

(Keep this letter for your records)

Erie Zoo

## Summer Camp 2026

**NEW INFORMATION- please read**

Dear Parents/Guardians:

Thank you for registering your child in the Summer Week-long Zoo Day Camps at the Erie Zoo. We want to make your child's week at Zoo Camp as fun and educational as possible. To help the week run smoothly, we have instituted some policies and need some support from you, the parents/guardians. Please read the information in this letter carefully and feel free to call the Education Department, 814-864-4091 x 1127 (Kim) or 1123 (Heather) with any questions or comments. **KEEP THESE NUMBERS IN CASE YOU NEED TO REACH US IN THE EVENT OF AN EMERGENCY.**

**Drop-off and Pick-up:** Drop-off and pick-up will take place at the **West 38<sup>th</sup> Street Entrance at the tiger striped education door.** This is the door next to the foot of the stairs to the office. Drop off will occur between 7:45-8:30 am. Any late arrivals and early dismissals must be pre-arranged with zoo staff because they disrupt the flow of the camp. **Half day pick up is 11:30-12. Full day pick-up must occur between 3:30-4:00 pm.** Late fees may be charged.

**Check-In/Out:** Children must be brought to the check-in table by a responsible adult who will check the child in and **pick up** the child's **zoo-assigned** code word. The child will then be escorted to the classroom by a zoo staff. This code-word **must be told** to the staff person manning the door when the child is picked up. Additionally, our staff reserves the right to request photo identification for anyone picking up a child. The staff will sign your child out at the end of the day and retrieve your child from the classroom for you. Please ring the doorbell for assistance if you show up early without making prior arrangements. Do not enter the child's classroom.

**Late Arrival /Early Pickup:** If you are going to arrive after 8:30 am or are going to pick up your child prior to 3:30 pm you will need to notify the check-in staff or call the zoo office (814) 864-4091 as soon as possible. We will have to adjust camper times in areas/activities to make sure we are ready for a late arrival or early departure. Without prior notice, this disrupts the whole camp and can cause campers to miss valuable parts of their day. Early pickups are difficult because the campers are not always located near the front of the zoo. **It can take up to 20 minutes to get a child to the front of the zoo for an unannounced pick up.**

**Snacks:** Water is able to be refilled from fountains throughout the day. **Please send your child with a water bottle that is clearly marked with their name on it.** We will provide your child with several options for their morning snack. Any food restrictions or allergies should be indicated on the child's Emergency Form. If you have a child with food restrictions of major importance (life threatening allergies, diabetes, religious restrictions or behavior-affecting food sensitivities, etc.), we **require** advanced notice so that we can have alternative snacks available from day one. You are also allowed to bring in allergy friendly snacks for your child if you choose to opt out of ours. Zoo snacks may include dry cereal, fruit snacks, popcorn, pretzels, goldfish crackers, animal crackers and freezer pops.

**Lunch:** Full Day campers will either need to bring a lunch or buy a hot lunch from our pre-determined menu. We do not have access to a refrigerator or microwave so please pack accordingly. Zoo lunches can be purchased for the whole week on Monday or paid for on individual mornings. **We only accept cash at this time** because we use that cash to purchase lunches at the concession stands or restaurants. All payments must be made the week of camp. **We cannot take lunch orders or payment prior to camp starting.** All lunch orders need to be completed at check-in.

**Dress:** Zoo Day Camps are fun and can be messy. Please send your child in play clothes so we can have a great time without worry. Bringing a change of clothes is encouraged. **Please do not allow your child to wear open-toed shoes, flip-flops, dress shoes or clogs.** This type of footwear is not safe for the activities we have planned. Dress for the weather and outdoor fun each day. Use sunscreen **before coming to the zoo** to be respectful of smell sensitivities of others. If you would like sunscreen **re-applied** throughout the day, please send **spray sunscreen only** in a gallon baggie with first and last name on it. **You do not need to fill out the Authorization to Dispense Medication form for sunscreen.** **4-6 year old parents: Please pack at least 1 pair of extra clothes with your child daily.**

**Camp Staffing:** Each camp group will be led by a minimum of three paid staff members. Our staff is assisted by adult and teen volunteers, who attend training in preparation to volunteer. The volunteers act as extra hands, eyes, and ears and for the staff and as a helper for the kids. If you have a question or concern, we ask that you direct it to the adult staff person working with your child. All staff and volunteers go through multiple forms of background checks.

