



# Parents' Guide 2026

## 2026 Summer Day Camp Dates and Rates

Full-day camp	\$253 members/\$281 nonmembers	9:00 AM – 4:00 PM
Half-day camp	\$177 members/\$197 nonmembers	9:00 AM – 12:30 PM
Before camp care	\$35	Begins at 7:30 AM
After camp care	\$39	Ends at 6:00 PM

During the holiday week of July 4<sup>th</sup> (June 29-July 2), a special four-day camp will be offered at a discounted price. During this camp, campers become nature detectives by teaming up to uncover the secrets of wildlife and habitats. Register for **Session 5!**

Full-day camp	\$203 members/\$225 nonmembers	9:00 AM – 4:00 PM
Half-day camp	\$142 members/\$158 nonmembers	9:00 AM – 12:30 PM

For ages 5-10, we offer **three camps** on alternating weeks, so kids can spend more than one session at Summer Day Camp! All three camps will explore the Zoo, but each week will focus on a new theme.

For ages 11-14, we offer **two camps** on alternating weeks!

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## Goals and Objectives

We want your child to have a great time while learning about animals.

Summer Day Camp at Cleveland Metroparks Zoo creates compelling experiences that connects campers with wildlife and inspires personal responsibility for conserving the natural world. All Education programs at the Cleveland Metroparks Zoo are designed to help foster respect for, connections with, and appreciation of wildlife and coexisting human cultures.

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## Activities

The Summer Day Camp program is designed to provide campers with a variety of wildlife and conservation themed activities in a safe, nurturing, and fun atmosphere. A camper's day is a balance of active and quiet activities suitable to the age and abilities of the campers in the group. Campers will have the opportunity to participate in individual, small, and large group activities. The activity schedule will remain flexible to allow camp counselors to maximize those times when Zoo animals are visible and most active.

Program activities may include, but are not limited to:

- Tours of Zoo exhibits
- Up-close encounters with small education animals (snakes, birds, small mammals, etc.)
- Arts and crafts
- Games and nature activities that reinforce the concepts taught that day

Activity schedules for the week will vary depending on age level; therefore, children in different age groups may not have identical schedules.

**Animal Contact:** Campers will have opportunities for up-close encounters with small education animals. Touching of these animals may or may not be permitted. For the safety of all, direct contact with exhibit animals is not possible. All exhibit animal care, including feeding and cleaning, is done by professionally trained zoo keepers.

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## Registration/Admissions Policy

Pre-registration is required for full-day and half-day campers. Payment in full is due at the time of registration and registrations are processed on a first come, first served basis. Online registration is available at <https://www.clevelandmetroparks.com/zoo/education>.

Once registered for Summer Day Camp, you will receive a ticket with a unique QR code. Please bring your mobile or printed ticket with your unique QR code to camp pick-up each day. Campers cannot be released without this code.

Program fees and deposits are **non-refundable**. Participants assume risk of all changes in personal health and affairs. With advanced notice of one week prior to the scheduled program date, the program may be rescheduled for free to a new date pending inventory/availability before the end of the following calendar year with a maximum of one (1) reschedule move. Rescheduling requests will not be honored for “no-shows” and requests submitted with less than a week’s notice, will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

If Cleveland Metroparks Zoo finds it necessary to cancel a program, a refund or internal education program credit will be issued. Registrants will be notified if programs are cancelled. By registering for a program, you acknowledge that you have read and understand this policy.

In order to ensure all campers receive age-appropriate opportunities, campers are grouped by their age as of June 1st, 2026, into the following categories:

- 5-6 year olds
- 7-8 year olds
- 9-10 year olds
- 11-12 year olds
- 13-14 year olds

Counselor to camper ratio for the 5-6 year old grouping is 1 counselor for every 6 campers and 1 counselor for every 10 campers for all other age groups.

**Exceptions will not be made to the above categories.** There will be occasions throughout the day when siblings and friends from different age groups will be participating in activities together.

As classes may fill quickly, the Zoo cannot guarantee that your child and friend of the same age group will be placed together. When registering, please indicate with whom you would prefer your child to be placed.

