



Office of Child Care
and Family Resources
SCHOOL OF EDUCATION
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON

Summer Camps, Youth Programs, & 4K



Do you have school-aged children or teens? **January through March** is the peak window for enrolling in summer camps and programs and even planning ahead for the 2026-27 school year!

Whether you're looking for **summer camps** for your school-aged kiddo, summer lessons or **activities for your teen**, or exploring **4K or after-school programs** for the fall, early preparation is the key to securing the right fit for your family.

UW CAMPUS & NETWORK CHILD CARE CENTER PROGRAMS

Below are summer camps offered at UW-Madison [Campus](#) or [Network](#) Child Care Centers that have openings.

Child care centers in general begin **offering summer spots to current families or families on their waitlist in January or February**. Contact centers today to schedule a tour, request details, or sign up on the waitlist!



Eagle's Wing Child Care & Education Program High Flyers Summer Program

- **Ages:** 4-8 years (Children who recently graduated 4K through just completed 2nd grade)
- **Dates:** Monthly sessions, June, July, and August
- **Hours:** Full-day
- **Rates:** \$310/week (non-residents) or \$260/week (residents)
- **Enrollment Opens:** February 2026
- **Contact:** 608-262-8161 | ellie.squire@housing.wisc.edu



Isthmus Montessori Academy Spring & Summer Break Programming

- **Ages:** 4K-6th Grade
- **Dates:** Spring Break: March 30-April 3; Summer Break: June 8-July 24
- **Hours:** 8:00 AM-3:00 PM; After School option 3:00-4:15 PM
- **Rates:** \$375 for 4K/5K; \$349 for 1st-6th grade
- **Enrollment Opens:** January 1, 2026
- **Contact:** 608-661-8200 | admissions@imapublic.org



Family Child Care Program Summer Openings

Looking for a **smaller, home-based setting** for your summer child care needs? Family child care programs offer care in small groups for **children 0-13 years old** (*ages served varies by program*) and may offer more flexible scheduling.

Get a Referral: OCCFR partners with **Satellite Family Child Care System** to connect UW families to **Satellite accredited family programs** in Madison and across Wisconsin. Fill out the form below to receive a list of programs with openings, or contact Laura Simkin, at lsimkin@reachdane.org with questions.

[Request a Family Program Referral](#)

MORE CAMPUS & COMMUNITY SUMMER PROGRAMS

Getting Ready Checklist



Enrollment for **summer camps and programs offered by school districts or community programs** operate a little differently than child care centers - here some tips to help you plan ahead:

- **Mark Your Calendar:** Many popular programs begin enrollment in **March or earlier**. Now is a good time to explore options, sign up for email alerts and add reminders to your calendar.
- **Create Your Profiles:** Some program registration sites (like MSCR or Rec Well) require a user profile. Create yours *now* so you aren't stuck troubleshooting on registration morning.
- **Gather Your Records:** Have your child's medical history, immunization dates, and emergency contact info ready in a digital document for quick copy-pasting. U.S. residents can find their child's vaccine dates on state registries - current Wisconsin residents can check the [Wisconsin Immunization Registry \(WIR\)](#).
- **Check Scholarships:** Scholarship applications offered by camps or programs often close *before* general registration opens. Search for "Scholarship" or "Financial Aid" information on program websites.



UW-Madison Rec Well Summer Camp & Teen Camp

The Rec Well Summer Camp moves "Junior Badgers" to play hard, get fit, and live well through recreational activities, swimming, and on-and-off campus field trips.

- **Ages:** 5-14 (summer camp) & 13-14 (teen camp)
- **Dates:** June-August
- **Hours:** Full-day
- **Rates:** \$275-325 per session
- **Enrollment Opens:** March 3 at 12 PM (returning families) & March 21 at 12 PM (new)



Wisconsin Union Summer Camps Art, Game, & Outdoor Camps

Kids can take part in hands-on, experiential summer camps designed to create lifetime skills and memories! Choose from camps that focus on art, games, or outdoor adventure.

Check the [WI Union Summer Camp webpage](#) - updates and details coming soon!

- **Ages:** 8-16, varies by camp
- **Rates:** Varies by camp (discounts for [WI Union members](#))

families). Spots fill fast, log in by 11 AM - [Learn more](#).

- **Contact:**
youth@recwell.wisc.edu and
Subscribe to Email List



MMSD Summer Programming

The Madison Metropolitan School District (MMSD) offers summer tracks ranging from specialized arts or career exploration camps to academic support options.

Grades: 4K-12 (varies by program)

Rates: Most programs are free for MMSD residents and include breakfast, lunch, and transportation. Space is limited.

Enrollment Opens: April

How to Enroll:

- MMSD website (for enrichment programs like art camp, music lessons, or First Time Credit Courses).
- MMSD Parent Portal (for Summer Semester or Credit Recovery - school invitation is required).

