

BROOKFIELD



CHICAGO

ZOO CAMP

WELCOME PACKET





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WELCOME TO ZOO CAMP!

This packet is full of information that will guide you through the entire Zoo Camp experience. Please read all materials carefully. If you have any questions that are not answered in these pages, feel free to contact us.

We cannot wait to share our summer with you!



CAMP CONTACT INFORMATION

Please use the following information to contact the individuals referenced in this document.

Education Hotline	(708) 688-8342
Absentee Hotline	(708) 688-8540
Inclusion Specialist	camp.inclusion@brookfieldzoo.org

You can also email us at adventuresinlearning@brookfieldzoo.org.

PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS



AMERICAN CAMP ASSOCIATION®

We are proud to be accredited by the American Camp Association® (ACA). ACA accreditation means that the camp you are sending your child to undergoes a thorough (up to 300 standards) review of its operation—from staff qualifications and training to emergency management. ACA collaborates with experts from the American Academy of Pediatrics, the American Red Cross, and other youth-serving agencies to assure that current practices at the camp reflect the most up-to-date, research-based standards in camp operation. Camps and ACA form a partnership that promotes summers of growth and fun in an environment committed to safety.

At camp, children make new friends, explore the world around them, and learn that “I can” is much more powerful than “I can’t.” Whether children are playing, exploring nature, or becoming part of a camp family, they are creating memories that will last a lifetime.

ACA helps accredited camps provide:

- Healthy, developmentally appropriate activities and learning experiences
- Discovery through experiential education
- Caring, competent role models
- Service to the community and the environment
- Opportunities for leadership and personal growth

To learn more about ACA, please visit www.acacamps.org.



NATIONAL INCLUSION PROJECT

Inclusion means all participate and all belong. We work every day to make the inclusion of children with disabilities a reality. The National Inclusion Project (NIP) is a nonprofit organization dedicated to promoting the inclusion of children with disabilities in activities with their nondisabled peers. NIP opens doors for all young people to be included together and experience all that life has to offer. They conduct programs with community partners to teach others how to be inclusive so that children with and without disabilities can experience lifelong benefits. By driving the movement for social inclusion in out-of-school and community programs, children of all abilities learn, play, and laugh together. To date, NIP has partnered with over 100 programs in 35 states, impacting 25,000 children annually.

Zoo Camp has partnered with NIP to work on the Let’s ALL Play (LAP) program model, which brings an inclusive recreational experience to children with disabilities. ALL children come together to participate in recreational activities such as arts and crafts, community service, physical fitness, and more.

To find out more about NIP, please visit their website at inclusionproject.org





REGISTRATION

Registration for summer begins at 9:00 a.m. on February 3, 2026 and ends 14 calendar days prior to the desired week of camp (or when the session is filled).

To view the Zoo Camp availability and to register, visit brookfieldzoo.org/camp and click **Register Now!** When you register your child for camp, you are signing them up for one full week (Monday–Friday).

PreZoo camp is only offered in half-day sessions: 9:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. We do not offer extended care until full-day camp concludes at 3:30 p.m.

Discovery camp is offered in half-day and full-day sessions. Half days run from 9:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Full days run from 9:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

Explorer, **Adventure**, and **ZooLab** camps are only offered as full-day sessions, running from 9:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

TO REGISTER

You will need a credit card and an email address to register. Please have all contact information, your membership number, and each camper's medical information on hand before you begin registration. Upon making a reservation, we reserve a space for your child. In doing so, we are barring others from signing up as we have limited space available. A nonrefundable and nontransferable 25% deposit is applied at the time of reservation.

ZOO MEMBER DISCOUNT

Members save on Zoo Camp registrations! To renew your membership, visit brookfieldzoo.org/membership. We are unable to apply membership discounts on camp registration retroactively.

WAITING LISTS

If a session is full, you may join the waiting list. Joining the waiting list does not guarantee a spot at Zoo Camp. You will only be contacted in the event that a spot becomes available.

CANCELLATIONS AND REFUNDS

We require that ALL cancellations must be in writing; please send an email to adventuresinlearning@brookfieldzoo.org.

Zoo Camp registration fees (not including the non-refundable deposit) can be refunded if cancellations are made by May 26, 2026. After May 26, refunds and rescheduling are no longer possible. If a late cancellation is due to a medical emergency, a written, physician-authorized note is required before a refund can be issued. This policy is in effect for any and all weeks of summer camp.

Zoo Camp participants that do not show up for their registered session will not be granted a refund or be rescheduled. If participants leave early on one or more Zoo Camp days, they will not receive a refund.