## Camp Schedule and Topics

During the holiday week of **July 4th** a special four-day camp will be offered at a discounted price. Register for **Session 5!**

2026 Zoo Summer Day Camp Topic by Session/Week							
Session	Week of	Age Group 5-8 Half Day	Age Group 5-6	Age Group 7-8	Age Group 9-10	Age Group 11-12	Age Group 13-14
1	June 1-5	Animal Superpowers	Animal Superpowers	Animal Superpowers	Animal Superpowers	Wild Designs	No Camp
2	June 8-12	Habitat Quest	Habitat Quest	Habitat Quest	Habitat Quest	Conservation Careers	Wild Designs
3	June 15-19	Eco Heroes	Eco Heroes	Eco Heroes	Eco Heroes	Wild Designs	Conservation Careers
4	June 22-26	Animal Superpowers	Animal Superpowers	Animal Superpowers	Animal Superpowers	Conservation Careers	Wild Designs
5	June 29-July 2 (Holiday Week)	Wild Explorers	Wild Explorers	Wild Explorers	Wild Explorers	Wild Explorers	No Camp
6	July 6-10	Habitat Quest	Habitat Quest	Habitat Quest	Habitat Quest	Wild Designs	Conservation Careers
7	July 13-17	Eco Heroes	Eco Heroes	Eco Heroes	Eco Heroes	Conservation Careers	Wild Designs
8	July 20-24	Animal Superpowers	Animal Superpowers	Animal Superpowers	Animal Superpowers	Wild Designs	Conservation Careers
9	July 27-31	Habitat Quest	Habitat Quest	Habitat Quest	Habitat Quest	Conservation Careers	Wild Designs
10	August 3-7	Eco Heroes	Eco Heroes	Eco Heroes	Eco Heroes	Wild Designs	No Camp

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## Lunch Guidelines

**Full-day campers are responsible for bringing their own lunch and beverage** (no glass containers, please). A reusable lunch bag will be provided for each camper on the first day and labeled with their name. We request that you please use this lunch bag throughout the week. Campers WILL NOT be permitted to purchase food from any restaurant or food stand while participating in camp.

**Half-day campers do not need to bring a lunch, as they leave camp prior to lunch time.**

The Zoo will provide a mid-morning snack for all campers and a mid-afternoon snack for full-day campers. Examples of snacks that may be served include applesauce, potato chips, and granola bars. Due to the severe food allergies in an increasing number of children, all snacks offered will be free of the top 9 food allergens, which are: milk, wheat, soy, eggs, sesame, peanuts, tree nuts, fish, and shellfish.

For other dietary needs, please contact the Zoo's Program Registration office at 216.635.3391 prior to your session regarding snack substitutions for your camper.

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## Map

**From I-71:** Exit at West 25<sup>th</sup> Street and follow the Zoo signs. The Zoo is approximately one mile from the I-71 exit.

**From I-90:** Take I-71 South, exit at West 25<sup>th</sup> Street and follow the Zoo signs.

**From I-480:** The Zoo is approximately two miles from the I-480 exit. Exit State Road (north) to Pearl Road. Follow Pearl Rd to Memphis Ave. Take a left on Memphis Ave. Take Memphis Ave to Fulton Pkwy and turn right onto Fulton Pkwy. Follow Fulton Pkwy and make a right onto Wildlife Way.

**From I-80 (Ohio Turnpike):** Zoo accessed from



two exits. Take Exit 173/11 to I-77 North, to I-480 West to State Road (north) to Pearl Road. Follow Pearl Rd to Memphis Ave. Take a left on Memphis Ave. Take Memphis Ave to Fulton Pkwy and turn right onto Fulton Pkwy. Follow Fulton Pkwy and make a right onto Wildlife Way. Or, take Exit 161/10 to I-71 North to the West 25<sup>th</sup> Street exit then follow Zoo signs.

**From Akron:** Follow I-77 (north) to I-480 (west), exit at State Road (north) to Pearl Road. Follow Pearl Rd to Memphis Ave. Take a left on Memphis Ave. Take Memphis Ave to Fulton Pkwy and turn right onto Fulton Pkwy. Follow Fulton Pkwy and make a right onto Wildlife Way.

