



**CAMP
GUIDE
2025**



WELCOME!

Dear Parents and Guardians,

We're so excited to welcome your child to camp at the Zoo! Our team has been hard at work planning an unforgettable week filled with hands-on experiences, up-close animal encounters, and plenty of time to explore, create, and play.

At camp, we'll explore the amazing ways play and enrichment help both kids and animals grow. For animals, enrichment can mean new toys, puzzles, or challenges that keep their minds sharp and their bodies active. For people, play is just as important—it's how we learn, try out ideas, and build confidence. At camp, you'll even get a chance to create enrichment for some of the Zoo's animals, helping them stay happy and healthy. You'll see how the fun you have at camp can make a big difference for animals, too!

To ensure a smooth and enjoyable experience for everyone, please take some time to carefully review the Camp Guide. It's packed with important details about what to expect, what to bring, and how we'll keep your camper safe and engaged throughout their time with us.

Thank you for choosing the Cincinnati Zoo for your child's camp adventure. We can't wait to welcome them!

Warm regards,

Dan Marsh

Director of Education

Cincinnati Zoo & Botanical Garden

GET IN TOUCH WITH THE EDUCATION TEAM

Office Hours: Monday–Friday 9:00am–5:00pm, Saturday 9:00am–12:00pm

513-559-7730 education@cincinnati-zoo.org

GETTING READY

TO COMPLETE BEFORE CAMP

- Review this Camp Guide (PDF or [online](#)) and our camp policies.
- Review the Camp Schedule ([Page 3](#)) and Tips for Success ([Page 3](#)) with your camper.
- Share the Arrival and Dismissal information ([Page 4](#)) with all adults dropping off and picking up.
- Check your camper's room assignment on the online [Camp Guide](#).
- Mark your camper's belongings with their name (first name and last initial).
- Double check your emergency contacts and authorized contacts via your Household Account. (<https://tickets.cincinnati-zoo.org/customer/login>)

WHAT TO BRING

- Lunch and a reusable water bottle. Label lunch boxes, bottles, and other belongings.
 - Snacks will be provided to all campers. Campers who do not want the provided snack may bring their own.
- Comfortable and weather-appropriate clothing (jacket/coat, hat, gloves, etc.).
- Comfortable footwear (closed-toe shoes recommended).
- For 4yr-Kindergarten camp:
 - Rest time: Each day, we have a 30-minute low-stimulation rest time. Campers may bring a small pillow, stuffed animals, and/or blanket. Any items should fit within the camper's backpack.
 - Optional: Bathroom accidents can happen. Send a spare set of clothing with your camper. While a supply of some sizes is available, we cannot guarantee we will have extra clothing in your child's size. Adults will be contacted if there are any issues with clothing. Campers should be able to use the bathroom independently and without assistance.
- Leave at Home:
 - Candy, toys, and games
 - Electrical equipment: cell phones, tablets, video games, etc.

CAMP SCHEDULE

Each day of camp follows the general schedule of classroom activities, Zoo hikes, and animal ambassador encounters. To see your camper's schedule, see our Camp Schedules: **All Grades**

TIPS FOR SUCCESS

BEHAVIORAL EXPECTATIONS

Please share these expectations with your camper(s) before the first day of camp:

- Campers and instructors should be respectful to each other, their peers, the animals, and their surroundings.
- Camper(s) must be able to stay with their group out in the Zoo on hikes and follow instructions.
- All campers must be able to use the bathroom independently and without assistance.
- Please let us know of any tools or techniques we may use to help your camper have the best camp experience.
- All electronics, toys, and valuable items should be kept at home. If a non-accessibility item brought from home disrupts camp, the item may be collected by the camp managers and returned when child is picked up from camp. Cincinnati Zoo is not responsible for any lost, stolen, or broken items.

BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT

If campers are participating in disruptive behavior, our instructors may first use positive reinforcement and redirection to help them make better choices. In cases where disruptive behavior continues, we will take the following steps:

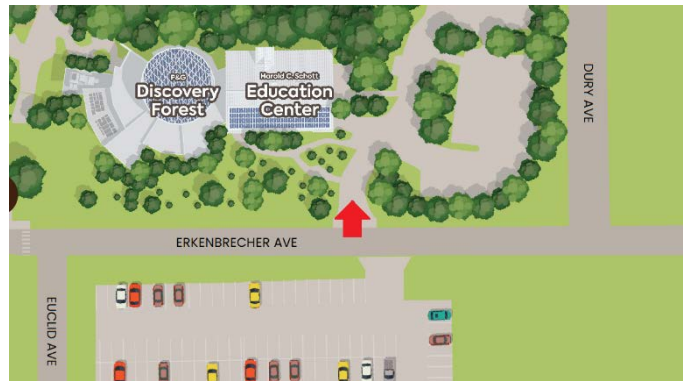
1. Instructor reminds camper of expectations (3 strikes)
2. Conversation with camp manager ("Principal moment")
3. Second conversation with a manager and a phone call home with the camper
4. Camper will go home, with a fresh start the next day
5. Behavior continues when camper returns, removal from camp

In cases where the behavior of a camper is deemed harmful to themselves, others, or their surroundings, we may bypass steps and will communicate with families as needed.

ARRIVAL & DISMISSAL

WHERE TO GO

- Camp takes place in the Harold C. Schott Education Building at 52 Erkenbrecher Ave.
- Enter at **Education Gate 1**.



ARRIVAL

- Building and classrooms open at 8:45am.
- Camp starts at 9:00am
- Park in the Education Lot and walk your camper(s) to the classroom.
 - Classroom assignments are posted on the online [Camp Guide](#). Education staff will be on hand to assist.
 - Day 1: Check-In with the instructor and go over camper information.
 - Any changes to authorized pick-ups can be given directly to your instructor.
- Running a little late? Call 513-559-7730.

DISMISSAL

- Classrooms open and pick-up begins at 3:45pm. Camp ends at 4:00pm.
- Park in the Education Lot and walk to your camper(s) classroom.
 - Classroom assignments are posted on the online [Camp Guide](#). Education staff will be on hand to assist.
 - Have your photo ID at hand **EVERY** day. Campers will only be released to those listed as authorized pick-ups with a photo ID.
- Running a little late? Call 513-559-7730.

LATE & EARLY

Due to the nature of camp, campers spend much of the day exploring the zoo, hiking, seeing animals, and playing games, so we kindly ask that any late drop-offs or early pick-ups take place during lunch (approximately 11:45am–12:45pm). This is the most convenient time, as campers are centrally located.

To ensure a smooth process, arrangements for late drop-offs or early pick-ups must be coordinated with the instructor ahead of time. If your camper's class isn't in their classroom, you will need to meet the camp group, which may add an additional 10–15 minutes to your schedule.

PARKING & VISITING

Adults are welcome to visit the Zoo during and after your camper's program. Admission for one adult and the camper is included for regular Zoo hours. Admission for additional friends and/or family that are not included in a Zoo membership may be purchased online or at the main Ticketing building.

All vehicles must move to a visitor parking lot (Vine Street, Euclid Ave, or Erkenbrecher Ave). Parking lot rates will apply.

HEALTH & SAFETY

SAFETY REMINDERS

- Campers must have a reusable water bottle to stay hydrated throughout the day.
- Campers will be outdoors in all weather, so they should wear weather-appropriate clothing to stay warm and dry.
 - Umbrellas are not recommended for rainy days—rain jackets are preferred.
- All camp instructor staff are first aid/CPR trained.
- All instructors will have a radio with them at all times to contact camp managers if any issues arise.

ILLNESS POLICY

It is the responsibility of the participant's guardian to monitor their participant's health and well-being leading up to and throughout the program. Participants will be asked not to participate in the program if they experience any symptoms of communicable illness, not caused by allergies or non-contagious conditions.

Please review the following list of symptoms. **If your camper develops any of these symptoms before coming to camp, please stay home.**

- | | | |
|-------------------------------|------------------|--------------|
| • Fever greater than 100.0° F | • Sore throat | • Diarrhea |
| • Chills | • Fatigue | • Nausea |
| • Shortness of breath | • Muscle aches | • Vomiting |
| • Difficulty breathing | • Headache | • Runny nose |
| • New cough | • New congestion | |

Participants must be fever-free for 24-hours without the use of fever reducing medications before attending or returning to programs.

If symptoms develop at camp:

- If your camper develops symptoms while at camp, staff will call the emergency contact (or anyone on the authorized pick-up list if the contact cannot be reached), and request the camper be picked up within 30 minutes.

