



# Parent Guide

Emerald Cove Outdoor Science Institute (ECOS Institute) is located in the beautiful San Bernardino Mountains, at multiple locations near the town of Running Springs. ECOS Institute is at an elevation of 6,500 feet and is surrounded by the San Bernardino National Forest, providing 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 teaching back at school.

Our students learn new songs and games, participate in line dances, and may also create and perform science or nature oriented skits at skit night. Learning responsibility and cooperation through group living, and practicing courtesy 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 their 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.
- Students, teachers and staff enjoy their meals together.
- Table manners and polite conversation are emphasized.

## MISSING HOME

- Most students who are missing home overcome it and have a successful week.
- If your child is experiencing separation anxiety, ECOS staff and visiting teachers will provide counseling and 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.



## 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.
- DO NOT send mail to the physical address of the camp.

## LOCATIONS

- Camp Cedar Crest  
33325 Camp Cedar Crest Rd. Running Springs, CA 92382
- Green Valley Lake Christian Camp  
32355 Green Valley Lake Rd. Green Valley Lake, CA 92341

## 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 illness, or a severe or ongoing behavior problem, you may be required to pick up your child.

## TUITION

- ECOS receives payment from your school, not from individual families.
- Total cost to families varies from school to school, due to differences in discounts, transportation costs, and other considerations. Please refer to your school for information about total cost.

## TUITION (cont'd)

- If your child attends a partial week, your school will be charged a prorated fee.
- Schools will be charged full tuition for students dismissed for disciplinary reasons.
- Schools will be charged full tuition for students who leave ECOS and then return.

## 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.



## SPECIAL DIET REQUESTS

If your child has food restrictions, you will need to call ECOS Institute directly (949-298-3267) or email ([info@ecosinstitute.com](mailto:info@ecosinstitute.com)) at least 2 weeks prior to the trip. At this time, please communicate precise information, so that our kitchen can prepare appropriate food for your child.

In the rare instance that the ECOS kitchen cannot accommodate a request, parents may be authorized by the ECOS Program Director to send supplemental food.



**ECOS Institute**  
**P.O. Box 8517**  
**Green Valley Lake, CA 92341**  
**(949) 298-ECOS**  
**[www.ecosinstitute.com](http://www.ecosinstitute.com)**



# Behavior Expectations

A student at ECOS Institute is expected to be a good listener, follow directions, and be considerate of others. Students who come with a positive attitude, ready to share, cooperate, and work in a group will have a successful and enjoyable week. Although the classes take place outdoors, the students live in cabins, and many fun activities are planned. ECOS Institute is a school and not a summer camp. Keeping this in mind will help the students to have a fun, successful week.

## Behavior Standards

1. Be courteous and polite
  - A. Be a good team member; share and take turns
  - B. Be a good listener; follow directions
  - C. Share in the work; show good sportsmanship
  - D. Respect others and be considerate of others' belongings
  - E. Do not pick plants; stay on the trails, respect wildlife
  - F. Do not fight or use inappropriate language
  - G. Allow yourself and other students to get much-needed rest by staying quiet at night
2. Be committed
  - A. Plan to stay on site the entire time
  - B. Participate in the lessons and activities
  - C. If you encounter a problem, work with adults and other students to solve it
3. Follow ECOS Institute safety rules
  - A. Please walk
  - B. Stay on established trails
  - C. Stay with your supervising adult and the group
  - D. Do not throw objects (rocks, snow, sticks, etc.)
  - E. Do not carry walking sticks on trails
4. Leave these items at home
  - A. Electronics (**Cell Phones**, Games, Radios, etc.)
  - B. Money or valuables
  - C. Food, candy, or gum
  - D. Curling irons, make-up, hair spray, body spray, or cologne/perfume.
  - E. Potentially harmful items (e.g., knives, razors, sharp tools, drugs, etc.)
  - F. Any items not allowed at your school

## Implementation of Standards

1. Failure to follow standards set at ECOS Institute will result in the following:
  - A. The student will meet with ECOS staff and teachers, and will be reminded of expectations.
  - B. If behavior continues to be problematic, the student will be removed from an activity, and will meet with ECOS staff and teachers to identify better choices.
  - C. If disruptive behavior continues, the school principal will be notified, and a phone conference will be held with the ECOS Director and the parent or guardian.
  - D. If the problem is still not resolved, the parent will be required to take the student home.



# ECOS Preparation Checklist

1. Complete the confidential **ECOS 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 prescribed medication that you plan to send to ECOS?  
If yes, complete the **ECOS MEDICATION AUTHORIZATION** form.
  - You and the prescribing physician must sign this form (faxed copies are accepted).
  - **We cannot administer any prescribed medication without a completed, signed form.**
  - If you would like your child to carry his/her inhaler or Epi-Pen, fill out the “Consent to Carry” section.
  - All medications must 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.
  - **District/school medication forms are NOT sufficient for ECOS Institute, as they do not specifically give ECOS Health Care staff authorization to administer prescribed medication.**
4. You do not need to send over-the-counter (OTC) medications listed on the **ECOS Student Registration** form, unless your child takes these medications on a prescribed schedule. Scheduled OTC medications require a completed ECOS Medication Authorization form.
5. Does your child have a special need or condition that may require individualized care or medical attention?
  - 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 an 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 food restrictions, please contact ECOS Institute directly at least 2 weeks in advance with specific details.
7. Pack for ECOS Institute. See the following **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:

- The mountains can be 20° colder than where you live. Check the forecast for zip code 92341 at NOAA.gov
- Dressing in layers is better than wearing one bulky item.
- 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 (sheets & blankets) & Pillow

Heavy, warm jacket (a sweatshirt is not a 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 protection)

Shoes (comfortable walking shoes/hiking boots with tread & closed toe)

Gloves

Pajamas

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 thick socks

Extra gloves

## PLEASE DO NOT BRING:

- Electronics (cell phones, games, radios, etc.)
- Money or valuables
- Food, candy or gum
- Make-up, cologne/perfume, hairspray, etc.
- Dangerous items (knives, lighters, etc.)

## OPTIONAL:

Flashlight

Camera (not a cell phone)

Hair dryer

Sunglasses & sunblock

Shorts

Slippers or shower shoes

Letter writing materials (including stamped envelope)

Photos of family

Book and game (non-electronic)