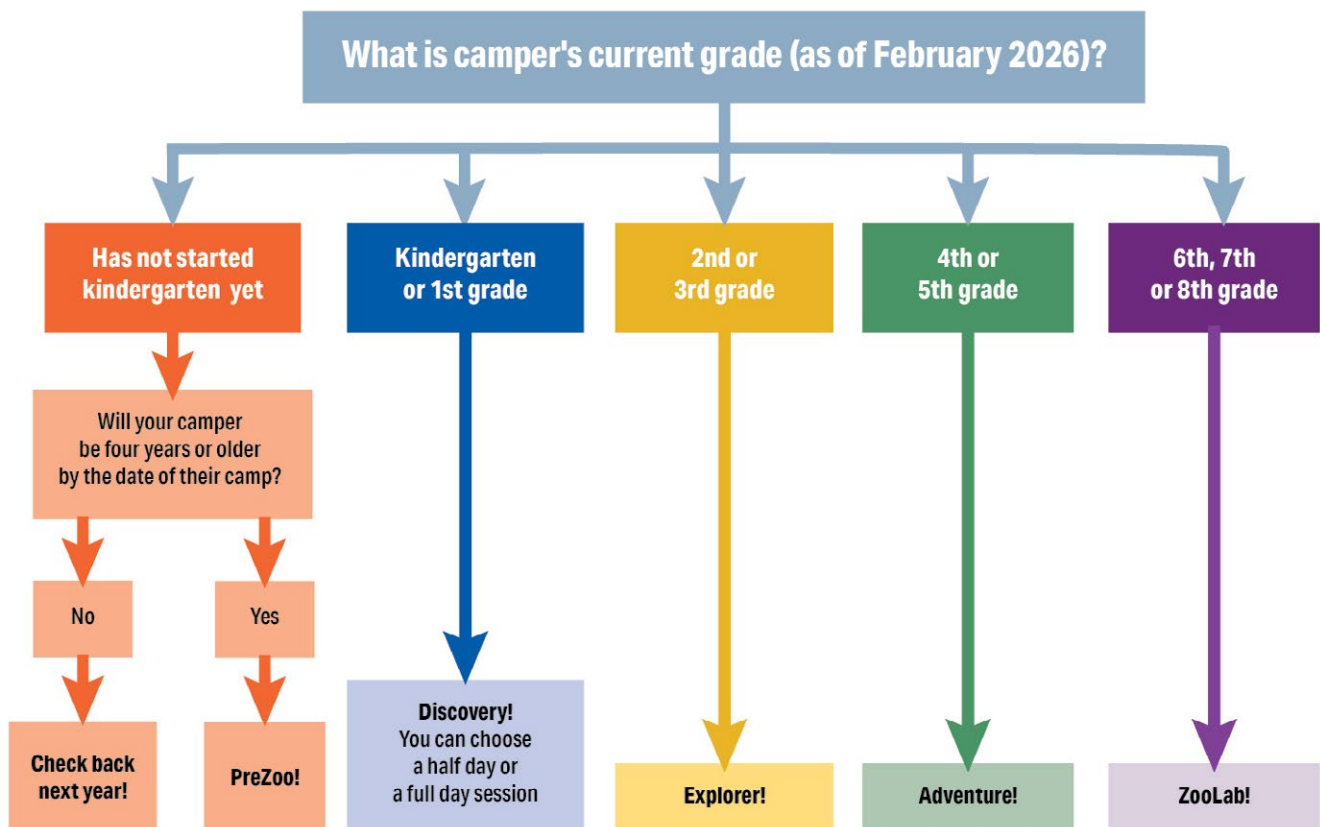
To reschedule your camp session, please send an email with your request to adventuresinlearning@brookfieldzoo.org. Campers may be rescheduled to a different camp session, presuming available space, with a \$40 processing fee per child, per session. Please keep in mind that camps fill quickly and we may not always be able to accommodate rescheduling your camper to another session. In that case, please refer to the cancellation policy. After May 26, refunds and rescheduling are no longer possible.





REGISTRATION

What camp group should I sign up my child for?





