

## Potawatomi Zoo Camp

Frequently Asked Questions **(Special Considerations for COVID-19 safety are bolded and highlighted – see the full list at the end of this document)**

### *What time can I drop-off/pick-up my child from camp?*

Full-day camps start at 9 AM and end at 3 PM. Half-day (Junior Naturalist) camps are from 9 AM to 12 PM. We try to have the check-in table ready by 8:45 AM. Arriving a little early on the first day of camp is always a good idea as we will be filing your paperwork for the week. We will begin check-out promptly at the end of the camp day.

Pick-up will be held in a car line on the west side of the Zoo, off Greenlawn Ave. (Please see attached map.) At check-in on the first day, each parent/guardian will be given 5 car passes designated for the pick-up of their child. **The pass must be displayed on the passenger side dashboard of the vehicle.** This will allow us to see the child's name before walking them to the vehicle. Please distribute these passes only to the individuals you have listed on the dismissal form. The car line will begin on the side of the road nearest the Zoo. Cars must be lined up facing North/the train tracks, meaning children must enter through passenger side door. Please be patient with us as we work through the car line. We want to make sure the appropriate person is picking up each child. Your child's safety is our top priority during camp.

**Aftercare pick-up will be in the Learning Center Classroom. When picking-up from aftercare, every person that picks up a child MUST show their ID,** whether that person is the camper's parent, grandparent, baby sitter, etc. We require the person picking up the child to present their ID and be listed as an approved guardian on the camper's paperwork. If a guardian does not have their ID, they may be asked to verify the child's personal information or asked to retrieve the ID before the camper is released into their care. Please park in the Zoo's parking lot and walk inside for aftercare pick-up.

If for any reason your child needs to be picked-up early or dropped-off late, please let us know. You may call the Education Office if it is an emergency or last-minute change. If you know in advance that your child will be missing part of camp, please provide us with a signed note.

### *What should my child wear to Zoo Camp?*

Summer campers will be provided a camp t-shirt upon arrival at their first day of camp. We ask campers to wear this shirt every day of camp; it will help us easily identify campers and keep them together as we explore the Zoo. You may purchase a second t-shirt for \$10 upon registration or at the Zoo. Spring and winter campers are not required to wear a camp t-shirt.

Due to the nature of camp activities, all campers should wear close-toed shoes each day of camp. Please do not send your child to camp in flip-flops or sandals. Please be aware that your child may participate in game and/or crafts throughout the day that may dirty their clothing.

**Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we highly encourage campers to wear a mask to camp. Masks are required only while campers are indoors.**

***What should my child bring to Zoo Camp?***

We ask that campers bring with them a water bottle and any weather-appropriate (rain coat, sweater, boots, etc.) clothing they may need for the day. If the camper is a picky-eater or has dietary restrictions, you may also pack an alternative snack for them. Full day campers (ages 7 and up) will need to bring a sack lunch. You are welcome to also send your child to camp with sunscreen, but they will need to be able to apply it themselves.

Please do not send your child to camp with electronics, toys, and other items of monetary or sentimental value. The Zoo is not responsible if these items become lost, stolen, or broken. If your child needs to contact you for any reason, we ask that they use an office phone with the assistance of staff. Cell phones should not be out during camp.

***Is lunch and/or snack provided at Zoo Camp?***

Snack is provided for all camps. Snack is frequently items such as goldfish crackers, pretzel sticks, popcorn, cereal, or fruit snacks. Each camper is offered our snacks but may also bring their own if needed. **Only ZooCamp Staff will be handing out snacks. All staff and campers will be required to wash/sanitize their hands before each mealtime.**

Lunch is not provided. We ask that full-day campers bring their own sack lunch. Please do not send your child with money to purchase lunch at the Zoo. We have a designated amount of time for the lunch break and need to keep all the campers together during that time, so taking them to the Congo Café can be difficult. We also have limited access to a fridge and microwave, so sack lunches are best. Half-day campers should eat lunch after camp; we do not have a designated time for lunch during half-day camps. Please provide breakfast to your camper before arriving at the Zoo; hungry tummies can be very distracting!

