

## Thank you for registering for Camp Zoo!

We are excited to have your camper(s) join us! Now that you're all signed up, here are your next steps:

1. Add [camps@phoenixzoo.org](mailto:camps@phoenixzoo.org) to your contact list!
2. Read this packet!
3. Watch our orientation video—new video coming this May!
4. Pick up apparel early in May!



## Camp Times:

### Check-in:

7:45 – 8 a.m.

*Check In begins at 7:30 a.m. on Mondays!*

### Check-out for kindergarten:

11:45 a.m. – Noon

### Check-out for grades 1 – 8:

2:45 – 3 p.m.

*(No aftercare available)*

**To add pick-up personnel,  
change your reservation, or edit  
your information log [click here!](#)**

### Need to cancel?

You can cancel your registration online up to one week before 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. Once we are informed of the cancellation, we will process a refund to the card on file. See refund policy below for more information.

### Need to sign up for a different week?

You can switch sessions up to one week prior to your camp (*provided the desired session is not sold out*). To switch your session, you will cancel your current session, then re-register for the correct one! When you cancel, your payment will be listed as an account credit, which will then be applied to the other session.

*Update: Camp Zoo is no longer providing snacks with camp and asks families to bring additional snacks along with their camper's lunch. Campers will have access to their lunch box during snack time.*

## Helpful Links

[FAQ](#) | [What to Bring](#)

# A Caregiver's Guide to Camp

Thank you for choosing Camp Zoo! We care deeply about our relationships with both campers and caregivers alike, so we have provided the following guidelines to help you feel prepared and confident to place your camper in our care.

## Communication

Upon registering for camp, you will receive a confirmation email outlining your next steps. Attached to the email is a caregiver information packet (*this document*) and our policies and procedures. Should you have any questions that are not covered in the information packet, please email us at [camps@phoenixzoo.org](mailto:camps@phoenixzoo.org)

Email is our primary form of communication. Our team will send all families the following communications:

- A notification email when apparel is ready to be picked up for your session
- Reminders email the week before camp
- Pick-up directions during your week of camp
- Post-camp email with information on photos and a post-camp survey

**If you need to get a hold of us while your camper is in our care, please call the camp phone at (602) 574-2253. This phone is only monitored when camps are in session. Please do not call this number outside of your camp session.**

## Family Resources

Our team creates the following resources in addition to this packet to help families prepare for camp:

- **Orientation video**— Provides details on how to prepare for camp and what to expect at Camp Zoo. This video is updated annually with a new version every May. The link for this video will be found in your confirmation email, apparel pick-up email and your reminders email
- **Camp Newsletter**— Provides a tentative schedule for your camper's week. This will be attached to your reminders email sent the week before your camp.
- **Early apparel pickup**— Allows families to get apparel in advance to make Monday's check-in smoother. In the summers, our staff will also run apparel pick-up days in May so you can meet some of our team before you arrive!
- **Behavior policy**— Outlines all expectations for camper behavior and Camp Zoo's approach to supporting campers. Found in the Camp Policies document.

# What to Bring

## Your camper will need:

- Camp t-shirt, worn each day
- Closed toe shoes
- Water bottle
- Two snacks: one for the morning, and one for the afternoon
- Packed lunch (*Full day camps only*)
- Hat, spray bottle and washcloth (*optional*)

## Horse Hands Camp Zoo participant will also need:

- Sturdy shoes that cover the whole foot
- Pants (*campers will have time to change into pants to stay cool in the heat*)

Camp Zoo is no longer providing snacks with camp and asks families to bring additional snacks along with their camper's lunch. Campers will have access to their lunch box during snack time.

If your camper is missing an item mentioned above, the item can be dropped off at the guest services lobby.

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.

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

# Check-In Procedure

**Camp check-in takes place from 7:45 – 8 a.m. each day at the Nina Mason Pulliam South Gate Entrance, located south of the main entrance outside of the Zoo. Check-in on Monday begins at 7:30 a.m. to account for apparel pick-ups.**

