



Pueblo ZOO

Summer Camp Handbook



Version 2026 Edition

Pueblo Zoo
3455 Nuckolls Ave.
Pueblo, CO 81005



Welcome to Pueblo Zoo Summer Camp!
Where Curiosity Meets Conservation

Located on 25 beautiful acres in Pueblo City Park, the Pueblo Zoo is an Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA) accredited facility and home to more than 400 animals representing 125 species from around the world.

Our mission is simple and powerful: To empower people to engage in the conservation of animals and their natural habitats.

Pueblo Zoo Summer Camp is committed to providing every child with the opportunity to learn, grow, and connect with nature. Campers are encouraged to build an appreciation for our environment - and for all the living things that share it.

What Makes Our Camp Special?

- Hands-on animal encounters and learning experiences
- Outdoor exploration and nature-based activities
- Discover animals from around the world and local wildlife
- Learn valuable outdoor and conservation skills
- Creative projects, games, and teamwork
- Build lasting memories, friendships, and a love for wildlife
- Explore the zoo like never before!

**Please review this handbook with your camper, contact us with any questions, and prepare to make this summer wild, wonderful, and unforgettable at
Pueblo Zoo Summer Camp!**



Contact Information

Renee Wahlen, Director of Education
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(719)561-1452 x 131

Marisa Quintana, Lead Counselor
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Education Department:
educationteam@pueblozoo.org

Emma Jarrett, Education Coordinator
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If you need to report an absence, please leave a message with the Director of Education at 719-561-1452 x131 or email: educationteam@pueblozoo.org

Summer Camp Staff

Staff includes individuals with various backgrounds who share a passion for nature, conservation, animals, art, and education. They have completed background checks, mandatory training, drug tests, and CPR/First Aid training. Most have a background or education in elementary education.

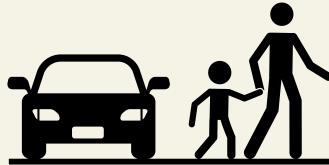
Education staff go through multiple in-house trainings that are specialized for our site and focus on the safety of the unique encounters that campers will experience. Education staff are occasionally assisted by ZooALIVE teen volunteers who also go through in-house training alongside our teachers.



Check in & Check out

Check in: 9:00-9:15AM

Check out: 3:50-4:00PM



Campers will need to be walked in and signed in by a parent/guardian at the Mandari Gate (Gate 2). Once signed in, campers will go to their counselors and start the day.

- Plan for a little extra time on Monday morning to get through check-in stations, pick up t-shirt, add-ons, and introductions.

Parent/guardians will pick up their children at the same Mandari Gate. Please sign the *Sign In/Out Sheet* before leaving.

- Notice will be given for any special zoo events that may change the pick up location.
- If you need to pick up your child before 3:50pm, please come to the front gate for pick up.

Authorized Pick-Up:

- **Anyone picking up your child must have a valid state issued I.D. DAILY for check out.**
- Their name must be listed on the authorized pick-up list in the child's file.
- In the event that an unauthorized adult attempts to pick up your child, zoo staff will contact the primary guardian for authorization.
- If this authorization cannot be confirmed, we will wait until an authorized adult arrives to pick up.

The Pueblo Zoo does not accommodate early drop off opportunities for any of our education programs. Please arrange to have your camper ready for drop off between the normal check-in times of 9am to 9:15am. We do not offer an extended care option. Beginning 10 minutes after camp ends, there will be a late pick-up fee of \$5 per five minutes charged (ex. camp ends at 4pm, camper is picked up at 4:22, a \$15 fee will be charged).

Behavior Guidelines

Pueblo Zoo Summer Camp understands that children are learning in all aspects of their lives and that learning appropriate behaviors is a process. If inappropriate behavior becomes an issue, whenever possible, education staff will attempt to work with the child to make sure they understand what is expected of them. Nevertheless, we are committed to maintaining a safe environment.