**Example Schedule:** Your child will participate in sit-down games as well as active games on the front lawn, activities, craft-making, walks to Glenwood Park (6-8 & 8-13 years) and zoo playground (all), rides on the carousel and train, and will see animals on a zoo walk each day and several times a week in the classroom. Please look at the attached sample schedule for a more detailed look at the activities and times.

**Special Concerns:** While we do not have extra staff available to accommodate severe behavioral and emotional special needs, campers with those needs are welcome to attend with an aide or caregiver. Your advice and suggestions are welcome and we suggest a call to the Education Department prior to the camp week. We welcome Therapeutic Support Staff or Aides if your child has one.

**Please fill out our Special Needs and Accommodations Questionnaire to help us better understand your child's needs.**

**Junior Zookeeper Campers** **should arrive by 8 am** at the latest so they can shadow the zookeepers and begin their day on time!

Please call us with any questions or concerns.

Thank you and we hope your child enjoys their week at Zoo Day Camp!

Heather Gula, Education Director  
(814) 864-4091 x 1123

Kim Bowes, Education Program Coordinator  
(814)864-4091 x 1127



## **Erie Zoo Summer Camp Positive Behavior Plan**

**The Erie Zoo ("Zoo") strives to provide each camper with a positive experience during our Summer Camps. To ensure an educational, fun, safe and inclusive environment for all children, we expect campers to abide by our Positive Behavior Plan. Parents should discuss the following behavior expectations and consequences with their child prior to the child's attending camp:**

- Treat others with dignity and respect. Bullying, teasing and/or other disrespectful behavior toward any educators, volunteers, Zoo visitors, fellow campers or others will not be tolerated.
- Be respectful of Zoo property and the property of others.
- Make responsible choices - follow directions, stay with the group at all times, and use materials properly.
- Obey safety rules. Do not enter staff-only areas. Do not run anywhere on Zoo grounds except the front lawn. Do not climb any fences or railings.

**The following inappropriate behavior is strictly prohibited and will not be tolerated:**

- Hitting, pushing, fighting or provoking a fight with other campers, staff, volunteers, Zoo visitors or others.
- Misusing, defacing or deliberately damaging Zoo property or the property of others.
- Mistreating animals.
- Stealing.
- Disobeying the instructions of Zoo staff or volunteers.
- Disobeying safety rules.
- Swearing.

We understand that children are learning in all aspects of their lives and that learning appropriate behaviors is a process. If inappropriate behavior becomes an issue, whenever possible, the Zoo will attempt to work with the child to make sure that he or she understands what is expected of them. Nevertheless, we are committed to maintaining a safe camp environment. In the event a camper engages in any of the prohibited behavior described above, he or she will be subject to discipline, generally in accordance with the following steps. The Zoo reserves the right to discipline more severely if the circumstances are deemed to warrant it, including skipping disciplinary steps and/or expelling the camper from the summer camp program without recourse.

### **Step 1 - Verbal Warning**

Camp staff will give the camper a verbal reminder of expected behavior and review rules.

### **Step 2 - Written Warning**

The Education Director will discuss with the camper his/her inappropriate behavior and develop a plan to encourage positive behavior. Positive behavior plans may include a time out in the Education Director's office, use of a positive behavior rewards chart, assignment of a Behavior Buddy, and/or minor adjustments to classroom settings/procedures. Parents will be told when they pick up their child about any incidents and will be encouraged to remind the camper of positive behavior expectations.

### **Step 3 - Expulsion**

Camper who consistently fail to abide by the Positive Behavior Plan or who engage in serious misconduct will be removed from camp for the remainder of the program and, depending on the severity of the circumstances, any additional camps in which the camper is enrolled during the season.

**No refunds will be issued if a child is removed (for any duration) from camp for behavior issues.**

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**Parent Signature: NOT REQUIRED to RETURN IF CHECKED THAT YOU READ THIS on REGISTRATION FORM**

I have read and understand the Erie Zoo Summer Camp Positive Behavior Plan and have discussed it with my child. I understand that failure to abide by the Positive Behavior Plan may result in my child's removal from Erie Zoo Summer Camp without refund.

Child's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Parent Questionnaire for Children with Special Needs

**(Fill out if information may be relevant and return)**

The Erie Zoo ("Zoo") cares for the safety and well-being of each participant in our Summer Camp Program. These questions are asked for the benefit of your child so that we may provide the best experience and safest environment for everyone involved. The Zoo respects your family's right to privacy. Any information shared from this form is communicated directly with those responsible for caring for your child while he or she is at camp and only on a "need to know" basis.

