



Saint Louis Zoo

Animals Always®

Camp KangaZoo Frequently Asked Questions

What are the times, dates and prices?

Please go back to the Camp KangaZoo page and click on one of the links at the top of the page. There are links for Camp Joey (age 4- entering Kg,) Camp KangaZoo (entering 1st – 6th grades,) Teen Camp (entering 7th – 9th grades) and Teen Camp II (entering 8th – 10th grade.)

How do I register?

When you return to the Camp page, follow the link on the right sidebar for complete registration information. Mail in or online registration is available.

Will my child be with children his/her own age?

Yes. All of the campers that are registered for a session of Camp are organized into a list based on their birth date. If you have requested a buddy for your camper within one year in age, we make sure that the buddies are together (they are listed by the younger buddy's birth date.) For more info, see questions relating to the buddy system below.

If we have between 73 – 90 campers registered for a session, we divide the list into 4 equal groups. Thus the 20 or so youngest campers are together, the next 20 are together, etc. If we have 47 – 72 campers registered, they are divided into 3 equal groups, etc.

Although the activities that campers participate in are similar between age groups, Camp Instructors are excellent at modifying the lessons and activities to fit their group's abilities and interests.

What do the campers do all day?

Two different Camp themes are offered: Animal Clues and Codes and Animals in Action. The format of both camp sessions is the same. Each day starts with our amazing "Camp Rocks" music session, and then the campers split up into their age-based groups. The groups all rotate through activities during the day. Each day,

campers participate in a game, craft, live animal contact opportunity, Zoo tour and another activity that varies day to day. Campers come together each day for lunch, snack, and sometimes an “all-camp” activity. Both camps visit the Children’s Zoo, attend the Sea Lion show and ride the Zooline Railroad. Camp concludes with an overnight on Thursday night. Campers can take either one or both sessions.

What is the overnight like?

The overnight is the grand finale to a jam-packed week at Camp. Parents are invited to stay and participate in a special musical performance until 7:15 pm. After parents leave, the campers eat dinner together, perform skits that they have worked on during the week, and get to take a night hike around the Zoo. We go to bed between 10:30 and 10:45 pm, and sleep peacefully under the stars in our sleeping area in the Chain of Lakes. All is quiet except for the occasional lion roar and familiar call of the Zoo peacocks. If rain or dangerously hot weather is in the forecast, we sleep inside of Zoo buildings, either The Living World or the Exploration Outpost. We rise at 6:40 am, roll up the sleeping bags, eat a tasty breakfast, and then go for an early morning stroll around the Zoo. Morning pick up is at 8:30 am.

What is the difference between the two Camp sessions?

The camp sessions have different themes –Animal Clues and Codes and Animals in Action. Animal Clues and Codes activities focus on the classification of animals and the characteristics (physical and behavioral) which scientists use to classify animals. It incorporates games, problem solving mysteries and animal observation. Animals in Action will focus on animal behavior. Campers will observe animals to learn about what they do, how they move and use their exhibit, how they get along with other animals, etc., using the some of the same methods that scientists use.

Since the themes are different, the activities, games, crafts and tours are different between the two sessions. **Campers can take either one or both sessions.**

Which session should my child take?

Both sessions will be active, fun and awesome! Discuss the themes with your child and see if he or she seems more interested in one topic than the other. Or, take both! The themes complement and build on each other. Animal Clues and Codes focuses primarily on animal’s physical characteristics used in classification, where Animals in Action focuses more on what animals do and how that helps them to survive in their environment. Both sessions engage children in animal observation, scientific thinking, and present complex subjects in a meaningful, positive and very fun way.

Both of these camps were last offered in 2008. If your child attended Camp in 2008, he or she may recognize some of the activities, however, several of the activities

are new and improved, and your child will be five years older, so will be getting a very different experience.

Where are the Camps located at the Zoo?

