

Camp Zoo Frequently Asked Questions

Note: These FAQs apply to all Day Camps. Please read carefully for information specific to your camp. For full details on Camp Operations, please see our policies and procedures.

1. What is the best way to contact you?

For questions regarding your upcoming camp, the best way to connect with Camps is through our email, camps@phoenixzoo.org.

You can also reply to your confirmation email, and any emails we send you regarding camp!

For urgent/time-sensitive assistance during your camper's week, you may call our Camp Emergency line at (602)574-2253. **This phone line is NOT monitored when camp is not in session. Please only reach out to this number during your campers' week.** All non-urgent calls for general assistance will be directed to email us instead.

Check In/Check Out

2. What time is check-in?

Check-in will run from **7:45 AM to 8:00 AM** every day of camp.

On **Mondays, we will begin check-in at 7:30**. Please allot at least 30 minutes for check-in on the first day of camp to allow for material collection, group organization, and paperwork collection.

3. What do I do if I am running late?

Please call the camp emergency line at (602)574-2253 to let us know you are running behind.

If you are running slightly late, some staff stay behind to facilitate a late check-in from 8:00-8:15. Campers that arrive late for check-in will be asked to wait with staff until 8:15 and will then be taken to their camp group.

4. What time is check-out?

Check-out begins at **2:45 pm and runs until 3:00 PM**. Please make arrangements to pick up your camper in this window.

All Kindergarten Camps are half day. Check-out begins at 11:45 and runs until 12:00.

5. Can other people pick up my child?

Yes, they just need to be on your Authorized Pickup List! You can add additional pickup personnel online via our registration portal. Just log into your account, and then scroll down the "My Account" page to select the grey tab labeled "pickup authorization."

Please make sure the names provided match the personnel's government issued ID. We will not release campers if the names do not match (even nicknames), no exceptions.

To login to the registration portal, [click here!](#)

6. My camper needs to arrive late or leave early, what should I do?

If you are running slightly late, some staff stay behind to facilitate a late check-in from 8:00-8:15. Campers at late check-in will be asked to wait with staff until 8:15 and will then be taken to their camp group.

Please communicate early pickups at check-in with the expected time you will be picking up. Then, call us on the camp phone at (602)574-2253 when you are 10 minutes away from pick-up. Additional staff and time are needed to escort early departures from the Zoo. We will do our best to facilitate timely pickups. Thank you for being patient and allowing yourself a time buffer.

We cannot facilitate timely departures during lunchtime (12:00-12:30) and up to 30 minutes before dismissal (2:15-2:45). If you need to pick up your camper during these windows, we recommend picking them up prior to then. Thank you so much for your cooperation.

If arriving late, please tell us on the camp phone at (602)574-2253 at least 30 minutes before your arrival, and then again when you are 10 minutes away so we can arrange for staff to check in your camper.

7. Is there an aftercare program where I can pick up my camper later?

Unfortunately, we are no longer able to offer any after-care services. Please pick up your camper by 3:00 PM.

What to Bring

8. What should my camper bring to camp?

Your Camper will need:

- Camp t-shirt, worn each day
- Closed toe shoes
- Water bottle
- Packed lunch (Full day camps only)
- Hat, Spray bottle, and washcloth (optional)

Campers will be expected to carry their items with them every day, we recommend a backpack, and leaving extra items at home.

A Camp shirt, a water bottle, and a hat are included in your camp registration. Additional items will be available for purchase at apparel pick-up days and check-in. Please dress each day in comfortable “play clothes” that can get dirty/wet.

9. Can my camper bring extra items with them to camp?

Campers are more than welcome to bring an extra item that will support their day at camp (sunscreen, cooling towel, shoes for water play, a backpack, etc.). All items are the camper’s responsibility to handle and care for in a safe manner.

We ask that toys, cell phones, and electronic devices stay at home. The Phoenix Zoo is not liable for any lost, stolen, or broken items brought to camp.

10. Can my camper bring a phone with them?

Camp Zoo focuses campers on being present in the experiences we offer. Cell phones, smartwatches, and other entertainment-based electronics are not allowed to be used during Camp hours. If found, these items will be confiscated from campers and returned to the adult picking up at the end of the day. If you have a circumstance that requires you to contact your camper during the camp day, please contact camp supervisors on the camp zoo emergency phone number 602-574-2253.

11. Why does my camper need close-toed shoes?

Our programs may involve behind the scenes elements where fecal matter may be present. For this reason, we ask that campers wear enclosed shoes to keep fecal matter from entering their shoes. **Shoes must be enclosed with no holes in them. Enclosed sandals with holes (e.g., Keens, Crocs) will not be allowed.**

12. Do you provide snacks?

We provide a light snack in the mornings and afternoons for all campers.

