



Camp Policies

Registration

In previous years, campers were allowed to move up or down an age level based on group availability. However, it is now our policy that campers **MUST** be signed up for the age group containing the grade they are currently in this school year. All campers **MUST** currently be in or have completed kindergarten before attending Zoo Camp, be a minimum of five years old, and be completely independent in the restroom. If an age group is sold out, no exceptions will be made. If a camper is found to have signed up without meeting these qualifications, they will be dismissed from camp without a refund.

Refund/Cancellation Policy

Zoo Camp registration is non-refundable, except at the discretion of the Director of Education in certain circumstances. As an alternative to cancellation, camp registration can be transferred to another camper in the event of a schedule conflict. If you would like to request cancellation or transfer of your registration, please contact the Director of Education at jchestnut@lincolnzoo.org or call 402-475-6741 ext. 137.

Refunds will not be given for illness or missed days of camp. If the Lincoln Children's Zoo sees fit to cancel a day of camp, refunds will be provided for the cost of that day. Zoo Camp will be held in all weather, though changes to the schedule will be made as needed to accommodate rain, extreme heat, and poor air quality. Please be sure to send your camper in weather-appropriate clothing and closed-toed shoes, as well as packing any necessary rain or sun protection and a full change of clothes, as there will be days campers play in water or get dirty.

Communication

All information about Zoo Camp will be communicated to the email address used during the sign-up process. If you would like communications – including camp drop-off and pick-up procedures, what to bring to camp, and notice of cancellations or changes – sent to a different email address than the one originally provided during registration, please let the Education department know your preferred contact information.

Emergency contact phone numbers will be used to reach caregivers if a medical or behavioral situation arises during camp. Please only list emergency contacts who are able to promptly answer their phone during the day. We will call "Emergency Contact 1" first, and "Emergency Contact 2" next if Contact 1 does not pick up.

Check-In Procedures

Check-in will be from 8:15-8:45am at the Zoo front gates. You may not drop off your camper prior to 8:15. Please make arrangements to have your camper dropped off no later than 8:45. If you arrive after this time, please go to the reception office – door 4, to the right of the front gates – to check in.

Upon arrival, look for the sign with your camper's age group and check in with that counselor. All campers must have an adult present with them until they are checked in. If you have multiple campers in different age groups, please wait with each one until they are checked in before moving to the next age group. Please note that caregivers will not be able to enter the zoo with their camper and must remain outside the gates when dropping off.

On the first day of camp, please make sure the check-in counselor is aware of any allergies, medications, or other needs your camper may have. Medications sent with campers must be registered with the Director or Coordinator and noted on rosters.

Morning check-in is the time to let the counselor know if you need to pick up your camper earlier than 3:45pm. Please see the Check-Out Procedures section for more information on early check-out.

Late Check-In: If you are dropping off your camper any time after 8:45am, please go to the reception office to the right of the Zoo front gates. Let the receptionist know you are here for Zoo Camp, and wait with your camper until a member of the Education team arrives to check them in.

Check-Out Procedures

Check-out will be from 4:15-4:30pm in the Nebraska Trust Environmental Center, the entrance to which can be found along the bike path outside the Nest529 Greenspace. (Specific directions and pick-up instructions will be emailed to families on the first day of camp.) Please make arrangements to have your camper picked up by 4:30 at the latest.

Upon your arrival, look for the sign with your camper's age group and check them out with their counselor. Campers will only be released to caregivers on their approved pick-up list (designated at registration) who have a valid photo ID. To pick up your camper, adults **MUST** show a photo ID every day. Please let the Education department know prior to pick-up if you need to add an adult to your camper's approved pick-up list.

If you are going to be late to check-out, please call the Director at 913-980-9620. There is a 15-minute grace period for late pick-ups. If a camper is picked up after 4:45, an additional \$10 fee will be charged.

Early Check-Out: If you need to pick your camper up before 3:45pm, please inform their counselor at check-in what time the camper will be picked up. When picking up early, enter through the reception office and tell the receptionist your camper's name and age group. A member of the Education team will bring your camper to you. Please note, there are no early pick-ups allowed after 3:45pm.

Behavior Expectations

Campers are expected to follow all Zoo Camp expectations throughout their time at camp. Expectations are taught on the first day of camp, and every subsequent day begins with a reminder of the rules. Our Zoo Camp Core Values are as follows:

- Be Respectful: Respecting zoo animals, property, counselors, and fellow campers
- Be Together: Remaining with the group and listening to all counselor instructions
- Be Excited: Being willing to participate in camp activities with enthusiasm and kindness, without disrupting the learning of other campers

If a camper's behavior does not meet expectations, staff will remind them of the rules and attempt to redirect their behavior. If no change is made, the camper will speak with their counselor individually and decide on action steps to improve their behavior. If the camper is still unable or unwilling to adjust behavior, they will be referred to the Education department's administrative staff.