REGISTRATION

2026 ZOO CAMP CALENDAR

		M	Tu	W	Th	F	PreZoo (Pre-K, 4-5 years old) Mornings	Discovery (grades K-1) Mornings	Discovery (grades K-1) Full Day	Explorer (grades 2-3)	Adventure (grades 4-5)	ZooLab (grades 6-8)
June	Week A: June 8-12 <i>Theme: Adaptations</i>						✓	✓		✓	✓	
	Week B: June 15-19 <i>Theme: Habitats</i>						✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
	Week C: June 22-26 <i>Theme: Zoo Jobs</i>						✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
July	Week D: July 6-10 <i>Theme: Adaptations</i>						✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Week E: July 13-17 <i>Theme: Habitats</i>						✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Week F: July 20-24 <i>Theme: Zoo Jobs</i>						✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
August	Week G: July 27-31 <i>Theme: Adaptations</i>						✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
	Week H: August 3-7 <i>Theme: Five Senses</i>						✓	✓				

Zoo Camp offers four themes that rotate through the summer: Fives Senses, Adaptations, Habitats, and Zoo Jobs. For each age group, our curriculum developers create activities that focus on animals, conservation, and STEAM education. Our Camp Counselors come from backgrounds such as biology, zoology, environmental studies, and education and are trained to deliver the day’s lesson in a hands-on and engaging manner. Campers will also have the chance to explore the Zoo, observe animals, create projects, and interact with peers.

Five Senses- focuses on how animals use their senses in the wild.

Habitats- focuses on both the animal’s wild habitat and their habitat recreation at the zoo.

Zoo Jobs- focuses on how the people at the Zoo contribute to the Zoo’s mission.

Adaptations- focuses on various traits animals use to survive in nature.



DROP OFF AND PICK UP POLICY

IMPORTANT PICK UP INFORMATION

IMPORTANT YOU MUST BE ON THE LIST

Campers will not be released to any individual not on the pre-approved pick-up list created at time of registration or the first day of the session. When providing this list, please ensure ALL pertinent individuals are included, including yourself, parents, grandparents, etc. For the safety of all campers, ***NO EXCEPTIONS TO THIS POLICY WILL BE MADE.*** Individuals may be added to the list by providing the Zoo Camp director with a signed note at drop off.

HALF-DAY SCHEDULE

PreZoo and some **Discovery** groups.

MORNING DROP OFF

8:00-8:55 a.m. | Early Care Drop Off – The Pavilions

Please walk your child to The Pavilions. Staff will be there to greet your child and to record their attendance. After your child is recorded, you are free to go.

Note: *there is no early care on Mondays.*

9:00 a.m. | Regular Drop Off – Dolphin Pavilion

Park in the Discovery Center parking lot and walk your child to the Pavilions. Please sign your camper in with their group.

MIDDAY PICK UP

12:30 p.m. | Pick Up – Dolphin Pavilion

Park in the Discovery Center lot. Meet your child's group in The Pavilions.

HAVE YOUR PHOTO ID READY TO SIGN THEM OUT.

YOU MUST HAVE A PHOTO ID

All approved individuals, including parents, must present a name and photo ID at time of pick up. Please have your photo ID ready to save time. Campers will not be released to anyone without a photo ID. If someone else is picking up your camper, they need to have a photo ID and be on the approved pick-up list to do so. We will not release any campers without a photo ID.

FULL-DAY SCHEDULE

Explorer, Adventure, ZooLab,
and some **Discovery** groups.

MORNING DROP OFF

8:00-8:55 a.m. | Early Care Drop Off – The Pavilions

Please walk your child to The Pavilions. Staff will be there to greet your child and to record their attendance. After your child is recorded, you are free to go.

Note: *there is no early care on Mondays.*

9:00 a.m. | Regular Drop Off – Dolphin Pavilion

Park in the Discovery Center parking lot and walk your child to The Pavilions. Please sign your camper in with their group.

AFTERNOON PICK UP

3:30-3:40 p.m. | Pick Up – Dolphin Pavilion

Park in the Discovery Center lot. Meet your child's group in The Pavilions.

HAVE YOUR PHOTO ID READY TO SIGN THEM OUT.

NEW POLICY – Pick up for full day camp is at 3:30 daily. Any child not checked out by 3:40 p.m. on Monday to Thursday will go to the extended day care and be charged \$20 for extended care. Any child not picked up by 5:00 p.m. on Monday to Thursday or picked up by 3:40 p.m. on Friday will be charged an additional \$1 per minute. These fees must be paid when picking up your camper. If you know you will be late, please call the absentee hotline at (708) 688-8540.