Indoor activities occur at classrooms in the lower level of the Primate House, in The Living World and at the Exploration Outpost, located in the lower level of the Orthwein Animal Nutrition Center. Outdoor activities take place primarily in the yard and tents between the Primate House and the Herpetarium, at the green space in the Chain of Lakes, and in a yard near the Exploration Outpost. We also spend time at many animal exhibits, both indoors and out.

Why are there two different ending times?

It is not possible to do afternoon pick up for both camps at the same time, there would simply be too many cars! So, we have staggered pick up to ease traffic congestion around the Zoo. Animals in Action pick up is at 3:00 pm and Animal Clues and Codes pick up is at 3:30 pm.

What if I have children at both Camps?

Both camps will have pick up at the same location – along Wells Drive in the curb cut East of the bridge. If you arrive around 3:15 pm, you will be near the end of the “Animals in Action” line and the beginning of the “Animal Clues and Codes” line, so will be able to pick up both of your children. Please be patient with us during pick up. We do camper pick-up as quickly and efficiently as we can, however your safety and the safety of your children and our other visitors are our top priorities. Full details about pick up, drop off and other Camp policies are sent to you in the Camp information packet you’ll receive later this spring, after you register for Camp.

What if I also have a child at Camp Joey?

Camp Joey pick up will be on the North side of the Zoo, outside The Living World at 3:30 pm. We predict that Camp Joey pick up will be faster, since there are fewer children. If both of your camps finish at 3:30 pm, our advice is to pick up the Camp Joey camper first, then drive around to the South side of the Zoo for Camp KangaZoo pick up. Full details about pick up, drop off and other Camp policies are sent to you in the Camp information packet you’ll receive later this spring, after you register for Camp.

Can my child attend Camp with a friend?

Yes. The buddy system can only be used for mail in registration, not for online registration. If you include the registration form for your child and his/her buddy in the same envelope, they will both be registered for the same **session and week** of Camp. Friends that are no more than one year apart in age may request to be placed in the same **camper group**. To do this, write your child's friends name on the appropriate line at the bottom of your child's Camp Health/Information form. Please also have your child's friend write your child's name on his/her form. See the Registration Information for full instructions on registering for Camp with a buddy. Please keep in mind that buddies are placed into a group based on the younger buddy's birth date.

Can my child request more than one buddy?

Please do not request more than one buddy. Circles of several buddies in a group can make the other campers in the group feel left out. Also, since groups are formed based on the camper's ages, if several buddies are added to a group, even if only one year apart, it can push other campers into a group that is not their ideal age group. For instance, if a 7 year old designates several 8 year olds as buddies, all of the 8's will be placed in the 7 year old's group. This could bump several other 7 year olds into the next group up, which may contain primarily 8 and 9 year olds. Thus by sticking to the one buddy rule, you are helping to support all of the campers' having the most age-appropriate experience.

Please do not try to take advantage of the buddy system by creating buddy chains (A with B, B with C, C with D, D with A, etc.) If your child will not attend Camp unless he/she is with three or four friends, perhaps he/she is not ready to attend Camp. Remember that summer camps are an opportunity for your child to grow mentally, emotionally and socially by participating in activities and making new friends!

Who are the Camp Staff?

Each Camp session has a staff which includes 8 Seasonal Instructors (counselors), 2 or 3 Assistant Seasonal Instructors, and numerous teen volunteers. The Seasonal Instructors are primarily teachers and college students. The Assistants are high school or college students, and the volunteers are high school students. Some of our Instructors were campers themselves!

What is the counselor to camper ratio?

Camp KangaZoo maintains an average 1 to 5 counselor to camper ratio (1 to 4 for the youngest campers, 1 to 6 for the older groups.)

How can I be sure my child will be safe?

Your child's safety is our top priority and we have many procedures in place to assure the safety of your child. All of the Seasonal Instructors are trained in First Aid and CPR. We use the "rule of three" at Camp which ensures that an instructor is never alone with a camper. Instructors always work in pairs, and have assistants and volunteers with them, so there are plenty of eyes to watch your child and for staff to watch each other. Instructors carry two way radios, so if a child should become lost, we can immediately mobilize Zoo Security and others to help locate the child.

