

Camp Zoo Policies and Procedures

Thank you so much for registering for Camp Zoo. Before your Camper arrives, all families are asked to read and acknowledge our terms and conditions. Caregivers sign and agree to these terms when registering for camp.

Communication

All our communication is via email. Please expect to receive updates from us through the email provided at registration. Any questions or updates may be directed to camps@phoenixzoo.org. Emails are typically responded to within two business days; however, anticipate some delays when camp is in session.

Any emails received from the Camps email on behalf of UltraCamp (our registration platform) can also be replied to and will be sent straight to camps@phoenixzoo.org.

The Camp Zoo emergency line is (602) 574-2253. You may use this number during your camper's week to communicate urgent/time-sensitive information (pick-ups, drop-offs, late arrivals, etc.). This emergency line is NOT monitored when camp is out of session. To ensure the quickest response to calls, the emergency line is handled by a staff member who is supervising the camp. This number will also be used by staff to call guardians to ask time-sensitive questions or share information about your camper. Please monitor for calls from this number during your camp week. To ensure our staff can be as present with campers as possible, we ask that all administrative questions are directed to camps@phoenixzoo.org.

Communication is key to a successful week of camp. Please reach out to us should you encounter any issues. Additionally, many campers in a new setting can find communicating problems intimidating. We encourage families to have regular conversations with their child about letting instructors know of issues as soon as they occur.

Check In Procedure

Camp starts at 8 a.m., with check-in beginning at 7:45 a.m. Monday check-in will begin 15 minutes early, at 7:30 a.m.

Each day we have a late check-in from 8-8:15 a.m.. During this time, campers may be signed in, but will stay with camp staff and join camp when late check-in ends.

Caregivers are required to park in in the parking lot and accompany campers to the check-in tables each day to ensure they have been signed in. If campers are sent into camp without a caregiver present, they will not be able to join any camp activities until they have been checked in by a caregiver.

Check Out Procedure

Camp ends and check-out begins at **2:45 p.m.** All campers must be picked up by 3 p.m.. We do **NOT** offer aftercare.

Half Day Kindergarten ends at 11:45 a.m. All Half Day Kindergarten campers must be picked up by Noon.

Campers will only be released to individuals identified as a designated pick-up person for the camper. **Anyone picking up a camper must show a photo ID to confirm they are designated for pick-up.** We will email additional details about the check-in/check-out process about one week before camp with detailed instructions.

Camp Zoo makes child safety their top priority. To avoid elevated temperatures, campers remain in classrooms with staff for pickup. Guardians are expected to park and walk up to our classrooms to pick up their camper. Please reach out to us at camps@phoenixzoo.org if you would like to request assistance going up to our classrooms.

Late Arrivals and Early Pick-ups

Camp Zoo is happy to accommodate late arrivals and early pickups.

1. When possible, please notify your camp counselor or email camps@phoenixzoo.org in advance!
2. Call the Camp Phone at (602) 574-2253 when you are 10 minutes away from the Zoo.
3. Park and walk to the Nina Mason Pullium South Gate (same gate as check in). Wait for Zoo staff to arrive.
4. Our team will sign in/out your camper at the gate. Be sure to have your ID with you if signing out!
5. **We cannot facilitate timely departures during lunchtime (Noon - 12:30 p.m.) and up to 30 minutes before dismissal (2:15 - 2:45 p.m.).** If you need to pick up your camper during these windows, be prepared to wait longer than normal for staff, or pick up your camper outside of these times. Thank you so much for your cooperation.

We will do our best to accommodate these requests according to the time you have specified, but please know that additional staff and time are needed to escort early departures within the Zoo. Thank you for being patient and allowing yourself a time buffer.

If a camper must be picked up early without notice due to an unforeseen emergency, please call the **Camp Zoo emergency line (602) 574-2253**. Please be aware that the Zoo spans over 120 acres and it may take time to transport campers to the gate.

Camp Registration

Due to the increased demand for Camp Zoo, **campers may only register for one week of camp over the summer.**

If you would like to request that your camper be placed in the same group as another camper in the same grade level and session, you can make a buddy request during registration. We will do our best to accommodate requests, but we cannot guarantee them. **We will not be able to accommodate any group requests once Camp is in session.**

Campers must be registered for their current grade level. We will not honor requests to be in a grade above or below. **NOTE: In Summer Months, campers should register for the grade they will be ENTERING in the fall.** Please email camps@phoenixzoo.org if a switch needs to be made.

Every group is set to a specific capacity to ensure instructor-camper ratios that align with the standards of the American Camp Association. If a session is sold out, we cannot move your camper from one group into another, **no exceptions.**

Upon registering, you will receive a detailed receipt containing the Phoenix Zoo's Tax ID. Please Note: we **cannot** guarantee that Camp fees will qualify for dependent care credits, dependent care reimbursement plans, or ESA Vouchers.

