



# Parent Guide

Emerald Cove Outdoor Science Institute (ECOS Institute) is located in the beautiful San Bernardino Mountains at Camp Cedar Crest near Running Springs. ECOS Institute is at an elevation of 6,500 feet and is surrounded by the San Bernardino National Forest which provides a unique opportunity to study the natural environment. Students hike established trails, investigate geological features, observe wildlife and compare plant adaptations. During the evenings, students study the night sky through telescopes and use their senses to experience the forest at night. The curriculum is aligned with state standards and supports teaming back at school.

Our students also learn new songs and games, participate in line dances, and create and perform science or nature-oriented skits at skit night. Learning responsibility and cooperation through group living and practicing courtesies and table manners at meals are some of the ways students develop their social skills.

Living in the mountains allows the students to develop an awareness and appreciation of the environment. They learn that the choices they make can have a positive effect on their world. Students are asked to limit their impact on trails, respect wildlife, take short showers and recycle. Students go home knowing more about the natural world and themselves.

## STAFF

- ECOS Institute Staff are carefully interviewed, referenced and fingerprinted.
- Staff are certified in first aid and CPR.
- They receive ongoing training and evaluation.
- They enjoy working with children.

## ACCOMMODATIONS

- Students stay in cabins with central heating, electricity and bathrooms with running water.
- They sleep on bunk beds and shower daily.
- Students clean their cabins daily.
- Boys and girls live in separate cabins.
- Instructors live in the cabins with the students.

## FOOD

- Meals are prepared on site by food service professionals.
- Meals meet USDA guidelines for the National School Lunch and Breakfast Program.
- Seconds are available for most items.
- A salad bar and fresh fruit are available.
- A vegetarian option is available upon request.
- Students, teachers and staff enjoy their meals together.
- Table manners and polite conversation are emphasized.

## HOMESICKNESS

- Most students who become homesick overcome it and have a successful week.
- If your child becomes homesick, the staff will encourage him/her to work through it.
- If s/he continues to have trouble adjusting, you will be contacted.

## HEALTH CARE

- A nurse is in charge of all health care related issues, including administering medications, if needed.
- Minor illnesses or injuries will be treated on site.
- If your child has something more serious, such as a fever, you will be contacted and may be asked to pick up your child.
- If your child wets the bed, please note it on the Student Registration form (confidential) and send extra bedding. If this occurs, it is handled discreetly.
- In case of a medical emergency, you will be contacted and your child's transport to a nearby medical facility will be arranged.
- Due to distance and possible severe weather, transport to a medical facility could take over an hour.





## TUITION

- Student fees pay for lease of the site, food, staff salaries and insurance.
- Your school may add the cost of transportation.
- If your child attends a partial week, the fees will be prorated.
- Students who leave then return to ECOS Institute will be charged the full fee.

## EMERGENCIES

- In the event of an emergency, the site maintains enough food, water and supplies to sustain a group for several days.
- ECOS Institute will keep your child's school updated, so you should contact your child's school in order to keep ECOS Institute's phone lines open. Due to the additional challenges of an overnight experience, students who do not require an aide at school may require an aide at ECOS Institute.

## SPECIAL NEEDS STUDENTS

A child with special needs is defined as one who, due to an emotional or physical condition, may require individualized care or medical attention. Some examples are: diabetes, routine nebulizer use, mobility challenges, casts, emotional challenges and severe food allergies. If your child has a special need/condition, please inform your school at least 6 weeks prior to attending. If your child requires a full-time aide at school, s/he will require one at ECOS Institute. Due to the additional challenges of an overnight experience, students who do not require an aide at school may require an aide at ECOS Institute.

## COMMUNICATION

- Telephones are not available for student use. You will be called if there is a concern regarding your child.
- Letters are encouraged and should be mailed the week prior to attending. Address the envelope with:

ECOS Institute  
 [Student Name & School]  
 P.O. Box 8517  
 Green Valley Lake, CA 92341

- Express/overnight mail is not recommended.

## VISITS

- Parents are welcome to visit ECOS Institute any time it is in operation except the week your child is attending.
- This policy prevents homesickness and distraction from the program.
- Please contact us to arrange a visit.

## TRANSPORTATION

- Each school arranges its own transportation.
- Buses are scheduled to arrive at ECOS Institute at 11 a.m. on the first day and depart at 11 a.m. on the last day.
- Under special circumstances, if you need to drop off your child late or pick them up early, please contact your school and ECOS Institute.
- In the event of a severe or ongoing behavior problem, you may be required to pick up your child.