After 3:40 p.m. | Extended Day Pick Up – The Pavilions

Note: *there is no extended day pick up on Fridays.*

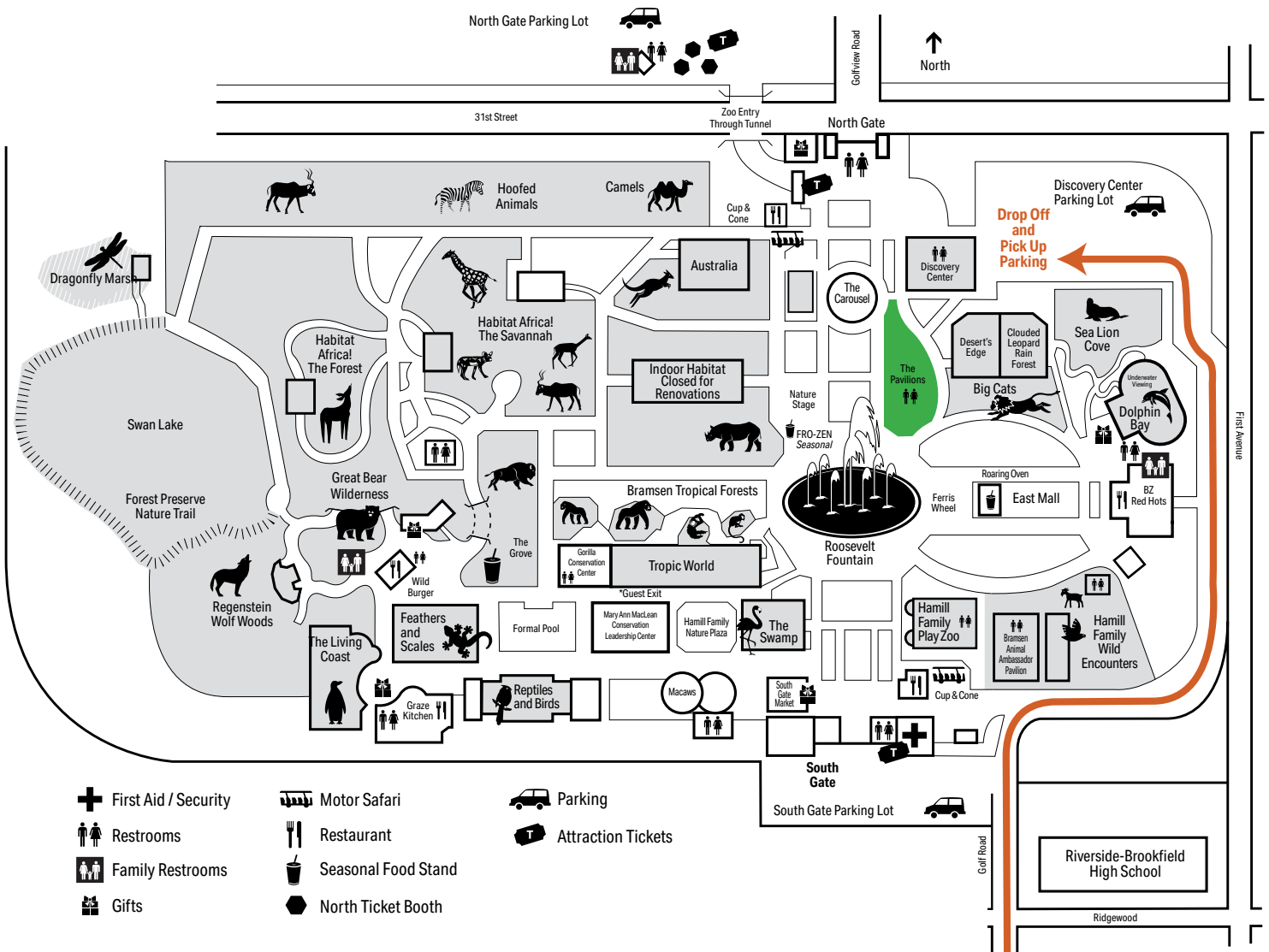
HAVE YOUR PHOTO ID READY TO SIGN THEM OUT.

THANK YOU
FOR YOUR
COOPERATION.





BROOKFIELD ZOO CHICAGO MAP



Please refer to the **DROP OFF AND PICK UP POLICY** section for the appropriate times and schedules.

- Please park in the **Discovery Center Parking Lot** for your convenience.
- Daily Check-In and Drop Off is at **The Pavilions**.
- Regular Pick Up is at **The Pavilions**.
- Early Care Drop Off is inside the **The Pavilions**.
- Extended Day Pick Up is inside the **The Pavilions**.

After dropping off your camper, you are free to explore the zoo on your own after the zoo officially opens at 9:30 a.m. Please do not venture further than the Pavilions until this time.

COMMON QUESTIONS

CAN I REGISTER MY CAMPER FOR MORE THAN ONE SESSION?

