



# **Zoo Camp Handbook**

2022

INFORMATION IN THIS HANDBOOK IS SUBJECT TO CHANGE.

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

Welcome to Zoo Camp! Whether your child attends for a 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

Full-Day: 9:00 AM - 4:00 PM

Half-Day: 9:00 AM - 12:00 PM

Extended Care: 8:00 AM - 8:45 AM and 4:15 PM - 5:15 PM

Morning extended care is available for both full and half-day camps, while evening extended care is only available for full-day camps.

Regular drop-off begins 15 minutes before camp and regular pick-up ends 15 minutes after camp.

### Drop-off and Pick-up

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 20 mph.

- Drop-off will begin approximately 15 minutes before the camp starts time.
- Please be punctual about dropping off and picking up your child. Campers should be picked up no later than 15 minutes after camp ends for regular pick-up.
- Parents/guardians must park and accompany their child to and from their designated drop-off area when dropping off and picking up.
- An authorized person must sign campers IN and OUT at their designated drop-off area. When registering, please list ALL authorized people 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.
- For your child's safety, EVERYONE PICKING UP A CAMPER MUST SHOW PHOTO ID, PICK-UP CARD, PIN#, OR PASSWORD FOR EVERY DAY OF CAMP. NO EXCEPTIONS. A photo ID is not necessary at drop-off. Please be patient- we need to properly check every child in and out.
- Those who drop off and pick up outside 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: \$10 up to 15 minutes late, then an additional \$1 per minute.

## Clothes and Shoes

- A camp t-shirt will be given out on the first day of camp. We request that campers wear a zoo camp t-shirt to keep our campers together easily.
- Camp can be messy. Please wear comfortable clothes that are easy to wash!
- We will go outside every day, even in heat, cold, and rain, so dress appropriately.
- Please bring raincoats/ponchos instead of umbrellas. No pokes in the eye, please!
- Due to behind-the-scenes footwear regulations, all campers **MUST** wear tennis shoes/sneakers at all times (rainboots may be worn if they do not interfere with walking). Flip-flops, crocs, keens, and similar open sandals are **NOT** acceptable.
- We highly recommend packing your camper a change of clothes.

## Water, Snacks, and Lunches

- Stay hydrated! We request that your child bring a reusable bottle with a carrying strap.
- Half-day camps have one snack break in the morning, while full-day camps will have two snacks, one before and one after lunch.
- Lunches must either be purchased from the Zoo at the time of registration or brought from home every day. Campers are not allowed to purchase lunches at the Zoo.
- We do not have microwaves or refrigerators available for camper use.
- Lunches Purchases: Campers can purchase their lunches from the Zoo for the week; Lunches include a main course, chips, and a drink. Lunches must be paid for at the time of registration.

## What do I need at Zoo Camp?

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

What to bring:

- Lunch (unless purchased through the Zoo at the time of registration)
- Water Bottle (preferably reusable and with a carrying 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 6 for more details)

What NOT to bring:

- Money: There will be **NO** opportunity for campers to spend money during the camp day.
- Jewelry/ valuables
- Toys/Games: In order to fully participate in the Zoo Camp experience, campers should leave toys, games, books, and other distracting objects at home. (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 be expected to be included.) Toys and games that do make their way into the classroom will be collected by the instructors and returned at the end of the day.

## **Camp Policies**

Our programs are designed to encourage respect for and appreciation of the world around us and understand how our actions affect the balance of nature. We expect campers to show respect for each other and our staff, volunteers, animals, plants, and materials.

### **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**
- **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 a camper may be timed-out or removed from the group. If the disruptive behavior continues, the parent, guardian, or chaperone will be called to help find a solution. If there is no improvement, the child-care provider may be asked to pick the camper up early, and we may require that the camper not return in this situation; there will be no refunds for any hours or days missed.

### **Emergency Authorization**

- If your child is injured while at the Zoo, appropriate First Aid will be administered by a First Aid and CPR Certified member of the Zoo Camp Staff.
- By enrolling in a Zoo program, you authorize emergency medical attention for your child.
- By enrolling in a Zoo program, you acknowledge the benefits and risks of play and agree to hold your child responsible for following the rules and regulations of the staff.
- We will notify you of any significant injuries or illnesses using the primary contact phone number listed on your registration.

### **Photography and Recording**

- Children who attend Zoo Camp may be photographed, filmed, or audiotaped. During registration, you may allow or deny this permission.
- We may share photos and/or videos taken during Zoo Camp to the email addresses provided during registration.
- These photographs or videos may be used in promoting camps or other Zoo programs, and campers will not be compensated for the digital marketing.

## Frequently Asked Questions

### How do I register for Zoo Camp?

- Registration is online only at <http://www.texaszoo.org/education/camps/>
- Payment is due in full at the time of registration.
- Registration closes at approximately midnight the day before.

### What if I need to cancel?

- No refunds will be given for cancellations.
- Unless The Texas Zoo cancels a camp, no refunds will be given for bad weather.
- There will be no refunds for dates missed due to illness.

### What does a typical day of camp look like?

Each day of camp can look very different but may include:

- Zoo walks
- Keeper or staff chats and/or behind-the-scenes tours
- A 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 a classroom setting.
- Nature videos/ G-rated movies may be shown during lunch.

### 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.
- 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 at the designated time.

### 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 background checks as prescribed by the State of Texas.

### Will my child get to touch 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.

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

- Please indicate on the registration form any special needs our staff must be made aware of.
- 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 Plan (with your 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 each day.
- The Zoo will supervise your child taking the medication but cannot help the child take medication or provide any medication to the child.