At registration, purchasers gave the Cincinnati Zoo & Botanical Garden permission to administer basic first aid (i.e. band-aid, icepack). The Cincinnati Zoo & Botanical Garden does not dispense medications, including pain relievers. In case of illness or injury, the Cincinnati Zoo & Botanical Garden will seek medical attention for the participant, and the Cincinnati Zoo & Botanical Garden is authorized to give treatment deemed necessary. Participants will be allowed to carry medically necessary medications. Special arrangements can be made, as necessary.

INCLEMENT WEATHER

Programs occur rain or shine. Camp supervisors and Public Safety will be monitoring weather conditions and communicating with staff.

- For thunder and lightning in the area, all groups move to indoor locations.
- If a tornado warning or watch is called, groups will seek shelter immediately at the closest tornado shelter building.

In case of predicted extreme inclement weather, the Cincinnati Zoo will contact all participants via email by 8:00am the day of the program if a program is cancelled. If a program is cancelled due to extreme weather the Zoo will do its best to create a make-up class or refund for cancelled days.

CANCELLATIONS

RESCHEDULING

- For camp, you may make changes to the topics and date of your camp up to 14 days before camp, as long as there is room in the topic/date you are looking to change to.

CANCELLATION POLICY

- For camp, you may make changes to the topics and date of your camp up to 14 days before camp, as long as there is room in the topic/date you are looking to change to.
- Programs cancelled by the registrant at least two weeks in advance of the program date will receive a refund.
- Refunds or credits are no longer available for programs cancelled by the registrant within two weeks of the program date.

WAITLIST

WAITLIST POLICY

- When a program sells out, the waitlist automatically opens. When space becomes available for a week, we will call/email the first person on the waitlist for that week. If they want it, they get it; if they don't, or do not respond, we move to the next person on the waitlist.
- There is no charge to be placed on the waitlist.
- You will only be contacted if space becomes available for your camper.
- We will contact waitlisted campers up to the Thursday before the camp week starts.

FAQS

CAN MY CHILD AND THEIR FRIENDS BE IN THE SAME GROUP? WHAT SHOULD I DO IF MY CHILD IS NOT IN THE SAME GROUP AS THEIR FRIEND?

To ensure your camper is grouped with their friends, friend information should be part of your camper's registration information at least 5 business days before the start of camp. After that time, camp rosters and groups are being created and moving campers between groups cannot be guaranteed.

To check if your camper's friend request information is correct, please see our [New Household Account How To](#) below.

I NEED TO UPDATE MY CAMPER'S EMERGENCY CONTACT AND/OR AUTHORIZED PICK-UP INFORMATION.

To ensure that your camper's information is correct, any changes and updates should be made at least 5 business days before the start date of camp through our **NEW** Household Accounts. After that time, the main contact can give the instructor any updates directly at camp, or in writing by emailing education@cincinnati-zoo.org.

NEW HOUSEHOLD ACCOUNT HOW TO:

Our registration now has a household account function. You can create an account and login via the following link, or at the main Education tickets page. Please note, this system is not connected to the same system used for memberships. The Household Account will say that a membership is not connected to your account. This is only because there are two systems.

How to create an account:

- Go to the Customer Login page (<https://tickets.cincinnati-zoo.org/customer/login>).
- Click on Forgot Password?
- Enter the email address you used when purchasing Camp. This was the email that your confirmation was sent to.
- A temporary password will be emailed to you.
- Create a new password.

Checking Friends, Emergency Contacts, and Authorized Pick-ups:

- Login into your Household Account.
- Under Order, click on the Registrations.
- Click on Edit next to the Registration you wish to look at. This will open the registration questions.
- There are three tabs: Info, Questions, Contacts.
 - a. Info: main camper information including name, birthdate
 - b. Questions: camper allergies, medications, considerations, friends
 - c. Contacts: emergency contacts and authorized pick-ups

MY CHILD IS HAVING A BIRTHDAY WHILE AT CAMP. CAN I SEND TREATS?

Due to allergy concerns, no food may be provided to campers. Other smalls trinkets or notes are allowed. Examples of non-food treats include: stickers, bracelets, keychains. Please speak with your instructor to know how many children are in your camper's group.

Stop by the Education desk to get a Zoo Birthday sticker.

HOW ARE CAMPERS SUPERVISED? WHAT IS THE SUPERVISION RATIO FOR CAMPS?

Campers are supervised at all times by camp staff. Each group has one camp instructor and is limited to 10-12 campers. ZooTeen camp assistants may also be with the camp group.