Our pick-up procedures are designed so that the parent can designate who will pick up their child. If the procedures are not followed, or we have any doubt whatsoever, we will not release the child without contacting a parent or an emergency contact person by phone. The entire Camp staff stays for the overnight, and the Zoo has overnight security personnel to keep your child(ren) safe. Camp staff and volunteers also undergo a background check.

It is important for parents to help us by notifying us of any allergies, special needs, behaviors to look for, etc. Please indicate these on the Health/Information form. If your child's condition changes, or if your contact information changes, please notify us before your child's Camp session.

Will my child feel welcome at Camp?

That is our goal. We pride ourselves on our ability to make every child feel welcome, respected and included at Camp KangaZoo. Camp staff receive training each year on how to meet the needs and create a welcoming environment for a diverse range of campers, including diversity of race, gender, culture, religion, economic status, ability, etc. Diversity is part of our camp culture and is one of our values. Camp is better because of the experiences your child brings. If you have concerns about your camper fitting in or being welcome, please contact the camp director to discuss your concerns.

What if my child has allergies?

Make sure to list your child's allergies, or other information about your camper, on the Camp Health/Information form. If your child requires medication, you can send the medicine with your child. The Camp staff can not administer medication, but we can remind your child to take medicine. If your child has a severe allergy or carries an epi-pen, please contact the Camp director in advance to discuss. If your child has food allergies or other dietary restrictions, you are welcome to send a snack with your child each day, or even send a special dinner with your child on Thursday night. Feel free to call the Camp director to discuss what snacks/foods will be served at Camp.

Is Camp accessible to children who use wheelchairs?

The Exploration Outpost and The Living World are fully accessible areas. Although the Primate House basement is not accessible, either of the Camp programs can be modified so that they are fully accessible. If your child uses a wheelchair, or needs assistance eating, walking or using the bathroom, please assist us by sending an aide to Camp with your child. Parents may want to contact the Recreation Council of Greater St. Louis and inquire about the program support voucher to help offset the costs of a personal attendant for children with greater needs.

Is Camp appropriate for children with other special needs?

Camp maintains an average 1 to 5 counselor to camper ratio (1:4 for the youngest campers, 1:6 for the older groups.) If your child requires more attention than this or needs one-on-one assistance, please assist us by sending an aide to Camp with your child.

Camp is an exciting, sometimes loud, environment. Children with sensitivities to loud noises, or that are very easily distracted, may be overwhelmed by Camp's energy and action.

Unisex/gender neutral restrooms are available around the Zoo, including in the classroom area that the Animals in Action camp uses frequently.

Please contact the Camp director to discuss your child's needs at least three weeks before your camp session begins, so that the best Camp experience can be provided. If you decide to send an aide with your child, the aide will need to undergo a background check before being allowed to attend.

Can I attend Camp with my child?

As a general rule, this is not allowed. However, if your child has special needs or requires one-on-one attention, you may come as your child's aide. Please contact the Camp director to discuss arrangements at least three weeks before your child's camp session begins, so that arrangements can be made for a background check. It could be confusing to young children if they see other children attending with a parent, when their parent was not allowed. A better choice would be to send an aide that is not a parent.

Can parents stay for the overnight?

No. But we do have awesome family overnight programs that are designed for parents and children to attend together. We can't let kids have ALL the fun!

What if my child does not want to spend the night at the Zoo?

We encourage all of the campers to spend the night at the Zoo. Usually, by Thursday night, the campers have made new friends, are very comfortable with the Zoo and their counselors, and are looking forward to the overnight. However, for campers that do not wish to stay, or for parents that are uncomfortable allowing their children to stay, we offer an optional 10:30 pm pick up on Thursday night. This allows the camper to participate in all of the evening Camp activities.