

Your Guide to



Registration

Our camps are designed for the developmental stage of each age group, therefore, grade levels must be observed. Campers may attend only those camps for which they are registered. Registration closes the Monday prior to the first day of camp. Please note that 4K-K campers must be four years old and fully potty-trained.

Cancellations & Refunds

McWane Science Center reserves the right to cancel camps that do not meet minimum enrollment. If a camp is cancelled by us, a full refund will be returned to the registrant. If a registrant cancels a camp, a 50% refund will be made if the registrant notifies the Camp program in writing, which is emailed to pchowning@mcwane.org, no later than 10 working days prior to the start camp. Otherwise, no refunds will be made.

Lunch & Snacks

Parents/Caregivers are responsible for lunch every day. Campers may bring a nut-free packed lunch, or you may purchase lunch through the Bean Sprouts Café (info available on page 16). This will be an added cost and the option is available with your camp purchase. For the health and safety of all our campers, peanut butter and nuts are prohibited in packed lunches. Sunflower butter is a good alternative and can be found in most grocery stores.

REMEMBER TO INDICATE ALL ALLERGIES AT REGISTRATION.

Snacks are provided in all camps. Campers are welcome to bring water bottles if they would like to, although water is provided in the classrooms. Water bottles must be labeled and secured in a lunch bag or backpack.



Drop-off & Pick-up

You must come in with your camper to sign them in before camp and sign them out after camp. Feel free to use our parking deck located on 2nd Avenue North. Parking tokens will be provided for you to exit the deck, free of charge. The loading zone on 2nd Avenue North is also available for quick drop off and pick up, however McWane Science Center cannot guarantee that you won't be ticketed. The person signing in your child at the beginning of camp each day will be given a **CAMPER CHECK OUT CARD**. The person who picks up your camper **MUST** present that card. If they do not have the card, we will check to see if their name is on the approved sign out list and will check their ID. If we do not have a person's name on the approved sign out list, we will not release your child to them, and we will call the number on the daily sign in sheet for clarification.

Before and after care of campers is available as an additional add-on. This price varies on the camp season.

Before & After Care

Before Care is available for all campers from 7:45–9:00 AM for an additional fee. After Care is available for 1st–7th grade campers from 4:00–5:30 PM, also for an additional fee. Structured activities and games will be provided during both care periods.

Schedule

- **4K - Kindergarten Camps**

Half-Day camps start at 9:00 a.m. and end at 12:30 p.m.

Campers may be dropped off no earlier than 9:00 AM, or 7:45 AM with the Before Care add-on, and must be picked up by 1:00 PM.

- **1st - 7th Grade Camps**

Full-day camps begin at 9:00 a.m. and end at 4:00 p.m.

Campers may be dropped off no earlier than 9:00 AM, or 7:45 AM with the Before Care add-on, and must be picked up at 4:00 PM, or no later than 5:30 PM with the After Care add-on.

Late Arrival & Early Pick-up

If you arrive after check-in, or need to pick your camper up early, please proceed to the security desk or ticket counter, and they will call a camp representative. Please remain in the lobby until your camper is signed in or out. *Note: there will be no early pick-up/drop-off between 11:45 to 12:00 and 3:45 to 4:00. These are transition times for campers and staff, so please plan accordingly.

Late Arrival

A camp representative will meet you in the lobby to sign your camper in. They will provide you with a camp check-out card and parking token, if needed.

Early Pick-Up

Provide the camper's name and age group/camp name to security or ticketing staff. A camp representative will escort your child to the lobby. You will need to present the camp check-out card or a valid ID to sign out your camper. Please remain in the lobby until they are brought to you. To ensure the safety of all campers, your child will not be dismissed until a camp representative has brought them to you and you have signed them out. Please **DO NOT** leave with your child if you have not spoken to a camp representative **AND** signed them out. Campers may not meet parents/caregivers outside of the designated pick-up area.

Camp Inclusion

We work to ensure that everyone, regardless of learning ability, cultural background, faith, income, or race, can reach their fullest potential with dignity. Campers, volunteers, and staff can look forward to interacting and learning within a welcoming environment.



Late Fees

4K-Kindergarten campers must be picked up by 1:00 PM. All other campers must be picked up by 4:00 PM, or by 5:30 PM if enrolled in the optional After Care add-on. A \$5 late pick-up fee will be charged for every 10 minutes a camper remains after the scheduled pick-up time.

