

2023 Registration FAQs

Program Offerings & Dates

Why did you change the Camp schedule from previous years?

In the past five years, we have seen a significant increase in demand for three week programs. Additionally, we have found that high school-aged campers often need to return to school earlier than other students due to sports, leadership, and orientation. In order to simultaneously meet our community's demands for more three week programs and to maximize the number of campers we can accommodate at Camp, we will offer **two** identical 3-week programs, **two** 2-week programs, our weeklong Taste of Camp, two teen leadership programs, multiple Adventure Quests and a wonderful lineup of adult and family weekends.

My child doesn't fit the age range for a program they'd like to attend, will you make an exception?

In very rare circumstances, we will allow a child to attend a program that is outside the designated grade range. Typically, these exceptions are made for children who repeated a grade or started school a year later than their peers, making them the same age as the majority of the other cabins with whom they'd be bunked. Because our cabins often include a combination of two grades, we want to ensure that campers are at similar developmental levels. It is rare that we would allow three grades within one bunk. If we find that there is sufficient demand for campers outside the designated grade range and there is space available in the program in late winter/early spring, we may allow a group of campers to have an exception. Otherwise, our staff will work with you to find a second choice program that has a grade range that includes your camper.

My child wants to leave Camp early - is that possible?

Generally speaking, no. Because our programs are group-centered and our bunk community is central to the Tawonga experience, it's important that campers start and end the program together. We do not allow campers to enroll for three week programs who only want to stay for two weeks. However, if you have an extenuating circumstance within the first or last 24 hours of camp, please contact us at info@tawonga.org. We will allow campers to leave early from Session 4 to accommodate early school start dates.

Your camp dates conflict with our school's calendar, what should I do?

We understand how frustrating it can be when the dates of your child's school and desired Camp session overlap. Over the last decade, we've found that the academic calendars of

our college-aged staff are ending later in June, and that many Bay Area based school districts are beginning their academic year earlier than ever before. This truncates the number of weeks we can offer programs to simultaneously accommodate the needs of our families and properly train our staff.

We highly encourage you to register your child for a session where the dates work best for your family. We understand that sometimes a camper can have their heart set on a certain number of weeks at camp, or may feel overprepared for a short session or underprepared for a longer one. Typically we find that campers mature greatly from the time they register to the start of Camp, and that attending a program that they hadn't expected still gives them a wonderful Tawonga experience.

If you are interested in your child attending Session 4 (July 30 - August 11) but have a conflict with the start of the school year, please note that we will allow parents to pick up campers from the session at dinnertime on Monday, August 7 and we will offer an early bus home on the morning of Tuesday, August 8. Due to the nature of our programmatic schedule, leaving Session 4 early may mean that your child misses some key program elements, such as their backpacking trip or day on the Challenge Course. If you plan to have your child leave Camp early, we will ask you to indicate this in your Camper Information Forms in the spring; please note that we are unable to prorate the cost of Camp for early departures.

Registration Process

When does registration for 2023 begin?

- **Priority Registration on November 8**

For 2022 Summer Camp, Teen programs, Quest, and Bar, Bat & B'nai Mitzvah participants and their siblings, and Jewish Families of Color Weekend registered families.

Please note that Priority Registration eligible families can submit registrations for all programs in this tier. However, we will not process any registrations for weekend programs until November 16 for all Priority and Early Registration eligible families.

- **Early Registration on November 15**

For 2022 Family Camp & Weekend Program participants, 2022 Waitlisted & Canceled families.

- **Open Registration on November 29**

For the entire community

Why are you changing the registration process from first-come, first-served?

Over the last 15 years, Tawonga has maintained high levels of registration across most programs. Many of these programs fill very quickly, and we are aware that to optimize one's chances of getting into a program, it has often been necessary in past years to be available precisely when our registration opens, and to race through the application to reserve a spot. It is not always possible for families to be able to register right when registration opens due to professional or personal obligations, lack of consistent internet service, and other factors and we want to make this process more equitable moving forward.

In an effort to provide transparency and equity in our registration process, and to remove the stressful "race to click," Tawonga is implementing a 24-hour stress-free registration window with a randomized registration mechanism.

How will the new randomized registration system work?

In an effort to provide transparency and **equity in our registration process, Tawonga is implementing a 24-hour stress-free registration window with a randomized registration mechanism.** Registrations will be accepted without being processed during the first 24 hours (from 9am on Tuesday to 9am on Wednesday) of each registration tier; regardless of the time the registration is received in that window, it will be considered as a 1st day of registration application.

After the 24-hour window, registrations will be processed by households in randomized order with the goal of giving campers one of their top choices in a more equitable process. **Siblings will be kept in programs together (where noted as first choice) as much as possible.** If the number of registrations received in the first 24 hours for any given program exceeds the program capacity, some campers will be placed on a waitlist using our randomized process and will be registered in their second choice program. **If the number of registrations received in the first 24 hours for a program *does not exceed* the program capacity, all of the campers will be registered until that program is filled.** Following the first day of registration 24-hour window within each tier, registrations will be processed on a first come, first served basis.

Confirmation emails will be sent 48 hours after the start of each registration tier. Campers who are hoping to return to Camp with friends from the previous summer who did not all receive spots in the same program can opt to change programs in order to be together, as long as space is available.

How does the randomized registration system work for siblings?

Registrations will be processed by households in randomized order with the goal of giving campers one of their top choices in a more equitable process. For example, if one child comes up tenth in the randomized system, their sibling(s) will be registered along with them at that time. **Siblings will be kept in programs together (where noted as first choice) as much as possible.**

What if my child doesn't get into the same program as their friends?

Confirmation emails will be sent 48 hours after the start of each registration tier. Campers who are hoping to return to Camp with friends from the previous summer who did not all receive spots in the same program can opt to change programs in order to be together, as long as space is available.

For priority registration families, why are Weekend Program registrations not being processed until early registration?

We want families who are eligible for priority registration to be able to register for summer camp programs in the first tier of registration (beginning November 8) in order to have the best chance to return to Camp with their bunkmates from previous years. Those who are eligible for priority registration will be able to submit their registration for Weekend Programs at the time they register, but we want all families who were enrolled in a 2022 Weekend Program to have equitable access to the randomized registration for those programs. Registrations for all 2023 Weekend Programs will be processed following November 15 (for both priority and early registration families).

Financial Assistance

Who is eligible to apply for financial assistance?

We know the cost of Tawonga's programs might feel intimidating, and **we are committed to ensuring that participating in our programs is an option for all individuals and families, regardless of financial constraints.** Our financial assistance program helps ensure that campers, adults and families from a wide range of socio-economic backgrounds and circumstances can experience the transformative Tawonga mission.

We offer a wide range of need-based assistance and need-blind grants, as well interest-free payment plans. In 2022, nearly 30% of all Tawonga program participants received financial assistance. **We encourage anyone, regardless of their income, to apply for financial assistance if the cost of Camp feels out of reach this year.** Learn more about our financial assistance program [here](#).

Does applying for financial assistance affect my chances of getting into Camp?

No! Our financial assistance process is kept entirely confidential and separate from the randomized registration mechanism. **We encourage anyone, regardless of their income, to apply for financial assistance if the cost of Camp feels out of reach this year.**

Families who participate in Tawonga's financial assistance program will have 14 days from the date of their final award to accept the award or cancel and be eligible for a full refund, less the non-refundable deposit.

What are your cancellation policies?

Our cancellation policies can be found [here](#).