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## Arrival/Departure Procedures

**Arrivals:** Before Care arrival time is 7:30-8:30am. Full-day and half-day arrival time is 8:30-9:00am.

- Traffic may be VERY HEAVY on Mondays due to the Zoo being free for residents of Cuyahoga County and Hinckley Township. Please take this into consideration and allow for extra time.
- **Late Fees:** Any fees for late pick-up will be charged to your account. Late fees of \$10 for every 15-minute interval or part thereof will be assessed for:
  - half-day campers not picked up by 12:46pm
  - full-day campers not picked up by 4:16pm
  - after care campers not picked up by 6:01pm

-If your camper is going to be absent, please call the Zoo's Program Registration office at 216.635.3391 to notify our staff.

**Departures:** Half-day camp departure time is 12:30pm. Full-day camp departure time is 4:00pm. After Care departure time is 4:15-6:00pm.

**NOTE:** *If you need to pick your child up earlier than the designated departure times above, please discuss this with the Camp Coordinator when you drop your child off in the morning. If an emergency arises and you need to pick up your child immediately, please call the Zoo's Guest Resource Center at 216.635.3391.*

**For your child's safety, please follow these procedures when dropping off:**

- Monday – follow camp signs to Lion Lot. Park your vehicle in the designated Summer Day Camp area and walk your camper in through Gate K2. Walk your camper to the registration table. Registration tables will be arranged according to camper's age.
  - Summer Day Camp staff will meet you at the appropriate age group table. Here you can ask any questions you may have and have the opportunity to meet your child's camp counselor on that very first morning!
  - Camp t-shirts will be provided at this time. You will receive one t-shirt per week of camp you have registered your child for. If your child is registered for multiple weeks, we will distribute the appropriate number of t-shirts per camp week registered at their first check-in.
- Tues through Fri – drive up to Gate K2 following the flow outlined below. Parents/guardians should remain in their vehicle. Staff will assist your camper(s) out of the vehicle and into camp.
- Have your camper's lunch and any necessary medications with you at this time.
- Morning drop-off occurs between 8:30-9:00am.
- If Before Care was purchased, drop-off can occur any time between 7:30-9:00am.

**Camp Drop-off Diagram:**



**For your child's safety, please follow these procedures when picking up:**

- Drive-up pick-up occurs Monday through Friday.
- **Half-day** campers should be picked up from Gate K2 at 12:30pm. Follow the same procedures as morning drop-off.
- If After Care was purchased, those campers should be picked up from Gate K2 any time between 4:15-6:00pm. Follow the same procedures as morning drop-off.
- Afternoon pick-up begins at 4:00pm in the Steffee Center staff parking lot.
- Parents/guardians should remain in their vehicle. Staff will escort campers from inside the Zoo out to their vehicle and assist them inside.
- **TRAFFIC FLOW FOR DRIVE-UP PICK-UP:**
  - Upon entering the Zoo off of Wildlife Way, follow Summer Day Camp signage past Lion Lot and Gate M.
  - Make a U-turn before Gate N and follow the road back toward Gate M/Lion Lot.
  - Pull up to the Steffee Center staff parking lot where staff will scan your barcode and escort your camper(s) out to your vehicle.

**Camp Pick-up Diagram:**



- Please bring the **confirmation email** (mobile or printed) you received when you registered your camper(s). **This contains the QR code unique to your camper(s) and will be scanned at check-out.** Campers will not be released without this code. For the safety of all campers, we **cannot** release campers to anyone who does not have a QR code. If you are having trouble locating your registration confirmation with this QR code, please contact the Guest Resource Center at 216.635.3391.
  - **NOTE:** *If you are carpooling, be sure to have the QR code for each camper you are picking up.*
- Once each QR code is scanned, camp staff will release your camper(s) to you.
- These procedures have been established for the safety of your children. We appreciate your patience and understanding.

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## Behavior Policy

**Expectations:** Expectations of campers, parents, and staff include:

- Considerate treatment of all people; physically, verbally, and non-verbally.
- Considerate treatment of the Zoo's animals, facilities, landscape, and materials.
- Appropriate language always and in all situations.

