



# SUMMER CAMP HANDBOOK



## CONTACT US

Email: [Camps@BrandywineZoo.org](mailto:Camps@BrandywineZoo.org)

Brandywine Zoo Education Department  
1001 North Park Drive,  
Wilmington DE 19802

Camp Office Phone  
302 - 407 - 4408

Afterhours  
302 - 407 - 4409

The Zoo camp office is often empty during check out. Use this number to reach our staff from 3-4 PM.

General Zoo Phone  
302 - 571 - 7788

Speak with the Zoo's administrative assistant, who will then contact camp staff.

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# ABOUT US

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Brandywine Zoo Summer Camp is designed to provide children the opportunity to spend the summer outside at the Zoo learning about animals, zoos, and wildlife conservation. Through our Summer Camp program we hope to inspire the next generation of wildlife conservationists and stewards of our natural world!

To register for camp, visit:  
[BrandywineZoo.org/Camps](https://BrandywineZoo.org/Camps)

## REGISTRATION AND REFUND POLICY

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In accordance with Delaware Health and Social Services, all Registration Forms (Household Information, Release Statement, Health Form, etc) found on the Camp Registration Portal must be completed for each camper. All forms must be completed at registration.

NOTE: Paper copies of past Delaware State Parks Camp or past Brandywine Zoo registration forms will not be accepted.

Payment is due in FULL at time of registration for camp. Campers may not attend if an outstanding balance exists. This may include, but is not limited to, outstanding payments for weeks of camp or late pick-up charges.

Refunds: Cancellations must be received by the first Monday in June (June 2, 2025) and will be subject to a \$50 administrative fee. There will be **no refunds after Monday June 2, 2025**.





## CAMP RULES AND EXPECTATIONS

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The Brandywine Zoo is committed to ensuring that all campers who attend Zoo Camp are provided a fun atmosphere where they can learn free of harassment or intimidation

- You and your camper are urged to inform any member of the Zoo staff of any conduct that is offensive or in contradiction to the Zoo's commitment to a harassment-free environment.
- All participants are expected to show respect for animals, teachers, fellow campers, themselves, Zoo staff, guests, and the facilities.
- Disruptive or dangerous behaviors and physical aggression are not acceptable.

Children who are extremely disruptive or exhibit unsafe behavior will face consequences outlined in our Zoo Camp Disciplinary Policy and repeat offenses may result in the expulsion from camp

### Brandywine Zoo Camp Rules:

- 1) Listen and follow directions
- 2) Participate in camp activities
- 3) Respect other campers and the animals
- 4) Respect the Zoo and the camp room
- 5) HAVE FUN!

## CAMP T-SHIRTS

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For camper safety, and to promote group cohesion, all campers will be required to wear a Brandywine Zoo Camp T-shirt everyday of camp.

Your camper(s) will receive one camp t-shirt for each camp week they are registered for. Additional t-shirts may be purchased during registration, through the camp registration website after registering, or on the first day of camp for \$10 each.

Camp shirts will be handed out on the first day of camp your child attends, or during designated shirt pick up days in early June.



# CAMPERS

Campers must be within the age range listed for each selected camp by the first day of that camp week.

Campers must be able to use public restrooms without any assistance.

Campers are expected to stay with their group, care for their own basic needs and participate in camp activities with children of the same age group. We host an active camp that prioritizes learning and being outside.

## DROP-OFF/PICK-UP

Campers are to be dropped-off and picked-up outside the Education Building following the **Zoo Camp Drop-off route** (see page 11).

### Drop off: 8:30-9 AM

Camp staff will wait at the curb in front of the Education Building with sign-in sheets to greet your camper in the drop-off line. Please make sure your child has been checked in with a zoo staff member before leaving.

### Pick-up: 3-3:30 PM (Mini camp pick up is 11:30-noon)

Camp staff will greet you at your vehicle in the pick-up line. Campers will only be released to adults listed in that camper's Designated Pick-up List. Those picking-up must present a **valid photo ID** everyday.

### Late Pick-ups

Campers who are not picked up on time will be charged a late fee of \$10 per camper for each 5 minutes you are late.

### Late Arrival/Early Pick-up

Late arrivals/early pick-ups will need to park and walk to the Education Building front door. Please notify camp staff as early as possible by email at [Camps@BrandywineZoo.org](mailto:Camps@BrandywineZoo.org). There is no refund for camp days missed.

## COUNSELORS

Brandywine Zoo Camps are well staffed by a mixture of adult paid staff and zoo interns. In addition, counselors are assisted by our teen volunteer assistant counselors.

Our camps meet or exceed the minimum counselor to camper ratio set forth by Delaware Health and Social Services for day camp programs.

All camp staff, interns, and volunteers must go through a background check before working with camp. Parents and guardians are not allowed to join camp groups.