In anticipation of your child's participation in Summer Camp, the following expectations should be reviewed before attending:

- Follow zoo staff directions and rules at all times
- Listen when someone else is speaking
- Treat others with dignity and respect
- Be respectful of Zoo property and the property of others - no climbing/hanging on Zoo trees
- Keep your hands, feet, and other objects to yourself
- Campers are expected to participate to the best of their ability in activities, games, and crafts
- Make responsible choices - stay with the group at all times, and use materials properly
- Express feelings verbally and seek out help from counselors and staff instead of reacting towards other students
- Talk to your counselor if you have a question or problem. We won't be able to help if we don't know your concerns
- Be safe, have fun, learn!

Minor Behavior Challenges to Expect at Summer Camp:

In these situations, counselors will handle the behavior with a reminder of Summer Camp expectations, redirection, conversation, and/or a calm down space. The counselor/staff will talk to the person picking up the child and explain expectations moving forward. Families may be called in for a meeting if the above methods are not successful.

- Touching or poking (getting inside the space bubble)
- Talking when someone else is talking
- Not following directions when asked
- Playing around in the bathroom
- Reoccurring minor meltdowns (getting upset and crying)
- Not staying with the group (wandering off, lagging behind, going in front of the adult)
- Whining or complaining
- Rudeness like arguing or talking back

Education staff may wish to discuss a campers behavior during the day (positive and negative) at check out. Please help by reinforcing all Summer Camp rules and communicate any suggestions/strategies that would be helpful to set a student up for success during their time at Summer Camp.

Serious Behaviors That Will Not Be Allowed:

Serious behaviors require counselor and the Director of Education involvement. These behaviors jeopardize the campers' safety or someone else's safety. Camper behavior that causes a safety concern for other participants or Zoo guests will require the camper to be sent home immediately. Examples include, but are not limited to:

- Multiple incidents a day, severe meltdowns, explosive outbursts, anger, yelling, screaming/extreme non-compliance (requiring all staff attention)
- Intentionally running off from the group after being told not to
- Physical violence such as hitting, biting, kicking, punching, scratching, etc.
- Throwing an object at someone else with the intent to injure them
- Refusing to follow safety instructions that could cause them or someone else injury or harm
- Verbal intimidation such as bullying, taunting, name-calling, swearing, or threatening violence
- Injuring another camper, a Zoo guest, animal, or a Zoo staff member

When the incident occurs, the counselor will immediately call the Director of Education to remove the camper. They will then reach out to the camper's emergency contact to have them pick up the camper and bring them home.

There are situations where a camper reports a serious behavior issue with another camper, yet it was not observed by either the counselor or other staff. In these instances, we will separate the campers. We will also focus additional attention to observe both campers. However, we will not remove the camper unless a behavior is observed by staff.

While we strive to do all we can to resolve any conflict and inappropriate behavior, the Pueblo Zoo does reserve the right to suspend or remove any child at any time for situations that involve fighting, hitting, threatening, stealing, property abuse, or carrying of weapons. Families will be notified immediately. The decision to continue or end the child's participation in that and other camps will be determined based on the severity of the harm caused. Refunds will not be issued.

Health & Safety Guidelines



If your child is not feeling well, please do not send them to the zoo.

Prescription/Non-Emergency Medications:

Zoo staff will not administer non-emergency medication to camp children. If a child requires non-emergency medication during camp hours, a parent/guardian must come to the zoo and administer the medication. By attending camp, families acknowledge their responsibility to administer medication to their child only.

Emergency Medication:

If a child has an emergency medication like epinephrine or an inhaler, families will hand over the medication in its original container to that child's counselor at the start of the day. It is recommended to put that medication in a plastic ziplock bag with the child's name on it. The lead counselor will carry those medications in the first aid bag at all locations throughout the day. It will be sent home at the end of each day. If the camper requires administration of emergency medication, the lead counselor will assist in administering it and will follow medical emergency protocol.

If a parent/guardian brings their child to Summer Camp without their emergency medication, they will be asked to leave with the child and return with the medication. For their safety, children with emergency medication are not allowed to attend camp without their emergency medication handed to the lead counselor each day.

