INNOVATION GROVE

SUMMER ACADEMY 2026

June 1 – June 26

Champaign, IL

Grades 6-8

Igniting curiosity in STEM.

What is Innovation Grove?

Innovation Grove Summer Academy is an innovation environment for **any** students entering **Grades 6–8** built to grow critical thinking, creativity, and confidence through real-world challenges. Hosted at **Next Generation School (NGS)**, the academy is designed for middle schoolers at a pivotal turning point – when school becomes more serious, expectations rise and students begin deciding what they are "good at". We give them the space to build confidence first. Through hands-on experimentation, interactive expert-led demos, teamwork, and real-world design challenges – students will strengthen resilience and creative problem-solving before high school pressures begin. At innovation grove – science and engineering aren't daunting labels – they're tools students learn to use to bring their ideas to life.

This is not a traditional summer camp. The program is intentionally project and collaboration based, guiding students through the ideation, design, testing and improvement phases that real innovators use. Students explore modern tools (neuroimaging, EEG, robotics, airflight simulations, etc.) alongside world-changing innovations across history and culture – so they gain insight on how even the oldest advancements in technology and discovery shape daily life.

Overall, students will practice design thinking, teamwork and problem solving through experiences such as:

- Hands-on engineering design challenges
- Applied forensic science physics and chemistry labs
- Human biology and nutrition science modules
- Game design and systems thinking
- Environmental sustainability projects
- Cultural exploration through historical innovation

OUR GOAL

Our goal is to help students build confidence through problem-solving – especially those who may not yet see themselves as "STEM kids." Students will discover that science, engineering, and technology are woven into everyday life – from art and filmmaking to nutrition, design and invention. We want every student to leave inspired, more resilient, and equipped with creative and critical thinking skills that will support them in high school and beyond.

Program Structure

Innovation Grove Academy runs for a total of four weeks from: June 1 – June 26, 2026

The program is split into two themed weeks:
- a technology and engineering themed week
- a science themed week

2026		JUNE				
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
WEEK 1 Technology & Engineering Theme	1	2	3	4	5	6
WEEK 2 Science Theme	8	9	10	11	12	13
WEEK 3 Technology & Engineering Theme	15	16	17	18	19	20
WEEK 4 Science Theme	22	23	24	25	26	27
	28	29	30			

Parents can choose to register their child for **one week** (either theme) or **two weeks** (one technology & engineering week AND one science week). Weeks 1 and 3 will cover the same technology and engineering concepts, while Weeks 2 and 4 will cover the same science concepts, so if you want your child to have a unique experience **sign up for one of each theme**. The sign-ups do NOT need to be consecutive. For example, you can register your child for Week 1 of Technology & Engineering and Week 4 of Science.

The academy runs daily from: **9:00 AM – 4:00 PM** (Monday–Friday), with an **optional 8:00 AM early drop-off and 5:00 PM late-pick up** available.

Program Schedule

Technology & Engineering Week Daily Schedule

	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
8:00 AM	Early Drop-off				
9:00 AM	World of the Day Sports/Game North America	World of the Day Sports/Game South America	World of the Day Sports/Game Europe	World of the Day Sports/Game Africa	World of the Day Sports/Game Asia
10:00 AM	Let's Launch It! Introduction & Demo	Technology Hour	Green Time Energy Wind Turbine Project	Technology Hour	Game Time! Scoring, Polishing & Customizing
11:00 AM		Innovation Mission Time		Game Time! Game & Player Setup	
12:00 PM	Lunch Break				
1:00 PM	Technology Hour	Ancient Innovations South America	Technology Hour	Ancient Innovations Africa	Technology Hour
2:00 PM	Let's Launch It! Design & Prototypes	Let's Launch It! Tournament	Green Time Energy Wind Turbine Project	Game Time! Obstacles & Collision	Innovation Mission Time
3:00 PM					
4:00 PM	Late Pick-up				

