



**Homeschool Zoocademy  
Jacksonville Zoo and Gardens**



**Program Handbook  
2019-2020**

*Information listed in this handbook may be changed or updated.*

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## HOMESCHOOL ZOOCADEMY

Homeschool Zoocademy at the Jacksonville Zoo and Gardens is a unique experience for homeschooled students ages 5-15. Zoocademy covers a wide range of topics in Biology, Zoology, Environmental Science, and Conservation (among others).

Homeschool Zoocademy Promotes:

- *Conservation and Environmental Awareness:* Empowering students to become responsible stewards of the natural environment.
- *Knowledge through Experience:* Engaging in meaningful, current, and interactive experiences to inform and excite students about their direct connection to the world.

Students ages 5-12 will meet once a month for eight (8) months and will explore a different topic each month. Each class will include lessons, animal encounters, art projects, tours, and more.

Students ages 13-15 will meet every other Saturday\* for eight (8) sessions and will perform deeper studies of animal behavior and cognition. Homework and Zoo visits may be required in between class sessions.

\*\*Please note that there will be three weeks between sessions from November 16 to December 7 and two sessions in a row on December 7 and December 14.

## ELIGIBILITY

Enrollment is limited to homeschooled children ages 5-15. Children will be enrolled into the appropriate age class based on their age as of September 1, 2019. In accordance with Florida state law, children must be 5 years old on or before September 1 to enroll.

Children are not denied enrollment on the basis of race, color, religion (creed), gender, gender expression, national origin (ancestry), or disability.

Please note this is a drop-off program. It is designed for children who can remain in a group setting without parental involvement.

## REGISTRATION AND FEES

Tuition must be paid in full at the time of registration in order to secure your child's space in the program. Registration will open in late summer and is handled online only. Please visit <http://www.jacksonvillezoo.org/homeschoolprograms> to register.

Refunds cannot be made for any portion of the program missed due to absence, illness, or disruptive behavior (please see BEHAVIOR POLICY below).

### 5-12 years:

- \$150/child – member rate
- \$175/child – non-member rate
- 8 class sessions (September-April)
- 3 hrs/session

### 13-15 years:

- \$150/child – member rate
- \$175/child – non-member rate
- 8 class sessions (September-December)
- 2.5 hrs/session

## DATE CHANGE AND CANCELLATION POLICIES

**Date Change:** A program date change must be made in writing by email or fax at least three weeks prior to the September start date. Date changes will incur a \$25 rescheduling fee per student. All date changes are subject to availability.

**Cancellations:** Cancellations must be received in writing by email or fax at least three weeks prior to the September start date to qualify for a 50% refund. No refunds will be given for cancellations less than three weeks prior to the September start date.

## ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE

**Morning sessions run from 9:00 am-12:00 pm\*.**

**Afternoon sessions run from 1:00 pm-4:00 pm.**

**\*9:30 am-12:00 pm on Saturdays for the 13-15 age group.**

Homeschool Zoocademy is located at the PepsiCo Foundation Education Campus, at the south end of the Zoo's main parking lot. To ensure the safety of all our families when driving through the parking lot, please obey all stop signs, and remember that the speed limit is 15 mph.

- Enter through the gate (it will be opened approximately 15 minutes prior to the beginning of the session) and read the signage to determine which classroom you should go to.
- **Please be punctual when dropping off and picking up your child.**
- We recommend arriving approximately 10 minutes prior to the start of class in order to expedite drop-off. Students should be picked up no later than 10 minutes after class ends for regular pick-up.
- Those who routinely drop off and pick up outside of regular times will be charged a fee.
- When dropping off and picking up, parents/guardians must park in the Zoo parking lot and accompany their child to and from their designated classroom on the Education Campus.
- An authorized person must sign their child IN and OUT at the Education campus classrooms before and after every session. When registering, please list ALL people who are authorized for pick-up, **including yourself**. If the person coming to pick up is not on the authorized list, the child will not be released until we receive verbal confirmation from the person who originally registered the child.
- For the safety of your child, EVERYONE PICKING UP A STUDENT MUST SHOW PHOTO ID EVERY MONTH. Photo ID is not necessary at drop-off. Please be patient – we need to properly check every child in and out.

## EMERGENCY AUTHORIZATION

If your child is injured while at the Zoo, appropriate First Aid will be administered by a member of the Zoo's Security Division. The Zoo's Security staff is certified in First Aid, CPR, and Automatic Emergency Defibrillator (AED) usage.

By enrolling in a Zoo program, you are authorizing emergency medical attention for your child.

