

**PARENT INFORMATION PACKET**

**(to be duplicated and sent home to parents)**

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**McKeever Environmental Learning Center  
55 McKeever Lane  
Sandy Lake, PA 16145  
(724) 376-1000  
info@mckeever.org  
www.mckeever.org**

**MCKEEVER ENVIRONMENTAL LEARNING CENTER**

**55 McKeever Lane  
Sandy Lake, PA 16145  
(724) 376-1000  
info@mckeeper.org  
www.mckeeper.org**

**A NOTE FROM THE EARTHKEEPERS TRAINING CENTER**

Dear Parents:

Your child is soon to take part in an exciting learning adventure in the outdoors -- the EARTHKEEPERS program. This letter, along with the attached information, describes our program briefly and will provide you with general information about how to prepare your child for his/her Earthkeepers experience.

We, the human passengers on the Earth, have little contact with the basic things that make life possible. Our lack of knowledge has led to actions that have disrupted our life support systems. The air that we breathe is considered to be harmful for most of us; our water continues to be contaminated by chemicals and poisons and our fertile soil is being depleted at an alarming rate. All of the things necessary for life can be found in the proper balance on the Earth: sunlight, air, water and soil. It is the flow of sunlight and the cycling of air, water and soil nutrients which allows for the existence of plants and animals (of which we are a part). More and more, we are finding that the Earth is a fragile thing -- its life systems can easily be disrupted or destroyed if we don't understand how they work.

This, in fact, is the purpose of your child's visit to the Earthkeepers Training Center: to understand how all life is connected and to get to know the Earth through close personal contact. With these newly acquired feelings and understanding, they can then develop good environmental habits and help others to realize their dependence on the Earth and its life.

We are looking forward to your child's visit to the Earthkeepers Training Center. Be sure to contact us if you have any questions or if we can help in any way.

Sincerely,

The Earthkeepers Training Center Staff

## GENERAL INFORMATION

**LOCATION:** The **Earthkeepers** program will take place at the McKeever Environmental Learning Center in Sandy Lake, PA, three miles east of I-79, Exit #130 and 11 miles north of I-80, Exit #24. The Center is owned by the Pennsylvania taxpayers and is administered by Slippery Rock University of Pennsylvania. Our eight buildings were built in 1974 and are located on 205 acres adjacent to Lake Wilhelm and Goddard State Park.

**THE EARTHKEEPERS TRAINING CENTER:** The McKeever Center is transformed into the Earthkeepers Training Center where your child will learn about becoming an Earthkeeper. Becoming an Earthkeeper is an important task, and is filled with excitement, discovery and good learning.

**LODGING:** Your child will be living in one of our three modern comfortable lodges complete with central heating, restroom and individual showers. Each lodge has one wing for males and another wing for females, connected by a central lounge with a fireplace. The sleeping areas contain bunk beds with mattresses, but children will need to bring a sleeping bag or bed roll, and a pillow. Approximately 24 students will share a wing while chaperoned by at least two teachers or adults from your child's school.

**MEALS:** The children will be eating nourishing, well-balanced meals in our dining hall. We eat "family style", just like at home. Each student will be a "gopher" for at least one meal. Gopher duties include setting and cleaning the table and getting food during the meal.

**SNACKS:** Any necessary snacks will be provided at the Center by the school or as part of the program. Other snacks are not needed and discouraged.

**CLOTHING:** Because 70% of your child's activity time will be spent outside, they should be prepared for a wide range of weather conditions. Some of their activities require being down on the ground, so "old clothes" capable of getting soiled are your best choice. Cold weather clothing should include hats, gloves, insulated underwear and boots (**Dress in layers of clothing so that additional clothing may be put on or taken off according to the weather.** All other seasons **REQUIRE waterproof raincoats** (windbreakers are not acceptable) and **waterproof boots**. If your child has adequate types and amounts of clothing, they will enjoy participating in all outdoor aspects of the program.