Emergency contacts will be notified if a camper's behavior does not improve after staff intervention. Depending on the severity of the behavior, staff may require the camper to be picked up early. Allowing the camper to return for subsequent days of camp will be at the discretion of the Director of Education. Refunds will not be issued for behavior-related dismissals.

If the student is continually disruptive or inappropriate, demonstrates physical aggression, or presents a flight risk, the student will be dismissed and asked not to return for the remainder of the week with the potential of no refund. Physical violence or harmful language toward another camper or staff will result in immediate dismissal.

Health and Safety

If your child is not feeling well, please keep them at home. Campers will be sent home early if they begin exhibiting symptoms of the flu, Covid-19, or any viral infection or communicable disease. These symptoms include but are not limited to vomiting, diarrhea, raised body temperature, coughing, or sore throat. Campers will be allowed to return to camp once they are free of symptoms for 24 hours without fever-reducing medication.

Counselors will administer basic first aid for minor cuts, bruises, and insect bites or stings. Trained zoo staff will be alerted for any first aid needs beyond these minor instances and will contact emergency services if necessary. Emergency contacts will be notified of any medical treatment beyond minor first aid.

A Day at Camp

Zoo Camp is dedicated to providing campers with a fun and educational experience that focuses on learning, exploring, and relationship-building. Each day of camp will include engaging STEAM lessons, an animal encounter with a zookeeper, team-building activities, outdoor free play, and crafts.

Camp is housed in a secure building that is not open to the public, and campers will leave most of their belongings in this building during the day. When out in the zoo, campers are led by two counselors who conduct routine headcounts to ensure all campers are present. Apart from the camp building, campers will spend their time in public buildings and locations within the zoo. They will not be allowed to go behind the scenes to staff or animal care areas.

Sample Schedule

- 8:15-8:45 – Check-in
- 8:45-9:00 – Morning Announcements & Camp Expectations
- 9:00-9:15 – “Morning Rug Time” & team-building activities
- 9:15-9:45 – Outdoor free play at one of our three playgrounds in the zoo (weather permitting)
- 9:45-11:15 – STEAM-based activities and classroom lessons
- 11:15-12:00– Lunch & Recess
- After Lunch – Story Time & Themed Craft

The rest of the day is filled with exploring the zoo, playing games, and participating in animal encounters with our zookeeper staff. There is a 30-minute break for a zoo-provided snack around the 2:00 hour. (If your camper has food allergies, we recommend sending a snack from home.)

- 3:45-4:15 – Classroom clean-up and daily debrief
- 4:15-4:30 – Check-out

- All campers will receive a Zoo Camp T-shirt on the first day of camp. Please have your camper wear this shirt daily, along with comfortable, weather-appropriate clothing that is allowed to get dirty, and closed-toe shoes.

What TO bring to Camp	What NOT to bring to camp
DO bring a backpack or bag to carry belongings and bring home crafts	DO NOT personal toys, electronics, or trading cards (including Pokémon). All items brought with your camper are not the responsibility of the zoo if they are lost, stolen, or damaged.
DO bring a reusable water bottle that is easy to carry	DO NOT anything of value, including money, jewelry, smart watches, and cell phones.
DO bring a towel and full change of clothes including underwear, socks, bottoms, and a shirt. There will be days when campers play in water or get dirty!	<i>*We recognize that cell phones are an important way to communicate with your child outside of camp, but campers will not be allowed to use any electronics during the camp program. Zoo Camp encourages campers to disconnect from electronics, engage in their surroundings, and connect with nature to make the most out of their time here. If you need to contact your camper in case of an emergency, please call the Director at 913-980-9620.</i>
A nutritional and filling lunch as well as any additional snacks. The Zoo will provide one snack each day (usually a granola bar, Goldfish, or graham crackers.)	
Any desired sun protection if needed, including a hat, sunglasses, or jacket. Please apply sunscreen before dropping your camper off as there will not be a designated time during the camp day for them to reapply.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Please label a name on every item sent with your camper. We have both a zoo-wide and camp lost and found, but please note that the Lincoln Children's Zoo is not responsible for any lost items. Please alert the Education team if one of your camper's items is missing and we will do our best to find it. • Lost and found items will be displayed on a table at check-in on the last day of camp. Please check for any of your camper's belongings. All camp lost and found items will be donated one week after the end of Spring Break Safari. 	