Module Descriptions

	World of the Day	A weeklong series that introduces students to cultures, traditions and innovations from different continents through themed physical activities and interactive projects. *Morning Session:* A new traditional game/sport will be played from the chosen continent. *Afternoon Session:* When there is time, an interactive project will be completed to learn about ancient innovations from the chosen continent.
	Let's Launch It!	A hands-on engineering project where students will work in small teams to design, build and test their miniature catapults. Over the course of three sessions, students will explore the physics and mechanical principles behind launching systems, experiment with structural designs and refine their prototypes through guided iteration.
	Technology Hour	A weeklong series led by invited experts from various fields. Invited experts will introduce students to modern scientific technologies and how they are utilized and implemented across various STEM fields. During Technology & Engineering weeks, experts will come from the fields of aviation, robotics, agriculture, and more.
	Innovation Mission Time	Students will be given extra blocks of time to work on their innovative "missions" – any projects that they have been working on throughout the week and either want to improve on, add more features, or work on their team with. Additional missions will be given to students who have finished all their projects.
	Green Time	During Technology & Engineering Week, Green Time will be a sustainability project centered on renewable energy. Students will build their own working wind turbine that powers an LED light out of recycled materials. They will learn about proper aerodynamics and the physics behind wind turbine design.
	Game Time!	Students will become game developers to design their very own simple game – a rendition of the 2013 mobile game "Flappy Bird" – using the Unity game engine. Across three sessions, they will learn basic physics and logic within game design, how to create obstacles, implement collisions, implement scoring systems and customizations.

Science Week Daily Schedule

	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
8:00 AM	Early Drop-off				
9:00 AM	World of the Day Sports/Game North America	World of the Day Sports/Game South America	World of the Day Sports/Game Europe	World of the Day Sports/Game Africa	World of the Day Sports/Game Asia
10:00 AM	Technology Hour	Human Body Series You are What you Eat	Technology Hour	Green Time Natural Conservation	Technology Hour
11:00 AM	Green Time Natural Dyeing 1		Human Body Series Therapy & Medicine		Human Body Series Brain Time 3
12:00 PM	Lunch Break				
1:00 PM	Human Body Series Brain Time 1	Technology Hour	Ancient Innovations Europe	Technology Hour	Mystery Heist Final Reveal Biology
2:00 PM	Mystery Heist Physics	Green Time Natural Dyeing 2	Mystery Heist Chemistry	Designing a Bio Simulation	
3:00 PM		Human Body Series Brain Time 2			
4:00 PM	Late Pick-up				

Module Descriptions

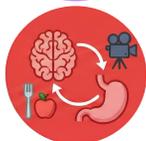|		
	World of the Day	A weeklong series that introduces students to cultures, traditions and innovations from different continents through themed physical activities and interactive projects. *Morning Session:* A new traditional game/sport will be played from the chosen continent. *Afternoon Session:* When there is time, an interactive project will be completed to learn about ancient innovations from the chosen continent.
	Mystery Heist	Across the week, students will work in groups as detectives to solve a mystery heist scenario. Each session they will use forensic science to gather new clues about the heist scenario. Using forensic principles from the fields of physics, chemistry, and biology they will work with their team to solve the crime and identify the culprits.
	Technology Hour	A weeklong series led by invited experts from various fields. Invited experts will introduce students to modern scientific technologies and how they are utilized and implemented across various STEM fields. During Science weeks, experts will come from the fields of neuroimaging, kinesiology, medicine, and more.
	Human Body Series	These sessions are focused on nutrition, neuroscience, human anatomy, and medicine. Students will learn about the gut-brain axis, design nutritious meals, learn about illusions in filmmaking, learn about neuropsychology and hear about occupational therapy and medicine from invited speakers.
	Green Time	During Science Week, Green Time will focus on two projects: a natural dyeing experiment and a natural conservation project. A spin on t-shirt tie-dying will be introduced in the framework of chemistry and students will become conservationists as they learn about erosion and how to naturally prevent it.
	Bio Simulation	Students will put on their computer science hats to design a unique biological simulation of their choosing in the form of a game.

LOCATION & LOGISTICS

Location: Hosted at **Next Generation School**

2521 Galen Dr, Champaign, IL 61821

Enrollment: Maximum of 25 spots per week

Activity Details: Students will be outdoors during some activities pending weather. All activities will have structured supervision and safety oversight.

Lunch: An optional lunch is available for additional cost.

TUITION & REGISTRATION

Weekly Tuition: $650 per student

Full 2-week Enrollment: $1,300

ID8 Lab Scholarships are available for full 2-week enrollment, please contact us (innovgrove@gmail.com) to see if you apply.

Payment Policy: $30 non-refundable deposit fee is due prior to the start of the program.

Cancellation Policy: Full refund minus registration deposit fee if cancelled at least 30+ days prior to selected week start. Partial 50% refund if cancelled 3-4 weeks before selected week start. Partial 25% refund if cancelled 1-2 weeks before selected week start. No refunds if requested 48 hours before selected week start or later.

SECURE YOUR SPOT ON OUR WEBSITE

Pre-registration is now OPEN!

Pre-register to secure a spot for your child – no payment necessary.

FULL REGISTRATION OPEN MARCH 2nd at 8:00AM CST

WEBSITE LINK: innovationgroveweb.web.app

CONTACT US: innovgrove@gmail.com