Please complete this form (attach additional pages if necessary) and email to [kbowes@eriezoo.org](mailto:kbowes@eriezoo.org) or mail to **Erie Zoo Education Department, P.O. Box 1029, Erie, PA 16512** prior to the first day of camp. The sooner it gets to us, the more prepared we can be.

Child's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

My child has the following diagnosis, medical condition(s) and/or learning difference(s). Please attach IEP if available:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Please help us better understand your child's needs. Please check any of the following that are applicable to your child:

<input type="checkbox"/> short attention span/easily distracted	<input type="checkbox"/> hearing challenges	<input type="checkbox"/> speech difficulties
<input type="checkbox"/> difficulty in social settings	<input type="checkbox"/> trouble sitting in group	<input type="checkbox"/> visual impairment
<input type="checkbox"/> tantrums/melt-downs	<input type="checkbox"/> aggressive behavior	<input type="checkbox"/> shyness
<input type="checkbox"/> motor skills (walking/jumping)	<input type="checkbox"/> tends to be possessive	<input type="checkbox"/> seizures
<input type="checkbox"/> trouble with sensory experiences	<input type="checkbox"/> changes in routine	<input type="checkbox"/> remaining on task
<input type="checkbox"/> trouble following directions	<input type="checkbox"/> separation anxiety	<input type="checkbox"/> tends to wander
<input type="checkbox"/> aversion to water, lights, loud noises	<input type="checkbox"/> trouble using the bathroom without assistance	
<input type="checkbox"/> other (please describe) _____		

Does your child have any allergies (food, drug or other)?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Please list any food restrictions your child has. If the restriction is due to a sensitivity/allergy, please describe the reaction.

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Does your child have an aide or therapist who will be attending camp? \_\_\_\_\_

Are there any other concerns you would like to share about your child?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

I have fully disclosed to the Erie Zoo all pertinent facts about my child's special needs and accept full responsibility for missing information. I understand the nature of the Summer Camp Program and do hereby release the Zoo and its representatives from any liability due to accident or injury incurred by my child.

Parent Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Authorization to Dispense Prescription and Non-Prescription Medication

**You do NOT need to fill this out for sunscreen- only medication**

Please complete this form if your child needs to be given any medication during Zoo Summer Camp hours. Please bring this form with you on the first day of camp. No medication will be dispensed without written authorization from the child's parent or legal guardian.

All prescription medication must be in the original container with the original pharmacy label containing the name of the medication, the child's name, prescribing physician, and dosing instructions. Non-prescription/over-the-counter medication must be in its original packaging and labeled with the child's name.

Child's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Parent/Legal Guardian: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

**By my signature below, I authorize the Camp Staff Supervisor to dispense the following medication(s) to my child as directed on the prescription label or printed manufacturer's label:**

Name of Medication	Prescribed Dose	Day(s) to be Administered					Time to be Administered	Known Side Effects
		M	T	W	TH	F		

Please provide any other information the Zoo should know about dispensing the above-listed medication to your child:

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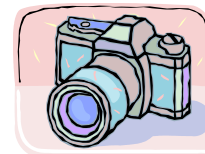
### Parent/Guardian Acknowledgments

I hereby acknowledge that the information I have provided above is accurate and complete.

In all cases, if there are any changes to the medications to be dispensed and/or the instructions for dispensing medications, a new Authorization to Dispense Prescription and/or Non-Prescription Medication form must be completed.

I recognize and acknowledge that there are certain risks of physical injury associated with the administering of medication to my child and do hereby release the Zoo and its representatives from any liability arising out of, connected with, incidental to, or in any way associated with the administering of medication.

Parent/Guardian Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_



This is a **sample** schedule.  
Activities will vary based on the weather and topic covered.

	A Camp		B Camp
8:00-8:30	Check in/ Coloring pages/Socialization	8:00-8:30	Check in/Coloring pages/Socialization
8:30-9:00	Topic of the Day/ Ice Breaker	8:30-9:00	Topic of the Day/ Ice Breaker
9:00-9:30	Craft	9:00-9:30	Craft
9:30-10:00	Sanitize hands/Snack/Story Time	9:30-10:00	Game
10:00-10:30	Game	10:00-10:30	Sanitize hands/Snack/Story time
10:30-10:45	Animal Meet and Greet (MWF)/ Ride (T,Th)	10:30-11:00	Zoo Walk
10:45-11:15	Zoo Walk	11:00-11:15	Animal Meet and Greet (MWF)/ Ride (T,Th)
11:15-11:45	Biofact Lesson	11:15-11:45	Biofact Lesson
11:45-12:15	Dance Party/Brain Break	11:45-12:15	Dance Party/Brain Break
12:15-1:15	Lunch/Movie/Quiet Time	12:15-1:15	Lunch/Movie/Quiet Time
1:15-1:45	Nature Play/ Front Lawn	1:15-1:45	Park/ Nature Play
1:45-2:15	Nature Play/ Front Lawn	1:45-2:15	Park/ Nature play
2:15-2:45	Topic of the day/Craft	2:15-2:45	Topic of the Day/Craft
2:45-3:15	Activity Time	2:45-3:15	Activity Time
3:15-3:30	Catch up time/ Activity Time/Clean up	3:15-3:30	Catch up time/ Activity Time/ Clean up
3:30-4:00	Pick up/ Coloring pages/ Socialization	3:30-4:00	Pick up/ Coloring pages/ Socialization