Aides and Level of Development

Zoo Camp is a program designed for children who are eager to learn more about science and can remain respectful and engaged in a group setting without one-on-one (individual) assistance from camp staff. In addition to age requirements, campers must be toilet trained, able to use automatic-flush public restrooms without assistance, able to spend up to two hours at a time outside, able to walk or otherwise traverse one to two miles a day on the Zoo property, and able to spend up to two hours at a time in a classroom setting. If your child does not meet the above requirements, please reach out to the Education team to discuss the possibility of potential accommodation and assistance. If a child is sent to Zoo Camp and is later found not to meet the minimum requirements or appropriate level of development, they will be asked not to return for the remainder of camp, with the possibility of no refund.

The Zoo is an equal opportunity organization that welcomes children with disabilities. Zoo Camp makes every effort to provide reasonable accommodation to meet student needs. If your child has medical, learning, physical, developmental, social, or behavioral needs, or if your child requires other modification of programming (such as specialized equipment, additional adult support/supervision at school, learning/social/medical/behavioral accommodations, etc.), please contact the Education department before registering for camp to allow discussion about reasonable accommodations, as Zoo Camp cannot guarantee that requested accommodations or modifications can be made in every situation. Requests for accommodation or modifications will be assessed on a case-by-case basis to ensure adequate staffing and group sizes are available to meet the needs of all children attending camp.

One-on-one aides provided and paid for by families are welcome as part of Zoo Camp. Aides must be a third-party professional over the age of 18 who are able to pass a background check. Family members and friends may qualify as an acceptable aide if they otherwise meet these requirements and have appropriate training. For Zoo Camp purposes, “appropriate training” for a family member consists of a minimum of 12 collegiate credit hours in Special Education courses, or 6 months minimum work history as a paraeducator in the school system. Education will be verified through transcripts and work history verified with employers. Though there will be no additional fee for an aide to attend camp for the purpose of one-on-one assistance, the child’s aide or family will be required to pay for a background check to be conducted for the aide through the Lincoln Children’s Zoo. The Zoo may deny the presence of an aide based on a background check or for any other reason in its sole discretion in accordance with applicable law.

A one-on-one aide is required if the camper is assigned a paraprofessional during the school day, requires the full attention of an adult to remain safe, respectful, and engaged, needs assistance toileting or with other medical needs, needs assistance eating, or cannot adequately or safely remain with the group without adult redirection or support.

Frequently Asked Questions

Where do I go if my camper arrives late in the morning?

- If dropping off after 8:45am, please enter the reception office to the right of the main gates and let the receptionist know you are here for Zoo Camp. Please wait with your camper in reception until a member of the Education staff comes to pick them up.

How do I pick up my camper early?

- Please notify the counselor at check-in that morning of your need to pick-up early and what time you will be arriving. When you get to the zoo, please enter the reception office to the right of the main gates and give the receptionist your camper's name and age. Education staff will be notified and will bring your camper to you. Please note there are no early pick-ups allowed after 3:45pm.

What is your cancellation/refund policy?

- Zoo Camp registration is non-refundable, except at the discretion of the Director of Education in certain circumstances. As an alternative to cancellation, camp registration can be transferred to another camper in the event of a schedule conflict. If you would like to request cancellation or transfer of your registration, please contact the Director of Education at jchestnut@lincolnzoo.org or call 402-475-6741 ext. 137.

How will the Zoo communicate with me during camp?

- All information about Zoo Camp will be communicated to the email address used during the sign-up process. If you would like communications sent to a different email address than the one originally provided during registration, please let the Education department know your preferred contact information. Emergency contact phone numbers provided at registration will be used to reach caregivers if a medical or behavioral situation arises during camp. Please only list emergency contacts who are able to promptly answer their phone during the day. We will call "Emergency Contact 1" first, and "Emergency Contact 2" next if Contact 1 does not pick up.

What level of animal interaction will my camper have during the day?

- While the Lincoln Children's Zoo prides itself on providing firsthand interaction with living things, that does not always mean getting to pet animals. There are several ambassador animals that campers may be able to gently touch, but most animal encounters will NOT allow the campers to pet. This is for the safety and comfort of both our animals and the campers. Apart from the secure camp building, campers will spend their time in public buildings and locations within the zoo. They will not be allowed to go behind the scenes to staff or animal care areas.

