



Frequently Asked Questions for Students and Families

Do students need to attend each day? What if a student can't make it for one of the days?

We ask that students attend each camp day for the full camp hours. Because camp builds skills progressively and emphasizes group ensemble and connection, we've found that it is challenging for individuals and the group when someone misses a chunk of camp. Because we have a limited number of spots available, we ask that folks register for camp only when they know they can attend all of the camp days/hours. If you have questions about this, or an unchangeable conflict, please contact us to discuss this issue before registering. If you can't make it work this year to attend all of the camp days, join our mailing list to be the first to find out when future camp weeks open.

How do I know if camp is a good fit for a student?

Camp is designed for autistic high school students and those with compatible needs and skills. Because there is great variability among these groups, we've created a few profiles of fictitious campers for whom camp would be a great fit:

1. Matt is 15 years old and will enter 10th grade next year. He is Autistic and has an ADHD diagnosis. He loves video games. In fact, he could talk for hours about his favorite one. Matt has one good friend in "real life," but most of his connections are online. Matt has a quick wit and is quite funny. However, he sometimes struggles to manage his impulses when it comes to sharing his thoughts, and he gets in trouble at school for talking over others.
2. Phoenix is 14 years old and will enter 9th grade next year. They are Autistic and struggle with anxiety. They love animals, drawing, and spending time outside. Phoenix is quiet and slow to warm up, but they are very friendly and interested in building a social network. They tend to be more comfortable talking with adults than peers their own age. They find school stressful due to sensory stimuli.
3. Jenny is 17 years old and will enter 11th grade next year. She is outgoing and loves theatre class at school. She has an easier time connecting with younger teens than with teens in her own grade. She sometimes struggles to control her volume, especially when excited. She is enthusiastic and benefits from supportive strategies to share turn-taking and ensure that everyone in a group gets to share their ideas.

Overall, we pride ourselves on being a neurodivergent-affirming program and aim to meet and accommodate as many access needs as we can. That said, we only have two full-time paid camp staff (though there are many adult professional learners on site with us), and there are some things that we aren't equipped for in the camp setting.

Some of the things that would make camp *not* a great fit for students include:

- Students who are physically aggressive;
- Students who are not independent in their toileting – we can offer reminders, but are not able to assist with actual toileting needs and activities;
- Students who are non-speaking or speak only in echolalic language;
- Students with complex medical needs that they cannot independently manage. While we're happy to offer medication reminders, hold an emergency epi-pen, or have a crisis seizure response plan in place, we do not have nursing staff at camp. Thus, if a student requires ongoing skilled medical care, assistance, or intervention, we unfortunately are not equipped to offer that at this time.

While improv can absolutely be a great tool and resource for students with any of these qualities, our current camp structure just isn't the right fit for students with these qualities.

If you're not sure whether camp would be a good fit for a particular student, feel free to contact us for further discussion!

Do students need to have improv experience?

Nope, no prior experience is needed! We build improv skills in a progressive way that supports students whether they've never done improv or are experienced in improv. If a student is nervous about trying improv, we understand. They won't be alone! We support self-determination and student participation in ways that feel safe and comfortable. We won't put someone on the spot or force anyone to do anything that doesn't feel good to them. There are a lot of different ways to participate in improv, and we work with each student to figure out what works best for them!

Should students bring anything specific to camp?

We recommend that students bring a refillable water bottle to camp. We take a snack break in the middle of the afternoon, and we offer snacks (no added sugar juice boxes and pre-packaged gluten- and nut-free snacks). Students are welcome to bring their own snacks if they prefer. Students also are welcome to bring comfort items with them.

Do you allow technology/cell phones etc. at camp?

During our afternoon snack break, students are welcome to use personal technology devices. During other camp hours, we ask that students minimize technology use. We understand that students use technology for a myriad of reasons, and that technology usage can range from being a helpful regulation tool to a stressful distraction. We work with students and families to create the best plan that we can for each student. If a student benefits from taking a solo tech break for a few minutes to regulate and then re-join the group, we don't have any problems with that. If it seems like tech usage is taking a student out of the present moment, dysregulating them, or doing more

harm than good, then we'll talk with the student and their caregivers to develop a plan for what might work best. If students choose to bring technology items to camp, note that there is an inherent risk of damage/loss, and Camp Yes And cannot be held liable or responsible for such loss.

Where does camp take place?

Camp takes place in Indianapolis at The Church Within. We're not affiliated with any religion, but the church has opened up their space to us, and we're grateful! The church itself is a non-denominational space. We'll spend most of the day in their main room, but we also have access to restrooms, a comfortable couch room, a snack area, and a small kitchen.

What is camp actually like?

Great question! Each camp day is a little different, but throughout camp we work on different improv skills, play different improv games, and have a lot of fun together. For the last hour on the final day of camp, we put on a casual improv showcase for family and friends. It's a great time to see what the group has been up to throughout the week.

Overall, improv is a form of theatre in which most or all of what is performed is unplanned and made up on the spot by the performers. To get good at improv, improvisers practice a range of skills that help them stay in the moment, co-create scenes and stories with others, respond to other people's ideas, generate their own, and more. Some of the improv skills we'll work on are:

- **Yes And:** This skill helps us co-create with other people. Since everything is being made up on the spot, we need to be able to add things to a scene or story with another person, and respond to whatever they add, too.
- **Spontaneity:** Coming up with ideas on the spot
- **Flexibility:** Since everything is being made up on the spot - things sometimes go a completely different direction than we plan! We'll practice how to respond to these types of moments on stage!
- **Character development:** In improv, you can play any character you can dream up. We'll practice developing characters and portraying different characters.
- **Storytelling:** Improv often tells a story, whether in a short scene or game, or through a longer story that plays out over multiple scenes. We'll work on storytelling basics together.
- **Justification:** Because unexpected things often come up as we're making stuff up on the spot with others, we practice taking ideas that don't necessarily seem to go together and justifying them so that things make sense!

Camp testimonials and sample games:

- A video featuring interviews with past students speaking about their experiences at camp: <https://www.facebook.com/campyesand/videos/500870564020302>
- A video from a past student speaking about his experience with improv: <https://www.facebook.com/campyesand/videos/2066487606948603>
- A game of Top That, in which improvisers come up with spontaneous ideas to justify an audience suggestion: <https://www.facebook.com/campyesand/videos/411512910840952>
- Virtual Performance and Question Session: During this hour-long video, you can see us play some improv games online and hear interviews with past students. This video was taken during Covid lockdown, when everything was being done virtually. In-person camp is obviously different in certain ways, but similar in others! <https://www.facebook.com/campyesand/videos/767727693931835>
- Some short scene starts during a past camp year: <https://www.facebook.com/campyesand/videos/505440693528926>
- A game of Phone Calls, in which improvisers pretend to be on the phone with a character we can't hear: <https://www.facebook.com/campyesand/videos/2371338826446514>
- A game of Slo-Mo Olympics, in which improvisers pretend to compete to perform ordinary household activities: <https://www.facebook.com/campyesand/videos/725680217888775>
- A game of Alien Translator, in which improvisers pretend to interview an alien from another planet: <https://www.facebook.com/campyesand/videos/2062540344009996>
- A game of TV Stations, in which improvisers make up clips from various cable TV networks: <https://www.facebook.com/campyesand/videos/2061626544101376>

We'll also play many of the games that you can see on the TV show *Whose Line is it Anyway?* If you do a quick YouTube search, you can find lots of Whose Line clips.