



Renaissance Adventures[®]

EXPERIENTIAL EDUCATION THROUGH
LIVE-ACTION ROLEPLAYING GAMES

Parents Guide



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Attending Summer Quests

Before attending any of our summer quests, it is important that you familiarize yourself with some important policies and expectations.



“Summer Quests”

These are week-long day programs where the participants are dropped off in the morning, picked up in the afternoon, and between those times, they embark upon an exciting quest at a local park.

What to Expect

Award-winning Programs

We have worked and refined our programs for over 20 years and won multiple awards. Here are some reasons why we are a well-loved class to thousands of kids over the years:

- **Small groups** of six kids per adult
- **Exceptional staff** undergo two weeks of training, including conflict resolution, first aid/CPR, experiential education, children’s needs, and of course running quests
- **Experiential education** in 21st century skills, such as decision making, ethical reasoning, critical thinking, fitness, teamwork, and more (see p. 7)
- **Supportive relationships** with the kids, parents, and staff are focused on encouragement, respect, and kindness

For more information about each particular program, see p. 11.

Your First Quest

While it’s often intimidating trying something new, we welcome new Questers and honor their bravery! Because we have such small group sizes, new Questers won’t be “lost in the crowd.” Rather, they are an important part of the group and will

get a significant amount of attention by the Quest Leader that first day.



“Quest Leaders”

This is the staff person that leads the kids on their quest. They are the storytellers, coaches, and mentors. They are the primary on-site contact for both the participants and their parents.

“Questers”

The participants in our programs.

Creating a Character: When a Quester joins a program for the first time, they will create a character. This is the hero of the adventure, and the Quester chooses the character’s powers, gear, and other aspects. The Quest Leader guides the Quester through this process. For those who want to get a head start on thinking about their character, we provide *Journeybooks* that have an outline of the game rules. These can also be found on our website.

First Day of Every Program

Please sign in with the Quest Leader, even if your child has permission to sign themselves in and out. There may be important questions the Quest Leader has.

If there are additional forms or payments needed, please arrive at least 15 minutes early to meet with the site supervisor or admin staff.

Please Note: *The first day of a program is not a good time for special requests, including changing group assignments.*

What to Bring

Every Day

Pack a backpack for your child with the following items:

- Hat for sun protection



- Bag lunch with snack
- Filled water bottle (20+ oz.)
- Weather-appropriate clothes (including a poncho if rain is a possibility, and coat and gloves if it is a cold day)

Footwear: Hiking boots are recommended and give more traction outdoors, but sneakers are adequate. Sandals or footwear that exposes the feet or toes are not acceptable due to the nature of the hiking trails.

Sunscreen: Questers should have sunscreen already applied before arriving, even for cooler days. If the parent gave permission for Renaissance Adventures to apply sunscreen during the registration process, and if it is available, we are happy to share, but please don't rely on it.

Overnights & Specialty Programs: Renaissance Adventures will provide an additional equipment list. Call or email us to request an advance copy.

Not Allowed

Do not bring:

- Food with peanut butter
- Candy or gum
- Weapons, including pocket knives or blunt real swords
- Music players or headphones
- Money
- Illegal items
- Medication (except epi-pens and inhalers)
- Anything of significant value (except cell phones)

If a Quester is in possession of any of these items, the site supervisor will confiscate the item(s) and return them to the parent at the end of the day.

Do not wear:

- Open-toed footwear

- Loose jewelry
- Clothing that is offensive or depicts drugs (including alcohol) or illegal activities

Cell Phone Policy

We do not prohibit use of cell phones, and Quest Leaders may allow children to play games on their cell phones for a very limited period of time (such as during free time periods).

Lunch and Snack

RA does not provide snacks, lunch, or water bottles. All sites have access to water to refill water bottles. Parents must pack a good lunch with plenty of food for an active day. Include a snack for young children or full days. Do not pack peanuts or peanut butter.

If a Quester does not bring enough food, the supervisor is notified and will attempt to contact the child's parents. In the case that we cannot contact the parents or if they are unable to drop off more food, we will purchase food for the child at our discretion and at the parent's expense.