**Remember to follow the Drop-off/Pick-up route found on page 10 of this handbook, and have the adult picking up bring their photo ID everyday.**

# A DAY AT CAMP

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Each camp week has an overall theme; within in that week, each day has a topic. These themes/topics inspire the activities and discussions for the day. Everyday at camp will be a little different, but the below is an average daily schedule.

- Free play during check in (8:30-9am)
- Rules/go over the day
- Daily topic discussion
- Zoo tour and snack
- Activities (games/craft/learning activity)
- Lunch (12-12:30pm)
- Recess (12:30-1pm)
- Cool down game inside
- Ambassador Animals visit the camp room
- Activity (game/craft/learning activity)
- Snack
- Free play during check out (3-3:30pm)

Most camp activities are held outdoors within the zoo or Brandywine Park.

Zoo Camp visits the Brandywine Zoo at least once per day, usually before the zoo opens for other guests.

Activity time may include crafts, games, or learning activities that highlight a concept or an animal from our daily topic discussion.

This schedule is subject to change. Changes may be made due to unexpected event, weather, special events/programs happening in the zoo, etc.

During pick-up, look for the “Today we...” board set up at the front of the car pick-up line. It will contain information about the games played, crafts made (if any), the topics/animals from our daily topic discussion, and the Animal Ambassadors that visited the camp room that day.

Each week campers are invited to participate in some special camp traditions.

- Shirt decoration - On Thursdays campers get a chance to decorate their camp shirts with fabric paint/markers. Older campers (10+) may reverse tie-dye their shirts with bleach.
- Handprints - Each year campers get to add their handprint to the wall!
- Gift shop trip on Friday - An optional trip, see page 6 for more information



# ZOO GIFT SHOP TRIP

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On the Friday of each camp week, there will be an optional trip to our gift shop, the Zootique. Your camper will have the option of shopping for souvenirs. Mini camps (4-5 year olds) will not visit the gift shop.

If you would like your camper to shop during this time, please provide them with a sealed envelope (to be handed to their counselor at drop-off, and kept with the counselor until reaching the gift shop) labeled with:

- Camper Name
- Amount of money enclosed (CASH ONLY)
- Brandywine Zoo Member number (if applicable)

The Brandywine Zoo is not responsible for misplaced money not handed to counselors at Friday drop-off.

All purchases will be put in each camper's cubby and not opened during camp.

The average amount spent by campers in our store is \$10 to \$15.

Unused money will be returned in a sealed envelope or bag.



Make sure to label all items  
your camper brings with  
their full name!

## WHAT TO BRING

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- Zoo camp t-shirt everyday (see page 4)
- Appropriate clothing for the weather, we will be outdoors most of the day.
- Close-toed and heeled shoes that are comfortable to walk or run in.
- A reusable water bottle.
- A packed, portable lunch every day (not needed for campers aged 4-5)

### Optional Items

- Two snacks
- Sunscreen.
- A full change of clothes (in case of games involving water or mud, as well as in case of bathroom accidents).
- Medications (if needed; see the Medications sections on page 5.

## WHAT NOT TO BRING

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- Electronics such as hand held games, iPods, cell phones, etc.
- Personal items such as toys, games, cards, stuffed animals, etc.
- Money (unless specifically for the gift shop visit on Friday - please give this money to camp staff during drop-off).
- Any other valuables or items that would upset your camper if they were to get lost.
- Shoes with wheels, such as Heelys or roller sneakers.

The Brandywine Zoo is not responsible for camper's lost, damaged, or stolen items.



# ANIMAL CONTACT POLICY

Campers will have opportunities for up-close encounters with Education Ambassador Animals each day. Our Ambassadors are not typically on public display and are brought out only for educational programs and special presentations. Campers will get an up-close experience during these presentations.

While some Ambassador Animals are able to be touched in a controlled setting, not all animals may be touchable based upon the species, number of campers, and camper behavior.

Campers are expected to remain calm and respectful during animal presentations. Campers that cannot behave appropriately will not be permitted to participate.

For the safety of all there is no direct contact with exhibit animals other than the animals in the Barnyard area (goats) when the Barnyard is open to guests. Campers participating in Jr Zoo Keeper Camp will occasionally assist keepers in animal habitats, but will not have direct contact with any of the exhibit animals.

Campers who violate the Animal Contact Policy will be disciplined as outlined in our Camp Disciplinary Policy.

## LUNCHTIME AND SNACKS

We require that campers bring a packed lunch, and a reusable water bottle everyday.

Lunch takes place at approximately 12 PM - those attending mini camp (4-5 years old) should not bring lunch.

We will have two snack breaks each day: one in the morning and one in the afternoon. If you would like your camper to have snacks for those times, please provide easily transportable snacks as snack time can take place anywhere throughout the park.

