



Teen Camp 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. The Teen Campers only spend time with the younger campers at the beginning of the day for the daily introduction and the end of the day, while awaiting pick up. With only 18 teen campers per session, they are all together for most activities, and may divide into smaller groups for other activities. The Teen Campers sleep in a different location for the overnight and have a different overnight schedule than the KangaZoo campers.

Check in/Drop off for both Camp KangaZoo and Teen Camp occur at the same time and location each morning, and with up to 160 KangaZoo-ites and only 18 Teen Campers, your teen camper may not see campers their own age until they get to the Camp location.

My camper is entering 7th grade (Teen Camp age,) but his/her buddy is entering 6th grade (Camp KangaZoo age.) Can they attend Camp together?

Maybe. We do not allow 6th graders to attend Teen Camp, however, we will allow 7th graders to attend Camp KangaZoo with a 6th grade buddy, if space allows after our Early Bird registrations have been processed. Please call the Camp Director after March 25 to ask for this exception. We have been able to accommodate this request in past years.

What do the Teen Campers do all day?

This year's Teen Camp theme is Zoo Adventure. Each day starts with our amazing "Camp Rocks" music session, and then the Teen Campers join their counselors for the day's activities. Each day, campers participate in games, crafts, live animal contact opportunities, Zoo tours and small group activities or projects. On Thursday, teen campers will spend the day at Riverlands Migratory Bird Sanctuary, where they will kayak on one of the pools, explore nature, and learn about wildlife conservation projects going on at the Sanctuary. Camp concludes with an overnight on Thursday night. A complete list of what to bring to Teen Camp, the field trip and the overnight can be found in the parent packet that will be mailed to you.

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 with the Teen Camp and Camp KangaZoo campers and parents until 7:15 pm, or can just drop off their teen camper. After parents leave, the teen campers eat dinner together, go on a Zoo Photo Scavenger Hunt, perform skits that they have worked on during the week, and enjoy viewing each other's photo scavenger hunt pictures on the big screen. We go to bed between 11:00 and 11:30 pm, and sleep peacefully under the stars in our sleeping area near the Cheetahs. All is quiet except for the occasional cheetah chirp and hyena laugh. If rain or dangerously hot weather is in the forecast, we sleep inside the Exploration Outpost. We rise at 6:45 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 Zoo Adventure theme like?

In Zoo Adventure, campers will discover that animal care goes beyond the walls of the Zoo as they learn about habitats and animal care both at the Zoo and in the wild. It includes Zoo tours, games, crafts, and a mystery animal to discover each day.

Where is Teen Camp 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.

What if I have children at Camps with different pick up times?

Teen Camp pick up is at the same location as Camp KangaZoo. If you have a child in Camp KangaZoo Super Survivors and Teen Camp, try to arrive around 3:15 pm, you will be near the end of the “Super Survivors” line and the beginning of the “Zoo Adventure/Teen Camp” 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 3:00 pm. We predict that Camp Joey pick up will be faster, since there are fewer children. Our advice is to pick up the Camp Joey camper first, then drive around to the South side of the Zoo for Camp KangaZoo and Teen Camp 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 Teen 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 Teen 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. Most Teen Camp activities are done with the entire teen camp group together, so friends will already be together for most activities.

Can my child request more than one buddy?

In Teen Camp, most of the day is spent as one group of campers. There are only 18 teen campers per session. So it is not really necessary to request group buddies at Teen Camp. The buddy system is most useful for ensuring that both friends are placed in the same session (week.)

Who are the Camp Staff?

Teen Camp has a staff of 2 Seasonal Instructors (counselors), and a teen volunteer. The Seasonal Instructors are primarily teachers and college students. The volunteers are high school students at least 16 years old.

What is the counselor to camper ratio?

Teen Camp maintains at least a 1 to 6 ratio while at the Zoo. While on the field trip, staff from the Sanctuary also accompany the group and staff from the Alpine Shop help to instruct and supervise the kayaking portion, so the ratio is more like 1:3 or 1:4.

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 expect, 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.

Our field trip involves a kayak trip on one of the pools of the Mississippi. We are not in the current of the river, only flat, still water. Staff from the Alpine Shop provide safety and paddling instructions and are out on the water with our campers and staff. A motorized water safety patrol boat is also in the area when we paddle. All paddlers are required to wear life vests while on the water. The kayak portion of the field trip may be cancelled in the event of high water, or other unsafe conditions.

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 and Teen Camp. 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. Valuing (not just tolerating) diversity is part of our camp culture and is one of the Saint Louis Zoo's stated 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. If your child notifies of you any bullying at Teen Camp, please contact the director immediately.

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.

What if my child follows a special diet?

We have snacks on hand which would meet most if not all dietary needs, including fresh fruit (apples, bananas, oranges) and fruit flavored non-dairy popsicles. If one of our regularly offered snacks does not fit with your child's diet, we are happy to substitute one of our other snacks that day. Or, you can send a snack or meal with your Teen Camper. Feel free to call the Camp director to discuss what snacks/foods will be served at Camp on which days.

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, any of our 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.

Since Teen Camp includes an off-site field trip, please let us know as far in advance as possible about any accommodations which will be needed.

Is Teen Camp appropriate for children with other special needs?

Teen Camp maintains an average 1 to 6 counselor:camper ratio. If your camper 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 Teen 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 Teen 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.

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 11:00 pm pick up on Thursday night. This allows the camper to participate in all of the evening Camp activities. Our alternate Thursday night pick up time for Camp KangaZoo is 10:30 pm. If you have children in both Camps, please just let us know what time you wish to pick them up.

The camp registration fee is the same regardless of whether your camper spends the night.