1. Park in designated spaces and walk your child to the check-in tables. **Please do not park at the curb.**
2. On Monday, if you need camp apparel, proceed to apparel pick-up first! Apparel pick-ups and additional purchases are available (*card purchases only*).
3. Staff can help you find your table for check-in. Your camper's counselors will sign them in each day, please feel free to ask them questions! Counselors may also ask you questions to ensure a successful day of camp!
4. Pick-up passes are available at check in and will also be emailed to you on the first day of camp. You will need to have your pick-up pass when you pick up your camper at the end of the day.
5. If your camper has medications, your counselor will direct you to our rangers to sign them in!
6. Once campers are all signed in, they will drop off their lunch box in their wagon. Camper lunches will be stored in a bin that is kept in a separate space to keep cool.
7. Once their lunch is dropped off, your camper will enter the Zoo through the South Gate. Parents are not allowed past the gate.
8. Check-in closes at 8 a.m. Late check-in occurs until 8:15 a.m. Late check-ins will join their group at that time.
9. If you arrive after late check-in, please call the Camp Phone at (602) 574-2253 for directions and allow more time for check-in.

## Check-Out Procedure

Kindergarten camps are half day. Check-out is at 11:45 a.m. and starts at the Zoo's Main Entrance. Grades 1 – 8 check-out is at 2:45 p.m. and starts at the same gate as check-in (Nina Mason Pullium South Gate)

1. **Make sure you have your ID and pickup pass** with you when you park and walk up.
2. Present the Ranger at the gate with your pick-up pass. Kindergarten caregivers will present the pick-up pass at the Zoo's main entrance.
3. Follow the signs up to the classrooms to sign out your camper. **We will be checking ID's at the classroom! Make sure you have it before you go uphill!**
4. Please anticipate a brief wait outside and a walk uphill to the camp classrooms to ensure camper safety during check-out. If you need any accommodation, let the staff at check-out know and we can arrange a cart to take you to the classrooms.
5. Staff will direct you to your classroom to sign out your camper. Parents are to wait for campers outside the classroom.
6. Your counselor will sign out your camper and check your ID based on the "Authorized Pick-ups" listed in your account.
7. Counselors may speak with you about your camper's day. Personnel responsible for picking up campers should be prepared to have conversations with staff, even if they aren't the direct caregiver.
8. All pick-up personnel must be listed in the authorized pick-up section in your account. Please make sure their name matches their Government Issued ID.
9. Exit the Zoo through the same gate. *(Kindergarten will exit through the main exit)*

## Late Arrivals/Early Pick-Ups

Camp Zoo is happy to accommodate late arrivals and early pick-ups!

1. When possible, please notify your camp counselor or email [camps@phoenixzoo.org](mailto:camps@phoenixzoo.org) in advance!
2. Call the Camp Phone 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)*. Wait for Zoo staff to arrive.
4. Our team will sign in/out your camper at the gate. Be sure to have your ID with you if signing out!
5. **We cannot facilitate timely departures during lunchtime (Noon – 12:30 p.m.) and up to 30 minutes before dismissal (2:15 – 2:45 p.m.).** If you need to pick up your camper during these windows, be prepared to wait longer than normal for staff or pick up your camper prior to these times. Thank you so much for your cooperation.

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.

## First Aid

Camper health and safety is our highest priority at Camp Zoo. We take matters of first aid very seriously. Should a camper need first aid, our Park Rangers are on call to support campers at a moment's notice. All matters of first aid will be documented and communicated to caregivers at checkout. Any urgent matters or symptoms of illness will result in a phone call home via the emergency line to discuss whether leaving camp is necessary.

## Caregiver Conduct

At Camp Zoo, we seek to develop partnerships with the caregivers of our campers. We strive to establish a safe environment and do our best to keep processes efficient. Our camp operates with the following expectations:

- Camp readiness materials are utilized and caregivers will reach out if they have questions or concerns.
- Camper needs and accommodations are communicated in advance through their registration forms or via email when applicable.
- All policies and procedures are agreed to during camp registration.
- Camp Supervisors, staff, and caregivers will be respectful of one another and work collaboratively. Should disagreements occur, feedback will be presented respectfully, assuming the best intentions of all parties involved.
- Should any concerns surrounding health, safety, or behavior arise at camp, Camp Supervisors and staff will actively communicate regarding concerns.
- Camp Zoo does not tolerate disrespect, hateful language or aggression towards staff. Camp Zoo reserves the right to ask for an alternative drop-off/pick-up personnel if a caregiver engages in disrespectful behavior.

At Camp Zoo, we greatly value transparency with caregivers and forming a partnership to help campers grow. Because our time with your camper is limited, we rely on caregiver input and involvement in supporting camper's needs. Caregivers should expect to talk with staff during their week. If staff does seek to discuss specific behavior with you, our intention is always to identify ways in which we can ensure the best possible experience for your camper.