- Lunches and snacks should be portable and easily stored in a cubby.
- No microwave or refrigeration is available for camper lunches.
- To minimize waste, please pack food in reusable containers

Campers may pack nut related items, such as peanut butter, but may have assigned seating during lunch time to accommodate campers with food allergies

Any medical needs related to food should be noted in the Medical Form during registration.

**We require that ALL full day campers bring a packed lunch, and a reusable water bottle everyday.**

All medications must be given to camp staff upon arrival (no medications can be stored in cubbies or lunchboxes).

## DISCIPLINARY POLICY

Disrespectful behavior, foul or hurtful language, and violence toward camp staff, fellow campers and animals will not be tolerated. Bullying of any type, whether physical or emotional, will not be tolerated.

If it becomes necessary to take disciplinary action against a camper, the steps following steps may occur:

**1st incident:** verbal warning and an explanation as to why their behavior is inappropriate.

**2nd incident:** Staff will determine an appropriate consequence for the camper's actions (examples may include exclusion from participating in an activity). The camper's parents/guardians will be notified of their behavior during pick-up.

**3rd incident:** The child will be excused from camp without a tuition refund.

The Staff of the Brandywine Zoo, Delaware State Parks, and the Delaware Zoological Society reserve the right to bar any child from camps following a first incident in cases of serious behavior problems, including situations involving violence (or threats of violence) of any kind, stealing, or possession of drugs/alcohol/weapons.

Camp staff is not permitted to administer medication to your child. Zoo Campers may self-administer prescription medication including asthma inhalers and Epi-pens with parent/guardian permission and doctor's note. Campers may self-administer sunscreen and/or insect repellent without doctor's order.

Please make sure your child knows the correct dosage and how to use or apply the medication, as employees are prohibited from removing medication from its container.

Parents or guardians sending medications to camp should add it to the camper's Medical Information form on the registration website.

All medications must be given to camp staff immediately upon arrival (no medications should be stored in lunchboxes or backpacks).

All medications should be provided with original labels and will be stored in a secure location.

Inhalers/Epi-pens must have the camper's name on them, and will be kept with the camper's counselor at all times.





# CAMPERS WITH DIFFERING ABILITIES AND SPECIFIC NEEDS

The Brandywine Zoo Camp strives to meet the needs of all children. While we are a traditional camp (not specialized for specific exceptionalities), we welcome all children and do our very best to accommodate every child. In order for us to be able to help your child have an enjoyable experience at camp, we ask that you notify us of your child's differing abilities and specific needs prior to your child's first day of camp via the Camper Profile or Medical Information forms on the registration website. This may include information on allergies, accessibility concerns, behavioral, psychological or emotional conditions, or other differing abilities and needs.

Any pertinent information you provide will only be shared with the appropriate Zoo Camp Staff. You may also want to include "hints" or "tips" for relating to your camper in the Camper Profile. For example: their interests, what they are most comfortable with, or talking points to better relate with them.

The Brandywine Zoo provides a caring staff knowledgeable in their subjects and interested in working with children; however we are not able to provide staff trained in specialized medical, physical or behavioral needs, nor does it have additional staff for one-on-one support or care. If your child requires an aide at school or a paraprofessional, he/she may not attend camp without a pre-authorized aide or worker.

Our camp takes place in a highly stimulating environment both in the classroom and on zoo grounds. Children are expected to stay with a group, care for their own basic needs and participate in camp activities with children of the same age group. We host an active, outdoor camp and thus our program might not be suitable for every camper. However, the Brandywine Zoo Camp will make every effort to meet the needs of all campers.

Please contact us with any questions, concerns, or to provide additional information to help us meet your child's individual needs.





## CAMPER ILLNESS

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The Brandywine Zoo reserves the right to refuse entrance to camp or send a camper home for any medical issue. No reimbursements will be provided for early dismissals.

For the well-being of your camper and the safety of other campers in our program, if your camper shows signs or symptoms of issues including, but not limited to, lice, severe coughing or complaints of pain, pink eye, sore throat, vomiting, you will be asked to pick up your child immediately.

In the event a camper becomes ill, camp staff will notify the parent/guardian listed on the Registration Packet followed by those listed as emergency contacts, if parents or guardians cannot be reached.

We will follow the guidelines regarding any contagious diseases, including Covid, set for camp by Delaware Division of Public Health, as well recommendations made by the American Camp Association, the CDC, and the American Academy of Pediatrics.

We will also follow any protocols regarding the health and safety of the animals living at the Brandywine Zoo as set by the Association of Zoos and Aquariums and the USDA. The following protocols are currently in place for our camps. As recommendations change, these protocols may also change. We will update you of any changes that may occur via email.