## **CLOTHES AND SHOES**

Students should wear comfortable play clothes that you don't mind getting wet or dirty. We will go outside every day except in the case of severe storms and lightning, so be sure to dress appropriately. We recommend a good set of raincoats/ponchos and rain boots, since we do not permit umbrellas in Homeschool Zoocademy!

Students must wear tennis shoes and feet must be completely covered at all times during the program. **Crosses, sandals, heelies and all other shoes that expose the bare skin of feet to the environment or interfere with walking are not permitted.**

## **PHOTOGRAPHS**

Children and families who attend Homeschool Zoocademy may be photographed, filmed, or recorded. Your paid enrollment in any Zoo program serves as permission for the Jacksonville Zoo and Gardens to use these images for promotional and news purposes.

## **SNACKS**

This program includes one **short** snack break – full lunches should be eaten outside of class time. (The 13-15 age group will not include a snack break, due to its shorter length.) The Zoo will not provide snacks, but will allow snacks brought from home. We do not allow sharing of food as a precaution against allergies, however, we are not an allergen-free environment. Please consider bringing a snack in waste-free packaging to help the environment.

## **ENTERING THE ZOO**

Each month, the 5-12 age groups will explore a portion of the Zoo with their instructor as part of their class. This is included in the program fee. Parents, siblings and others may choose to visit the Zoo while they wait, but will be required to enter through the Main Camp entrance and pay separate admission. Zoo Members receive free admission, and are free to explore and enjoy the Zoo as often as they'd like, all year long.

The 13-15 age group will follow the same structure as the 5-12 age during the eight Saturday class sessions. However, students may need to come to the Zoo in between class sessions in order to complete their projects. We highly recommend a Zoo Membership so that you will not be charged admission for the extra Zoo visits you may require.

## CLASSROOM POLICIES

Our programs are designed to encourage respect and appreciation of the world around us and an understanding of how our actions affect the balance of nature. To that end, we expect students to display respect toward our animals, our staff, our materials, and to each other. Participants will be taught the appropriate ways to behave at the Zoo and how to interact with our Zoo animals.

We understand that many homeschool students are used to a different academic structure than is found in a formal classroom, and we encourage creativity! However, we do expect students to be able to sit for a brief lesson (at least 20 minutes for the younger groups), take turns, and raise hands to make points during group discussions so that everyone has a chance to be heard.

Our staff uses positive behavior management whenever possible, but if students cannot cooperate in a given situation, does not follow staff instructions or demonstrates disrespect toward living things on Zoo grounds, they may be timed-out and removed from the group. If the disruptive behavior continues, the parent, guardian, or chaperone will be called to help find a solution. If improvement is not realized immediately, the child-care provider may be asked to pick up the student early from the program and the student may be asked not to return. In this situation, there will be no refunds for any days missed.

### **What to Bring to Homeschool Zoocademy:**

- Small snack (preferably in waste-free container)
- Reusable Water Bottle (with strap)
- Raincoat/poncho or other weather gear (no umbrellas, please)
- Epi-pens/inhalers and other necessary medications (see FAQs on page 7 for more details)
- Notebook and pencil (if desired)

### **What Not to Bring:**

- Money (there will be NO opportunity for students to spend money during class)
- Jewelry/Valuables/Toys/Games

### **At Parents' Discretion:**

- *Phones:* Participants may carry mobile phones, but we ask that they remain silent and are put away during class (for phones being used as cameras, see below).
- *Cameras:* Participants may carry cameras. Instructors will indicate when it is a good time to take photos and when cameras should be put away. The same policy applies to mobile phones which are being used as cameras.

If at any time a phone, camera, or other item becomes a distraction to students and/or staff, the child will be asked to put the item away until the end of the program. If the item continues to cause problems, the instructor reserves the right to collect it and return it at the end of class.

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### **How do I get in touch with you?**

- *Address:* Education Department  
Jacksonville Zoo and Gardens  
370 Zoo Parkway  
Jacksonville, FL 32218
- *Phone:* (904) 757-4463 x 111
- *Fax:* (904) 757-2444
- *Email:* [feinsteina@jacksonvillezoo.org](mailto:feinsteina@jacksonvillezoo.org)

### **Can I change my child's class date?**

- You will register for the Tuesday series, the Wednesday series, the Thursday series, or the Friday series (or Saturday series for ages 13-15) and attend all eight classes on that program day and time.
- We are able to reschedule your day and time at least three weeks prior to the September start date, according to availability, for a \$25 fee per child.

### **How do you screen your staff and volunteers?**

- All staff educators and classroom volunteers are screened for excellence in children's programming.
- All have previous experience with children and have cleared nationwide, state and FBI Level 2 background checks as prescribed by the State of Florida's Jessica Lunsford Act.

