

SPRING BREAK CAMP 2025

Dr. Zoolittle's Animal Training Camp



Dear Parents & Guardians,

Thank you for enrolling your child in the Cincinnati Zoo & Botanical Garden's Spring Break Camp. We are so excited that your child can join us! For this **5th and 6th Grade Spring Camp**, we will focus on animal behavior and how it applies to zoo husbandry. Through interactive learning games and activities, animal encounters, and treks to various zoo habitats, we will learn all about operant conditioning and campers will be able to operantly condition a zoo Ground Squirrel by the end of camp!

Below, you will find more information on daily camp themes and activities. Feel free to use these to facilitate discussions with your child after each day of camp. Should you have any questions, comments, or suggestions, all camp staff will be happy to assist you. Thank you for your continued support of your Cincinnati Zoo!

Day One: Animal Intelligence

Today, we will explore the concept of animal intelligence, and how it can be observed in the wild and in human care.

Possible Animal Friends:

- Ground Squirrel, Box Turtle, and Yellow-Billed Hornbill

Possible Zoo Hike Locations:

- Wings of the World, Gorilla World

Conversation Starters:

- What was your favorite animal that you got to meet today? Why?
- Can animals learn information?
- Can animals outsmart us?





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Day Two: Motivation

Today, we will learn about the concept of motivation and why it is important to operant learning

Possible Animal Friends:

- Chinchilla, Ground Squirrel, Red-Footed Tortoise

Possible Zoo Hike Locations:

- Wolf Woods, Africa

Conversation Starters:

- What was your favorite animal that you got to meet today? Why?
- What is motivation?
- What would motivate an animal? What motivates us?



Day Three:

Today, we will learn about the basics of animal behavior and how we can “capture” desired behaviors through operant conditioning

Possible Animal Friends:

- Brazilian Rainbow Boa, Ground Squirrel, Screaming Hairy Armadillo

Possible Zoo Hike Locations:

- Veldt, Manatee Springs, Elephant Trek

Conversation Starters:

- What was your favorite animal that you got to meet today? Why?
- What is a behavior?
- What was your favorite game or activity today?

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Day Four: Operant Conditioning

Today, we will continue to operantly condition the Ground Squirrels and learn more about what it takes to become a skilled animal trainer

Possible Animal Friends:

- Skunk, Spotted Turtle, Ground Squirrel

Possible Zoo Hike Locations:

- Night Hunters, Cat Canyon, Jungle Trails

Conversation Starters:

- What was your favorite animal that you got to meet today? Why?
- How can we define Operant Conditioning?
- What is the difference between a learned and innate behavior?

Day Five: Ground Squirrel Encounter

Today, campers will put on a Ground Squirrel Encounter and have a relaxed day exploring the zoo and visiting animal chats

Possible Animal Friends:

- Dumeril's Ground Boa, Ground Squirrel

Possible Zoo Hike Locations:

- Camper's Choice, Barnyard Bonanza

Conversation Starters:

- What was your favorite animal that you got to meet today? Why?
- What has been your favorite part of camp this week?
- What is something interesting that you learned this week?