Medication

Epi-pens & Inhalers: Because the Questers are not always with the same staff all day, Questers carry their own epi-pens and inhalers, not the Quest Leader. Upon signing in every day, please inform the Quest Leader of the location of these medications. All Quest Leaders are trained in First Aid and CPR and can help administer epi-pens.

Overnight Programs: Our trained staff can intake and dispense medication that is prescribed by a doctor. If your child has medication, consult the "Medication Form" during registration for the overnight program.

All Other Medications: Our day programs are not child care, nor are they hosted at sites that have adequate facilities for medication administration. Do not bring medication to our programs. Please administer all medication at home and do not bring them to the program.



Special Needs

If this medication policy is a challenge, contact the office for possible options.

Lost & Found

Throughout the year we collect a large amount of items that are left behind by Questers. We encourage you to write your phone number and your child's full name on any item that is important to you.

If you believe that one of your child's belongings may be in the lost and found, please notify our office staff promptly. We keep items for at least two weeks and will call phone numbers written on lost items. Sometime after two weeks the lost item will be trashed, appropriated, or donated.

Sign-in & Out

We take your child's safety and well being seriously and have strict policies regarding signing in and out.

For specific times and notes for particular sites, see our website: www.RenaissanceAdventures.com.

Authorized Pick-up

Only those adults authorized by the parents or legal guardian can pick up Questers unless written authorization has been given, either in the registration forms, or by filling out a paper copy with the child's Quest Leader. The paper copy authorization is only good for that program only (and not future programs).

Child Permission

If you would like your child to have permission to sign themselves in and out on their own, including the ability to leave early or arrive late without parent approval, please update this preference in the registration forms. You may also complete a paper copy with your child's Quest Leader that can be used for that program only (and not future programs).

Even if the child has permission to sign themselves in and out on their own, please sign-in your child in person on the first day of every program by meeting the child's Quest Leader.

Early Arrival

There is a lot for our staff to go over each day to ensure that our programs run smoothly. Quest Leaders may not be available to sign in children until up to five minutes before the program's scheduled start time.

Do not drop off your child early and leave unless you are okay with the child being unsupervised *and* you have given the child permission to sign themselves in and out.

Late Arrival

Fifteen minutes after sign-in, the Quest Leaders are likely leaving the sign-in location to begin the program. Parents who arrive late should call the office or site supervisor of the location (if available), or find another staff member to call the child's group via walkie talkie. When a late child arrives, the parent will be sent with the child to their group's location.

Late Pick Up

For children whose parents have not yet arrived and cannot sign themselves out, a staff member will stay late and wait for the parent to arrive.



There is a 15 minute grace period for picking up participants at the end of a program. After that, the parent's account is charged \$5 for every fraction of five minutes that the staff member must wait. If you would like to work out a different arrangement prior to the start of a program, call or email the office.

Unauthorized Pick-up

When a person not authorized to pick up a child attempts to do so, employees will contact a supervisor (supervisors are the only people authorized to allow the sign out). Identification of the party will be established, the parents will be contacted, and the supervisor will receive a verbal authorization from the parents before allowing the sign out to take place.

If the person does not cooperate with the process, the child will be kept at the facility and authorities will be called. If a child is forcefully removed by an unauthorized person, both the parents and the proper authorities will be called immediately.

Health & Safety

The safety of your child is extremely important to us. If you have questions or special needs about our health and safety policies, please email or call the office.

If Your Child is Sick

Please notify the office by phone or email if your child is ill, especially if the illness is contagious. If your child has a communicable disease, please do not send them to our programs until the illness has been fully treated and your child is symptom free. A child exhibiting any typical symptom (runny

nose, sneezing, achiness) is considered sick and contagious.

Injury & Illness

Our Quest Leaders are trained in First Aid/CPR.

Illness: When appropriate, we notify parents via email and/or phone if there is a likelihood that their child has been exposed to an illness. If your child has contracted a communicable illness, the child will be quarantined, the parents called to arrange a pick-up, and other parents may be informed of the situation at pick up time.