Camp Behavior Policy

To successfully attend all McWane Camps, children must be able to independently function in a group setting without consistent one on one support. They must be able to follow verbal instructions and rules and resolve conflicts without physical contact or verbal abuse. Camp management will communicate behavior issues with the camper and with their caregiver when necessary. Repeated behavior issues may result in dismissal from the program.

Member Benefits

McWane Members receive special benefits when registering for camps, including early registration access and discounted pricing. Early registration gives Members priority access to camp spots before they open to the general public.

For Summer Camps, Members receive 15% off tuition during the early registration period. After early registration ends, the Member discount for Summer Camps is 10%.

For Spring Break and Winter Camps, Members receive \$10 off on camp tuition throughout the entire registration period.

Discounts and early registration benefits are available to active Members at the time of registration and cannot be applied retroactively. Camp availability is limited, and early registration is encouraged.

Contact Us!

For Questions About Camps Contact:

Peggy Chowning - pchowning@mcwane.org

For Questions About Membership Contact:

Everett Robinson, Sr. - erobinson@mcwane.org

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Warning: Puns ahead!

This Camp Guide contains an excessive amount of puns. Side effects may include laughter, groaning, and an increased love of science.





Spring Break *Camps*

Registration for Spring Break Camps opens on January 2, 2026 and closes on March 16
Spring Break Camp dates are March 23 - 27, 2026

Half-Day Camps: 4k-K

Half-day camps are \$55 per day, \$45 per day for McWane Science Center Members.

Before Camp Care: +\$5, per day
After Camp Care: +\$5, per day

Bean Sprouts Café Lunches: +\$10, per day

Full-Day Camps: Grades 1-6

Full-day camps are \$85 per day, \$75 per day for McWane Science Center Members.

Before Camp Care: +\$5, per day
After Camp Care: +\$5, per day

Bean Sprouts Café Lunches: +\$10, per day



March 23 Think Outside the Box

4k-K Puzzle Palooza

Grab your pieces and put your heads together. Follow clues to hunt for missing objects, take a close up look at the world, and create invisible drawings. Puzzles, secret messages, and detective work await in this itty-bitty mystery of a camp.

1st - 3rd The Great McWane Escape

In this camp, STEM stands for Secrets, Trickery, Escape, and Mystery. Discover what makes escape rooms so clever and try to escape the McWane Mystery Room. Will you make it out?

4th - 6th Mystery Box

What secrets await us in The Box? It's time to get a clue as you explore the puzzling tricks behind escape rooms. Crack codes, uncover clues, and solve ciphers to reveal the mystery hidden within The Box.



March 24 Soar Into Science

4k-K Up, Up, & Away!

Step into the cockpit and fasten your seat belt for an adventure like no other. Design airborne contraptions, chart a path through the skies, and even help pigs fly in this exploration of the forces of flight!

1st - 3rd Plane Crazy

Discover the wonder of flight without ever leaving the ground. Build the world's greatest paper airplane, navigate a path around the globe, and even drop an egg 50 feet from a roof – make sure your parachute works!

4th - 6th McWane Flight Academy

Do you have what it takes to withstand the g-forces of McWane's Flight Academy? Complete training exercises in engineering, the physics of flight, and air traffic control to earn your pilot's wings.



March 25

These Camps Rock!



4k-K Pebble Pals

Get ready to dig, discover and explore everyone's favorite – ROCKS! Our little geologists will investigate different rock types, learn how mountains are made, and even try to build their own earthquake proof structures! Campers are sure to have a rockin' adventure with this one!

1st - 3rd Geo Journey

Join us on a journey to explore the geological depths of the earth! From identifying real rocks and minerals, to modeling plate tectonics and aquifers, campers will uncover the geological processes that shape our planet.

4th - 6th Secrets in the Stone

What stories do rocks tell? What clues are hidden in the layers of the Earth? Campers will step into the role of junior geologists as they investigate the processes that shape our planet and uncover the ancient secrets preserved in stone. Decode the rock cycle, model plate tectonics, and investigate the unique history told in Alabama's soils.



March 26
**Cloudy With a Chance
of Science**

4k-K Rain or Shine

Ever wonder what makes the sky thunder and flash? Step into the shoes of a meteorologist as we investigate electricity, air, and water in this weather bash!

1st - 3rd Forecast Frenzy

Unleash your inner storm chaser in this interactive camp where we will track weather patterns, decode radar maps, and make your own forecasts!