Illness:

If a child falls ill during the camp day, a parent/guardian or emergency contact will be notified to come and pick up the child within the hour. The child will be pulled from activities and given a safe space to rest comfortably with appropriate accommodations. If an illness worsens quickly, zoo staff will contact the proper emergency medical personnel if deemed appropriate. If a child contracts a contagious disease and has been attending Summer Camp, please notify us immediately. We will notify all families if their child has been exposed to a contagious illness while at camp. Children will be sent home due to the following:

- They have a temperature of 101 or above
- They have diarrhea causing “accidents”
- They vomit and it was not caused by coughing, crying, or motion
- They are suspected of having a contagious illness
- They are not well enough to participate in activities

Injury:

Families will be notified about minor injuries such as scrapes, lost teeth, or bruises at pick-up. More severe injuries such as head injuries, broken teeth, or sprains will initiate a call home to parent/guardian. If an injury is deemed severe, staff will follow the medical emergency protocol.

Allergies:

The Pueblo Zoo cannot guarantee safety from exposure to any foods that can cause an allergic reaction. If a severe allergic reaction occurs and the child has an epinephrine pen, staff will follow the emergency medication administration protocol and contact emergency personnel. Parents/guardians will be contacted immediately after. If a severe allergic reaction occurs and the child does not have emergency medication, staff will contact emergency personnel. Parents/guardians will be contacted immediately after.

Medical Emergency:

All counselors are trained in CPR/First Aid. The lead counselor will administer emergency medication if necessary. Additional staff will monitor the other children and radio the appropriate communications to zoo staff. Appropriate emergency medical personnel will be contacted. Parents/guardians will be contacted and an incident form will be completed by the end of the day. Any injury or illness deemed an emergency will include emergency personnel to be contacted.

Weather Guidelines

Be weather wise and send your child to Summer Camp with appropriate clothing. Layers are recommended. Staff cannot apply sunscreen to campers, so ensure children have sunscreen applied before drop off. Bug spray is also recommended. Hats and lighter long sleeve shirts are a good option for sun protection. Campers should wear closed-toed shoes and play clothing that can get dirty or wet. A change of clothing can be kept in a camper's backpack just in case.

Camp Ratios & Other Safety Measures:

Our camps are limited to a 20 child capacity. There will be 1 adult staff for every 10 children, with a minimum of 2 staff per camp. Zoo staff will do a “safety sweep” of each location before campers are allowed to play in that area. This is to ensure there are no major hazards such as: snakes, skunks, broken glass, etc. In that time, ZooALIVE teens or volunteers are counted as staff ratio for short periods throughout the day.





Supply List

Please send your child to Summer Camp with the following:

- Reusable water bottle
- A packed lunch and two snacks (unless purchasing lunch)
- Backpack
- Closed-toed shoes
- Clothing appropriate to play in
- Extra set of clothing (just in case)

Do not send the following:

- Money
- Jewelry or other valuables
- Trading cards/toys/games
- Food to share
- Weapons or anything representing a weapon
- Cell phone, tablet, or other electronic devices



The Pueblo Zoo is not responsible for any lost or stolen personal belongings. Anything deemed distracting by the counselors will be asked to be placed in backpack until free time or end of camp.

Lunch & Snacks

Please pack food that does not need to be heated or kept cold. We do not allow children to share food. Please do not bring any food to camp to be shared with other campers to avoid any food allergy problems. The Pueblo Zoo cannot guarantee a nut free zone. Please ensure all food allergies are clearly communicated to staff so proper precautions can be taken. There are two snack breaks at camp, one in the morning and one in the afternoon.

Please provide two snacks in addition to a lunch for each child.

Hydration

We take hydration very seriously. Campers should come to camp with a reusable water bottle each day. Camp staff will make several stops a day to allow campers to fill their water bottles.



Add-ons

Safari Café Lunch

Camp lunch can be purchased for \$40.00 for the whole week (daily options are not available). And no substitutions for allergies or preferences. Lunch package must be purchased at registration or by the Friday before camp week. **Counselors cannot take money from families/campers for lunch or merch purchases.**

Pizza Fridays

Add on \$5 for your camper to participate in Pizza Friday. Purchase this add-on during registration or by the Friday before camp week.

If you have purchased the weekly lunch package, Pizza Friday is INCLUDED in the \$40 lunch fee.