Lice: Although we acknowledge that most childcare organization are shifting toward a more tolerance-oriented approach to head lice, because we use foam swords as a contact sport, we have a zero tolerance policy for head lice. Children with lice will be quarantined, the parents called to arrange a pick-up, and other parents may be informed.

Minor Injuries: Unless otherwise requested, our staff does not immediately report minor injuries, such as scrapes and bruises that happen during hikes. The parent or authorized adult picking up the child that day will be notified at sign-out of such injuries and the care provided.

Major Injuries: The Quest Leader will notify the site supervisor immediately, who will in turn contact the parent(s) and all authorized adults (in the order given during the registration process), and if it is an emergency, an ambulance will be called to take the child to the nearest hospital.

Inclement Weather

All of our programs are "rain or shine" unless the weather is severe (see below). Some programs are held at

sites with an indoor facility while others have only a shelter.

Be sure to pack clothing and gear that will keep your child comfortable and dry during whatever weather may come.

In the case of inclement weather, groups find shelter and wait there doing appropriate activities until the weather clears.



Site Amenities

For more information about the amenities and shelter availability of each site, visit our website.

Communication & Tracking

Grouping charts are kept at the office and with every site supervisor. Quest Leaders, support staff, and site supervisors carry walkie talkies for programs with four or more groups, and most also have cell phone access. Children are in sight and sound of adult staff at all times, and Quest Leaders do regular check-ins with their Questers.

Lost Child: In the event that a Quester is lost, the Quest Leader will immediately contact the supervisor. The supervisor will organize a search with all available staff. If the child has not been located within 15 minutes, the parents are notified first and then the police department while our staff continues to search. In the event that a child is suspected of being injured or

abducted, the parents and authorities are notified immediately.

Emergency Procedures

All Quest Leaders have step-by-step emergency procedures in their first aid kits, and all site supervisors are trained in emergency preparedness.

If you would like more detailed information about our emergency procedures, please email or call the office.

Severe Weather: During a severe weather “watch,” the site supervisor communicates with all Quest Leaders to be prepared for severe weather. Parents are not usually notified. If the severe weather develops into a “warning,” all groups get to safety, an email is sent to all parents, and evacuation may be enacted.

Child Abuse

If it is suspected that a child is involved in a neglectful or abusive situation, the following steps are taken. First, the staff member reports the information to a supervisor. Then, within 24 hours of suspicion, RA administration fills out a report with Social Services or police. Our staff will continue to support and monitor the child. Renaissance Adventures complies with the request of Social Services to not inform the parents when a report is filed with Social Services.

Our Heart & Vision

Mission

Our programs are experiential education through live-action roleplaying games. We inspire youth to rise to their potential by facilitating a journey of discovery, excitement, and responsible empowerment.



What’s a “larp”?

Acronym for live-action roleplaying games, like our Adventure Quest program.

Our Story

Mark Hoge started Renaissance Adventures in 1995 after many years in



the summer camp industry, as well as engaging in the boy scouts and live-action roleplaying games. What started as a small after-school enrichment program in Boulder, Colorado quickly grew into a well-loved community of kids and adults that create adventures together in locations across Colorado and beyond.

Aaron Pirnack joined Renaissance Adventures in 2000 as a Quest Leader. With his love of experiential education and knack for organizational skills, he has since partnered with Mark to steer the direction of Renaissance Adventures into the future.

We are currently in the process of creating a business opportunity with our Sword Skirmish and Adventure Quest programs so that school, camps, and businesses throughout the United States can offer the same kinds of fantastic programs that we have developed over the years. If you know anyone that may be interested in running Adventure Quest programs on their own, have them contact the office to learn more.

Our Philosophy

Live-action roleplaying games, like *Adventure Quest*, can be an excellent learning experience to develop 21st century skills. In these games, Questers have the chance to:

- Solve puzzles, riddles, and mysteries
- Explore fantastic realm
- Confront dilemmas that have no easy answer
- Negotiate peace treaties with difficult characters
- Depend upon their team to overcome daunting challenges

- Emerge victorious after a hard-fought battle

By letting the students co-create the story and empowering them to make decisions (and mistakes) that have game-changing consequences, we have found that our programs are exciting and inspiring opportunities for experiential learning.

