be then completed by staff about child's behavior documenting the incident. If three (3) Disciplinary Action Forms are completed on a child, their continued participation will be subject to suspension or expulsion from the L.E.A.P. Program.