### **May I sit in the class with my child?**

- Our programs are designed to allow children to be successful in group-oriented programs without parent involvement. For your child to get as much as possible out of the class, parents and siblings may not sit in. We also ask that you do not follow your child's group in the Zoo, as this is very distracting and creates safety concerns.

### **My child has a younger sibling or friend. Can they attend together?**

- Children in the same age group will be placed in the same class.
- Our classes involve exciting, hands-on learning that is age-appropriate.
- We reserve the right to cancel the registrations of children registered in sessions that do not match their age. There will be no refund in this case.
- With proper justification older students may be allowed to attend class for younger students due to special needs, but younger students are not allowed to attend classes developed for older students. We reserve the right to cancel the registrations of children registered in sessions that do not match their age/grade.

### **Can you accommodate children with special needs?**

- Please indicate on the registration form any special needs our staff must be made aware of prior to your first day.
- The more information you can give us ahead of time, the better.
- Please let us know if your child has a behavioral treatment plan.
- If your child requires one-on-one assistance, he/she may not attend HSZ without a Non-Parent Aide. All Aides must register with the Zoo's volunteer department, pass a Level II criminal background check, and sign an HSZ *Aide Guideline and Agreement* document prior to the first day of class.
- Physical, academic, and social needs will be accommodated to the best of our ability.
- Please note that while the Zoo does not employ specific individuals certified and trained to handle special needs children, we do have experience accommodating different types of special needs. However, if your child is not able to function in a group setting, this may not be the right program for them.

### **What if my child has to take medication during Homeschool Zoocademy?**

- If your child has allergies or asthma that require the use of an Epi-pen or inhaler, you must complete an Allergy Action Form (with doctor's signature) and return it prior to the first day of Homeschool Zoocademy.
- Epi-pens and inhalers must be clearly labeled with the child's name and dosage and brought to every class session. The instructor will carry the medications and return them at the end of each class.
- If your child has non-prescription medication, it should be clearly labeled with the child's name, dosage, and timing, and given to the instructor at the beginning of the class.
- The Zoo will supervise your child taking the medication but cannot help the child take medication or provide any medication to the child.

### **Do you ever cancel class?**

- If the Zoo is open, we're open! During lightning storms, we will stay in the building, but otherwise we walk in the Zoo rain or shine, heat or cold.
- If the Zoo closes during due to severe weather events such as hurricanes, we will email you through our Constant Contact list as soon as possible with updates. Every attempt will be made to reschedule class.

**HOMESCHOOL ZOOCADEMY DATES 2019-2020**  
**AGES 5-12**

AM classes run from 9:00-12:00; PM classes run from 1:00-4:00

<b>Tuesday Series (pm only)</b>	<b>Wednesday Series (am/pm)</b>	<b>Thursday Series (am only)</b>	<b>Friday Series (am only)</b>
September 3	September 4	September 5	September 6
October 8	October 9	October 10	October 11
November 5	November 6	November 7	November 8
December 3	December 4	December 5	December 6
January 7	January 8	January 9	January 10
February 4	February 5	February 6	February 7
March 3	March 4	March 5	March 6
April 7	April 8	April 9	April 10

# HOMESCHOOL ZOOCADEMY DATES 2019-2020

## AGES 13-15

Instructor-led sessions take place on the Education Campus at the south end of the Zoo's Main Parking Lot. Students and/or parents may need to visit the Zoo between class sessions in order to complete projects.

<b>Saturday Series</b> <b>9:30-12:00</b>
September 7
September 21
October 5
October 19
November 2
November 16*
December 7*
December 14*

\*Please note that there will be three weeks between sessions from November 16 to December 7 and two sessions in a row on December 7 and December 14.



**Please return this form to the Jacksonville Zoo and Gardens Education Department before the first day of Homeschool Zoocademy.**

**This signed document must be on file in order for your child to participate in the program.**

We have read the Homeschool Zoocademy Handbook and agree to abide by the policies of the Jacksonville Zoo and Gardens Education Department.

We understand that failure to follow these policies may result in exclusion from portions of the program or removal from the program without a refund.

Parent/Guardian:

(Print) \_\_\_\_\_

(Sign) \_\_\_\_\_

(Date) \_\_\_\_\_

Student Name and Signatures:

\_\_\_\_\_ Age: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Age: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Age: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Age: \_\_\_\_\_

Email scanned/signed document to: [education@jacksonvillezoo.org](mailto:education@jacksonvillezoo.org) (preferred method)

Fax signed document to: (904) 757-2444

Mail signed document to: Education Department  
Attn: Homeschool Zoocademy  
370 Zoo Parkway  
Jacksonville, FL 32218

Or drop off at the Education Campus Monday-Friday from 9:00 am – 5:00 pm.