Exclusive Summer Camp Merch

The camp registration fee includes a summer camp camp t-shirt and camp drawstring bag for each camper and will be provided at sign-in on Monday. There is a choice of shirt colors, so if the camper is attending more than one week, they can select a new color each week. The camp t-shirt should be worn daily. This shirt is easily identifiable for camp and zoo staff and allows counselors to manage their groups more effectively. Campers are welcome to wear past years' camp t-shirts as well.

Other camp merch add-ons include:

Water bottle - \$5

Camp baseball hat - \$15

Please purchase these add-ons during registration or by the Friday before camp week. Counselors cannot take money from families/campers for lunch or merch purchases.

2026 Summer Camp Schedule

Date	Age and Theme	Age and Theme
June 8-12	1st-2nd: Animal Tales: Once Upon a Paw - Come write, draw, imagine, and let your favorite animal be your muse—because every great story starts with a little imagination and a lot of heart!	3rd-4th: Art in Nature - Grab your pencils, open your imagination, and let the zoo be your canvas! Plan to attend the Pueblo Zoo Art Show at 3pm on 6/12 to view the masterpieces!
June 15-19	1st-2nd: Animal Super Powers - Come discover the science of the senses and experience the world like our animals do as we dive into the weird, wild, and wonderful ways animals sense the world.	3rd-4th: Creepy, Crawly, & Cool: Radical Reptiles! - Come explore the wild side of nature with the most radical reptiles and awesome amphibians around! This camp will be un-frog-gettable.
June 22-26	3rd-4th: Apex Predators - Through exciting games, simulations, and up-close Zoo experiences, campers will think like predators and learn why the wild needs them.	5th-6th: Zookeepers to the Rescue! - Campers will go behind the scenes to explore what a real zookeeper's day looks like and how zoos play a role in conservation through the Save Animals From Extinction (SAFE) program.

SUMMER CAMP BREAK: JUNE 29-JULY 3

July 6-10	1st-2nd: Life on the Farm - From feeding animals, growing food, and sharing the harvest - welcome to the farm-Zoo style!	3rd-4th: Flying Wild with our Feathered Friends - Calling all bird lovers and future scientists to experience creative experiments, close-up animal encounters, and outdoor exploration!
July 13-17	3rd-4th: Animal Olympics - With lots of outdoor play, friendly competition, and cooperative games, this camp is perfect for kids who love to move	5th-6th: Zoo Doctor - Campers will be able to work with our zoo vet during this hands-on experience. It's a great introduction for children curious about how we keep wild animals healthy.
July 20-24	1st-3rd: Prehistoric Journey: Exploring the World of Dinosaurs - Grab your explorer hat and get ready for a dino-mite adventure full of science, imagination, and digging in the dirt fun	1st-3rd: Prehistoric Journey: Exploring the World of Dinosaurs - Grab your explorer hat and get ready for a dino-mite adventure full of science, imagination, and digging in the dirt fun
July 27-31	1st-2nd: Butterflies, Bees, and Beetles: Explore the World of Insects - Grab your butterfly net and magnifying glass—it's time to go investigate these tiny critters!	3rd-4th: Nature Detectives: Hot on the Trail! - Calling all curious minds and sharp-eyed explorers! Campers will step into the role of wildlife investigators to solve nature's greatest mysteries.

Registration - www.pueblozoo.org/camps

- Grades listed are what the camper is going INTO for the coming school year
- Do not sign up for more than one grade level per child
- Campers must be six years old by the first day of camp
- Registrations are on a first come, first registered basis
- Camp fee payments are due at registration



Cancellation policy:

- Programs run rain or shine
- We reserve the right to refuse enrollment to anyone or dismiss without refund any student for behavioral issues
- No refund for cancellation less than one week before camp or for missed full or partial days

Limited camp scholarships are now available. Submit an application through our website: <https://www.pueblozoo.org/camps>. Scholarships are awarded until funding is exhausted.

Families: Please read and review this handbook with your child(ren). Sign and return this bottom portion as acknowledgement of your intent to support the policies of Summer Camp and the Pueblo Zoo.

Parent/Guardian Name

1.

2.

Camper Name(s)

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date