

SUMMER CAMP 2026

Exploring Enrichment



Dear Parents & Guardians,

Thank you for enrolling your child in the Cincinnati Zoo & Botanical Garden's Summer Camp. We are so excited that your child can join us! For this **5th and 6th Grade Summer Camp**, we will focus on animal enrichment! Through hands-on activities, animal encounters, and treks to various zoo habitats, we will learn about the importance of enriching the lives of animals in human care, the different types of enrichment, and what it takes to create safe and meaningful enrichment items! 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: Intro to Enrichment

Today we will explore what enrichment is, why it is important, and what it takes to create it!

Possible Animal Friends:

- Ball Python, Yellow Billed Hornbill/Von der Decken's Hornbill, Blue Tongued Skink

Possible Zoo Hike Locations:

- Swan Lake, Gibbon Island, Gorilla, Manatee House, Jungle Trails

Conversation Starters:

- What are some types of enrichment that you learned about?
- What was your favorite animal that you saw?
- Do you have any initial ideas for your enrichment proposal?





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Day Two: Operant Conditioning

Operant conditioning for animal husbandry and research behaviors provides animals with mental stimulation that increases their wellbeing.

Possible Animal Friends:

- Chicken, Rats, Tawny Frogmouth, African Tenrec

Possible Zoo Hike Locations:

- Cat Canyon, Night Hunters, Elephant Trek, Campers' Choice

Conversation Starters:

- What is operant conditioning and why does the zoo use it?
- What enrichment did you choose for the armadillo?
- What was your favorite thing about today?



Day Three: Food Enrichment

Food is an important form of enrichment and special treats can be used to add variety and excitement to an animal's day!

Possible Animal Friends:

- Red-footed Tortoise and 3-banded armadillo

Possible Zoo Hike Locations:

- Scavenger Hunt, Camper's Choice, Veldt, Wings of the World

Conversation Starters:

- How is food used as enrichment?
- What did you find on your scavenger hunt?
- What was your favorite hike from today?

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Day Four: Sensory Enrichment

Sensory enrichment is designed to stimulate the animal's sense of smell, touch, hearing, vision, and taste!

Possible Animal Friends:

- Angolan Python, White's Tree frog, Giant African Millipedes, Sand Boa

Possible Zoo Hike Locations:

- AAC, Wolf Woods, Reptile House, Dragons

Conversation Starters:

- What is sensory enrichment?
- Did you meet any special animals today?
- Did you meet someone from the enrichment committee/what did you learn from them?

Day Five: Novel Item Enrichment

Novel items introduced into an animal's environment that can be manipulated by the animal can provide valuable enrichment opportunities.

Possible Animal Friends:

- Striped Skunk, Brazilian Rainbow Boa, Blue and Gold Macaw, Pancake Tortoise

Possible Zoo Hike Locations:

- Camper's choice and World of the Insect

Conversation Starters:

- What is a novel item?
- How was the enrichment drop off?
- What was your favorite part of camp this week?



Gadgets for Gorillas is our summer camp conservation challenge! We are collecting e-waste to recycle, helping to protect gorilla habitat in the Congo. The bin will be located in our lobby. Click [here](#) for a video with more details.