	C Camp		D Camp/ Junior Zookeeper
8:00-8:30	Check in/Playing on Front lawn/socialization	8:00-8:30	Check in/ Schedule for the Day
8:30-9:00	Game	8:30-9:00	Icebreaker/Theme for the Day
9:00-9:30	Topic of the Day/Icebreaker	9:00-9:30	Keeper Shadow
9:30-10:00	Craft	9:30-10:00	Keeper Shadow
10:00-10:30	Sanitize/Snack/Articles	10:00-10:30	Keeper Shadow
10:30-11:00	Biofact Lesson	10:30-10:45	Snack/ Talk about Jobs/
11:00-11:30	Zoo Walk	10:45-11:00	Animal Meet and Greet
11:30-11:45	Animal Meet and Greet (MWF)/ Ride (T,Th)	11:00-11:30	Biofact Lesson
11:45-12:15	Brain Break/Riddle Time	11:30-12:00	Zoo Walk
12:15-1:15	Lunch/Movie/Quiet Time	12:00-12:15	Activity Time
1:15-1:45	Park/ Nature Play	12:15-1:15	Lunch/Movie/Quiet Time
1:45-2:15	Park/ Nature Play	1:15-1:30	Enrichment/Touch Table/ Observations
2:15-2:45	Topic of the Day/Craft	1:30-2:00	Animal Training/ Behind the scene tour
2:45-3:00	Catch up time/ Clean up	2:00-2:30	Behind the Scene Tour/ Rides
3:00-3:30	Pack-up and head to front lawn/ activity Time	2:30-3:30	Craft/ Activity Time
3:30-4:00	Pick up/ Socialization	3:30-4:00	Pick up/ Socialization/ Dismissal



# 2026

Monday				
Smaller Meal		Larger Meal		Beverage
\$6.00		\$7.00		
1 slice Pizza (Pepperoni or Cheese) or 1 Uncrustable		2 slices of Pizza or 2 Uncrustables		juice
Chips (BBQ, Plain, Cheese Curls, Doritos, Pretzels, Popcorn)		Chips (BBQ, Plain, Cheese Curls, Doritos, Pretzels, Popcorn)		
Dessert		Dessert		

Tuesday				
Smaller Meal		Larger Meal		Beverage
\$6.00		\$7.00		
4 piece Chicken Nuggets or 1 uncrustable (grape or straw)		6 piece Chicken Nugs or 2 uncrust.		juice
Small Fry or Chips (See above)		Medium Fry or Chips		
Dessert		Dessert		

Wednesday				
Smaller Meal		Larger Meal		Beverage
\$6.00		\$7.00		
1 Hotdog or 1 uncrustable		2 Hotdogs or 2 uncrustables		juice
Chips (BBQ, Plain, Cheese Curls, Doritos, Pretzels, Popcorn)		Chips (BBQ, Plain, Cheese Curls, Doritos, Pretzels, Popcorn)		
Dessert		Dessert		

Thursday				
Smaller Meal		Larger Meal		Beverage
\$6.00		\$7.00		
4 piece Chicken Nuggets or 1 uncrustable (grape or straw)		6 piece Chicken Nugs or 2 uncrust.		juice
Small Fry or Chips (see above)		Medium Fry or Chips		
Dessert		Dessert		

Friday				
Smaller Meal		Larger Meal		Beverage
\$6.00		\$7.00		
1 slice Pizza (Pepperoni or Cheese) or 1 Uncrustable		2 slices of Pizza or 2 Uncrustables		juice
Chips (BBQ, Plain, Cheese Curls, Doritos, Pretzels, Popcorn)		Chips (BBQ, Plain, Cheese Curls, Doritos, Pretzels, Popcorn)		
Dessert		Dessert		