Camp Zoo Frequently Asked Questions

For full details on camp operations, please see our policies and procedures.

What is the best way to contact you?

For questions regarding your upcoming camp, the best way to connect with the Camp Leadership Team 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.

Registration and Reservation Changes

I need to cancel my registration; can I do that online?

You can cancel your registration online up to 1 week (7 days) prior to your camp. Log back into the registration portal and click "My Reservations." Then you will select your session and cancel it on the next page. When you cancel, your payment will be listed as an account credit, and once we are informed of the cancellation, we will process a refund to the card on file. See below for our refund policy.

Can I switch to another week?

For programs with multiple sessions, you can switch sessions up to 7 days prior to your camp. To switch your session, you will cancel your current session, then re-register for a different session with availability. When you cancel, your payment will be listed as an account credit, which will then be applied to the other session.

Can I register for multiple weeks of camp?

Campers may only register for one camp session per program. Attempts to schedule your camper for more than 1 of the same program will result in one of the registrations being cancelled. In this case, you will be notified beforehand, and given the opportunity to select which session you'd like to keep. Please note that specific programs may offer more than one week of unique programming, in which case you can register for each unique offering once per season.

How can I add my camper to the waitlist?

You can add your participant to a waitlist for any sessions. To add to the waitlist, make an account on UltraCamp, and a profile for your participant. Then, proceed as if you are registering your participant for a session. When you arrive at the list of sessions, the full ones will have a "waitlist" button instead of a register button. Click this button and you will be added.

How does the waitlist work?

Waitlists are formed in order of when participants are added. For the waitlist to move, someone currently registered for the session will need to cancel their reservation to make a spot. Once a cancellation occurs, the first person on

the waitlist will be notified via email and have 48 hours to register. Once 48 hours have passed, the spot will move to the next participant on the waitlist.

If you have multiple participants on the waitlist, complete registration when you receive notice of one spot being open. Waitlists only run one spot at a time, and if you wait for more than one spot to open, you may risk losing your spot on the waitlist altogether.

What is your refund policy?

You can cancel or move your session online through our registration portal up to 1 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.

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.

Which group should I register my camper for?

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.**

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

Campers enrolled in the incorrect group can only move if the desired grade has spots available. You may edit your camper's information online through our registration portal and cancel/switch sessions up until 1 week (7 days) prior to your camp start date. To login to the registration portal, click here!

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.**

Can I sign my camper up for a different grade level?

Camp Zoo specifically designs each grade level's program to match the developmental needs for each age range. Campers are not permitted to join groups outside of their grade level, **no exceptions.**

How do I place my camper in the same group as a friend or sibling?

If you would like to request that your camper be placed in the same group as a sibling or friend in the same grade level and session, you must submit 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 buddy requests once camp is in session.**

How can I order a hot lunch for my camper?

You can now purchase lunch for your camper in your camp account! During the registration process, you will be presented with opportunities to purchase additional apparel, hot lunches, and more depending on the program you

are registering for. From there you can review the options, decide which items you would like to purchase each day, and make your payment.

Please note that all additional purchases must be made by 11:59 p.m. the Tuesday before your camp session. Any purchases made after Tuesday at 11:59 p.m. before your scheduled program will not be reflected in our documentation, and may result in the purchase being cancelled and refunded.

Check In/Check Out

What time is check-in?

Check-in will run from **7:45 – 8 a.m.** every day of camp.

On **Mondays, we will begin check-in at 7:30 a.m.** 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.

Please monitor your email the week before your camp for additional information regarding check-in procedures.

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 – 8:15 a.m. Campers that arrive late for check-in will be asked to wait with staff until 8:15 a.m. and will then be taken to their camp group.

What time is check-out?

Check-out begins at **2:45 p.m. and runs until 3 p.m.**

Please monitor your email the week before your camp for additional information regarding check-out procedures.

Can other people pick up my child?

Yes, they need to be on your Authorized Pickup List! You can add additional pickup personnel online via our registration portal. 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 person'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!

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

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

1. When possible, please notify a camp supervisor or email camps@phoenixzoo.org in advance.
2. Call the Camp Emergency Line 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).
4. Our team will sign in/out your camper at the gate. Be sure to have your ID with you if signing out.

5. **Expect longer wait times during campers' lunch time (11:45 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.). We reserve the right to refuse early pick-up requests after 2:30 p..m.** If at all possible, we encourage you to schedule your early pick-up around these times.

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.

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

Unfortunately, we do not offer any after-care services. Please pick up your camper by 3 p.m.

What to Bring

What should my camper bring to camp?

Your camper will need:

- Camp t-shirt, worn each day
- Shoes that cover the whole foot (no holes or "Heelys"!)
- Water bottle
- 2 peanut-free snacks that can be carried separately from their lunchbox.
- Packed lunch (full day campers 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 a cooling towel or washcloth

If your camper is missing one of the required materials, you will be asked to purchase a replacement or drop off the item at the guest services lobby. Please note that your camper's ability to participate in specific activities may be impacted if they do not have the required materials.