***What will my child be doing in Zoo Camp?***

Camp activities include educational animal encounters, games, crafts, and other activities. We try to ride the train and carousel once with each summer and spring camp but cannot guarantee the rides will operate during cold/rainy weather. Each camp will also meet a variety of animal ambassadors throughout the week, such as small birds, reptiles, mammals, amphibians, and insects.

Campers may be given the opportunity to safely touch some of these animals. Campers may also be given the opportunity to feed some animals, such as our bison, goats, okapi, anteaters, or tortoises. In this instance, the campers will be separated from the animals by a barrier. **For the safety of our campers and animals during the COVID-19 pandemic, touching and feeding opportunities may be limited.** Some camps may also tour our vet hospital, diet kitchen, or other behind-the-scenes areas of the Zoo. Campers will not be able to go behind the scenes with any large carnivore.

***Who is caring for my child during Zoo Camp?***

Zoo camp staff is comprised of 3 Education Instructors and 1 Education Intern. **In an attempt to limit the number of people interacting with campers our Junior Educator Volunteers will not be assisting camps in summer 2020.** All camp staff is managed by the Education & Volunteer Manager and Education Curator. Each instructor has been trained to deliver the camp's educational objectives while caring for the campers. **We have also trained staff according to CDC guidelines for facilitating a day camp during the COVID-19 pandemic. With our reduced capacity, camps will have a ratio of one staff member per every 3-5 campers.** Every camp staff member also has a background check on file with the zoo and prior experience in child care/education.

***Can I stay in camp with my child?***

Because we ensure that all camp staff has a background check on file with the Zoo, we typically do not allow parents/guardians to remain in camp with their child. The only exception to this rule is for children with special needs that require an aid. **Any adult permitted to be in camp will need to have signed a Camp Entry Screening form and will also be subject to daily temperature checks before entering the camp.**

***What will my child be doing during before or after care?***

Before and after care is a free-play time supervised by camp staff. Campers may choose between games, toys, books, coloring sheets, and movies inside the camp classroom. We will not leave the classroom during this time. **Sharing of materials will not be permitted and social distancing will be required during before and after care.**

***If my child has special needs, limitations, medications, and/or dietary restrictions, how can I ensure the camp staff is aware?***

If your child has any special need or limitation, please list it on the child's medical release form and camp registration (online). You may also confirm the information with camp instructors upon check-in for the first day of camp. We do our best to make Zoo Camps as inclusive as possible and provide extra support to individual campers when needed. If your child needs to take medications during the camp day, we ask that they self-administer. Please make us aware if your child is bringing medications, including EpiPens, to camp. **If your child is considered high risk for COVID-19, we highly discourage their attendance at Zoo Camps on-site. Full refunds are available up to two weeks before the start of camp and please consider purchasing a Camp-In-A-Box!**

***How is the Potawatomi Zoo changing ZooCamp procedures in response to COVID-19?***

The Potawatomi Zoo is following CDC Day Camp Guidelines by:

- **Offered fewer camps and lowering the maximum capacity of camps to better ensure social distancing**
- **Moved as many activities outdoors as possible and eliminated activities that require campers to touch (such as tag games) and encouraged social distancing**

- Decreased number of camp staff and eliminated the role of volunteers in camps
- Required forehead temperature screenings for all staff and campers before the beginning of camp; anyone with a fever will not be permitted to attend camp
- Added a Camp Entry Screening form
- Required camp staff to wear a mask at all times; campers are also recommended to wear a mask while outdoors, but only required to wear them while inside.
- Increased required hand cleaning to several times per day for staff and campers, as well as increased sanitization of classroom surfaces and camp materials
- Limited animal touching and feeding opportunities to only those animals approved by our veterinarian
- Added a review of safety precautions to our “ZooCamp Guidelines” discussion with campers at the start of each camp day
- Added CDC Recommended staff trainings for safety and wellbeing in regards to pandemic
- Continue to consult with local health authorities and be flexible with changing policies/program schedules as new information arrises

*Didn't find the answer to your question?*

Contact the Education Department at (574) 235-9070/ (574) 235-7621 or  
zoeducation@potawatomizoo.org