



Zoo Camp Handbook

Jacksonville Zoo and Gardens



Updated January 2018

Please read this packet carefully to prepare for a great camp experience!

Welcome to Zoo Camp! Whether your child attends for a half-day, a whole day, or a week, they will experience an entertaining and educational mix of games, activities, behind-the-scenes tours, and up-close animal encounters.

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CAMP HOURS

Half-Day Camp (when available): 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. OR 1:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Full Day Camp: 9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Extended Care: 7:45 a.m. – 8:45 a.m. and 4:15 p.m. – 5:15 p.m.

(Available for Full Day Camp only, additional cost applies)

Regular drop-off and pick-up are 10 minutes before and 10 minutes after camp hours.

DROP-OFF AND PICK-UP

Camp is located at the PepsiCo Foundation Education Campus, at the south end of the Zoo's main parking lot (a map is available on our website at www.jacksonvillezoo.org/zocamps). 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 Extended Care or the beginning of camp) and read the signage to determine which classroom you should go to.
- Please be punctual about dropping off and picking up your child.
- We recommend arriving 10 minutes prior to the start of camp in order to expedite drop-off. Campers should be picked up no later than 10 minutes after camp ends for regular pick-up.

- Those who routinely drop off and pick up outside of regular times will be charged for Extended Care.
- Parents who do not pick up their campers by the end of Extended Care will be charged a fee. If you are up to 15 minutes late, you will be charged \$10. After that, an additional \$1 per minute applies.
- When dropping off and picking up, parents/guardians should 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 camp 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 CAMPER MUST SHOW PHOTO ID FOR EVERY DAY OF CAMP. 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

The best clothes for children to wear are comfortable play clothes. Creativity and learning are sometimes messy! We will go outside every day, even in heat, cold, and rain, so be sure to dress appropriately. Please bring raincoats instead of umbrellas to avoid anyone getting poked in the eye. We will stay inside in case of severe weather.

Shoes **MUST** completely cover the feet and remain on at all times during the program. **Sandals, heeries, crocs and all other shoes that expose any bare skin of the feet to the environment or interfere with walking are never permitted. Students who do not wear the required shoes will not be permitted to participate.**

PHOTOGRAPHY AND RECORDING

Children and families who attend Zoo Camp may be photographed, filmed, or audiotaped. 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.

WATER, SNACKS, AND LUNCHES

- Campers are welcome to bring water bottles (preferably reusable and with carrying straps), but water fountains are available on campus and throughout the Zoo.
- Half-day camps include one small snack break. Full-day camps have one snack break in the morning in addition to lunch.
- **Snacks are not provided by the Zoo.**
- Lunches should be brought from home; campers are not allowed to go out into the Zoo for lunch. If a camper forgets a lunch, a parent or other adult must bring them one before noon. You can help us go green by packing a waste-free lunch.
- **Summer Only:** Summer Campers have the option to purchase their lunches from the Zoo for the week (there is no option to purchase individual days). Lunches include a main course (hot dog, hamburger, or veggie burger), chips, animal crackers and a drink (contents subject to change). Lunches must be paid for and selected at time of registration. If you are opting to purchase lunches, a morning snack must still be brought from home.

CAMP POLICIES

In order to promote a quality camp environment, we ask that all program participants adhere to our policies at all times during their visit.

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.

Zoo Camp Rules

- Always follow directions.
- Be kind to yourself and others.
- Stay with your group and walk at the speed of the group.
- Stay on the paths and do not cross safety barriers.
- Speak calmly and quietly.
- Show respect to the animals on exhibit and in the classrooms (i.e. no tapping on the glass).
- Make sure no food or objects go into the exhibits.
- Be safe, learn a lot, and have fun!

Our staff uses positive behavior management whenever possible, but if campers 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 child early from the program and the child may be asked not to return. In this situation, there will be no refunds for any days missed.

The Zoo is not responsible for lost, stolen, or damaged items.

