Zoo Camp: Parent Information Packet

Federal Tax ID #: 046-145-635

Dear Parents,

Thank you for registering your child for The Zoo in Forest Park & Education Center's Zoo Camp Program. We are busy gearing up for a fun-filled week of Zoo activities. Please read this information packet thoroughly to help you and your child prepare for a ZOORIFIC experience.

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Check-In and Check-Out procedures

Camp Hours:

- **Hours are 9-3 p.m. Mon.-Fri.**

Extended Care Hours:

- **Summer Extended Care Hours 8-9 a.m. 3-5 p.m. *previous notification is required for all extended care***
- **Winter Extended Care Hours: 8-9 a.m. and 3-4:30 p.m. *previous notification is required for all extended care***

Procedures:

1. **Enter Forest Park through the Sumner Avenue Gate. Present your park pass & say your child's name to the attendant at the toll booth. Follow the one-way road & bear right. Park in the Zoo Parking Lot (on the left after the ball field). Please be sure to have all of your child's paperwork with you if necessary for Check-in.**
2. **Walk your child to the Zoo Ticket Booth (our Main Entrance), by the lawn bowling area of Forest Park. At check-in a counselor will greet you and your child. PLEASE DONOT LET CHILD WALK UP TO OUR GATE ALONE. You must properly check-in with a counselor each day.**
3. **Check-Out location for all campers is also at the Zoo Ticket Booth. You do not need to let the attendant in our booth know that you're here. Wait outside the booth for your child's group to be brought to their specific location. You will need to sign your child/children out individually. Please be patient, as we need to properly check in/out each child. ONLY PEOPLE LISTED ON THE RELEASE FORM WILL BE ALLOWED TO PICK UP YOUR CHILD.**
4. **If you arrive past Check-in or Check-out time, please let our ticket booth attendant know, so that they can alert the counselor.**

General Information:

Lunch/Snacks:

- **Campers must bring their own lunch and drinks with them from home**
- **We spend the entire day outside, so please send your camper with a water bottle (a strap is helpful)**
- **Campers can come with a mid-morning snack or after-care snack**
- **Campers will not be permitted to leave zoo grounds for lunch**
- **A microwave will NOT be provided**
- **We are happy to work around food allergies; if your child needs a peanut free table please let your counselor know**

Dress:

- **Please send campers in weather-appropriate clothes each day. We spend the entire time outdoors.**
- **Pants & shorts are recommended instead of dresses & skirts**
- **Closed-toe, athletic style shoes are preferred, flip-flops are not permitted.**
- **Please label all of your child's belongings with their name**
- **We recommend a "just in case" pair of clothes on pond dipping day.**
- **If you wish to send your child with sunscreen or bug spray, please have it labeled**

What NOT to bring:

- **Please do not send any of the following to camp with your child: jewelry, electronics, stuffed animals, card games, collectibles, or other inappropriate items. These items will be confiscated and given to parents at the end of the day.**
- **One day each week, the children visit our gift shop. That should be the only day you send money with your child.**

Animal Contact:

- **Direct contact with all Zoo exhibit animals is not possible. We keep the safety of everyone in mind.**
- **Campers will have opportunities to have up-close encounters with our education animals.**
- **Campers will only touch/handle animals if they are deemed safe by our counselors**
- **No camper will be allowed to touch/handle animals if they cannot follow our safety procedures**

Frequently Asked Questions:

Who are the camp counselors?

- **Camp counselors are selected based on their experience working with children in a camp, school, or environmental setting. They must be in college studying education or a science-related field or have professional experience in a related field.**
- **All Zoo Camp Counselors must be at least 18 years of age and pass a Cori Check in order to be a Zoo employee.**
- **Counselors are energetic, responsible, dependable, and must an enthusiasm for wildlife and children.**
- **We utilize Crew in Training (CIT) volunteens ages 14-17 to assist our counselors**

How are the campers grouped?

- **Campers are grouped by age/and or grade levels.**
- **We have 3 separate groups: 6 & 7 year olds; 8-10 year olds; 11-13 year olds**

Can my child be in the same group as his or her friend?

- **We typically do not make exceptions to the grade requirements. All of our activities & lessons are age-appropriate. Placing children in the incorrect group can compromise activities.**
- **If the children are the same age, then they will be in the same group.**
- **We cannot adjust camper groups once Zoo Camp begins.**

What is the camper/counselor ratio?

- **We have one counselor for every 10 children in each group**
- **We utilize Crew in Training (CIT) volunteens ages 14-17 to assist our counselors**

What do I do with my child's medication?

- **Please be sure to complete all forms prior to your child attending our camp. Give your child's medication to our counselors daily at check-in (unless prior arrangements are made)**
- **You are responsible to take back any medication you gave the instructor when you arrive for pick-up each day**
- **If your child has severe allergies or conditions, please contact us prior to camp to ensure that we are meeting all of your child's needs**

Directions:

Driving Directions:

From Hartford

From Hartford and points south:

From Rt. I-91 North, take exit 2 in Massachusetts (several miles from the state line). Continue up the hill and the road curves to the left. Take a right at the traffic light onto Sumner Ave. Forest Park is on the right.

From Boston/Worcester

From Boston/Worcester, and points east:

Take the Mass. Pike (Rt. I-90) West to Rt. 291 in Chicopee. Follow Rt. 291 to Rt. I-91South in Springfield. Take exit 4 (Sumner Av to Rt. 83,). Take a left, under the highway. After the first traffic light, turn right, up Longhill Street. At the traffic light go left on Sumner Ave. Forest Park is on the right.

From the Berkshires

From the Berkshires and points west:

Take the Mass. Pike (Rt. I-90) East to Rt. 91South in Holyoke. Take exit 4 (Sumner Av to Rt. 83) Take a left, under the highway, go right, up Longhill Street, then go left on Sumner Ave. Forest Park is on the right.

From Greenfield

From Greenfield and points north:

Take Rt. I-91South to Springfield. Take exit 4 (Sumner Ave. to Rt. 83). Take a left, under the highway, go right, up Longhill Street, then go left on Sumner Ave. Forest Park is on the right.

Zoo Camp Directions

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