Refunds/ Rescheduling

You can cancel or move your session online through our registration portal up to one week before your camp begins. The cancellation will be sent to our team to process your refund. Please allow 1-2 business days for your refund to be processed.

Refunds can be obtained up to seven days (one week) before your camp begins. Please email camps@phoenixzoo.org if you need to cancel less than one week before camp. Refunds made within seven days (one week) of the camp session will be subject to a \$50 cancellation fee (per camper per session). Caregivers can also elect to receive credit towards a future session instead of a refund.

There are no refunds for no-shows or missed days. If your camper's week begins and you decide to no longer attend camp, you will not be able to receive a refund.

We reserve the right to cancel any camp session. In such cases, you will be notified, and we will reschedule you or a full refund will be made.

Animals

To best prioritize the safety of campers, staff and animals at the Zoo, Camp Zoo is unable to guarantee the presence of any animals both on and off exhibit. We cannot accept any animal requests for our camp programming, and we are unable to remove animals from our programming due to fear or dislike.

If your camper is unable to view or be in the presence of a specific animal due to their cultural practice, please let us know as soon as possible either via email or in your registration forms. We take these requests seriously and will take the necessary steps to accommodate.

Weather

Sun safety is a high priority for Camp Zoo, especially in the summer. **All summer programs spend at least half the day inside (or longer), with all outside activities occurring in the early morning.** Like a rainy-day schedule, we modify activities in instances of elevated temperatures. Campers will not spend more than 45 minutes outside (cumulatively - including breaks and time spent traveling between activities) during times of high heat. All outdoor activities are accompanied by water play to cool campers down, and a water break to provide all campers with ice and cold water. Campers are more than welcome to come with additional tools to keep them cool (cooling towel, spray bottle, etc.), but it is their responsibility to handle and care for the items in a safe manner.

Camp Zoo is a rain or shine event. During unexpected weather, we will implement a modified schedule to keep campers indoors during heavy rain and thunder. Campers may go outside if the rain is light, so we recommend rain boots and raincoats on rainy days. Campers may have an umbrella, but it is their responsibility to handle and care for the umbrella in a safe manner.

Camper Materials

Campers are required to bring the following materials to each day of camp:

- Camp t-shirt, worn each day.
- Shoes that cover the whole foot (no holes!)
- Water bottle.
- two peanut-free snacks: one for the morning, and one for the afternoon.
- Packed lunch (Full day camps only).

Horse Hands Camp Zoo Participants will also need:

- Sturdy shoes that cover the whole foot.
- Pants.

Optional Items we recommend for Summer Camp: backpack, hat, spray bottle, sunscreen, water shoes, extra socks and cooling towel or washcloth.

If your camper is missing an item mentioned above, the item can be dropped off at the guest services lobby.

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 campers each day in comfortable “play clothes” that can get dirty/wet.

Footwear must be closed toe, covering the full foot, comfortable for walking, and able to get dirty/wet. For sanitary purposes, **shoes cannot have holes or gaps** (crocs, keens, etc.). “Heelys” and other rolling shoes are not permitted at the Phoenix Zoo. Campers may not be able to participate in outdoor/behind-the-scenes activities if they do not have appropriate footwear.

Campers are responsible for all of their belongings, and will be expected to use their items independently and appropriately. Please ensure that your camper can independently apply sunscreen and bug repellent and change their own shoes and clothing before sending them to camp with those items. The Phoenix Zoo reserves the right to confiscate any item that is being used in a way that is harmful or disruptive to camp.

The Phoenix Zoo is not liable for any lost, stolen, or broken items brought to camp.

Drugs, alcohol or weapons of any kind are prohibited.

Cell Phones, Smart Watches and Electronics

Camp Zoo focuses campers on being present in the experiences we offer. Cell phones 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.

Watches are permitted at Camp Zoo; however, they must only be used as a watch. If a watch is used as a phone or entertainment-based electronic during camp hours, the camper will be asked to put the watch away. If the watch continues to distract, the item will be confiscated from campers and returned to the adult picking up at the end of the day.

Lost and Found

Please label all items brought to camp with your camper’s first and last name and grade level. The Phoenix Zoo cannot assume responsibility for anything brought to camp, however, staff will do their best to help locate missing items. A Lost and Found box is kept in the C.W. and Modene Neely Education and Event Center. Items not claimed at the end of the week are taken to the Ranger Station. Clothing and other unclaimed items are donated to charity if they are not collected within one month of your Camp.

Lunch

Lunches for full-day campers are dropped off at check in and then stored in our lunchroom to keep cool, and campers will have access to them during snack time.