If your camper arrives without lunch, a lunch must be provided before 11 a.m. Lunches can be dropped off at the Guest Services lobby. If a full-day camper does not have a lunch before 11 a.m., they will be sent home for the remainder of the day.

Campers will be expected to carry their items with them every day. We recommend campers carry a small backpack and leave extra items at home. The Phoenix Zoo is not liable for any items that are lost, stolen, or broken during camp.

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 (when available) and check-in. Please dress each day in comfortable "play clothes" that can get dirty/wet.

Please review our Prohibited Items and Confiscation Policy in the Camp Policies document for information about what can and cannot be brought to camp.

How do I get my camp apparel?

For larger camp programs, we will provide specific opportunities for you to come pick up your camp gear before your first day. You can check the Caregiver Guide to Camp to find out if there will be early apparel pick-up days before that start of your program.

If you are unable to pick up your apparel early, you will get your apparel on the first day of your camp session. We start check in at 7:30 a.m. on the first day of each session to accommodate apparel pickups. **We will not facilitate early apparel pick-up outside or early apparel pick-up days or while camps are in session, no exceptions.**

Can my camper wear shoes with holes in them?

Our programs may involve behind the scenes elements where fecal matter may be present. **Campers must wear enclosed with no holes in them to participate in animal interactions.** Sandals, water shoes, or any shoe with holes (e.g., Keens, Crocs) can only be used during water play if brought as an extra pair of shoes.

Can my camper bring shoes for water play?

Yes! Campers are more than welcome to bring extra shoes/socks with them. We ask that campers can change shoes independently. Camp runs on a tight schedule, and we may not be able to provide extra time for campers to change shoes. Please practice changing shoes at home for a successful transition!

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 to encourage campers to get the most of their time at camp!

Please review our Prohibited Items and Confiscation Policy in the Camp Policies document for information about what can and cannot be brought to camp.

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 need to contact your camper during the camp day, please contact camp supervisors on the camp zoo emergency phone number 602.574.2253.

Please review our Prohibited Items and Confiscation Policy in the Camp Policies document for information about what can and cannot be brought to camp.

Can my camper wear a smart watch?

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.

Please review our Prohibited Items and Confiscation Policy in the Camp Policies document for information about what can and cannot be brought to camp.

Where can I find lost items?

A Lost and Found will be available to check at the end of every camp day. Any items not claimed will be sent to our Ranger office and can be picked up through the Guest Services Lobby while the Zoo is open to the public. Unclaimed items are donated to charity if they are not collected within 1 month of your camp.

Do we need to bring a snack?

Campers must bring 2 peanut-free snacks with them each day of camp. Please store snacks so they can be carried separately from their lunch if needed.

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.

Camp Day

What will my camper do each 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 ½ 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, one week before camp!

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

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 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, 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 at camps@phoenixzoo.org or in your registration forms. We take these requests seriously and will take the necessary steps to accommodate.

Do you take pictures of the campers throughout the day?

Camp Zoo places priority on camper, animal and staff safety, and the quality of lived experiences over opportunities to document activities. We take photos of campers at select times throughout camp, which vary from program to program; however, we do not guarantee photos of any specific activities, or 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.

All photos will be shared on SmugMug the week after your camp, and may also be used for marketing purposes.

Camp Zoo takes privacy and cultural practices seriously. Please request a media release at check in if your camper cannot be present in any photos.

Can I interact with my camper while they are out in the Zoo?

While campers are in our care, we ask that caregivers not interfere with camp programming by attempting to interact with campers in the Zoo, photograph campers or communicate with campers using personal devices.

Camp Zoo provides valuable opportunities for campers to practice independence and build community with their camp groups. When caregivers are observing activities, taking pictures and communicating with their campers, it can impact the camper's ability to participate in activities, make new friends and follow directions intended to keep them safe.

However, we encourage caregivers to reference the Camp Chronicle we send out via email the week before your camp session to learn what their campers will be doing so you can ask them questions about their day after check-out!

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.

How can I request an accommodation for my camper?

At Camp Zoo, we want every camper to have what they need to succeed! Our staff are trained to provide many types of accommodations independently. However, certain accommodations require prior communication and approval by the Camp Leadership Team.

Some examples of accommodations that would need to be approved include:

- Accommodations involving modifications to camp activities or procedures.
- Accommodations that require any form of 1:1 support from camp staff or an aide.
- Accommodation relating to difficulties understanding directions or communicating needs. Examples include but are not limited to language barriers, the use of communication devices or requests for interpreters.

- Requests to provide medications that cannot be self-administered (with the exception of epi-pens).
- Medication management requiring regular monitoring and communication from caregivers.
- Life-threatening allergies or conditions.
- Requests to place a camper with a different age group due to developmental delays.
- Support for camper behaviors that may result in harm to themselves or others.
- Severe phobias or sensory overwhelm that may be triggered by camp activities.

We recommend submitting your request to our email (camps@phoenixzoo.org) 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 the program to ensure we have adequate time to process your request and plan for your accommodation.

To better understand our procedures for accommodations requests, refer to the Caregiver Guide to Accommodation Requests document located at the bottom of the Camp Zoo webpage.