THIS IS MY CHILD'S FIRST CAMP AWAY FROM ME. WHAT IF THEY ARE NOT READY TO GO?

It's normal for first-time campers to feel a little nervous, and we're here to help! Our experienced staff works with first-time campers often and will do everything we can to ensure your child feels comfortable and has a great time. While we'll support and encourage your camper throughout the day, if they truly can't make it through, the decision to continue is up to you and your camper. Please note, however, that we cannot offer refunds if a camper decides not to attend.

WILL CAMPERS WORK WITH/CARE FOR ANIMALS?

All of our programs include encounters in the classroom with ambassador animals. 7th-8th grade camps may have opportunities for closer encounters and special experiences.

WHAT SUPPORTS ARE AVAILABLE FOR CHILDREN WITH DEVELOPMENTAL, INTELLECTUAL, OR PHYSICAL DISABILITIES?

The Cincinnati Zoo strives to make environmental education accessible for all people. In-classroom resources such as visual schedules, fidgets, timers, noise-cancelling headphones, and more are available for participant use throughout the program. Educators receive training on how to support children of all need types. For more information about how the Zoo may best serve your participant's specific needs, please contact education@cincinnati-zoo.org.

CAN YOU STORE MY CAMPER'S LUNCH IN THE FRIDGE? CAN MY CAMPER HEAT UP THEIR LUNCH? CAN MY CAMPER BUY LUNCH AT THE ZOO? CAN I VISIT MY CAMPER FOR LUNCH?

We do not have facilities to keep lunches cold or for warming up lunches. Lunches should be able to remain at room temperature or have an internal ice pack to keep cool or a thermos to keep warm.

Campers must bring their lunch—they will not be able to purchase their lunch or other snacks in the Zoo during camp.

Adults cannot join the group during camp. The lunch break is an important bonding time for campers and may vary in its timing day-to-day.

CAN MY CAMPER VISIT THE GIFT SHOP?

Campers are not able to visit the gift shop during camp. Adults should make plans to visit the gift shop after camp.

MY CHILD NEEDS TO TAKE MEDICATION/INHALER. HOW SHOULD I ARRANGE FOR THIS?

The Cincinnati Zoo is not responsible for administering medication to children. We will remind them to take their medicine or inhaler by themselves if needed. To ensure a positive experience for all campers, it is imperative that you notify us of any medical or behavioral conditions your child may have. In most cases, we can accommodate these needs and will do so to the best of our ability.

MY CHILD HAS AN ALLERGY. CAN I PROVIDE YOU WITH AN EPINEPHRINE INJECTOR?

Yes, you can. Your child or our staff will carry it with the group throughout the day. Zoo staff will contact you via phone prior to the first day of camp to discuss your child's allergy and go over the specifics of their injector.

HOW DO I GET IN CONTACT WITH A CAMP COORDINATOR OR MY CHILD DURING THE CAMP IF THERE IS AN EMERGENCY?

Please call 513-559-7730 for our main line.

MY CHILD IS OUTSIDE THE AGE RANGE FOR A CERTAIN CAMP. CAN THEY STILL ATTEND? THEY'RE ADVANCED FOR THEIR AGE.

Our camps are thoughtfully designed to provide the best possible experience for each specific age group. To ensure all participants have a safe and enjoyable time, we kindly ask that children attend the camp sessions created for their designated age range. Younger campers may find activities for older children too challenging or feel out of place socially, which can affect their experience as well as that of the older campers. We truly appreciate your understanding and ask you to register your camper for the sessions that match their age.

WHAT ARE THE GENERAL PHYSICAL, MENTAL, AND EMOTIONAL REQUIREMENTS OF THIS CAMP?

Campers may walk as much as one mile or more in one day. For everyone's safety, campers are expected to follow directions given by instructors and remain with the group at all times. All campers must be able to use the bathroom independently and without assistance. Campers are expected to treat others and the animals with respect, kindness, and empathy. Please see our Behavioral Expectations ([Page 3](#)).

I NEED A RECEIPT FOR CHILDCARE.

Your confirmation email should serve as a receipt. If you need additional paperwork filled out, we are happy to fill out these forms. Unfortunately, we cannot guarantee that every plan considers summer camp eligible for this reimbursement. Please check with your company to see if camp qualifies.

Our Tax ID number is: 31-0537171.