

Welcome to ZooTampa at Lowry Park Summer Camp 2024!

ZooTampa at Lowry Park is proud to offer exciting educational experiences through our summer camp program. Zoo Camps are designed to be fun, innovative, imaginative, and investigative for all ages.

This handbook will provide you with information on the summer camp program ZooTampa offers.

For more information and reservations, please visit ZooTampa.org or contact Jamie Elkington at (813) 933-8093 or email at EducationPrograms@zootampa.org.



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Camp Contacts

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Education Office Manager

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Arinn Bolin

Director of Guest Engagement

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Senior Manager of Educational Programs

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Emergency Contact During Camp Hours

Camp Cell Phone

(813) 373-3450

Zoo's Main Line - Please ask for camps

(813) 935-8552 ext. 0

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The Zoo Camp Experience

Over the summer, ZooTampa at Lowry Park is headquarters for week-long camps for campers who have completed Kindergarten-8th grade. Participants learn about nature, science, and the animal kingdom while hiking through the zoo, exploring behind-the-scenes, and cooling off in the zoo's water play areas. Zoo Camps include animal encounters, animal care chats, games, crafts, and more!

Registration and Payment Policies

Registration is on a first-come, first-serve basis and takes place on ZooTampa.org. Payment is due in full when you register.

Waivers, Cancellations, and Withdrawals

Please review our waiver pertaining to photographs as well as our cancellation and refund policy that is sent via e-mail to you.

We reserve the right to combine or cancel camps that have not met the minimum enrollment or if a venue becomes unavailable. A minimum of 5 campers must be enrolled for a Zoo Camp to take place. If a camp does not meet the required number of campers, we will either merge your camper with another age camp topic or contact you a minimum of 3 days in advance so you are able to make other arrangements for your child.

In the event that you need to cancel, an 80% refund will be given if the cancellation request is received 15 days or more before the first day of camp. A 50% refund will be given for requests made 14 to 10 days before the first day of camp. No refunds will be given for cancellations made 9 or fewer days before the first day of camp, or if you need to withdrawal your camper during the camp week. Please note: There is a \$20 processing fee to reschedule 15 days or more before the first day of camp, and a \$25 processing fee to reschedule 14 or fewer days before the first day of camp.

Camp Staff

Each Zoo Camp maintains a capacity of 16-20 campers, with two counselors and one ZooTeen volunteer. Each Premium Zoo Camp for 4th-5th grade and 6th-8th grade maintains a capacity of 12 campers, with two counselors and one ZooTeen volunteer. When considering camp counselors for employment, the completion or pursuit of a Bachelor's Degree in Education, Environmental Science, or Biology is desired. In addition, we have year-round Zoo educators overseeing and assisting with camp programs.

Summer Camp All-Inclusive Experience

All Zoo Camps include:

- Lunch and snack each day of camp
- T-shirt and nametag to be worn each day of camp
- Refillable water bottle and pouch
- Commemorative photo
- Extended Care
- A complimentary ticket for the camper to visit the Zoo on another summer day

Camp Schedule

Monday through Friday, 9:00 am to 4:00 pm

Extended Care Hours: 8:00 am to 9:00 am and 4:00 pm to 5:00 pm (included with all camp programs)

Monday Morning Check-in

On the first day of camp, please park and escort your child to the check-in location at the Saunders Event Pavilion, located along North Boulevard, to the right of the main entrance of the Zoo. This will be our opportunity to get to know your camper and their needs before their week of camp begins. At that time, you will fill out any additional safety, medication, and registration forms. We will be happy to address any concerns or questions you may have about your camper's upcoming week. Please allow extra time for this check-in process, as we want to ensure we are thoroughly prepared to provide an excellent camp experience for your child!

Arrival and Dismissal

For the rest of the week, camp drop-off and pick-up will continue to be at the Saunders Event Pavilion. Camp drop-off begins at 8:00 am each day. Please park and walk to the front gate of the Saunders Event Pavilion to sign in your camper. The camp day begins promptly at 9:00 am, and all camps will proceed into the Zoo at this time. If you arrive later than 9:00 am, call the camp cell phone number listed at the drop-off location to contact a coordinator. Please note that this may delay your sign-in process and that your camper may miss elements of their camp day.

