



Texas Big Bend Intercept Semester // Family Seminar Information

OVERVIEW, TRAVEL, ACCOMMODATIONS, AND DIRECTIONS

The Outward Bound Intercept Family Seminar is as much for you as for your child. We strongly encourage all parents or guardians who live with the student to attend the Family Conference, but only one parent/guardian is required to attend. This document includes an overview of the Seminar, general reminders, travel information, directions, and accommodation suggestions. Please read this document thoroughly and contact your Course Advisor if you have any questions.

The Seminar will focus on how your family can best support one another as your child finishes their Outward Bound course and transitions home. The seminar is crucial to the success of the Intercept Program, and your choice to participate demonstrates a strong commitment to that success. Thank you for your involvement, and we look forward to meeting you at the end of the program.

FAMILY SEMINAR OVERVIEW - The Family Seminar accounts for the last three days of your child's Outward Bound course and will include a series of interactive workshops, activities, presentations and discussions. It will culminate with a family conference facilitated by Outward Bound staff and a graduation with the student group. The objectives of the Family Seminar are to:

- Provide you with a mini Outward Bound experience so you can better understand your child's experience.
- Connect with other parents, guardians, and families.
- Share specific information about your child's experience and stories from their expedition.
- Share tools, techniques and lessons that instructors employed during the expedition. We will also discuss how your family can employ the same or similar tools at home.
- Begin a plan for your child's transition home.

Note: You will not see your child until the second day of the Seminar as they will be engaged in volunteer service projects. Also, during the seminar your child will spend each night with their group. Students are not permitted to leave the Seminar to go to hotels, restaurants, etc. You will travel home with your child on the final day of the Seminar following graduation.

Day 1: During the first day of the Family Seminar you will meet your child's instructors and the parents of the other students. You will participate in lectures, interactive lessons and activities in the morning and afternoon. In the evening you will have one hour to engage in an in-depth conversation with one of your child's Outward Bound Instructors. This meeting is intended to update you on your child's experience and help prepare for the reunion and family conference the following day. The purpose of the first day is to equip parents with a better understanding of their child's Outward Bound experience, where they struggled and thrived, what progress they made, and what struggles they may face while transitioning home. By the end of the day you will have learned the same communication, decision making, and conflict resolution lessons that the Instructors taught your child during the expedition, giving you a common vocabulary to use the following day when you reunite with your child.

Day 2: This is the day you will reunite with your child! This day your child and their group will give a short presentation about their experience. You will have the opportunity to participate in some activities together with your child and with the other families. Individual family conferences are scheduled throughout the afternoon. You will have one-and-a-half hour scheduled to have a conversation with your child that will be facilitated by



one of their Instructors. This conversation will touch on some of the issues from the past, but is intended to retain a focus on the future. It aims to be the beginning of a conversation that you and your child will continue in the days and weeks to come. It will allow you to reconnect and to begin making a plan for your child's transition home.

Day 3: On the final day, we will begin with conversations and course closure with the large group of parents. Then there will be a graduation ceremony for your child and their group. The graduation ceremony is an important part of your child's course as it provides recognition of their accomplishments at Outward Bound and acknowledges the transition and challenges ahead. You will travel home together with your child on this day.

Day 1		Day 2		Day 3	
7:30am	Registration and breakfast	7:30 am	Breakfast	7:30 am	Breakfast
8:00-11:30am	Lectures, activities, discussions.	8:00-11:00am	Reunion, activities, and student presentation	8:00am	Course closure with parent group
11:30-12:30pm	Lunch	11:00am	Lunch	9:45am	Graduation
12:30-2:45pm	Lectures, activities, discussions (cont).	11:30-6:15pm	1.5-hour scheduled conference with your child and an instructor. Other activities scheduled throughout the afternoon.	10:30am	Final group circle
3:00-8:15pm*	1-hour scheduled conference with an instructor *Dinner is on your own this evening.	6:30pm	Dinner with parents, students, and staff	11:00am	Outward Bound

WHAT TO BRING - It is important that you arrive prepared with:

1. **Workbook:** You will receive an email from our Intercept Associate Program Director within the first 2 days of the course. This email will direct you to download the workbook. This workbook is your daily "homework" while your child is away. It provides you a parallel experience to that of your child's Outward Bound course and is intended to keep you connected with the experience as well as prepare you for the Family Seminar.
2. **Letter to your child:** You will find guidelines for crafting this letter in the "Week 7" section of the workbook.
3. **[Narrative Request Form](#):** The Narrative is a written account of your child's Outward Bound course written by their instructors. This document can be provided to parents, schools, bosses, therapists, colleges etc. Click the link above to confirm the email addresses to which you would like us to send the narrative.

Note: Please do not bring gifts, treats, mail, or electronics for your child. After an extended period in the wilderness these items have a great influence on students and can greatly distract from the overall goals of the Seminar. Please hold these items until after Graduation.

WHAT TO WEAR - Please dress in whatever is comfortable for you. Activities at the seminar are non-strenuous and primarily indoors. We recommend casual, comfortable clothes and shoes. Please note that weather in this area can be unpredictable. Bring clothing for chilly and rainy weather (sweatshirt, sweater, raincoat or jacket), as well as lightweight clothing for warmer weather.



Travel to/from the Family Seminar:

Please make no travel arrangements until your child has been medically approved for the course.

SEMINAR LOCATION

University of Texas - El Paso
Union Building East
351 W. University Ave, El Paso, Texas
[Location of Union Building East on Google Maps](#)

PARKING - There will be free parking available on the University Campus at most within a 5-8 minute walk from the venue. We will share more detailed parking information leading up to the Seminar.

DATES

Course Number(s):	Family Seminar Dates:
VRSF-2471	Saturday, March 16 - Monday, March 18

TRAVELING TO THE FAMILY SEMINAR – Please arrive in El Paso on **Friday**. Seminars begin early in the morning on Saturday so it is very important that you arrive the day before.

TRAVELING HOME FROM THE FAMILY SEMINAR - The Family Seminar ends no later than 11:00 AM on the last day of the course. We cannot guarantee you will make any flights before 12:30 PM out of El Paso. Please plan your itinerary accordingly.

TRANSPORTATION AND ACCOMMODATION – We recommend staying at the [Hilton Garden Inn El Paso/University](#). This hotel is a 5 minute walk from the Seminar Location and we have a special rate of \$119/night. Call **915-351-2121** and reference code “UTVOB” or click [here](#) and enter the same code, “UTVOB”, in the “Special Rates” box to book in our room block. There are both single/King bed rooms and two-bed rooms. **YOU MUST BOOK BY FEBRUARY 15** to get this room rate.

This hotel is a short, 5-minute walk to the Seminar location. Rideshare services and taxis are available in El Paso, so if you stay at the Hilton Garden Inn El Paso/University you would not need to rent a vehicle to get too and from the Seminar.

And, it is okay if you prefer to stay at another hotel. Staying around the airport, Central El Paso, or West Central El Paso are all fine options. Should you choose to stay at a hotel other than the Hilton Garden Inn, you may find it easiest, and in some ways more economical, to rent a car. Major car rental companies are available at the El Paso Airport. There is also a free Streetcar that runs close to the University and many downtown hotels. See schedule and route here: <https://sunmetro.net/streetcar/about-streetcars/>

- **Do NOT make travel arrangements until your child has been medically approved for the course.**



However, once your child has been approved, book travel as soon as possible. El Paso is a popular winter vacation destination.