## Feedback

We welcome feedback from families, as it helps improve our programs and advocate for changes! There are two ways you can share feedback:

1. At the end of every camp, a survey will be sent via email. This is anonymous and has many questions and opportunities for specific comments
2. Families are welcome to send feedback to [camps@phoenixzoo.org](mailto:camps@phoenixzoo.org)

# Camper Behavior

Camp Zoo creates a safe, energetic and fun learning environment. Camp Zoo is not a daycare facility and does not follow a school-like structure. We ask caregivers to prepare their child for some of the changes they may encounter at camp away from parental or caregiver guidance. Our program operates with the expectation that campers can:

- Follow directions from adults other than their caregiver
- Communicate personal needs such as needing to use the restroom or feeling discomfort
- Show respect to staff, fellow campers, animals and Zoo property
- Refrain from physical violence and express feelings verbally and seek out help from adults

Camp is an energizing place that can sometimes lead to overstimulation or behaviors that are not safe or appropriate for camp. Campers that make choices causing a distraction, negative experience, or a safety concern in camp, regardless of ability, will step away from the current activity and work collaboratively with staff to ensure expectations are met. When expectations are not met, the camp day may be impacted in the following ways *(including but not limited to)*:

- Divided staff attention from other campers and the overall camp experience
- Compounded behavior issues from multiple campers, stemming from one incident
- Safety concerns or increased situational danger to the camper, staff, other campers, guests or animals
- Dynamic shifts in group energy *(staff or other campers feeling overwhelmed or emotionally drained)*

When this occurs, we notify caregivers of the instance either by phone or at dismissal to seek partnership on how to best support the camper. Camp Zoo utilizes empathy-driven and researched behavior management practices that establish boundaries and support based on child brain development. Often, behavior is a result of environmental factors that can be modified or addressed. When camper misconduct persists past instructor intervention, Camp Zoo will respond accordingly based on our Action Plan for Misconduct *(located in our policies and procedures)*.

Depending on the severity of the action, Camp Zoo reserves the right to call caregivers and ask that a camper be picked up early from their day of camp or be dismissed from their week early. Refunds will not be given to campers dismissed from camp.

# Camp Zoo Frequently Asked Questions

## **I missed the window for early apparel pickup. How do I get my camp shirt?**

If you miss our early pickup window, rest assured that all apparel will be available on the first day of your session, and we start check-in at 7:30 a.m. that day to accommodate for apparel pickups. Early apparel pick-ups vary from session to session, based on camp capacity and timing. We will not facilitate early apparel pick-up while camps are in session, no exceptions.

## **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 to the "My Account" page to select the grey tab labeled "pickup authorization." Please make sure the names provided match the personnel's government issued ID. To login to the registration portal, [click here!](#)

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

Unfortunately, we are no longer able to offer any after-care services. Please pick up your camper by 3 p.m.

## **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. The Phoenix Zoo is not liable for any lost, stolen or broken items 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.

## **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.

## **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.

## **Can my camper wear shoes with holes in them?**

Our programs may involve behind the scenes elements where fecal matter may be present. For this reason, we ask that campers wear enclosed shoes to keep fecal matter from entering their shoes. **Shoes must be enclosed with no holes in them. Enclosed sandals with holes (e.g., Keens, Crocs) will not be allowed.**



## Camp Zoo Frequently Asked Questions (continued)

### **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!

### **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. Our schedule will vary from program to program. We recommend campers bring a washcloth and a spray bottle to help cool down throughout the day! **All summer programs spend at least ½ the day inside (or longer), with all outside activities occurring in the early morning.**

### **Do you take pictures of the campers throughout the day?**

We take photos of campers at select times throughout camp, which vary from program to program. All photos will be shared on SmugMug at the end of your week! Be on the lookout for an email on the last day of camp with instructions!

Camp Zoo takes family privacy and security seriously. Please request a media release at check-in or email [camps@phoenixzoo.org](mailto:camps@phoenixzoo.org) if your camper cannot be present in any photos.

### **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 they 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 and Zoo animals alike, we are unable to guarantee the presence of specific animals during camp. All hikes, animal discoveries and animal interactions are subject to change from session to session.

### **Our cultural practice does not permit the viewing of specific animals.**

### **Can we still come to camp?**

Yes! Please note this in your registration forms or email us at [camps@phoenixzoo.org](mailto:camps@phoenixzoo.org). We are happy to provide accommodations to create an inclusive camp!

### **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.