Our Goals

- Create a nurturing and safe environment with an adventure that is full of fun, freedom, and creative problem-solving with a small group of friends.
- Assist children in realizing their own unique gifts and talents.
- Help children achieve their personal goals and experience self-fulfillment and empowerment.

Experiential Education

Outcomes in Quests

Renaissance Adventures has published a library of over 200 quests and scenarios.



What's Experiential Education?

Engaging with learners in direct experience and focused reflection in order to increase knowledge, develop skills, clarify values, and develop people's capacity to contribute to their communities.

-from the *Association for Experiential Education* website.

In all of our week-long quests, the combination of the written curriculum and the improvisational skills of the Quest Leaders develop the following educational outcomes:

- **Ethical Reasoning:** Questers hold firm to ethical actions, and understand and choose an ethical approach to moral ambiguity or ethical dilemmas.

- **Fitness:** Questers hike, race, battle, and are active in the quest.
- **Self-Esteem:** Questers maintain a sense of self-worth, responsible empowerment, self-efficacy, and positive identity, and support these in others.
- **Critical Thinking:** Questers use a rational, analytical approach toward solving a problem.
- **Teamwork:** Questers coordinate their efforts to overcome a challenge.
- **Social Skills:** Questers show ability to honor friendships and contracts, positively deal with emotions (“emotional intelligence”), be comfortable in a social setting, understand community awareness and involvement, and communicate their needs and listen to others’ communications in a respectful way.

Staff Integrity

Working at Renaissance Adventures is an opportunity for us all to learn and grow and share our gifts. In support to each other and our mission, we commit our efforts toward a mutual PACTT:

- **Presence:** I am available and present, here and now. I bring my best efforts and spirit into participation and engagement.
- **Appreciation:** I focus on gratitude and compassion. When there are challenges, I focus my attention on the best possible outcomes and on proactive actions, instead of complaining.
- **Celebration:** I bring my light heart and playfulness to my work and interactions. How can I support enjoyment amongst the staff and Questers?
- **Truth:** I strive to be authentic and honest. I speak my truth, while being respectful of the listener. I am

a Rumor-Dispeller, and a Boundary Setter! I ask, rather than assume, so that I can know your truth.

- **Teamwork:** We are all on this journey together. I am proactive in lending a helping hand to my team mates. I co-create with the team to manifest the best experience ever.

Conflict Resolution Policy

We believe that emotional safety is as important as physical safety. Quest Leaders act swiftly and compassionately to uphold physical and emotional safety. Each child is respected, and each child is invited to act with respect to all. We role model and teach the children how they can resolve conflicts without resorting to name-calling, taunts, or bullying. We never “punish” a child for their unsafe behavior, but rather let them know what the potential consequences will be if they repeat their behavior.



Inspiring Invitations

The *Inspiring Invitations* strategy is used immediately when anyone’s physical or emotional safety is at risk. A full description of the Inspiring Invitations conflict resolution strategy is available upon request.

Inspiring Invitations

At Renaissance Adventures we promote safety and respect through the use of a three-level strategy called *Inspiring Invitations*. The three levels of the strategy are

1. The Heart-to-Heart Talk
2. The Safety Talk
3. The Asking for Help Talk

These strategies address boundaries and clearly communicate consequences (not “punishment”) to those involved. Our goals are to act immediately for conflict resolution, to



reestablish trust and a safe situation for all involved, and for the children to be comfortable and harmonious with the other Questers in the group.

Heart-to-Heart Talk

The essence of the Heart-to-Heart Talk is to connect lovingly and firmly with a child so that they feel heard and respected, and so that they hear and understand what behavior is safe or unsafe, and what the needs are of all involved. The Quest Leader and the child make an agreement to act safely. If safety challenges persist after one to three Heart-to-Heart talks, then it's time for a Safety Talk.

Safety Talk

The essence of the Safety Talk is to clarify consequences for future unsafe actions, to monitor a child's actions, and if need be, follow through with the consequences they have agreed to or have been warned about.