What to Bring:

- Morning Snack
- Lunch (unless purchased through the Zoo at time of registration)
- Reusable Water Bottle (with strap)
- Sunscreen/Bug Spray (we strongly recommend applying these before the camper is signed in – we cannot help children apply them, and they must be applied **outside** the classrooms)
- Raincoat/poncho or other weather gear (no umbrellas, please)
- Epi-pens/inhalers and other necessary medications (see FAQs on page 7 for more details)

What Not to Bring:

- Money: There will be NO opportunity for campers to spend money during the camp day.
- Jewelry/Valuables

At Parents' Discretion:

- *Phones:* Participants may carry mobile phones, but we ask that they remain silent and are put away during camp (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. **Any photos that are taken behind the scenes may not be posted to social media.**

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

- *Toys, games, etc.:* Participants should leave toys, games, books, and other distracting objects at home.* We hope that our programming is enough to keep your child entertained and engaged! Toys and games that do make their way into the classroom will be collected by the instructors and returned after camp.

*Campers enrolled in Extended Care may bring books or small toys. They should be aware that if toys or trading cards are brought out, other campers may expect to be included. Campers may also use mobile phones during Extended Care, but will be asked to put them away if they are not using them appropriately.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

How do I register for Zoo Camp?

- Registration is online only at www.jacksonvillezoo.org/zoocamps.
- Payment is due in full at the time of registration.
- Registration closes approximately one week before the 1st day of camp.

If I want to change my child's camp date, is that option available?

- A program date change must be made in writing by email or fax at least three weeks prior to the camp start date. Date changes will incur a \$25 rescheduling fee per camper.

What if I need to cancel?

- Cancellations must be received in writing by email or fax at least three weeks prior to the camp start date to qualify for a 50% refund.
- No refunds will be given for cancellations less than three weeks prior to the camp start date. Cancellations will incur a \$50 processing fee.
- Unless Jacksonville Zoo and Gardens cancels camp, there will be no refunds given for bad weather.

What does a typical day of camp look like?

Each day of camp can look very different, but we try to include a few basic elements.

- Zoo walks
- Meeting keepers or other Zoo staff and/or behind-the-scenes tours (subject to scheduling)
- Brief lesson on the theme of the day (includes touchable items and activities)
- Indoor and outdoor games (often with animal themes!)
- Meeting Education Ambassador Animals in an auditorium or classroom setting
- Nature videos/G-rated movies may be shown during lunch and during Extended Care

I only need Extended Care for the afternoons. Do you pro-rate?

- Our Extended Care rates are charged per day (for individual day camps) and per week (for week-long camps). We cannot discount the listed rate.

Can I drop off my child late/pick them up early?

- Zoo Camp has activities scheduled all day long.
- We highly recommend letting your child enjoy the full range of what we have to offer by allowing them to experience the entire camp session.
- If you absolutely must pull your child out of camp, please let your child's instructor know during drop-off so that we can ensure they are ready for pick-up.

Who are your Educators?

- All staff educators and classroom volunteers are interviewed and selected for excellence in children's programming.
- All have had 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.

Will my child get to pet the Zoo animals?

- For everyone's safety, direct contact with exhibit animals is not possible.

- Campers will have the opportunity to get up close to or touch (when appropriate) Ambassador Animals on the Education Campus.

How are campers grouped?

- For summer camp, campers are grouped by the following grades: K-1st, 2nd-3rd, 4th-5th, and 6th-8th. Campers should be registered for the grade they are entering in the fall.
- For spring and winter camps, the above groupings apply, but there is no 6th-8th age group. Ages groups may be combined due to low enrollment.
- Smaller seasonal camps (e.g. Spooktacular Camp) may have different age breakdowns.

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

- If they are the same age/grade grouping, they will automatically be enrolled in the same class.
- If they are in different age groups, they will be in different classes.
- 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/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.
- 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 without one-on-one attention, this may not be the right camp for them.

What do I do with my child's medication?

- 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 camp.
- Epi-pens and inhalers must be clearly labeled with the child's name and dosage and brought to camp every day. The camp instructor will carry the medications and return them at the end of each day.
- If your child has non-prescription medication, it should be clearly labeled with the child's name, dosage, and timing, and given to the camp instructor at the beginning of the day.
- The Zoo will supervise your child taking the medication but cannot help the child take medication or provide any medication to the child.