4th - 6th Wild, Wild, Weather

Dive into the science behind extreme weather events, with experiments that bring the atmosphere down to earth. You will make a cloud from scratch, fly a weather balloon, and use satellites to forecast the future!



March 27
The Sickest Camps in Town

4k-K Biohazard Buddies

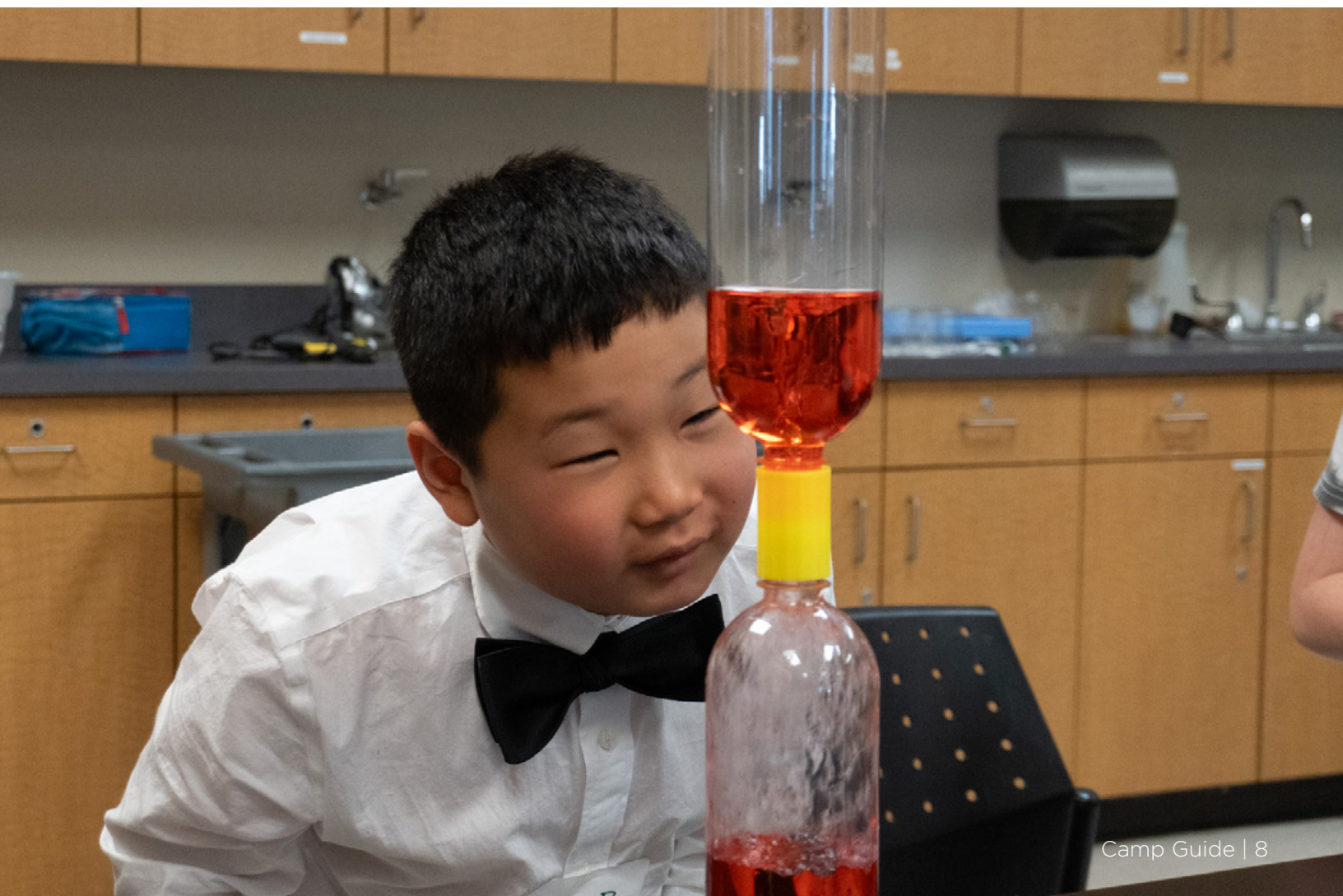
Outsmart the body's defense systems and go viral. Learn how germs spread and experiment to find out the best way to cover a sneeze before making some extra mucus of your own to take home.