Camp pick-up begins at 4:00 pm each day. Please park and bring your photo ID to the front gate of the Saunders Event Pavilion to sign out your camper. Camp staff will verify that the name on your ID matches an adult's name on the authorized pick-up list. No camper will be released unless the adult picking up the child is on the authorized pick-up list and shows a photo ID. If

you would like to add more people to your child's pick-up list, the primary contact must provide the additional information by contacting our Office Manager Jamie Elkington at (813) 933-8093 or EducationPrograms@zootampa.org or speaking with the camp coordinators during Monday morning check-in. Please note: your child's safety is our primary concern and every possible effort is made to make camp dismissal procedures quick and convenient. Feel free to take a few minutes at pick-up to inquire about your child's day! Our camp staff will gladly fill you in on some of the highlights.

Camp pick-up ends at 5:00 pm and all campers must be picked up by this time. Late pick-ups are subject to additional fees.

Late Arrivals/Early Dismissals

If you know in advance that your camper will need to arrive late or be picked up early, please contact Jamie Elkington at EducationPrograms@zootampa.org. During the camp week, you can speak with a camp coordinator to make arrangements. Advanced warning will save time and help us provide the best service for your child. When you arrive, call the camp cell phone number listed at the drop-off location to contact a coordinator.

Absent Campers

If your child will be absent, please contact Jamie Elkington at (813) 933-8093 with your child's name and absence information. A voicemail suffices if you cannot speak directly with Jamie. There is no refund for missed camp days.

Custody Issues

All adults listed as approved contacts will be able to pick up their campers. If there are custody issues or safety concerns, please contact Jamie Elkington at (813) 933-8093 or EducationPrograms@zootampa.org.

Extended Care

All camps include extended care from 8:00 am – 9:00 am and 4:00 pm – 5:00 pm. Campers picked up after 5:00 pm will be charged a \$1 per minute fee for late pick-up. During extended care, campers will play games and participate in other classroom-based activities.

A Typical Camp Day

The activities listed below are examples of what most camps include.

- **Arrival** — Campers will arrive and check in with camp staff and join their camp group to engage in games and activities until the camp day begins at 9:00 am.
- **Animal Encounters** — Campers have the chance to get up close and personal with animals during exclusive camp encounters.
- **Themed Crafts, Activities, and Games** — Each camp has a wide variety of crafts and games that are both fun and educational. Games are played both indoors and outdoors.
- **Zoo Hikes and Behind-the-Scenes Tours**— All camps spend time out in the Zoo everyday exploring our animal exhibits. Campers may even have opportunities to travel behind-the-scenes and uncover some of the Zoo’s best kept secrets!
- **Animal Care Chats and Enrichment Sessions**— Campers meet with animal care staff to learn insider info on animal training and husbandry, as well as watch animals enjoy enrichment items.
- **Lunch** — All camps have lunch included. Lunch includes a hot entrée, chips and a cookie. Campers are welcome to pack their own lunch (please see Lunch section of the Handbook for more information).
- **Educational Lessons** — Campers have special opportunities to learn camp themed lessons in fun and interactive ways while cooling down in air-conditioned spaces.

- **Rides** — All camps are encouraged to spend time on the various rides ZooTampa offers. Please be aware that specific camps may be limited to the rides they can go on depending on height and age.
- **Snack** — All camps have a scheduled snack break in the afternoon. Snack is provided by ZooTampa.
- **Dismissal** — Campers will be called by name for dismissal once a parent or guardian has signed them out. Dismissal begins at 4:00 pm.

Water Play

On the first day of camp, you will receive a letter from your child's counselor about water play. Each camp group is scheduled for water play during the week. It will never be on the first day of camp.

On water play day, please have your camper wear their bathing suit under their camp T-shirt and other camp attire to expedite the changing process before water play. Bathing suits should be full coverage, one-piece bathing suits or swim trunks (**no bikinis please**). Water shirts are also encouraged as shirts and shoes are required to ride Roaring Springs.

