“OUTSIDE SCHOOL FEELS LIKE BEING FEARLESS”: Designing a 4-week Summer Camp to Support the Transition from Preschool to Kindergarten.

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Camp Coordinator
K-Camp
A Summer Adventure for Children Entering Kindergarten

July 8 - August 2, 2019
Monday - Friday, 8:30-3:30
Teachers and students from the three Acorn Schools on Vanderbilt campus come together for a month long learning experience on Vanderbilt’s beautiful campus.

The K-Camp Chant
“We are k-Camp, We are Fearless, We are Amazing”
Objectives for K-camp to support the goal: the transition from preschool to kindergarten

- Joy through play.
- Support children’s positive self-image as capable and competent learners.
- Provide a unique experience of Nature Education through outdoor explorations.
- Facilitate children’s ability to know the Vanderbilt community.
- Encourage children to manage their personal belongings.
- Gain a sense of self-confidence through new experiences and relationships.
- Navigate through adult spaces (buildings, restrooms and city streets).
- Develop self-control.
Manage personal belongings supports Kindergarten Readiness

- Exactly the same backpack the child will use in kindergarten
- Sports-top water bottle
- Sunscreen of choice
- Bug spray of choice
- Swim suit
- Towel
- Change of clothes
Fieldtrips

K-Campers are students of Vanderbilt University. They engage with the experience of place offered by the arboretum, buildings, and grounds of the campus. They embrace the opportunity to know their neighborhood and to be known by the community.
Fieldtrips help campers in navigating various environments with the ability of self-control.

Monroe Carrell Jr. Children's Hospital at Vanderbilt

Walking to the Football Stadium

The Brain and the Five Senses
Parents are a key in providing campers with meaningful field trips and learning experiences.

Soccer coach

Experiment in the five senses

Identifying different plants
Benefits of playing in nature

- Bring the best out of children
- Increase resilience and ability to negotiate risks
- Improve physical and mental benefits
- Recognize social emotional benefits
- Build self-confidence
Nature is the central concept to organize the K-Camp Program. It ties four fundamental threads—camp’s philosophy, methodologies, designs, and identities.
K-Campers develop a sense of wonder as they explore the natural world. This process of inquiry engages children through their own exploration to take ownership of their learning.
“At the end of a very busy day, the campers played on the grass of Magnolia Lawn. I saw a group of children playing with sticks, another group searching for cicada exoskeletons, and another group flying paper airplanes into a tree. At that moment, I thought to myself ‘this is what summer in childhood should look like.’” - Pam McColl
Water Play on Tuesdays and Thursdays
Benefits of water play

- Nature problem-solving skills
- Develop motor skills
- Develop communication skills
- Assist social-emotional growth
- Learn science and mathematics
Special Events

Musical guests

Fort Day

Wacky K-Counselor Olympics

Robot Day
CLOSING/BRIDGING CEREMONY
THE LAST DAY OF CAMP

Performing favorite camp songs for families, teachers and staff.
WE ARE K-CAMP,
WE ARE FEARLESS,
WE ARE KINDERGARTENERS!

They enter the tunnel as k-campers
and exit as kindergarteners.
One last good-bye and off to Kindergarten
Parents’ comments about K-Camp

- K-camp was helpful because it prepared Val to go out and try new things every day. She was fearless when she got out of the car (by herself!). When I dropped her off on the first day, she was fearless when she marched on to the bus; neither time did she look back 😊 Thank you for inspiring her to be self-reliant and confident!

- Mallory is loving kindergarten! K-Camp really helped with the transition! Being in a new location for K-Camp helped—instead of the same classroom, meeting new people at camp, exploring and gaining independence were huge helpful factors for her transition. Also, managing her backpack and water at camp helped her to be more confident starting kindergarten.

- The transition was really a breeze, and I give credit to K-Camp for that. Getting her off naps a month in advance and preparing her for a full day of kindergarten was just what she needed. I can’t say enough about how much both of my girls loved K-Camp, and I’m so glad they were able to be a part of the first 2 years!

- I believe that K-Camp prepared my daughter for kindergarten—especially, cutting out naps. Many children in Olivia’s class are still having difficulties transitioning through that but we had no problems at all.