

PARENT INFORMATION

DOWNUNDER PROGRAMS ROCK! HERE'S WHY...

- **They're fun, safe and healthy**

Get them outdoors! Kayaking and Paddle Boarding are safe and easy, and our high counselor to camper ratio ensure everyone gets personal attention. All participants wear life jackets with whistles, everything floats, our counselors have been taught by ACA certified instructors and they're first aid and CPR certified

- **Kids LOVE it**

Making new friends, being challenged, exploring, learning new things, and especially having fun with the counselors

- **It's good for them**

Increases self esteem, balance, coordination, confidence, personal and social skills, increases awareness of and respect for the environment - it's empowering – every child goes away feeling successful.

- **They learn a lot**

From what to wear, equipment used, how it works, to paddling skills – paddle and boat handling, form, strokes, how to get in and out, and what to do if you find yourself 'out'! Information such as rules of the 'road', weather, navigation, tides... essentials for the skilled and responsible kayaker

- **Puts their brains to work brain**

Ever heard about brain gym? Any time your arms cross the midline of your body it engages both sides of the brain. Given that we tend to use one side of our brain more, this is good for all of us, but particularly good for children with difficulty in reading and writing. We teach kids to rotate when they're paddling - using their core muscles vs the small arm muscles and this requires crossing the midline.

- **Develops an appreciation for the marine environment**

We educate children so they understand the impact of trash and contaminants. They actively make a difference by cleaning up the river and beaches we visit. Checking out our traps to see what lives down there is fascinating AND an important part of our work with Harborwatch. Scavenger hunts to identify shells, birds, marine species, and science experiments.

- **Educational and team building activities and field trips**

Find a geo cache then make their own for future groups; indoor climbing; Earthplace-- trails, animal hall, natural history museum, wildlife rehabilitation program and water quality laboratory-- exploration on inclement weather days (will be notified in advance).

- **Great locations**

The Five Mile River in Rowayton and the Saugatuck River in Westport are beautiful, diverse, and sheltered – making it the perfect place to learn and develop kayaking skills. On less than perfect days we go on exciting and educational field trips, including geocaching treasure hunts!

WHAT DO YOU NEED TO KNOW?

Everyone should come prepared to get wet! Kayaking is a water sport, and children like to swim/splash/engage in water games. Do have them dress appropriately and bring a change of clothes!

Ideally they should bring:

- Swimsuit
- Water shoes
- Sunscreen
- Hats and sunglasses with croakies (optional)
- Towel
- Change of clothes
- All forms (if being dropped off)

Camp Reservations and Cancellations

To reserve for camp give us a call so we can take down all the pertinent info. In order to guarantee their space, we will charge at the time of reservation. The cancellation policy is 1 month for a refund. Up to 2 weeks prior to the date of your program you are eligible for a credit toward another program or equivalent in rentals. Cancellations within 2 weeks of start date do not receive a refund or credit. In the event your child is ill or has an injury lasting two or more days, they will be moved to another week (based on availability) or you may take a credit to use towards rentals. Credits are only for use in the same season.

We hope your child enjoys their experience and that you come back to paddle with us. Please visit our website to see all of our offerings – you may be interested in the birthday parties, children’s summer programs and afterschool programs. Or you may be interested in an adult version – we offer a variety of programs for adults.

WHAT ELSE IS THERE?

What is Stand-up Paddle boarding

The sport purportedly started with surf instructors standing on their boards to watch students and check out the wave patterns. It’s become the newest rage – much like kayaking, only it’s surpassing it in growth. Similar to a surfboard, they average 10.6’ – 12’ long and 30” wide - stable and safe with excellent visibility. Standing up on the board the paddlers use a paddle with one blade and switch from side to side, much as you do when canoeing. Paddle boarding is a great core workout, as well as fostering balance and coordination, and ensures a ‘birds’ eye view’ of the area. SUP’s are incorporated into the summer programs for variety and we offer specialty programs just for SUP enthusiasts. They are also available for birthday parties.

Birthday Parties

Wrap up these programs with a bow and you have a birthday party that is so unique you’ll be the talk of the town. All ages find celebrating their birthday with an outing Downunder something special, and a great way to entertain friends. Younger participants, say under 13, enjoy a treasure hunt – finding bottles with messages in them that start the fun and games, and ultimately have them paddling back to the dock. Replica bottles are given as a memento from Downunder, and include things like a Downunder tattoo, gummy bear flip flops, hawaiian trinkets for girls, pirate for boys, and/or a gift you might like to share (sharks tooth necklaces and sailor bracelets are popular!) We offer 10% off items that you purchase from the store for the favor. *Please ask for our recommendations on number of participants to invite*

Cost: Weekdays: Two hours \$60pp, three hours \$70pp
Weekends: Two hours \$65pp, three hours \$75pp

Adults enjoy heading to the islands for a picnic, sunset paddles, moonlight tours. Getting out with a guide who knows the area and adds that additional element of fun we’re all looking for. In Rowayton you can stop off at the River House Tavern for a meal! (note that alcohol is not permitted during an outing).

Post outing food and drink, even setting up the tiki bar for the adults, is the perfect way to wrap it up. Downunder can cater anything from pizza and cake to a sit-down dinner on the Rowayton Market deck, or at a local Westport restaurant.

Memories – our staff endeavor to get pictures of the parties and will send them to you – please remind us by emailing info@downunderct.com.