Campers are able to sign up for multiple weeks. We have several themes that we rotate through over the summer. Activities for the themes and animal experiences may be repeated for multiple camp weeks. For the best experience for your child, we recommend registering for a maximum of three weeks of camp.

CAN I ENROLL MY CHILD IN A DIFFERENT LEVEL OF ZOO CAMP THAN THEIR CURRENT GRADE?

Zoo Camp is proudly accredited by the American Camp Association (ACA) and abides by ACA's high standards for curriculum and camper-to-counselor ratios. We are confident that we have created the most fun and age-appropriate curriculum for each of our levels of Zoo Camp and our experience has been that campers thrive best when they are interacting with other kids their age. Additionally, because our camper-to-counselor ratios are based on the set grades of each level of camp, *we are unable to enroll a camper in camp level outside of their grade level.*



CAN MY CHILD ATTEND ZOO CAMP WITH A FRIEND OR RELATIVE?

During registration, you will be given an opportunity to request a friend for your child to be grouped with. We can only guarantee one friend request per week and any number of friends over this amount may not be honored due to space needs and staffing requirements. We always encourage Zoo Campers to make new friends at camp! Friend requests must be in the same age level and week of camp to be honored.

WHAT IF MY CAMPER NEEDS TO LEAVE THE ZOO DURING CAMP?

Please notify your counselors at check-in if you know your child will need to leave early so they can make arrangements with you for pick up. If you are unable to pre-arrange an early pick up, please report this immediately by calling the **Absentee Hotline**. There are no refunds due to early departures.

WHAT IF MY CAMPER NEEDS TO ARRIVE LATE DURING CAMP?

Please tell your counselors at check-out the day before if you know your child will be arriving late so they can make arrangements with you for drop off. If you are unable to pre-arrange a late drop off, please report each occurrence by calling the **Absentee Hotline**. There are no refunds due to late drop offs.

WHAT IF MY CHILD REQUIRES ANY ACCOMMODATIONS?

Brookfield Zoo Chicago Camp provides an inclusive environment for all campers, with or without disabilities. We believe that the inclusive environment at Zoo Camp provides an opportunity for campers to explore, learn, and connect with animals and nature in more meaningful ways. We will gladly do our best to fulfill any accommodations to make your child's camp experience as pleasant and fun as possible. During the Zoo Camp registration process, please share any additional accommodations that may benefit your child. You may also call the **Education Hotline** Monday through Friday from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. to speak with a representative, or email us any time at adventuresinlearning@brookfieldzoo.org.



ZOO CAMP PREPARATION

EARLY CHECK-IN DAY

Early Check In Day will only be available for those campers who are requesting a special accommodation. Those campers will be emailed with more information before camp begins.

WHAT TO WEAR

- Zoo Camp t-shirts will be distributed during the first day of each session. *These shirts must be worn daily.*
- Closed-toe shoes – NO FLIP-FLOPS.
- Shorts or pants. Campers may get dirty!
- Campers often wear hats or sunglasses to protect themselves from the sun.

PLEASE LABEL ALL OF YOUR CHILD'S BELONGINGS!

WHAT TO BRING

We recommend that campers use a backpack to carry their items through the park with them all day.

Please send your camper with:

- A reusable water bottle.
 - Lunch every day (unless he/she is attending a half-day session). Lunches will not be refrigerated or heated.
- Please note:*
- *A snack is provided.*
 - *Gluten-free snacks are available.*
- Sunscreen (please note that counselors and staff cannot apply sunscreen to campers).

LEAVE AT HOME

- Books, toys, and stuffed animals. We are not responsible for lost items, but you can go to the Lost and Found by the South Gate if you did lose something.
- Money for food or gifts. Concessions and gift shops will be off limits during camp.

- Cell phones, tablets, or other electronics.
- Weapons of any kind, including pocket knives.
- You can find more park rules on our website at brookfieldzoo.org/parkrules.

BEATING THE HEAT AT CAMP

We have many ways of staying cool on hot days:

- Groups rotate through indoor, climate-controlled areas.
- Outdoor activities, lunch, and snack take place in shady areas.
- Stops are made at misting areas when out in the zoo.
- Groups are welcome to use the Splash Pad by The Pavilions or The Living Coast where they can really cool off!
- Games involving water, such as Drip Drip Drop, are often played in the afternoon.
- Camper water bottles are refilled frequently and staying hydrated is encouraged throughout the day.



IMPORTANT INFORMATION—ZOO CAMP A TO Z

You can find information on all camp levels covered on these pages. Please read carefully and share any necessary information with your camper. We are looking forward to a great year of Zoo Camp!