Contact: 608-663-1914 or
summerschool@madison.k12.wi.us

- **Enrollment Opens:** February or March 2026

- **Contact:**
wusummercamps@union.wisc.edu



MSCR Summer Camps

Madison School & Community Recreation (MSCR) offers a variety of full-day and half-day summer camps focused on arts, outdoor exploration, sports, and science.

- **Grades:** 4K-9 (varies by program)
- **Dates:** June – August 2026
- **Hours:** Full and half-day options.
- **Rates:** Varies by camp (\$150–\$300/week); Fee assistance is available for MMSD residents.
- **Enrollment Opens:** February 23 at 12:00 PM (for MMSD residents).
- **How to Enroll:** Register via [MSCR ActiveNet](#). Families are encouraged to create an account and add family members in advance, as popular sessions often fill within minutes of opening.

Surrounding Districts: If you live in areas near Madison, local recreation departments such as [Verona](#), [Fitchburg](#), [Sun Prairie](#), [Monona](#), [Middleton/Cross Plains](#), [Waunakee](#), [Oregon](#), or [McFarland](#) may have summer youth programming.

SUMMER PROGRAM SEARCH TOOLS

[Understanding Program Oversight](#)



In Wisconsin, childcare licensing is required based on age and program structure. Many summer options for older children and teens **may be legally exempt from state licensing which regulates safety and quality**. Nannies and babysitters are independent employees and are also not regulated.

Regardless of state licensing status, **families should inquire about a program or provider's specific safety protocols**, background check procedures, staff qualifications and training.

DISCLAIMER: This content is provided for informational purposes only. The links included are offered to support independent research. Inclusion in these directories does not imply regulation, oversight, or endorsement by the University of Wisconsin–Madison.

YoungStar Child Care Finder

Maintained by the Wisconsin Department of Children and Families, this database helps families **find licensed or certified child care programs** that meet specific state health and safety standards.

4-C Referral Services

The local non-profit 4-C (Community Coordinated Child Care) offers personalized child care search assistance. Families can email referral@4-c.org to request a **customized list of licensed child care or summer programs**.

Madison-area Out-of-School Time (MOST) Program Finder

The MOST Program Finder is a **citywide directory** to help local families find afterschool and summer enrichment programs for art, sports, STEAM, and neighborhood programs.



UW Student Job Board

Can't find an option that fits your schedule? UW families can post a summer nanny or babysitter position on the [UW Student Job Board](#) for a **\$5 affiliate fee** (must use your [@wisc.edu](#) email).

[Learn More](#)

UW YOUTH LESSONS & CAMPS



Discover **shorter, specialized camps or private lessons** focused on specific skills like sports, music, or academics **offered through UW-Madison and campus partners** below for school-aged children and teens.

Private or hourly lessons, or short-term camps are typically not eligible for child care financial assistance programs like CCTAP or Wisconsin Shares.

Badger Sports Camps

Sports-specific camps offered by UW-Madison Athletics for different age groups and skill levels, allowing youth to train with university coaches and athletes.

- **Ages Served:** Varies, 5-18 years old
- **Registration Opens:** Mid-January-February, varies by camp

Rec Well Youth Lessons

Private and group lessons in activities like ice skating, swimming, and tennis, designed to help young participants develop an active and healthy lifestyle.

- **Ages Served:** Varies, 5-18 years old or 6 months to 5 years old for parent/child swim lessons.
- **Private Lesson Registration Opens:** Monday, January 12, 2026 at 9 AM
- **Group Lesson Registration Opens:** Ongoing, varies by lesson session

UW-Madison Extension 4-H Camps

Explore 4-H camps that take place at outdoor learning centers, providing kids with activities focused on nature, teamwork, and traditional camp fun. Check your local county Extension Office for specific dates and programs.

- **Ages Served:** Varies statewide, 5-18 years old (Dane County Grades 3-8)
- **Registration Opens:** Varies statewide (Dane County in mid-April, 2026)

Badger Precollege

Summer programs focusing on academic enrichment, career exploration, and college preparation through immersive experiences on campus.

- **Ages Served:** Grades 2-8 (Junior programs) & Grades 9-12 (Senior programs)
- **Registration Opens:** January 12, 2026

Summer Music Clinic

This long-standing program invites young musicians to the UW-Madison campus for a week of focused music learning and performances.

- **Ages Served:** Grades 6-12
- **Registration Opens:** January 12, 2026

Greater Madison Writing Project

These creative workshops invite youth to explore various genres of writing—including poetry, graphic novels, art, and fan fiction.

- **Ages Served:** Grades 3-12 (varies by camp)
- **Registration Opens:** ~February, [Click here to join the mailing list for registration updates!](#)

Earth Focus Day Camp

Located at the UW Arboretum, this summer day camp offers programs to help youth learn about nature through outdoor exploration and science activities.

