

# Caregiver Guide to Accommodation Requests

## What is an Accommodation?

An accommodation is any adjustment to the established structures or procedures of the Camp Zoo program that would allow a camper to fully and safely participate in the program without significantly impacting the experience of other camp participants. Caring for your campers is what we do best, and we want every child that attends camp to have what they need for an amazing week full of fun and learning!

## Help Us Support Your Camper: When to Request an Accommodation

- If your camper would have difficulties meeting expectations for camper behavior without an accommodation (please refer to the Camper Expectations section in this document).
- If your camper would have difficulties fully participating in camp without an accommodation. Examples of activities that might be challenging or distressing for some children include singing, playing games, staying with a group, reading, writing, following verbal directions, transitioning between activities, sitting still for periods of time and being near a variety of animals.
- If your camper receives accommodation(s) through an IEP, a Behavior Plan, or a 504 Plan at their school.

## Camper Expectations:

Camp Zoo creates a safe, energetic and fun learning environment. Camp Zoo is not a daycare facility and does not follow a traditional school structure. Campers will spend their day moving throughout the Zoo, interacting with and observing animals, playing games, singing songs, collaborating, using their creativity, learning new things and practicing new skills! 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.
- Show respect to staff, fellow campers, animals and Zoo property.
- Quickly and independently transition between activities and locations with their group.
- Communicate personal needs such as needing to use the restroom or feeling discomfort.
- Express feelings verbally and seek out help from adults.
- Refrain from physical violence.

When expectations are not met, the camp day may be impacted in the following ways (including but not limited to):

- Campers' ability to experience and enjoy camp activities may be negatively impacted.
- Staff attention becomes focused on supporting a single camper instead of supporting their full group or completing tasks needed to support camp functions.
- Unsafe choices could result in harm to your camper or others.
- Other campers may choose to mimic the behavior, further disrupting camp activities and increasing the risk of physical or emotional harm.

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 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 after 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.

### How to Request an Accommodation:

- We recommend submitting your request as soon as possible, as our team has limited capacity to plan for accommodations in the months leading up to camp. All requests must be made at least 30 days prior to the first day of Session 1 (May 1, 2026) to ensure we have adequate time to process your request and plan for your accommodation. Requests made after May 1 may not be approved.
- Please provide us with detailed information about your camper and monitor your email for communication from our team so that we can set your camper up for a successful week of camp!
- Review the guidelines listed below to determine how to request your desired accommodation. Some requests can be made while filling out your camper's registration forms, and others must be made by emailing the Camp Leadership Team ([Camps@phoenixzoo.org](mailto:Camps@phoenixzoo.org)).
- If your request is not represented in the guidelines below, please submit your request via email to be considered.

### Requests You Can Make on Registration Forms:

These are strategies and procedures that we regularly use to support campers. Please let us know if your camper might need, or benefit from, any of this support when you sign them up for camp, and we will take care of the rest! If you have already registered

and would like to modify your form, please submit another form in our registration portal and notify the Camp Leadership Team at [camps@phoenixzoo.org](mailto:camps@phoenixzoo.org) so we can refer to the updated form.

- Providing extra wiggle breaks to help with focus and emotional regulation.
- Providing extra quiet breaks to help with emotional regulation.
- Providing additional bathroom breaks.
- Supporting campers through transitions between activities.
- Arranging for designated seating closer to the speaker during activities.
- Allowing the use of fidget tools to help with focus and emotional regulation.
- Allowing the use of noise-dampening headphones to help with sensitivity to sound.
- Administering oral medication at specific times.
- Cultural Animal Restrictions,
- Allergies caused by ingestion.

### **Requests to Submit to the Camp Leadership Team:**

These requests fall outside of our regular procedures or training and may require additional planning, training or support. If your camper might need, or benefit from, any of the following supports, please email us at [camps@phoenixzoo.org](mailto:camps@phoenixzoo.org) with your request and any information that would help us set your camper up for success.

- Requests to adjust Check-In or Check-out procedures.
- Requests to adjust or opt out of Camp activities.
- Any accommodation relating to difficulties understanding directions or communicating needs. Examples include but are not limited to language barriers, the use of communication devices or requests for interpreters.
- Medication management requiring regular monitoring and communication with caregivers.
- Requests to provide medications that the camper cannot self-administer.
- Requests to place a camper with a different age group due to developmental delays.
- Requests for 1:1 attention from our staff or an aide during activities, including walking through the Zoo and transitioning between activities with their group.
- Requests for aides to provide medical support beyond basic first aid.
- Any situation where a camper may demonstrate threatening or aggressive behavior.
- Severe allergies caused by inhalation or contact with trace amounts of an allergen.
- Severe phobias that may be triggered by camp activities.

### **Accommodations We Cannot Provide:**

- Any accommodation that would require our staff to receive medical training beyond basic first aid (examples include support with feeding tubes, colostomy bags, transfers, etc.)
- Any accommodation that would require our staff to provide bathroom support
- Any intervention involving restraint of a camper.
- Any accommodations or interventions that could endanger campers, staff or animals, including violent behavior.