**STAFF & SUPERVISION:** The program staff consists of Group Leaders who are college students and other interested adults who have been specially trained to guide your child through the learning experiences at Earthkeepers Training Center. The professional staff of McKeever supervises and coordinates the entire program and makes sure that each student has an enjoyable and educational experience. Teachers and adult leaders from your school will also conduct various activities and ensure that your child is supervised at all times. All Leaders have child abuse clearances.

**CONTACTING YOUR CHILD:** We ask that you do not telephone your child except in the case of an emergency. If there are complications or an emergency, we will contact you immediately. We do encourage you to write. Check our address and phone number at the top of your cover letter.

**HEALTH & MEDICATION:** Many schools send a school nurse or another qualified individual to handle daily medication needs. To assist us in understanding any special aspects of your child's personal habits and health, please complete the attached form carefully and have your child return it to the school.

**MEDICAL EMERGENCIES:** In case of sickness or accident, you will be notified as soon as possible. Greenville and Grove City Hospitals are located within a half-hour drive from the McKeever Center.

**INSURANCE:** Your school can make arrangements for optional insurance coverage for students while they are at the McKeever Center. Costs are nominal. This policy is extended only as a group policy to the schools; not as an individual policy. Please contact your school for details. Should you decide not to opt for this insurance, please determine whether your personal insurance or school insurance covers your child in case of an accident. Each person attending the program should be insured by some form of accident insurance.

\* \* \* \*

## WHAT TO BRING

The following is a list of items that your child should bring to the Earthkeepers Training Center. Please pay particular attention to items that should be left at home. Mark your child's name on all clothing and possessions with a permanent marker. New clothing is **not** necessary nor suggested as the majority of the time will be spent **out of doors** come rain or shine. Please be sure that your child has enough clothing to keep him/her warm. A **WATERPROOF RAINCOAT** is a necessity. Nylon windbreakers, canvas jackets **ARE NOT** acceptable substitutes.

### GENERAL CLOTHING:

- \_\_\_\_\_ old jeans or pants (2 pair)
- \_\_\_\_\_ shirts--T shirts and/or long sleeves depending on the weather
- \_\_\_\_\_ socks (at least 4 pair, preferably wool for cold weather)
- \_\_\_\_\_ underwear
- \_\_\_\_\_ insulated underwear tops & bottoms for cold weather
- \_\_\_\_\_ pajamas
- \_\_\_\_\_ handkerchief (rather than tissues)
- \_\_\_\_\_ hiking boots or hard soled shoes
- \_\_\_\_\_ old sneakers (for lounging at night)

### WARM AND PROTECTIVE CLOTHING:

- \_\_\_\_\_ jacket--lightweight, medium or heavy, depending on the weather
- \_\_\_\_\_ sweater and/or sweatshirt
- \_\_\_\_\_ hat and gloves for cold weather
- \_\_\_\_\_ rain gear--**A MUST**--raincoat or poncho, hat
- \_\_\_\_\_ **For winter**--boots--waterproof and insulated--**NOT DRESS BOOTS!**
- \_\_\_\_\_ **For non-winter seasons**--waterproof boots--**NOT DRESS BOOTS OR TENNIS SHOES!**

**Dress in layers of clothing so that additional clothing can be put on or taken off, according to the weather!**

**Your child will be spending 70% of their time outside in all types of weather so it is crucial that they arrive with the proper type and amount of clothing to remain comfortable under these conditions.**

**SLEEPING GEAR:**

\_\_\_\_\_ sleeping bag or blankets and sheets  
\_\_\_\_\_ pillow and case

**PERSONAL NEEDS:**

\_\_\_\_\_ bath towel and wash cloth  
\_\_\_\_\_ soap and container  
\_\_\_\_\_ shampoo in unbreakable container  
\_\_\_\_\_ toothbrush and toothpaste  
\_\_\_\_\_ comb/brush  
\_\_\_\_\_ chapstick  
\_\_\_\_\_ other personal items