1st - 3rd Antibody Avengers

All immune systems are a go! Fight back against germs and allergens before it's too late and you... ah...Ah...AH...AH-CHOOOOO. Jump into the role of immunologist, microbiologist, and epidemiologist as you learn how the body defends itself against microbe invaders. Discover how disease spreads, get hands-on experience staining bacteria, and create mucus to trap unwanted foes.

4th - 6th Microbe Defenders

Detect, diagnose, defend. Train like a microbiologist by learning to stain and identify bacteria, model transmission like an epidemiologist, and become an immunologist by studying mucus barriers. Uncover the science that keeps us in the know when it comes to illness.





Summer Camps

Registration for Summer Camps opens on January 2, 2026 for McWane Members only. Registration opens for everyone else on February 2, 2026.

Each week of Summer Camp has its own registration deadline, which is the Monday before that week starts.

Summer Camps are a week long each

Half-Day Camps: 4k-K

Half-day camps are \$200 per week, excluding tax. McWane Members get 15% off camps for the first month of registration. On Feb 2, that discount drops to 10%.

Before Camp Care: +\$15, per week
After Camp Care: +\$15, per week

Bean Sprouts Café Lunches: +\$50, per week

Full-Day Camps: Grades 1-7

Full-day camps are \$380 per week, excluding tax. McWane Members get 15% off camps for the first month of registration. On Feb 2, that discount drops to 10%.

Before Camp Care: +\$15, per week
After Camp Care: +\$15, per week

Bean Sprouts Café Lunches: +\$50, per week



Week of June 1 - 5

Built to Tinker

4k-K Nuts and Bolts

Grab your tool belt and bring your ideas to life! Wire a circuit, build helpful gadgets, and even design a city block! Imagination meets invention in this camp for curious creators.

1st - 2nd Tinker Tech

Check your clock because it's tinker tech time! Learn the ins and outs of making. Through hands-on activities, your camper will use real woodworking tools, build and program robots, and get inspired by local architecture.

3rd - 4th Moby Minecraft

What do you get when you mix Minecraft and STEAM with an archipelago of islands? A whale of a time! With barren islands as blank canvases, we will bring our world to life and create a tropical paradise through brilliant engineering challenges.

5th - 7th Next Level Makers

Design, Make, Improve! From creating robot accessories and 3D printing tech solutions, to architecture and community projects, explore the tools and techniques of the maker community and bring your ideas to life. Join us to discover the maker in you!



Week of June 8 - 12

Past Meets Play



4k-K Planet Wild

Stomp, splash, and soar your way through time! From prehistoric dinosaurs to McWane's Animal Ambassadors, discover the wild adaptations of the animal kingdom that have helped these curious critters survive on every corner of the earth. Explore real fossils, test a wing design in the wind tunnel, and uncover how animals use camouflage to hide from predators. Bring your curiosity – and your binoculars!

1st - 2nd Time Trekkers

From the fossils of the past to the forests of today, join us on a journey millions of years in the making! Explore dinosaur footprints, hunt for shark teeth, and discover how humans are helping animals as they adapt to take on the challenges of tomorrow.

3rd - 4th Survival Safari

It's a wild world out there, but nature's toughest challenges can create the coolest creatures! Discover real Ice Age fossils, explore aquatic worlds through a microscope, and get up close with the amazing adaptations of McWane's Animal Ambassadors. From microscopic organisms to the largest animals on earth, learn about the incredible features of the creatures that ruled the past and roam the present.

5th - 7th Ice Age to Heat Wave

Step into the shoes of a scientist and discover what it takes to survive in an ever-changing world. From the relics of the past to the urban landscapes of today, find the challenges our animals face and explore how they adapt. Examine real-world fossils from an Ice Age dig site, discover the microscopic majesty of the world around us, and engineer solutions to keep our wildlife safe in an urban age.





Week of June 15 - 19

Stack, Snap, Create!

4k-K Itty Bitty Brick City

Everyone's favorite construction toy will be used to build mazes, monsters, towers, boats, ziplines and more. The youngest builders find out what they can create in a series of building challenges designed by the McWane Master Builders! What will you make today?

1st - 2nd Brick by Brick: LEGO® Engineers

Yes, we can! Build it that is! Build an earthquake proof tower, design the fastest racecar, and even construct a zipline. Everyone's an engineer with Legos®!

3rd - 4th Science Brick-tacular!

Science, engineering and LEGOS® collide in this engineering-based builder's camp. Using the engineering design process, campers will build towers, bridges, racecars and more in a series of building challenges. Will you be the missing piece?