**ECOS Institute**  
**P.O. Box 8517, Green Valley Lake, CA 92341**  
**(949) 298-ECOS**  
**ecosinstitute.com**





# Preparing for ECOS Checklist

1. Complete the confidential **Student Registration** form.  
**Your child cannot attend without this completed and signed form.**
2. Complete and sign the **Return Trip** half sheet.
3. Does your child take medications, herbal/homeopathic remedies or supplements that you plan to send to ECOS?  
If yes, complete the **Medication Authorization** form.  
You and a physician must sign this form (faxed copies are accepted).  
**We cannot administer any medication, remedy or supplement you send without a completed, signed form.**  
If you would like your child to carry his/her inhaler or EpiPen, fill out the “Consent to Carry” section.  
All medications should be in the original containers and clearly labeled.  
The information on the Rx label must match the information on the form, such as dosage and schedule.  
Your school will need the medications and the completed form prior to the morning of departure.
4. You do not need to send over-the-counter medications listed on the **Student Registration** form, unless your child takes them on a regular basis.
5. Does your child have a special need or condition that may require individualized care or medical attention?  
Some examples of special needs/conditions are: diabetes, routine nebulizer use, mobility challenges, casts, emotional challenges and severe food allergies.  
If yes, complete and sign the **Release For a Student With a Special Need/Condition** form.  
If your child is under medical supervision for the need or condition, the physician must also sign.  
If your child requires a full-time aide at school, s/he will require one at ECOS Institute. Due to the additional challenges of an overnight experience, students who do not require an aide at school may require and aide at ECOS Institute. Your school is responsible for providing the aide.  
If your child has a special need/condition, please inform your school at least 6 weeks prior to attending.  
You may also contact us.
6. Does your child have a special diet?  
If vegetarian, write it on the **Student Registration** form so s/he can have the vegetarian option.  
For other special diets, like gluten-free, please contact us to determine if you will need to send substitute food. We can send you the menu and the **Meal Substitution Guidelines**.
7. Pack for ECOS Institute. See **Packing Checklist**.
8. Morning of departure  
Students should wear pants, walking shoes and bring a jacket on the bus  
Students are screened for health before departure. Your child may be excluded from participation for:
  1. Temperature of 100° or higher
  2. Signs and symptoms of a communicable disease or condition
  3. CrutchesS/he may attend later in the week if the situation is resolved



# Packing Checklist

- When packing, some things to consider are:
  1. The mountains can be 20° colder than where you live. Check the forecast for zip code 92341 at NOAA.gov
  2. Dressing in layers is better than wearing one bulky item.
  3. In rain/snow, wool and fleece are warmer than cotton.
- Label everything with your child's name, especially jacket, water bottle and camera.
- **Two pieces of luggage only:**
  1. Sleeping bag/bedroll wrapped in plastic bag, labeled with name and school
  2. Suitcase/ duffel bag labeled with name and school
- On the bus trip the first day, wear pants, walking shoes and bring a jacket.
- Some rain ponchos, rubber boots, jackets, hats & gloves are available to borrow.
- ECOS Institute is not responsible for any lost, damaged or stolen items.

## ESSENTIALS:

- Sleeping bag or bedroll (i.e. twin sheets & blankets)
- Pillow
- Heavy, warm jacket
- Long & short sleeve shirts (no tank tops)
- Sweater/sweatshirt
- Jeans/sturdy pants (Please, no tights, leggings, or capris as an outer layer)
- Socks
- Underwear
- Hat (for warmth & sun)
- Shoes (comfortable walking shoes/hiking boots with tread & closed toe)
- Gloves
- Pajamas
- Water bottle
- Towel
- Toiletry kit: comb/brush, soap, shampoo, toothbrush, toothpaste, deodorant, lip balm, sanitary supplies (if needed)

## ADDITIONAL ITEMS FOR WINTER:

- Long underwear/sweats/tights
- Waterproof hiking boots or snow boots
- Extra socks
- Extra gloves

## OPTIONAL:

- Flashlight
- Camera
- Hair dryer
- Sunglasses & sunblock
- Shorts
- Slippers or shower shoes
- Letter writing materials (including stamped envelope)
- Photos of family
- Book and game (non-electronic)

## DO NOT BRING:

- ⊗ Electronics (cell phones, MP3/iPods, games, radios, etc.)
- ⊗ Money or valuables
- ⊗ Food, candy or gum
- ⊗ Curling irons, make-up, hair spray, body spray, cologne/perfume
- ⊗ Potentially harmful items (knives, razors, sharp tools, drugs, etc.)
- ⊗ Any items not allowed at your school