**OTHER:**

\_\_\_\_\_ letter writing materials (paper, envelopes and stamps)  
\_\_\_\_\_ pencils (2 or 3)  
\_\_\_\_\_ insect repellent (non-aerosol preferred)  
\_\_\_\_\_ sunglasses (optional)  
\_\_\_\_\_ musical instruments (optional)  
\_\_\_\_\_ binoculars (optional)  
\_\_\_\_\_ camera and film (optional)

**PLEASE LEAVE THE FOLLOWING HOME!**

- \* Food or snacks (including candy or gum)
- \* Radios, record or tape players and televisions
- \* Electronic games
- \* Flashlights
- \* Pocket knives or hatchets
- \* Pets
- \* Money-there's nothing to spend it on!

**NOTE ON PACKING:** PACK GEAR IN A SUITCASE, DUFFLEBAG, OR BACKPACK AND MAKE SURE YOU SECURE A BAGGAGE TAG WITH YOUR CHILD'S NAME ON EACH PIECE OF LUGGAGE!

**McKEEVER ENVIRONMENTAL LEARNING CENTER**

**HEALTH INFORMATION FORM**

(TO BE USED BY NURSE & McKEEVER STAFF ONLY)

Student's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone (H) \_\_\_\_\_

(W) \_\_\_\_\_  
Cell \_\_\_\_\_

**In case of accident, please notify:**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Relation: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone (H) \_\_\_\_\_

(W) \_\_\_\_\_  
Cell \_\_\_\_\_

**If above person cannot be reached, please contact:**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Relation: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of most recent tetanus booster (should be within last 3-8 years): \_\_\_\_\_

Does your child have any activity restrictions? Yes \_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_

If yes, please indicate reason: \_\_\_\_\_

**Does the visitor have a history of: (please check all that apply)**

- |  |                                   |
|--|-----------------------------------|
| Allergies (food, med, environment) _____ | Epilepsy/Seizures ..... _____     |
| Asthma ..... _____                       | High Blood Pressure..... _____    |
| Back Ailments..... _____                 | Heart Condition/Murmur..... _____ |
| Chicken Pox/varicella vaccine _____      | Hepatitis..... _____              |
| Diabetes..... _____                      | Tuberculosis..... _____           |
|  | Other..... _____                  |

If you have checked any of the above, please explain thoroughly and include any major illnesses or operations within the past year:

<u>Condition</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Medical Treatment</u>
_____	_____	_____

Please list any medications that your child takes on a routine basis:

\_\_\_\_\_

Please list medications which you give permission for a nurse, teacher or McKeever professional staff to administer to your child:

Please note: All medication must be sent in a recent, original pharmacy package (labeled).

Medication      Dosage      Time      Reason

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Please check medications which you give permission for your child to self-administer (w/assistance by nurse, McKeever professional staff or teacher).

Antacid Liquid      \_\_\_\_\_      Motrin/Ibuprofen      \_\_\_\_\_  
Benadryl      \_\_\_\_\_      Tylenol      \_\_\_\_\_      Kaopectate  
\_\_\_\_\_      Other      \_\_\_\_\_ \*

\* Please list any other over-the-counter medications and give to nurse/staff upon arrival to McKeever.

\_\_\_\_\_

Are there any other factors of which we should be aware that may affect the care of the visitor while at McKeever:

\_\_\_\_\_

In case of emergency, may we have your permission to transport your child via ambulance to the nearest hospital or call a physician for treatment and/or give medications, by mouth or injection, including toxoids or antibiotics?

YES \_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

NO \_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Please indicate any dietary restrictions:

\_\_\_\_\_

Insurance Coverage:

Company: \_\_\_\_\_

Coverage: \_\_\_\_\_ ID or Group # \_\_\_\_\_

Effective Dates: \_\_\_\_\_ Holder's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

I give my permission for my child (if 18 or under) to participate in the McKeever Environmental Learning Center program from \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_