QUICK TIPS FOR A GREAT CAMP EXPERIENCE

- Clothing should always be appropriate for the weather—all campers spend at least some time outdoors every day!
- Shoes should always be closed-toe and fit well! We do a lot of walking each day of Zoo Camp. NO flip-flops, sandals, or Crocs™ please.
- Meals – See **LUNCH AND SNACKS** for details.
- Late arrivals and early departures disrupt camp and cause staff to be pulled away from programming. Please make every effort to respect the camp schedule.



ABSENT CAMPERS

If your child will be absent, please leave a message at (708) 688-8540. *There are no refunds or make-up days for days missed.*

ACTIVITIES

Zoo Camp provides a unique experience for making new friends, having fun, learning, teaching responsibility, creating independence and decision making skills, as well

as connecting participants to the natural world. Campers will enjoy spending the week visiting our exhibits and attractions throughout the park and making connections to the week's theme. They will have opportunities to participate in exclusive Zoo Camp experiences that may include Zoo Chats with animal care staff and up-close encounters with animals. Additionally, campers will enjoy traditional summer camp activities like hikes, songs, crafts, games, and more!

All Zoo Camp activities are subject to change due to weather, instructor, and staff availability, as well as animals rotating on/off exhibit at Brookfield Zoo Chicago. Because of these variables, please note that though there may be opportunities for close contact with animals, such experiences cannot be guaranteed.

ACCOMMODATIONS & ACCESSIBILITY

Please see **INCLUSION**.

AFTER CARE AND BEFORE CARE

Please see **EARLY ARRIVAL/EXTENDED DAY**.

ALLERGIES

If your child has any food allergies, you will find a list of snacks under **LUNCH AND SNACKS**. Please contact a member of the Zoo Camp staff for nutrition and ingredient information. You are also welcome to send your camper with their own snacks as well.

We very commonly have campers who have peanut, tree nut, and/or other allergies. The camp counselors receive this information prior to the start of the week so they are aware of the needs of all of their campers. For lunch time, counselors make sure to have a "peanut-free" area to ensure the safety of those campers with allergies. Our campers have access to restrooms to wash their hands before and after eating.

Campers do have some contact with animals whose diets may contain allergens. An animal keeper is always present during these encounters and will be able to advise specifically about what the animal eats.

Campers are welcome to carry their own EpiPen, but it is important to note that our counselors are not authorized to administer an EpiPen. Each camp group has a radio to contact Brookfield Zoo Chicago Police Department in case of an emergency.

Our counselors are trained in and have experience working with children who have severe allergies. If you have any further questions, please feel free to call the **Education Hotline** Monday through Friday from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. or email adventuresinlearning@brookfieldzoo.org.

ARRIVING LATE AND LEAVING EARLY

Late arrivals or early departures can be accommodated but disrupt camp and cause staff to be pulled away from programming and may result in missed tours, animal



encounters, or other activities for your camper. Please make every effort to respect the camp schedule. If absolutely necessary, late arrivals or early departures should be arranged in advance and can be done so by speaking with your counselors and/or calling the **Absentee Hotline**.

ANIMAL CONTACT

Campers in all Zoo Camps will have up-close encounters with animals. With many, touching is permitted if the situation allows. If at any time a camp counselor or animal care specialist feels their group is not following the camp expectations, the animal encounter may be ended prematurely.

Each camper will also have the opportunity to pet the goats, and to feed the parakeets, in our Hamill Family Wild Encounters exhibit. For the safety of all, direct contact with other exhibit animals is not possible. All animal care is done by professionally trained zoo keepers.

BATHROOM POLICY

All campers* must be fully potty trained and completely independent when using the restroom. If campers are not potty trained or require verbal or physical assistance of any kind, we reserve the right to send the camper home immediately and without a refund.

When in public restrooms, we follow the rule of three: a zoo camper is always accompanied by two camp counselors or one camp counselor and one other camper. Children are allowed to enter the restroom alone if it is a Zoo Camp area or is a single restroom.

Bathroom and water breaks are taken frequently throughout the day. If your camper requires a disability-related accommodation, please contact the **camp inclusion specialist**.

* Campers who are unable to meet this camper requirement can attend camp with an adult (18+) to aid in these tasks. The Zoo Camp

staff can assist in communicating bathroom break times/locations to a parent/guardian. You will not have to pay the zoo admission fee to come assist your child.

CAMPER REQUIREMENTS

To enable our staff to provide your child with the best experience possible, please share information about your camper that will enable our staff to provide such an experience. The information you provide will be shared only with Zoo Camp staff and volunteers unless you request otherwise. Details will not be shared with other camp participants.