- **Ages Served:** 5-14 years old
- **Registration Opens:** Wednesday, February 11, 2026 at 12 PM

Explore more UW youth programs [here!](#)

CHILD CARE FINANCIAL RESOURCES



Explore financial resources to help cover the cost of **care for children 0-12 years old** (or up to 18 years old for children with disabilities or special needs). Discover more financial resources for [UW-Madison parenting students](#) and [UW-Madison employees](#).

Child Care Tuition Assistance Program (CCTAP)

Child care financial assistance for income-eligible, currently enrolled **UW-Madison parenting students** with children 0-12 years old enrolled in licensed care in Wisconsin. Minimum 6 weeks of care required for Summer Term, can combine camps/programs.

Wisconsin Shares Child Care Subsidy Program

State child care funding for **income eligible families** for children 0-12 years old enrolled in licensed child care in Wisconsin.

City of Madison Child Care Tuition Assistance Program

Available to city of Madison residents who have financial need but **are over income for Wisconsin Shares** with children enrolled at a **City of Madison accredited** child care center.

Please note, nannies, babysitters, private or group lessons, private school, or unlicensed day camps/programs are generally not eligible for child care financial assistance programs.



4K (Four-Year-Old Kindergarten)

4K is an optional early education program for children who turn 4-years-old on or by September 1, offered by local schools or partner Early Childhood Education (ECE) sites.

- **Hours:** Half-day morning/afternoon or Full-day (Tuesday-Friday) - varies by site
- **4K Rates:** Free
- **Wrap-around Care Rates:** Some centers offer extended care for before/after 4K hours - rates range from \$225-\$1400/month.
- **Enrollment Opens:** January or February, depending on school district.

4K Programs at UW-Madison Child Care Centers

The following UW Campus and Network child care centers offer 4K programs. **UW employees and parenting students receive priority enrollment!** If interested, contact centers to get on their internal waitlists for 4K and wrap-around care.

MMSD 4K ECE Partner Sites

[Enrollment for MMSD 4K](#) opens February 16. Families living within MMSD school district boundaries may attend any MMSD 4K ECE site, regardless of location. During MMSD 4K enrollment, families can list up to three preferred locations, but placement is not guaranteed. If no space is available, the default placement is the [nearest elementary school](#) based on your home address.

Contact MMSD with questions about the enrollment process:
enrollment@madison.k12.wi.us or (608) 663-4957

- **Eagle's Wing Child Care:** Full-Day 4K

- **UW Child Development Lab:** Half-Day 4K
- **Waisman Early Childhood Program:** Half-Day 4K
- **Bernie's Place:** Full-Day 4K
- **Creative Learning Preschool:** Half-Day 4K
- **Meeting House Nursery School:** Half Day 4K
- **The Playing Field (Midtown & East):** Full Day 4K
- **Preschool of the Arts:** Half-Day 4K

Middleton-Cross Plains 4K

- **Middleton Early Childhood Center:** 4K for Middleton-Cross Plains School District. School district **enrollment** opens **January 15**.

Charter School 4K (Madison)

UW Network Center **Isthmus Montessori Academy** offers a morning Half-Day 4K Program, publicly funded through their charter school. The 2026-27 **Lottery Application Window** is open NOW through **February 12, 2026 at 3:00 PM**.



What if I want my child to attend a school *outside* of my school district?

If you want your child to attend a school (4K-12) *outside* of your school district, **you need to apply for [Open Enrollment](#)** through the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction. This is also required in order to receive *tuition free* 4K at a public school or ECE site outside of your school district.

Families applying to Open Enrollment should also enroll their child(ren) in local school districts if they are waiting for Open Enrollment or Charter lottery application results.

Open Enrollment Application Window: February 2-April 30, 2026

Contact: openenrollment@dpi.wi.gov or call toll-free: 888-245-2732

School Enrollment & After-School Programs (5K-12)



New Student Enrollment: Opens **January-August** (varies by school district).

Returning Students: Schools will ask you to register or confirm your child(ren)'s information between **May-August** (varies by school district).

After-School Programs

Registration opens between **March-May**, depending on program and school. After-school options are typically posted on school district or individual school websites and fill quickly.

Please note that while many after-school programs are hosted in school buildings, they are often operated by community partners rather than the school district itself; parents should conduct their own research or contact the school directly to confirm a program's licensing and oversight.

We understand that navigating these separate systems can be complex and hope that these resources help with your summer care planning and getting ready for the 2026-27 school year!

Best regards,
The Office of Child Care & Family Resources

Want to opt-out of school-aged/teen updates?

Wait! Don't unsubscribe - you'll be removed from *all* OCCFR emails, including our monthly Badger Buzz Parent newsletter. Instead, click the "Update Profile" button at the bottom of the email. You'll receive an email through which you may update your subscription preferences and select which topics you're interested in.

Feel free to contact [Perri Moran](#) with questions.



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