To provide for the safe enjoyment of all campers, Summer Day Camp staff will not allow inappropriate behaviors. Examples of inappropriate behaviors include:

- Bullying
- Mistreating animals
- Name-calling
- Talking back
- Fighting
- Stealing
- Disobeying instructions or safety rules
- Swearing
- Deliberate property damage
- Disobeying safety regulations
- Breaking another camper's skin

The tools we use to help campers develop responsible and appropriate behavior patterns include discussions, clear communication about rules/expectations and consequences, and separation from the group to refocus/regain calm. Parents are notified of any major issues, and we appreciate your cooperation in helping keep Summer Day Camp safe and enjoyable for all.

In some situations, parents may be called to pick up a camper immediately, or a camper may need to remain home for a day as a corrective and reflective measure. Staff keeps a log of all corrective action that goes beyond a warning. Campers who exhibit persistent behavioral issues that require excessive staff attention or campers who engage in more serious behaviors may be immediately and permanently dismissed from Summer Day Camp. These behaviors include actual, threatened, intended, or implied physical violence towards campers, staff, or animals; grossly inappropriate gestures or actions; theft; and the use or carrying of illegal substances or items.

**Refunds will not be granted for campers that are dismissed from camp.**

While the behavior policy will be reviewed with all campers on their first morning at camp, please discuss this policy with your camper before that time. Summer Day Camp staff believe that your understanding of these expectations, and your support of them, is integral to your camper's positive experience.

Thank you for helping to make this year's Summer Day Camp a success for your child and fellow campers.

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## Do's and Don'ts

- **DO** send your child in comfortable shoes and clothing appropriate for the day's weather. Activities will take place rain or shine and campers will do a lot of walking. Counselors purposely avoid use of the Zoo trams throughout the summer, as crowds and lines get very long and can cut into the number of activities we can complete in a camp day. Umbrellas and raincoats are acceptable; however, your child is responsible for carrying those items throughout the day.
- **DON'T** send your child with money to spend in the food or gift shops. Campers will not be visiting these areas.
- **DO** remember to send your child with sunscreen and insect repellent if necessary. The Zoo cannot provide these items.
- **DO** remember to have your child wear their Summer Day Camp t-shirt each and every day of camp. The Zoo can be a crowded place and camp t-shirts are the easiest way to help counselors keep the group together.
- **DON'T** send your camper with cell phones, video games, or radio/portable speakers. Backpacks and water bottles are acceptable; however, your child is responsible for carrying those items throughout the day.
- **DON'T** send your child to camp if they experience any form of illness.

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## Participant Health Records

Campers needing any form of medication during the day must have a completed Parent/Guardian Request for Administration of Medication form on file at the Zoo before they will be allowed to take any medications, including:

- Prescription medication
- Nonprescription medication
- Food supplement

This form is not considered complete without a parent or guardian signature and date.

All medications will be kept in a secure location during the course of Summer Day Camp and will be administered at the appropriate times by trained staff. All medications must be clearly labeled with the camper's name and in their original packaging. Refrigeration is available if required.

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## Illness/Emergency Medical Procedures

In the best interest of your camper, as well as the other campers and the staff, please do not send your camper to camp when they are ill or show symptoms of a communicable disease. Please contact the Zoo's Program Registration office at 216.635.3391 if you know your camper will be absent.

Our camp follows the Ohio Department of Health "Communicable Disease Chart" in that if there is a concern a child may have a communicable disease, the parent/guardian will be notified, and an early pick-up will be required. Some symptoms of communicable diseases are diarrhea, severe coughing, difficult or rapid breathing, yellowish skin/eyes, conjunctivitis, temperature of 100° or higher coupled with other symptoms, untreated infected skin patches, unusual spots/rashes, sore throat/difficulty swallowing, vomiting, lice, and scabies. A staff member will remain with the camper until they are picked up.

In case of an emergency, staff from the Zoo's First Aid office will be dispatched to the camper's location to assess the situation. Camp staff will call the camper's emergency contact numbers if it is deemed that treatment or transport is necessary.