In an effort to provide the most meaningful, positive, and appropriate experience at Zoo Camp, we require that all campers be able to:

- Follow simple directions and be able to communicate their interests and needs.
- Be willing to spend the week outdoors and participate in group activities.
- Administer any personal medication without camp counselor assistance.
- Fully and independently manage basic self-care skills like eating and toileting, or come to camp with an adult (18+) assistant to aid with these tasks.

DISABILITIES

Please see **INCLUSION**.

DISCIPLINE

Maintaining proper discipline at camp is an important job of the counselor. Why? Because discipline helps to create an ideal environment for safety, fun, and learning, while at the same time protecting children from harassment, bullying, and violence.

Zoo Camp staff members set realistic expectations for campers to maintain the health and safety of all children in the program. To promote positive behavior, emphasis is placed on guided constructive activities while adequate time is allowed for free choice and self-expression.



Some of the methods we use to manage behavior issues may include discussions of undesired actions/behavior, modeling appropriate behavior, brief time-outs, visual and verbal warnings, switching groups, behavior reward systems, removing the stressor, shortening activity time, or earning or removal of privileges. We also are happy to discuss pre-established Behavior Management Plans (BMP) if your child uses this in a school or recreational setting to manage behavior.

In the event of a repeat problem, parents/guardians will be contacted for a phone conference to give guidance and establish mutually agreeable solutions for their child's behavior.

We rarely send campers home for disciplinary reasons, but if the child's behavior is repeatedly abusive (physically or verbally) toward other campers or staff, if the child's actions pose a threat to the safety of others or themselves, or if the child commits a criminal action, parents/guardians will be responsible for picking up the child immediately.



EARLY ARRIVAL/EXTENDED DAY

We offer early arrival on Tuesday through Friday for \$15/day/camper. You may drop your camper(s) off as early as 8:00 a.m. on these days. **Due to first-day check-in, there is no early drop off on Mondays.**

We also offer an extended day opportunity, where you may pick up your camper(s) as late as 5:00 p.m. Monday through Thursday for \$20/day/Camper. There is no late pick up on Fridays.

Pick up after 5:00 p.m. or after 3:30 p.m. on Friday will result in additional fees. See late pick up policy and fees on page 7.



FEEDING

We recognize that some children have a disability or special need that limits their ability to feed themselves independently. Zoo Camp staff can assist with opening packages, peeling fruit, providing verbal directions, and using visual supports and social stories for lunch and snack time. However, they cannot directly feed campers. Should your child require direct assistance with feeding, you or another caregiver over 18 years of age are welcome to meet your child's camp group during lunch and snack times to assist with feeding. You will not have to pay the zoo admission fee to come assist your child.

ILLNESS

In the event your camper is sick before arriving at camp, please be sure to call the lead counselors or the camp supervisor to

notify them that the camper is sick and will not be arriving to camp that day. We request that you notify us about your child's absence, as it is helpful for planning purposes. If your camper becomes sick while at camp, you can anticipate a call from lead staff to notify you that your camper is sick and will need to be picked up immediately. Campers with contagious illnesses, vomiting, or a fever will be sent home and should not return to Zoo Camp for 24 hours after the symptoms have passed. We reserve the right to require a doctor's note to return to camp.

INCLUSION

Zoo Camp is a proud partner of the National Inclusion Project. We strive to accommodate and include campers of all abilities. Many of our staff have experience working with children with Autism Spectrum Disorders, Sensory Processing Disorders, Down syndrome, other developmental and intellectual disabilities, physical disabilities, ADHD, and more. As part of our camp leadership team, we have a camp inclusion specialist to whom you can speak regarding any possible accommodations and available resources to best support your camper while at Zoo Camp. All information on camper needs is kept confidential and provided to staff only on a need-to-know basis.

To learn more about Zoo Camp's inclusion initiatives, please visit brookfieldzoo.org/zoocampforall.

LOST AND FOUND

Lost articles will be kept in the Zoo Camp office until the end of each week. If the item is unclaimed by Friday, it will be taken to the main Security Office at the south end of the zoo. Campers should avoid bringing jewelry or other irreplaceable items. However, if these items are left on zoo property, we are not responsible for loss or damage. You may reach the main Security Office at (708) 688-8811 and ask for Lost and Found during zoo hours.



LUNCH AND SNACKS

All campers are encouraged to bring their own snack if they would like but are not required to do so. Campers will be provided a snack by the counselors each day.

Below you will find a list of the snacks that we provide to our campers (subject to change):

- Animal crackers
- Goldfish crackers
- Pretzels

For those with gluten allergies, we do have gluten-free snacks available.