In your camper’s backpack, please pack closed toed water shoes, a towel, and a change of clothes for the end of the day. Please bring a plastic bag to store wet items after water play.

PLEASE NOTE: Be prepared for your camper to get wet on any camp day. While water play will be scheduled, we also want to give campers the opportunity to cool off at other times throughout the week by riding Roaring Springs or visiting the Roaring Springs splash zone. Bathing suits are not required to ride Roaring Springs, so changing is not necessary under these circumstances. Please contact camp staff with any questions, concerns, or if you prefer that your camper does not participate in unscheduled water play.

Lunch

All camps have lunch included. Lunch includes a hot entrée; a side of grapes, carrots, or apples; Lay's potato chips; and a cookie. Campers are welcome to pack their own lunch or snacks. We do not provide refrigeration or microwave.

Monday: Mac and Cheese

Tuesday: Chicken Tenders

Wednesday: Spaghetti and Meatballs

Thursday: Hamburgers

Friday: Cheese Pizza

Snack

ZooTampa will provide snacks each day. Options will change daily and may include animal crackers, goldfish crackers, fruit snacks, or Chex Mix.

What to Wear

- Camp T-shirt.
- Comfortable clothes (shorts and camp T-shirt) that are appropriate for the weather.
- Closed toed shoes or sneakers. Please save Crocs™ and water shoes for water play only. Shoes with wheels are not permitted. **For safety reasons, campers who do not have FULLY closed shoes will NOT be allowed behind-the-scenes.**
- On water play day, campers should wear their camp T-shirt and bathing suit and bring a change of clothes, towel, and water shoes.
- Camp water bottle and pouch.
- Hat and backpack are highly recommended.
- Rainwear (no umbrellas please).
- Sunscreen and bug spray.

Campers will receive a camp T-shirt on the first day of camp. T-shirts must be worn daily and previous years' T-shirt styles are acceptable. Campers may purchase additional camp T-shirts, for \$10 each, through Jamie Elkington at EducationPrograms@zootampa.org, or through a camp coordinator during Monday morning check-in. ZooTampa at Lowry Park is not responsible for any clothing that may become soiled or for any lost or stolen items.

There are some activities, including certain animal encounters and behind-the-scenes tours, which require masks and/or gloves to be worn. If your camper participates in any of these activities, the necessary items will be provided.

What to Bring

Campers are responsible to provide the following:

- Sunscreen*
- Bug Spray*
- Backpack – to be used as transport for water play clothing and crafts.

**Campers must be able to apply themselves.*

What NOT to Bring

- Videogames or cellphones. They are NOT permitted during academic camp hours. They can be used during lunch and extended care ONLY. *
- Soda or other sugary drinks.**
- Personal items such as toys, games, cards, stuffed animals, etc.
- Items your child would become upset about if they were to get lost.

** Any items seen during camp hours will be confiscated until the end of the day. ZooTampa is not responsible for lost or damaged items.*

*** Soda causes bloating and can make your child sick during times when exposed to extreme heat. To avoid this problem, please send only water or Gatorade with your child.*

Money and Valuables

We strongly discourage children from bringing any valuables to Zoo Camp. The Zoo is not responsible for lost, damaged, or stolen items; this includes all handheld electronic devices, such as iPods®, handheld videogames, and cell phones. There is no need for your child to bring money to purchase any items at camp, as trips to the gift shop or snack areas will not be included in the camp schedule. The Zoo is not responsible for any lost money.

Use of Electronic Devices

Campers are permitted to bring cellphones or handheld videogames that may be used during lunch and extended care hours ONLY. During regular camp hours, campers may only use cellphones and cameras to take photos. If a camper is seen using an electronic device during academic camp hours, other than for photos, the device may be confiscated until the end of the day. In the case of an emergency, a camper should inform their counselor and we will contact you immediately. If you need to contact your child due to an emergency, please contact the camp cell phone at 813-373-3450. If you are unable to reach someone, call the Zoo's Main Line at (813) 935-8552 ext.0 and ask them to contact Camps.