- Campers must stay home if they are sick or experience any Covid related symptoms.
- Cleaning protocols will include disinfecting frequently touched surfaces, hard surfaces, and the general camp space.
- Masks may be required for some behind the scenes experiences for our older groups (ages 10+). Campers attending these experiences without masks will be provided a disposable mask to use. Campers not willing to wear a mask will be excluded from these experiences.
- Sanitizing shoe spray may be required some some behind the scenes experiences for our older groups (ages 10+).

These details are all subject to change, in following guidance from DE Department of Health and Social Services, the CDC, AZA, and USDA.

# ZOO CAMP DROP-OFF/PICK-UP ROUTE



## From Downtown Wilmington:

1. Take Delaware Ave to Van Buren St.
2. Cross the Van Buren St. Bridge. (cobblestone road)
3. Follow Van Buren St. all the way up the hill to the intersection of 18th St.
4. Turn LEFT onto 18th St.
5. Take the next LEFT onto Franklin Drive (across from Franklin St. Look for blue Zoo Camp directional signs. NOTE: Franklin Drive does not appear on Google Maps.)
6. Follow Franklin Drive through the park and around to the LEFT. This will bring you to the Brandywine Zoo's Education Parking lot. Here an education staff member will greet you and you will be able to drop-off your camper(s) right from your vehicle!

The Education Parking lot will NOT be accessible by vehicle from Van Buren Street (the cobblestone road) during drop-off and pick-up time periods.

Please remain in your vehicle throughout Drop-off and Pick-up unless you are helping to get your camper in/out of the car. Please DO NOT park in the Education Parking lot.

## 4-5 YEAR OLD MINI CAMPS (9-11:30AM)

**Tales of Tails:** Discover the tales inspired by amazing animals! Each day we will read an animal tale, then get hands-on to immerse ourselves in the story's theme with crafts, games, and other exciting activities. \*This will be a 4-day camp; no camp on Thursday June 19 in observance of Juneteenth.

**Color Me Wild:** Animals come in all shapes, sizes, and COLORS! Learn about our many colorful creatures, each day focusing on a different color!

## 6-7 YEAR OLD CAMPS (9AM-3PM)

**Talk to the Animals:** Noises, smells, and body language. Animals "talk" in lots of ways, but what are they saying? Join us and discover how you can talk and listen to the animals! \*This will be a 4-day camp; no camp on Friday in observance of July 4th.

**Slime, Poo, and Bugs Too:** What might be gross to us, could be the key to an animal's survival! Learn how condor poop helps them cool down, how lemurs fight with stink, and celebrate Camp Mud Day in this fun and messy camp.

**Continental Creatures:** Grab your passport and take off on a journey to learn about wildlife from around the world! Each day we will focus on a new continent and the animals and people that call it home.

## 8-9 YEAR OLD CAMPS (9AM-3PM)

**Legendary Creatures:** Unicorns, dragons, and bigfoot, oh my! Discover the legends of mythical creatures and the real-life animals they are inspired by, then invent a mythical creature of your own!

**Disguises and Surprises:** Camouflage and mimicry. Playing dead and acting tough. Learn about animal masters of deception, and the secrets behind their disguises and surprises!

June 16-20\*

August 18-22

June 30-July 3\*

July 14-18

August 4-8

June 23-27

July 28-Aug 1





## 10-11 YEAR OLD CAMPS (9AM-3PM)

**Wild Designs:** How do you build a zoo? What makes a great animal habitat? How do keepers prepare exhibits for more than one species? Learn about what zookeepers do to take care of animals and plan exhibits, then design an exhibit of your own!

## 12-14 YEAR OLD CAMP (9AM-3PM)

**Jr Zoo Keepers:** Ever wonder what being a zookeeper really involves? Discover how our animals are cared for, practice your husbandry skills cleaning an animal habitat, prepare animal diets, create enrichment, and visit behind-the-scenes to see how the zoo really works!

\*This theme is offered on multiple weeks—campers are only able to register for one session as both weeks include the same activities/schedule.

\*\*Jr Zoo Keeper Camp will include hands-on activities or tours in behind-the-scenes areas that may involve dirty and smelly tasks that are often outside and in cramped spaces. These camps require campers to be able to work cooperatively with peers and adults and to be able to follow directions promptly.

## OTHER DETAILS

4-5 Year Old Mini Camp: \$160 (\$130 for the 4-day camp Tales of Tails)

6-7, 8-9 Year Old Camps: \$260 (\$210 for the 4-day camp Talk to the Animals)

10-11, 12-14 Year Old Camps: \$360

Standard camps (ages 6+) run 9 am - 3pm.

- Drop off 8:30 - 9am, pickup 3 - 3:30pm

Mini camps (ages 4-5) run 9 am - 11:30am.

- Drop off 8:30 - 9 am, pickup 11:30am-3:30pm

July 21-25

July 1-5  
or  
July 8-12