Safety Talk Example

"Joey, I know you've been trying very hard to duel safely with that broadsword, and I know you've been practicing the safety tips I shared with you, but this is the third time that you've tagged someone too hard. Smaller Swashers tag lighter than long ones like the one you are using. Would you like to try using a smaller Swasher? No? Well I need you to know that if you use the broadsword unsafely one more time, I will need you to use this light dagger, until I am confident that you can use a long sword safely. Okay?"

If safety challenges persist after two or three safety talks (each with a fair consequence), then it's time for the Asking for Help talk.

Asking for Help Talk

The essence of the Asking for Help Talk is asking the child and others for help

resolving the present challenge. If appropriate, the Quest Leader may ask the questing group, Site Supervisor, Director, and/or the child's parents for help.

On Swords and Villains



What are Swashers and Boffers?

"Swasher" is Renaissance Adventures's brand of foam boffers—sports equipment that lets us have fun dueling and battling. We sell Swashers and other forms of boffers. See our website for details.

Renaissance Adventures employs the use of foam boffer swords as a teaching tool that children absolutely love. The safety rules are simple to learn and are reinforced by the Quest Leaders.

Swords are symbols that aid us in opening a gateway into the mythic realms, reflections of which are seen in the knights of King Arthur, the Quest for the Holy Grail, and in the archetype of the spiritual warrior. Children are inspired and excited by our safe foam Swasher swords.

Swasher Safety

While our Swashers have been play-tested and designed with safety as a top priority, misuse can cause injury. We only allow Questers to play with the Swashers if they can do so safely.

Are They War Toys?

Swashers are a useful teaching tool for awakening in the youth a respect for physical safety and emotional boundaries, and an awareness and understanding of patterns of abuse and victimization. The use of Swashers also gives the Quest Leaders an opportunity to teach non-competition by addressing issues of competition that come up in the swordplay, and by

guiding and role-modeling how to play fair, and how to be assertive while at the same time respectful and compassionate.

Diverse Challenges

Swashers are only one component of *Adventure Quest*. When a child or teen embarks upon a quest, they face many diverse challenges – ethical, moral, social, mental, physical, etc. The Questers are the heroes of the quest, and are called upon to promote peace in the imaginary land.

Treatment of Villains

So-called “villains” in our quests are never called “evil” and are generally

not purely wicked. We have found that it is not useful for the students’ learning to portray morality in absolute terms. Just like “real life,” villains within the quests have complex motivations and goals, people they love and grudges they grapple with. Astute Questers must uncover the true source of the quest’s problems and often must come up with compromises, negotiations, and creative solutions to the difficulties that the kingdoms are wrestling with. The kingdom’s problems are not generally able to be fixed by the swinging of a sword!

Registration & Programs

Quester Resources

Pictures and Videos

As long as we have the parents’ permission, we empower our Quest Leaders to take pictures and videos of their group and post them on Facebook/RenaissanceAdventures. Toward the end of each week, the Quest Leaders themselves post what’s going on in their group so that parents can see and download the snapshots, or comment on the adventures.

Campers with Special Needs

Renaissance Adventures can offer services to a child with special needs providing the child has the mental and physical abilities of a six-year-old.

Renaissance Adventures will work within reason along with the parents and child to accommodate the child as long as the child can support a safe environment with other children in regards to our hiking and physical activity, and emotional safety in regards to fair play.

If the experience of the others in the group would be negatively affected by the amount of attention that the employee would need to give the child, or if the group is would be prevented from activities that other parents are expecting from the program, then additional help may be needed, such as having the parent join as a volunteer.

Online Registration Deadlines

Please realize that Renaissance Adventures runs experiential education programs. We do not offer child care or “drop in” services because each program is in fact a class that is tailored toward the participants. While we often allow for late registration, there is never any guarantee that we can accommodate; you will be assessed fees; and we have a waitlist system that favors those who attempt to register sooner than later.

- Access to **online registration for most programs ends on Thursday midnight** before the program.



- Online registration for **overnight programs** ends the Friday that is at least five days before the start date.