Inquiries on all food nutrition and ingredient information can be directed to adventuresinlearning@brookfieldzoo.org.

Please see **ALLERGIES** if you would like more information regarding our nut policy.

MEDICAL WAIVER

A medical waiver must be completed in order for your camper to attend zoo camp. This will be done at the time of registration

MEDICATIONS

Camp staff are not able to hold, distribute, or administer medication of any kind. Only lifesaving medications (such as an EpiPen or inhaler) are allowed and campers must carry and administer those medications themselves.* The medication must be in its original container with patient and prescription information. If a camper has a medical emergency, staff will contact Brookfield Zoo Chicago police officers. Officers will respond to medical incidents, and provide basic first aid and emergency medical responder (EMR)-level care. All prescribed medications a camper will bring should be noted in your registration. Please contact the camp inclusion specialist if you have any further questions in regard to medications.

* If your child cannot administer their own medication, you or another caregiver over 18 years of age are welcome to assist your child.

PARENTS AND GUARDIANS

You are welcome to remain at the zoo while your child attends Zoo Camp. Zoo Camp starts at 9:00 a.m. and you are welcome to spend the day in the zoo on your own. Please do not go beyond the Discovery Center/ The Pavilions until the zoo opens at 9:30 a.m.

The camp staff are committed to making Zoo Camp fun and meaningful for your camper. To minimize confusion for your camper while supporting the process of them bonding with their group, we request that you not remain in close proximity of the group once your camper is checked in.



Groups may or may not leave the check-in locations right away due to planned activities.

Check-in locations are not an area for parents to meet or gather after the campers are checked in, as it tends to be a negative distraction for campers and the space may be used by other groups when not in use by Zoo Camp.

PAVILIONS

For all campers, the typical drop off location is at the Dolphin Pavilion. Please note that these locations may change in the event of inclement weather. Signs will be posted



to help direct you in the event the check-in location is changed.

To reach The Pavilions, please enter at the South Gate (adjacent to Riverside-Brookfield High School). Please stop at the booth and alert the attendant that you are here for Zoo Camp. The attendant will direct you to the Discovery Center parking lot. Please refer to the zoo map on page 9.

RESTRICTIONS

There are three primary areas of assistance that Zoo Camp staff cannot provide. Please see **FEEDING, MEDICATIONS,** and **BATHROOM POLICY.**

ROAD SAFETY

When dropping off or picking up your child, it is imperative that you follow all posted stop signs and speed limits on zoo grounds. Respecting the posted speed limit ensures the safety of our staff and other guests. The Brookfield Zoo Chicago Police Department will issue citations in light of any violations.

Please note that foot and bicycle traffic on the perimeter road to the Discovery Center parking lot is not allowed.

SHOPPING

Campers are not permitted to purchase any items from the zoo concession stands, gift shops, or restaurants during camp sessions. PLEASE DO NOT send money to camp with your child for any reason. You may purchase items from concession stands or gift shops after camper pick up.

SPECIAL NEEDS

Please see **INCLUSION.**

STAFF

Staff are screened for a background of excellence in programming for children. Camp staff are required to have previous experience with children and many staff are returners to Zoo Camp at Brookfield Zoo Chicago.

All staff working with children undergo a federal background check prior to employment. To ensure high quality supervision, we follow the camper-to-staff ratios provided by the American Camp Association (ACA).

All Zoo Camp staff must pass an interview screening and background check, and participate in staff training and review sessions. These standards are required by Brookfield Zoo Chicago and ACA.

We are proudly accredited by ACA and abide by their camper-to-counselor ratios, which are as follows:

PreZoo	Minimum of two (2) counselors for every twelve (12) campers.
Discovery	Minimum of two (2) counselors for every sixteen (16) campers.
Explorer	Minimum of two (2) counselors for every sixteen (16) campers.
Adventure	Minimum of two (2) counselors for every sixteen (16) campers.
ZooLab	Minimum of two (2) counselors for every twenty (20) campers.

T-SHIRTS

Zoo Campers are required to wear Zoo Camp t-shirts every day. This is a safety precaution and allows us to recognize campers easily among other visitors. Each child receives one shirt with each week's registration, with extra shirts available to purchase. T-shirts will be distributed the first day of camp or at Early Check-In Day. We are not able to provide your camper's shirt outside of these designated distribution days.

Available sizes: Youth: XS, S, M, L; Adult: S, M, L, XL, XXL

BROOKFIELD
ZOO
CHICAGO

Last revision – 23 December 2025.
Please visit brookfieldzoo.org/camp
for the most up to date information.

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