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 peanuts. Please be sure to communicate all your campers’ allergies on their health history form. Camp Zoo is unable to provide lunches for campers.

If your camper arrives without lunch, it must be brought to us by 11 am. Lunches can be dropped off at the guest services lobby. If a full-day camper does not have a lunch, they will not be permitted to participate in afternoon activities until they have eaten lunch. The camp day is very active and fast-paced, and it is important that campers have enough food to keep them fueled for camp activities.

Photography

Photos are taken every week of camp. These images may be used for marketing purposes at the Phoenix Zoo, except for one whole-group photo to be taken each week. All photos will be made available through a photo sharing website. All participants of that week will have access to the photos.

Camp Zoo takes family privacy and security seriously. **Families are welcome to opt out of photos by requesting a media release form at check-in.** Your camper will then be asked to wear a wristband, so they are easy to identify for our photographers. Campers are responsible for wearing their wristband the entire day; please have a conversation with your camper prior to Camp so that they are prepared.

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 absolute 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. Thank you so much for your patience, and we are continually working to find new ways to capture moments at Camp.

First Aid

Camper health and safety is our highest priority at Camp Zoo. We take matters of first aid very seriously. Should a camper need first aid, our Park Rangers are on call to support campers at a moment's notice. All matters of first aid will be documented and communicated to caregivers at check-out. Any urgent matters, or symptoms of illness will result in a phone call home via the emergency line to discuss whether leaving camp is necessary.

To allow our rangers to have the highest possible response times, instructors may provide support (snack, ice pack, etc.) to campers with minor discomforts unrelated to specific accommodations. If after a staff intervention a camper can rejoin the group quickly and is not showing nor communicating discomfort, then the camp day will continue without a call to the rangers. We will do our best to communicate if this occurs; however, we cannot guarantee that every minor discomfort is communicated. Should your camper come home reporting an issue that was not discussed with your instructor at Camp, you are more than welcome to connect with us the following morning, or by email at camps@phoenixzoo.org.

Caregiver Conduct

At Camp Zoo, we seek to develop partnerships with the caregivers of our campers. We strive to establish a safe environment and do our best to keep processes efficient. Our Camp operates with the following expectations:

- Camp readiness materials are utilized, and caregivers will reach out if they have questions or concerns.
- Camper needs and accommodations are communicated in advance according to the directions in the Caregiver Guide to Accommodation Requests located on the Camp Zoo webpage.
- All policies and procedures are agreed to during camp registration.
- During check-in and check-out, any caregivers picking up campers should be prepared to speak to counselors about their camper's day, even if they are not the camper's primary caregiver.
- Camp supervisors, staff and caregivers will be respectful of one another and work collaboratively. Should disagreements occur, feedback will be presented respectfully, assuming the best intentions of all parties involved.
- Should any concerns surrounding health, safety or behavior arise at camp, Camp supervisors and staff will actively communicate regarding concerns.
- Camp Zoo does not tolerate disrespect, hateful language or aggression towards staff. Camp Zoo reserves the right to ask for an alternative drop off/pick up personnel if a caregiver engages in disrespectful behavior.

At Camp Zoo, we greatly value transparency with caregivers and forming a partnership to help campers grow. Because our time with your camper is limited, we rely on caregiver input and involvement in supporting camper's needs. Caregivers should expect to talk with staff during their week. If staff does seek to discuss specific behavior with you, our intention is always to identify ways in which we can ensure the best possible experience for your camper.

Camper Behavior

Camp Zoo creates a safe, energetic and fun learning environment. Camp Zoo is not a daycare facility and does not follow a traditional school structure. Campers will spend their day moving throughout the Zoo, interacting with and observing animals, playing games, singing songs, collaborating, using their creativity, learning new things and practicing new skills! We ask caregivers to prepare their child for some of the changes they may encounter at camp away from parental or caregiver guidance.

Our program operates with the expectation that campers can:

- Follow directions from adults other than their caregiver.
- Show respect to staff, fellow campers, animals, and Zoo property.
- Quickly and independently transition between activities and locations with their group.
- Communicate personal needs such as needing to use the restroom or feeling discomfort.
- Express feelings verbally and seek out help from adults.
- Refrain from physical violence.

When expectations are not met, the camp day may be impacted in the following ways (including but not limited to):

- Campers' ability to experience and enjoy camp activities may be negatively impacted.
- Staff attention becomes focused on supporting a single camper instead of supporting their full group or completing tasks needed to support camp functions.
- Unsafe choices could result in harm to your camper or others.
- Other campers may choose to mimic the behavior, further disrupting camp activities and increasing the risk of physical or emotional harm.