Campers are more than welcome to bring additional snacks from home. We just ask that they are **nut-free and stored outside of their lunchbox as lunch boxes will be stored in a separate location.**

13. Does my camper need to bring lunch?

Yes, all **full day** campers are required to bring their own lunch from home. Please note that lunches will be stored together in the lunchroom, so we recommend storing your food in a structured lunch box labeled with your camper's name.

All Kindergarten Camps are half-day. Kindergarteners do not need lunch but are welcome to bring an additional snack!

14. Does my camper need to wear their camp shirt every day?

Yes, we ask that campers wear their camp shirt each day. This aids in the identification of participants in our program. Additional shirts will also be available for purchase for \$10.

Camp Day

15. What will my camper do in a day?

Campers participate in indoor and outdoor activities including games, crafts, learning activities, stories, songs, hikes, animal demonstrations, and special behind the scenes animal encounters/experiences.

To best prioritize sun and heat safety, expect that campers will have activities indoors, regardless of time of year. All Summer Camps are required to spend at least 1/2 day (if not more) indoors.

For specific information about your camper's curriculum, a newsletter will be provided during your camper's week! Keep an eye out for it in your email!

16. How do you accommodate high temperatures?

Camper health and safety is our highest priority at Camp Zoo. All year long, we prioritize heat safety by limiting time outside and providing campers with regular cool downs and water breaks. Like a “rainy day schedule” Camp Zoo implements a High Temperature schedule to keep campers safe. Our schedule will vary from program to program. When temperatures reach 110 or higher, campers will spend no more than 45 minutes outside **cumulatively** (not all at once, including water breaks outside and going from one room to another).

We recommend campers bring a washcloth and a spray bottle to help cool down throughout the day!

All summer programs spend at least ½ the day inside (or longer), with all outside activities occurring in the early morning.

17. Do you take pictures of the campers throughout the day?

We take photos of campers at select times throughout camp, which vary from program to program. All photos may be used for marketing purposes at the Phoenix Zoo, except for one whole-group photo to be taken each week.

Camp Zoo takes family privacy and security seriously. Please request a media release at check in or email camps@phoenixzoo.org if your camper cannot be present in any photos.

Camp Zoo places priority on camper, animal, and staff safety, and the quality of lived experiences over opportunities to document activities. We will do our best to take as many photos as we can; however, we do not guarantee a set number of photos for any given week. Photos may be taken by a variety of staff and over different devices, so quality may vary. Due to elevated temperatures, we often experience devices overheating. Thank you so much for your patience, and we are continually working to find new ways to capture moments at camp.

18. What animals will my camper see at camp?

Every day, your camper will see many animals in a variety of ways! They will see animals on our Zoo trails, they will meet our ambassador animals in up-close animal discoveries, and they may have opportunities throughout the week to go behind the scenes of exhibits with Zookeepers for animal interactions.

To best prioritize the safety of campers and Zoo animals alike, we are unable to guarantee the presence of specific animals during camp. All hikes, animal discoveries, and animal interactions are subject to change from session to session.

19. My camper has food allergies, is there a safe space for them to eat?

We offer a communal lunchroom and a separate “nut-free” area in which lunch boxes are checked to ensure they do not contain any products with nuts. Please be sure to communicate all your campers’ allergies on their health history form.

All snack times are nut free. Snacks with nuts eaten outside of lunchtime will not be permitted.

Registration & Reservation Changes

20. How are campers grouped?

Campers are grouped by grade level: Kindergarten, 1/2, 3/4, 5/6, 7/8

NOTE: When registering for Summer Camps, please enroll your camper in the grade level they are entering in the fall.

21. What do Group A and Group B mean?

Due to increased demand, some grade levels are offering two groups! These groups will have identical curriculum and activities throughout the week (although daily schedule may vary). Groups are assigned internally and will be communicated on your first day's check in.

If you have family/friends in the same grade level coming to camp, the best way to guarantee you are in a group together is to place a request in the corresponding field provided at registration. We will do our best to accommodate requests, but we cannot guarantee them. We will not be able to accommodate group requests while camp is in session.

22. I registered my camper for the wrong group. Can I switch groups?

Camper enrolled in the incorrect group can only move if the desired grade is available. You may edit your camper's information online through our registration portal and cancel/switch sessions up until 14 days (2 weeks) prior to your camp start date.

To login to the registration portal, [click here!](#)

Every group is set to a 20-camper capacity to ensure a 10:1 instructor-camper ratio. If a session is sold out, we cannot move your camper from one group into another, **no exceptions.**

23. I missed the window for early apparel pickup. How do I get my camp shirt?

Every camp will have a window for families to pick up their apparel early, to ensure a smooth check-in process. If you miss our early pickup window, rest assured that all apparel will be available on the first day of your session, and we start check in at 7:30 that day to accommodate for apparel pickups. Early apparel pick-ups vary from session to session, based on camp capacity and timing. **We will not facilitate early apparel pick-up while camps are in session, no exceptions.**