

# MONKEY BUSINESS CAMP

**GIRLS ON THE GO!** **Boys on the Go!**

Summer + School Break Day Camps for Kids Ages 3 - 16

## Our Philosophy

We started Monkey Business Camp to nurture the creativity and individuality of each child in a loving and magical environment. We develop programs with balance of structured and spontaneous activities, hire incredible and kind staff, and then go about building a thriving community. With these intentions, we have developed a holistic approach to how we run our camps:

### Being Outdoors Is Something We All Need More Of

The most important way we do this is by hosting many of our our camp programs outdoors. Our Tilden program is 100% outdoors, with the remainder of our programs having access to outdoors at least 80% of the time. Planning specific time for nature exploration, being barefoot when it is safe, and inviting naturalists and herbalists to share their knowledge about plants and animals of the area are some ways we expand into this idea. When children have depth experiences in nature, they are sustained in the moment and in an ongoing way, and inspired to protect the wild.

### Play Makes Everything Better

What would camp and life be without play! It's easier to learn something new when it's fun and if you are in a relaxed mood, so our staff bring this joyful spirit to camp days. Playing a competitive or non-competitive game, with laughter and flexibility, builds empathy and trust with others. During the school year, younger people often have a very full schedules, so at camp, we balance structured and non-structured times of day, where some play is initiated by the staff and youth leaders, and some by the campers themselves, so they get to practice leading from within and from each other, as well as being led. Play is a powerful catalyst for positive socialization. Through play, children get to "play nicely" with others—to work together, follow mutually agreed upon rules, and socialize in groups. As adults, we can continue to use play to break down barriers and improve our relationships with others and to experience JOY!

## **We Are Similar and Different**

Camp is a positive force for hanging out with people who are both different than you, as well as finding points of contact and similarity. We believe that this world is better when there is a diversity of opinions, which often comes from growing up in different backgrounds, and each of us coming into this world with unique medicine for the world. We are committed to making a camp experience that is extraordinary for children and families from all sorts of backgrounds. Staff focus on ways to be more inclusive in terms of the language used, the kind of activities provided, and food served. We hire staff from diverse gender, economic, racial, cultural, religious, and sexual orientation backgrounds. There are many barriers to attending our camp, and are doing our part, with scholarship, work exchange and flexible payment plans. In addition, activities we plan are guided by a multiple intelligence's model of how people learn. With interactive games, kinesthetic experiences, expressive art, time in nature, and more, we want both to ground kids in things in which they feel confident, but also stretch them to learn more about those they are not. Our food project team is very conscientious about using Kosher products, as well as providing alternatives for those with allergies or sensitivities. Our dream is to create a camp and a world where there is justice for all, where all people are respected, treated well, and celebrated for who they are and where all can explore what it means to be them!

## **Positive Guidance and Being Friendship Coaches**

We know that conflicts arise at camp and see these as the result of unmet needs. Maybe a camper had a really late night and acts out meanly toward her friends, or a camper is overstimulated and keeps complaining. Staff gets to know the children during their time at camp, so can support them and give positive guidance. Many kids come to camp with friends and some without and we want to support both new and older friendships. We also want kids to learn skills, for navigating the inevitable inter-personal and intra-personal ups and downs of life. Staff ask questions, inquire about camper ideas for how to navigate conflict, and pro-actively play with kids to be a positive guide. Sometimes children do need to sit out, and cool out, but we work on finding out the underlying reason for a child's behavior and work with parents to address. Campers do need to have self-regulation, where they can calm themselves, follow directions, and be kind, and manage where the staff to camper ratio is 1:9 (1:6 at Pre-K), otherwise they will need the extra support of a coach, outside of our staff team. We believe in letting kids know what we want from them, or channeling their energy toward something positive, rather than telling them "no".

## **Eating Healthy and Being a Fierce Advocate for our Planet Earth**

We are incredibly proud to invest in our campers by providing nearly 100% organic food at snacks and cooking at camp, and serving minimal sugar. At lunch and snacks, everyone sits for about 15 minutes, to take time to eat, and socialize with others. We are a Certified Green Business since 2009. We are dedicated to doing our part at this critical time to create a beautiful, healthy world for future generations of humans and other beings. We donate to causes dedicated to planting trees and saving land, specifically Tree Sisters, The Greenbelt Movement, Rainforest Alliance, Sogorea Te Land Trust and East Bay Regional Park District. Girls on the Go and Boys on the Go camps travel by public transit. We use Dr. Bronner's and other "healthy for people and the planet" soaps at camp whenever possible.

## Playing Safely

Having served over 7,000 campers since 1999, we have a stellar safety record. It is one of primary goals that kids are not only safe at camp, but that they (and you!) feel safe about being at camp. Most importantly for safety is our high ratio of staff to campers- 1:7 at our Pre-K program; 1:9 at all others. Additionally we have a strong youth leadership program which provides for a bit of extra assistance and support for the kids. Staff are certified in CPR and first aid and are background checked. In addition we have developed a number of site-specific safety protocols that staff enforce at camp. We are nut-free camp to support those with allergies staying safe.

*“So easy to tell she had a great experience as she would provide great details on where they had gone, what they did, and how much fun she had with friends she made each week. In addition, the counselors and staff were attentive, friendly, and taken good care of my daughter while in their care that I didn’t have to worry. Because of her daily interaction with other girls at camp, it was easy to see her more confident and mature in her mannerism and in her communication.” ~ Parent of a Camper*