TV and Computer Use

Currently, we have computers in some of the camp classrooms to supplement educational activities. We do provide camps an opportunity to use DVDs or other videos to enhance the campers' learning during cool down times in the classrooms. In general, TV and computer use in camp only takes up a small portion of the day, if at all.

Birthday Celebrations during Camp

Birthdays are special occasions, and we love to celebrate them! Parents are welcome to provide store bought refreshments that show a list of

ingredients. Homemade refreshments are not permitted due to allergy reasons. Additionally, we ask that parents encourage options for children with food allergies. Balloons and candles are not allowed at any time for safety reasons.

If you would like to provide a treat for the class, please speak to a camp coordinator ahead of time to make arrangements. Please ask a camp coordinator for an updated list of the number of campers and any allergies in the camp.

Lost and Found

Please check with camp coordinators for items lost at camp. We keep all found items for at least two weeks in the Camp Office. After that time, items may be donated.

Inclement Weather

Thunderstorms are common during Florida afternoons and may impact scheduled camp activities. For your child's safety, campers will be moved to a secure indoor location during extreme weather. While we make every effort to continue with our program as planned, missed activities may not be able to be rescheduled.

Should inclement weather disturb normal camp dismissal operations, please see posted signs at the Saunders Event Pavilion for further information.

In the event of a hurricane or any other event that would put the campers or staff in an unsafe position, Zoo Camp will be closed. ZooTampa at Lowry Park will also post an automated message on the Zoo's main telephone line to notify callers of the Zoo closing. If camp staff is able to do so, advanced notice of a closure will be sent via email.

Accident Reports/Notification of Parents

Any accidents that happen throughout the day that affect your child will be documented by the camp staff supervising your child at that time.

Information will be provided on an incident report. You will sign a copy when you pick up your child that will be placed in our summer camp file. If the accident is severe enough to warrant medical attention, you will be called immediately. If your child has an accident that affects their head in any way, you will also be called immediately. For more details about this type of accident, please refer to the Medical Emergencies section of this handbook.

Medications

If your child needs to take prescription medication during camp hours, a Parent Authorization for Medication Form needs to be filled out and discussed with our Medical team during Monday morning check-in. The following list helps ensure that your child's prescription medication is safely administered:

- The prescription medication container must have the pharmacy label and your child's legal name. The medication must have been given at home at least once, in case of an allergic reaction. We will not administer medication that is past the expiration date.
- All medications will be stored in a locked portion of the camp backpack that remains with the camp group at all times. A refrigerator is also available if needed.

PLEASE NOTE: We will not administer any prescription medication without proper written permission. If the Parent Authorization for Medication Form is not fully completed or does not match the pharmacy label, we will notify you that we will be unable to dispense the medication. We also cannot dispense medication that is expired.

Allergies and Epi-Pens

Zoo Camp recognizes the potentially serious consequences of children with allergies. These allergies may include a condition known as anaphylaxis. Anaphylaxis is a severe, potentially life-threatening allergic reaction brought about by exposure to certain foods or other substances. Zoo Camp will make every reasonable effort to reduce the risk to children with severe allergies or anaphylaxis in accordance with this policy.

At this time, Zoo Camp is not a nut or allergen free environment. However, if a camper is enrolled who is allergic to nuts or other allergens, we will provide a table that the camper can sit at during his/her lunch period. In addition, we will have allergy friendly options available with our included lunch. At the start of the camp week, please speak with camp staff regarding your child's lunchtime needs or restrictions.

If your child has an Epi-Pen, you are required to fill out the Anaphylaxis form with our Medical team during Monday morning check-in. The Epi-Pen will be carried in a locked portion of the camp backpack that remains with the camp group at all times. Please ensure that your child knows how and when to use their Epi-Pen. In the event your child needs their Epi-Pen, our counselors and Medical team will assist with administration as needed. We will also call 911 for your child to be checked over by emergency medical personnel. This could include a trip to the Emergency Room, if emergency medical personnel deem necessary.