5th - 7th Bricks & Bots

LEGO® builders, assemble! From rube Goldberg machines, to stop motion animation, to bots like WeDo and Spike, this camp will push brick building to the outer limits.



Week of June 22 - 26

Science Gets Artsy



4k-K Arty Smarty

Are you an Arty Pants? If Picas-SO, join us in our itty-bitty studio where we will: mix colorful concoctions, wire electrifying works, and create mini masterpieces. Feel Frida join in!

1st - 2nd Art Attack

Dawn your smocks and prepare to get messy! In this camp, your artist will: become origami masters, make a banana piano, and discover nature's subtle secrets inside your favorite paintings. It's sure to be picture-perfect!

3rd - 4th ArtyFacts

Looking to brush up on the awesome science of art? Join our dream STEAM team, as we: engineer gravity defying sculptures, breakdown the biology of breakdance, and 3D print our very own designs. It'll make you Van Gogh Wild!

5th - 7th 20,000 Leagues Under the Steve

Set sail on this voyage around the cube! In this camp we combine STEAM topics, Minecraft, and an archipelago of empty islands to flex our creative muscles and leave our mark. The world is your oyster!

Week of June 29 - July 3

Science with a Bang



Note: Camps during this week have limited capacity

4k-K Pop! Science

It's a week of spectacular science! McWane's youngest campers will try a host of amazing experiments - from bubbly, sticky, fizzing chemistry to miniature rockets to a look into outer space. Dress for a mess!

1st - 2nd Sci-spllosion!

This camp will run the gamut of amazing experiments. From chemistry that's icy cold, surprisingly hot, or super slimy, to physics that buzz with sound, expand with air pressure and move at super speed.

3rd - 4th Science Spectacular

Strap in for a week filled with the most spectacular science experiments. Chemical reactions will change colors and freeze solid, engineering will launch rockets and build shocking capacitors, and physics experiments will challenge gravity itself.



Week of July 6 - 10 Dive Into Discovery

4k-K Sink or STEM

It's science on the High Seas! From currents to coral, you'll dive into an underwater world full of fascinating creatures, forces of nature, and feats of engineering. Meet real life ocean animals, build and test boats, and use chemistry to understand ocean currents. Set sail for a whale of a good time!

1st - 2nd School of Fish

Become an o-fish-al scientist as we investigate currents, uncover hidden marine life, and experiment with the forces that shape our seas. Will this camp satisfy your coastal curiosity? Shore thing!

3rd - 4th Moby Minecraft*

What do you get when you mix Minecraft and STEAM with an archipelago of islands? A whale of a time! With barren islands as blank canvases, we will bring our world to life and create a tropical paradise through brilliant engineering challenges.

5th - 7th Camp Tidal

What's in the water? You'll get to the bottom of it all with dissections, water testing, and conservation engineering. In this marine biology camp, the world is your oyster!

*Because our Minecraft Camps book quickly, we are offering this camp twice this summer

Week of July 13 - 17 Science Steals the Scene



4k-K Lights! Camera! Science!

Get ready for your close-up as we go inside the wacky world of Hollywood! Make a movie monster, design your own prop, and train to be a Hollywood stunt master. It will be a CUT above the rest!

1st - 2nd Hollywood Hijinks

Places everyone! It's all hands-on deck as we explore the fantastical facts behind filmmaking. Make a working camera, get a master class in movie makeup, and learn the surprising tools behind movie sound effects. Don't miss out on this limited release!

3rd - 4th Movie Magic Makers

Discover your inner Spielberg as we explore the science of the movies! Be prepared to conjure some ghostly special effects, break glass without leaving a mark, and make a not-so-silent movie. That's a wrap!

5th - 7th Silver Screen Science

Quiet on set! We're giving a behind the scenes tour of the science of movie magic. Bring clay to life, design real special effects, and get a front row seat to dazzling pyrotechnics. This camp will be certified fresh!





Week of July 20 - 25

Coding the Future

4k-K Red Bot Blue Bot

Ready or bot, here we code! Get ready to build, program, and explore the inner workings of McWane's fleet of robots. Campers will explore Ozobots, Copybots, and LEGO® robots, as well as analog challenges and games.

1st - 2nd Super Bot Squad

Harness the power of electricity by building circuits, try your hand at beginner programming languages, and explore what happens when a robot can see the colors of our world and more!

3rd - 4th Robo Ready Rangers!