My child has food allergies/sensitivities. What do you provide for lunch and snack?

- If your camper is a picky eater or has dietary restrictions, we do not recommend purchasing zoo lunch as our options are limited. All lunches will come with an entree, fruit juice, fresh fruit or a fruit cup, a cookie or granola bar, and a bag of potato chips. Snacks usually consist of granola bars or crackers like Goldfish or grahams.

What kinds of activities will my camper participate in during the day?

- Zoo Camp is dedicated to providing campers with a fun and educational experience that focuses on learning, exploring, and relationship-building. Each day of camp will include engaging STEAM lessons, an animal encounter with a zookeeper, team-building activities, outdoor free play, and crafts.

What should my child bring to camp?

- We ask that campers bring a backpack or bag in which to carry belongings and bring home crafts. In this backpack should be a reusable water bottle, lunch and snacks as needed, any desired weather protection (including a hat, sunglasses, or jacket), and a towel and full change of clothes (including underwear, socks, bottoms, and a shirt) as there will be days when campers may play in water or get dirty. Please make sure to label all items sent with your camper. Please do NOT send your camper with any toys, electronics, or personal items of sentimental or financial value. The Lincoln Children's Zoo is not responsible for any lost, damaged, or stolen belongings.

How do I contact my camper if I need to reach them during the day?

- We ask that you do not send campers with cell phones, as Zoo Camp encourages campers to disconnect from electronics, engage in their surroundings, and connect with nature to make the most of their time here. However, we understand there may be instances when important communication is necessary. If you need to reach your camper during the day, please call the Director at 913-980-9620.

My child has special needs/requires specific accommodations. Can they still participate in Zoo Camp?

- Zoo Camp makes reasonable efforts to accommodate student needs. If your child has medical, learning, physical, developmental, social, or behavioral needs, or if your child requires other accommodation (such as specialized equipment, additional adult support/supervision at school, learning/social/medical/behavioral accommodations, etc.), please contact the Education department before registering for camp to allow discussion about reasonable accommodations, as Zoo Camp cannot guarantee that requested accommodations or modifications can be made in every situation. Requests for accommodation or modifications will be assessed on a case-by-case basis to ensure adequate staffing and group sizes are available to meet the needs of all children attending camp.

To contact the Education Team

- Email jchestnut@lincolnzoo.org or call 402.475.6741 ext. 137



MEDICATION CONSENT FORM – LINCOLN CHILDREN'S ZOO

(Please fill out one consent form for each medication)

Child Name: _____

Date: _____

Name of medicine on the label: _____

Medicine dose on the label: _____

Time of last dose given: _____

Time of day medicine is to be given at camp: _____

Route of medicine as on the label: _____

Possible side effects: _____

Special instructions for giving medicine: _____

I verify that the above information is accurate and authorize Zoo Camp Staff to supervise the camper in administering his/her medication.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

NOTE TO PARENTS: Medications must be in their original packaging and clearly labeled with camp child's name and appropriate prescription, dosing and /or other pharmaceutical information. Liquid medications must be accompanied with an appropriate measuring cup/syringe. All medication will be stored in a locked drawer inside the Camp Office. We are unable to accept damaged/expired medications or loose medications in unmarked packaging.

Signature that parent received medicine container at the end of camp:

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Record that medication was distributed (Time & Staff initials):

	MON	TUE	WED	THUR	FRI
AM					
PM					



CAMP RELEASE OF LIABILITY

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION

Name of Camp Participant: _____

Name of Parent/Guardian: _____

Address: _____

Phone Number: _____

Allergies: _____

Medications: _____

Additional Information: _____

EMERGENCY CONTACTS:

First Contact Name: _____

Preferred Phone Number: _____

Second Contact Name: _____

Preferred Phone Number: _____

Approved Pickup: _____

I hereby give my permission for my child(ren) to participate in the Lincoln Children's Zoo Camp Program. I acknowledge that participation in any program which involves physical activity exposes the camper to certain risks and dangers and accept any and all risks associated with my child attending camp at the Zoo.

I agree to allow photographs of my child to be used for publication and archiving by the Lincoln Children's Zoo. The rights to use the photos include, but are not limited to, the publication and display in editorial, promotion advertising, trade, or otherwise and in any media, including, but not limited to, electronic databases, print, internet, and archival and/or data retrieval systems.

By signing below, I acknowledge and agree that I have fully read, understand and voluntarily sign this release of liability.

Signature: _____

Printed Name: _____

Date: _____