Camper Illnesses

ZooTampa reserves the right to refuse entrance to camp if a child is exhibiting any of the following symptoms or illnesses:

- Fever of 100°F or higher
- Severe/Persistent Coughing
- Vomiting
- Sore Throat
- Severe Headache
- Conjunctivitis (Pink Eye)*
- Ringworm
- Lice*
- COVID-19
- Other contagious illnesses

**Child must be treated for Lice and Pink Eye for a minimum of 24 hours and must present a doctor's note upon returning to camp.*

In the event a camper becomes ill during the camp day, camp staff will notify the emergency contact immediately and discuss the situation. For the well-being of your camper, and the safety of other campers in our program, we will provide space for the child in our office with a staff member and you will be asked to pick up your child immediately if they are showing any of the symptoms listed above.

Medical Emergencies

In the event that your child experiences a medical emergency, we will immediately call 911 for your child to be checked over by emergency medical personnel. This could include a trip to the Emergency Room, if emergency medical personnel deem necessary. Camp staff will contact you if this situation occurs. In addition, a staff member will accompany your child to the Emergency Room.

A Child with Special Needs

Zoo Camp strives to meet the needs of all children. In order for us to be able to help your child have an enjoyable experience at camp, please notify us upon registration of your child's special needs prior to your child's first day of camp. This may include information on allergies, accessibility concerns, behavioral, psychological or emotional conditions, or other special needs. While we offer our camps to as wide a range of children as possible, it is not possible for us to offer one-on-one care.

Camper Behavior and Safety Expectations

All campers are expected to:

- Listen and follow directions.
- Stay with their group at all times.
- Walk to all areas and destinations.
- Respect all campers and staff.
- Keep their hands and feet to themselves. Violence will not be tolerated.
- Respect the animals and their environment.

Zoo Camp has standard rules of behavior, including respecting staff, fellow campers, camp materials, and especially, the animals. These rules are reviewed with the campers on the first day before the start of camp and at different times throughout the week. Disrespectful behavior, bullying, foul or hurtful language, and violence toward camp staff, fellow campers and animals will not be tolerated. In the event that the following Discipline Policy is disregarded, ZooTampa reserves the right to dismiss the camper from the Zoo Camp program without refund.

Discipline Policy and Consequence Plan

ZooTampa is a demonstration site for Program Wide Positive Behavior Support. To ensure the safety and well-being of staff, campers, and animals, the following policy will be enforced.

Minor Infractions:

Disrespect shown to staff members, fellow campers, or animals.

- **1st Offense** – Camper will be given a verbal warning and will speak with the camp counselor. Camp counselor will document the situation.
- **2nd Offense** – Camper will be given “me time” in the office with the Camp Coordinator and the camper will make a call to his/her parent from the office to explain their actions. Campers who receive “me time” from the group will not be included in zoo hikes or special activities at that time.
- **3rd Offense** – Camper will be dismissed from camp without a refund. This is to ensure a favorable learning environment for all.

Serious Infractions:

Endangerment or intent to endanger another’s well-being (human or animal).

- **1st Offense** – Camper will be given “me time” in the office with the Camp Coordinator and the camper will make a call to his/her parent from the office to explain their actions. Campers who receive “me time” away from the group will not be included in zoo hikes or special activities at that time.
- **2nd Offense** – Camper will be dismissed from camp without a refund. This is to ensure a favorable learning environment for all.

Immediate Dismissal

Behaviors that result in immediate dismissal without refund include terroristic threats, sexual harassment, possession of drugs, alcohol, or weapons, stealing, serious injury or verbal abuse to campers, staff members, or animals.

Additional Questions?

Contact our Office Manager Jamie Elkington at (813) 933-8093 or EducationPrograms@zootampa.org.

If you have an emergency and you need to contact your child or camp staff immediately, call the camp cell phone at (813) 373-3450, or ZooTampa’s Main Line at (813) 935-8552 ext. 0 and ask them to contact Camps.



We strive to provide quality programming and welcome any suggestions or comments you may have for improving our services to you. We hope you have a fun and educational time in our camps!