Power up those programming skills and get ready to challenge your knowledge of - and creativity with - robotics. Tesla coils, circuits, advanced robotics kits, and more! Do you have what it takes to become a resident robot expert at McWane?

5th - 7th TechQuest

Join us on a quest...a tech quest! Unleash your creative potential with the power of programming! Featuring our Vex robots, we will find out what makes robots function, build bots from scratch, and program them to their fullest potential to overcome challenge after challenge. Time for the digital robo-lution!

Week of July 27 - 31

Science with Superpowers



4k-K Power Up

Join a league of pint-sized heroes as we explore the science of superpowers! Use static electricity to unleash your telekinetic powers, learn to repel water to create stunning hydrophobic art, and harness chemistry and neuroscience to make objects seem to disappear... Capes encouraged!

1st - 2nd Save the Day

Deep in the heart of The Magic City, a hero emerges! Will you rise to the challenge of this super powered camp? Come and see the spectacle of fire and ice in our Rushton Theater, create gadgets worthy of your own hero's origin story, and even harness the power of electricity to light up the sky - with pickles!

3rd - 4th Heroes and Villains

With great science comes great responsibility, but not all choose the side of good. In this camp, there is something for your heroes and villains alike! Campers will take a page out of Batman's book with gadget engineering challenges, develop an expertise in illusions like Mysterio, and even ride a hoverboard like the Green Goblin.

5th - 7th Fantastic Forces

It's a bird... It's a plane... It's science! Ever wondered if superpowers were possible? In this action-packed camp, your hero will explore the chemistry, biology, and even robotics, that inspired the creation of our favorite comic book characters.





Winter Camps

Details & Registration for Winter Camps will be available on October 1, 2026.
Registration closes on December 19, 2026.
Winter Camp dates are December 28 - 31, 2026.

Half-Day Camps: 4k-K

Half-day camps are \$50 per day (not including tax), \$40 per day for McWane Science Center Members.

Before Camp Care: +\$5, per day
After Camp Care: +\$5, per day

Bean Sprouts Café Lunches: +\$10, per day

Full-Day Camps: Grades 1-6

Full-day camps are \$80 per day (not including tax), \$70 per day for McWane Science Center Members.

Before Camp Care: +\$5, per day
After Camp Care: +\$5, per day

Bean Sprouts Café Lunches: +\$10, per day



SCIENCE, LEARNING, FUN!

Every school break is an opportunity for your child to explore, create, and discover something new. At McWane Science Center, our camps are designed to turn days off from school into unforgettable learning adventures.

Our 2026 Camp Guide highlights a wide variety of STEAM-focused camps offered during Spring Break, Summer, and Winter, created for a range of ages and interests. Whether your child loves building, creating art, exploring nature, or diving into new technologies, there's a camp where they can learn by doing. And have a blast along the way!

Led by experienced educators, McWane camps encourage kids to ask questions, think critically, and collaborate with others. Each camp blends education and excitement in a safe, supportive environment where curiosity leads the way.

We would love to be a part of your child's learning journey this year. If you have questions about camp offerings or what to expect, please feel free to reach out to me at pchowning@mcwane.org. I look forward to welcoming your family to McWane Science Center camps in 2026.

Peggy Chowning

Vice President of Education,
McWane Science Center

Meet Our Education Team

At the heart of our STEAM camps is an exceptional team of science communicators and educators dedicated to sparking wonder and curiosity about our world through hands-on science experiences.

About McWane Education Staff

McWane camps are designed and led by a team of passionate, highly trained educators who bring science to life every day. Our educators come from diverse professional backgrounds, including classroom teaching and scientific research, with expertise spanning fields like physics and mathematical modeling, civil and environmental engineering, computer science, immunology, marine biology, creative writing, and more.

What unites our team is a shared commitment to creating learning experiences that are hands-on and deeply engaging - experiences where campers are encouraged to ask questions, collaborate with peers, and see themselves as capable users of science. Our educators design camps that spark wonder and curiosity, build confidence, and help every camper walk away thinking "science is for me."



beansprouts®

A hip, healthy cafe at McWane Science Center



Scan the QR code to see the most up-to-date camp lunch menu.

Bean Sprouts adheres to clean ingredient & allergy-friendly guidelines and features organic and sustainable foods, compostable packaging, and eco-friendly design.

The beansprouts' PhilosopEA:

SPARK KIDS' APPETITES FOR YUMMY, GOOD-FOR-YOU FOOD;
AND DELIGHT GROWN-UPS WITH A HAPPIER MEALTIME!