Campers that make choices causing a distraction, negative experience or a safety concern in Camp, regardless of ability, will step away from the current activity and work collaboratively with staff to ensure expectations are met. When this occurs, we notify caregivers of the instance either by phone or at dismissal to seek partnership on how to best support the camper. Camp Zoo utilizes empathy-driven and researched behavior management practices that establish boundaries and support based on child brain development. Often, behavior is a result of environmental factors that can be modified or addressed. When camper misconduct persists after instructor intervention, Camp Zoo will respond accordingly based on our Action Plan for Misconduct (located in our policies and procedures). Depending on the severity of the action, Camp Zoo reserves the right to call caregivers and ask that a camper be picked up early from their day of camp or be dismissed from their week early. Refunds will not be given to campers dismissed from Camp.

Camp Accommodations

All children are welcome at Phoenix Zoo programs, and we want to ensure that every camper has what they need to have a great experience at Camp. We ask caregivers to provide us with any information that can help our staff set up your camper for a successful week.

Upon filling out the health history form, please provide us with the tools necessary to give your child the best possible experience at Camp Zoo by informing us of all special considerations - this may include information on allergies, accessibility concerns, behavioral, psychological or emotional conditions, or other special needs. The Camp Leadership Team will review the forms and may reach out via email for additional information. The information you provide will be shared with Camp Zoo staff & volunteers unless you request otherwise. Details will not be shared with other Camp Zoo participants without your permission.

Please note that while our staff are trained to provide many types of accommodations independently, certain accommodations require additional time, resources and planning. Therefore, we recommend submitting your request as soon as possible, as our team has limited capacity to plan for accommodations in the months leading up to camp. All requests must be made at least 30 days prior to the first day of Session 1 (May 1, 2026) to ensure we have adequate time to process your request and plan for your accommodation. Requests made after May 1 may not be approved.

To better understand when and how to request an accommodation and how our team processes those requests, please refer to the Caregiver Guide to Accommodation Requests document located at the bottom of the Camp Zoo webpage.

Action Plan for Camper Misconduct

To ensure Camper Safety, the following outlines Camp Zoo's current action plan for misconduct, outlining the behavior and their subsequent responses, based on occurrence (i.e., first "X" is the first occurrence, and so on). Camp Zoo reserves the right to escalate misconduct depending on the severity of the action, or patterns of past misconduct from prior sessions.

All instances listed will always result in caregiver notification, either during the camp day via phone or at the end of the day.

Action	Instructor Intervention	Removal from Activity	Supervisor Intervention	Removal from Camp Day	Dismissal from Camp Week
Possession of prohibited items to camp (drugs, alcohol, weapons, etc.).					X
Physical violence towards a staff member.				X	X
Physical violence towards an animal.				X	X
Animal endangerment.				X	X
Rough/rowdy behavior that results in unintentional or intentional harm.			X	X	X
Lewd Conduct			X	X	X
Intentional, targeted aggression toward a camper.		X	X	X	X
Property damage.		X	X	X	X
Inappropriate language.	X	X	X	X	X
Refusal to follow rules/ safety guidelines	X	X	X	X	X
Refusal to stay with group, excessive running away from the group.	X	X	X	X	X
Theft.	X	X	X	X	X
Disruptive behavior.	X	X	X	X	X

Instructor Intervention- Camper works with the instructor to find a solution to resolving the behavior and ensuring a safe rest of the day.

Removal from Activity- If the camper's behavior persists past the instructor intervention or presents a disruption to the activity or safety protocol, the camper will be asked to sit out of the activity, within staff supervision.

Supervisor Intervention- If the camper behavior persists past being removed from the activity (repeats in other activities) or presents a significant disruption of the safety or function of an activity, the camper will be removed from the activity and work with Camp supervisors to find a solution to resolving the behavior and ensuring a safe remainder of the day. If this occurs, the supervisor will have a conversation with caregivers regarding the behavior.

Removal from Camp Day- If the behavior continues to persist past Supervisor Intervention, or jeopardizes the safety protocols of Camp Zoo, the camper's caregivers will be notified, and an early pick-up will be requested. The camper will not be allowed to rejoin the group for the remainder of the day. The camper may return to Camp the next day.

Dismissal from Camp Week- If the camper returns to camp, and the behavior persists, or if Camp Zoo is no longer able to guarantee the safety of a camper, animal or staff member, the camper's caregivers will be notified, and an early pickup will be requested. The camper will not be allowed to rejoin the group under any circumstances. The camper may not complete their week of Camp. Refunds are not granted to campers dismissed from camp.

We look forward to seeing your camper at Camp Zoo! Should you have questions about any of the above information, please contact the Camp Leadership Team. The best form of contact is email. Email: camps@phoenixzoo.org