If you do not register for a program by the time online registration ends, there is still a possibility of enrolling in the program. However, this is considered a “**late registration.**” This incurs a **\$45 late registration fee**, required extra paperwork, and program uncertainty.

Program Summaries

While *Adventure Quest* is our most popular program, we have developed a number of specialty programs that fulfill our vision in unique ways.

Quest Programs

Adventure Quest: Playing as knights, wizards, healers, shapeshifters, or other adventurers, students join together to solve riddles and puzzles, overcome daunting challenges, and battle monsters with foam swords to save the kingdom!

Star Quest: Intrepid adventures in space! Discover strange new worlds, negotiate intergalactic treaties, and battle using blasters (beanbags) and fusion blades (foam swords)!

Quest & Quill: Adventure Quest + creative writing! Questers write about the stories unfolding in their quests, their heroic character, or any topic that inspires them. Work on weekly Guild Challenges and pen the next short story for the Adventure Quest: Stories publication!

Teen Programs

Heroes Academy: Formidable missions, nighttime ambushes, wayfarer inn merriment, and a monster-laden wilderness to explore! Teens band together to engage in an

immersive village co-created by costumed adult live-action roleplayers.

Knight CIT: As an assistant to a Quest Leader and mentor to a group of younger Questers, the skills of leadership, accountability, and integrity are learned and developed.

Friday Game Night: A lively hangout for teens on most Friday nights, we take Adventure Quest to a tabletop game using dice, maps, game pieces, and imagination.

Events and More

Birthday Parties: Exciting quests, team games, treasure hunts, and more! Choose from a variety of options, customize the theme, and let Renaissance Adventures lead an unforgettable experience!

Sword Skirmishes: Whether your 3rd grade class is learning about pirates, your library’s young adults are reading *The Lord of the Rings*, or your Star Wars themed block party could use some kids activities, we can run a variety of excellent scenarios to enliven any event.

Team Building: Evolve your group into a team by overcoming exciting and daunting challenges! Your group is equipped with a riddle map, a bag of supplies, and swords. Somewhere in the wilderness is a buried treasure chest, but marauding bandits seek to take the loot... and your lives. Can you overcome a series of dynamic challenges and work together as a team before time runs out?

Treasure for Chores: Using a rewards chart and gold coins, students earn treasure and powers for their Adventure Quest character by completing goals set by students and parents, such as homework, grades, chores, and other responsibilities.

Alumni

Renaissance Adventures is currently developing a network and program for Questers that have become adults.

- Job & internship openings
- Insider access to game rules and development
- Invitations to free events and adult larps

- Contribute to future publications and offerings
- Discounts and coupons you can give to friends/relatives
- Networking with other RA alumni

The only qualifications are that you have participated in our programs and are at least 18 years old. Participants that are interested in joining the network should contact the office.

Connection

Office Hours

Office hours are Monday through Friday, 8:30am-4:30pm June through August. From September thru May, office hours vary and are limited. Please call for details.

Contact

RA Office: 303-786-9216
Director: 720-280-3579
Email: Info@RenaissanceAdventures.com
Website: www.RenaissanceAdventures.com

Feedback

We appreciate your feedback, praise, and suggestions. Please help us to help you by communicating directly with us whenever there is a problem. We will do our best to resolve the issue, and if need be, create new policies to support positive changes in our program. Thank you!

Testimonials

If you loved our programs, we invite you to share the experience by reviewing us online. Email the office for a list of sites. Thanks!

Meet the Staff

Mark Hoge, Director: Mark has led the team at Renaissance Adventures since he founded the company in 1995.

Aaron Pirnack, Operations & Publications: Starting as a Quest Leader in 2000, Aaron been involved in nearly every aspect of Renaissance Adventures.

Mary Wolf, Office Manager: Mary sent her children to RA years before joining the team with a passion for helping people with a love of a well-run office.

Jake Snow, Registrar: Certified cat person, tarot card enthusiast, and no relation to President Snow.

Beryl Beauchamp, Office Assistant: Helping RA since 2009, Beryl enjoys that there is always something new and exciting to learn... like a quest!

Quest Leaders: Check out our Facebook page to see our awesome story-crafters and hero-mentors!