

Summer Camps FAQ



Program Schedule & Procedures

How old does my child have to be to participate in summer camps at Sunset Zoo?

Animal Crackers is the youngest summer camp, and all participants must have completed kindergarten. Thus, this camp will mainly comprise of children ages 6 and 7 with the potential for a few 5 year olds that have summer birthdays.

Where are summer camps at Sunset Zoo held?

All summer camps at Sunset Zoo are based in the Nature Exploration Center. Each camp has a designated room where they will begin and end each day. Throughout the day, however, each camp will split the time up between inside and outside activities.

What are the session times for Sunset Zoo's Summer Camps?

All summer camps at Sunset Zoo run Monday through Friday with drop off starting as early as 7:30 a.m. and pickup by either 12:15 p.m. or 5:30 p.m. depending on full or half-day session except the first week. The first week starts on Tuesday due to Memorial Day. Sunset Zoo does not prorate any program, so the first week is offered at the same cost as the others.

Do I need to sign my child in every morning?

Yes, this process is required. Staff will manage the sign in/out forms. Failure to follow this procedure will result in termination from the program. Our license that allows us to operate depends on this.

Can I drop my child off late?

Yes. If campers arrive prior to 8:30 a.m., they should report to the classroom where the camp is based. If they arrive after 8:30 a.m., please check in with the office. Please note that if the camp is not in the classroom, the parent/guardian will need to walk the child to the location of the group within the zoo.

How can I reach my child in an emergency?

If this situation arises, contact Sunset Zoo's main office at 785-587-2737 or check in at the Ticket Booth. They will direct you to where your child's camp is located.

Can I pick my child up early?

Yes. If you know in advance, please let staff know when dropping off your camper. Regardless, you will need to check in at the ticket booth when picking up your camper early. They will radio your camper's supervisor to determine their location, and you will need to go to their location to sign them out. Staff is unable to bring your child to you at the zoo entrance. Thus, plan your time accordingly, and know the name of the camp they are enrolled in to expedite this process.

Is it okay to have someone other than a parent or guardian pick up a camper?

*Yes, but everyone you want to be able to pick up your camper must be listed on the Health Assessment form and/or on an attached piece of paper if there is not enough space. **In addition, you MUST list someone other than a parent/guardian that has authorization to pick up your camper in case of emergency. This is required by our KDHE license.***

Can campers bring personal items to the summer camp?

Sunset Zoo strongly discourages campers from bringing personal items to camp, and will confiscate items if they are used during summer camp. Summer camp supervisors have a procedure they follow regarding confiscating personal items. This procedure is available upon request. All confiscated items

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will be returned at the request of the camper at the end of the day or if requested by the individual picking up the camper. We do understand bringing personal items may be necessary, and will not require them to be taken with parent dropping off a camper. They just need to remain in the bag they were brought in during camp.

What if a camper becomes ill during camp?

The summer camp supervisor will contact parent/guardian or emergency contact to inform them of the situation. Sunset Zoo follows the exclusion policy suggested by KDHE, and is available in the parent handbook. If a camper is not picked up in a timely manner, late fees may be assessed.

What is the schedule of activities?

Sunset Zoo's summer camps follow a general outline, but it is subject to change.

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|---|---------------------------|
| 1. Morning Meeting | 6. Lunch |
| 2. Introductory Lesson | 7. Educational Video |
| 3. AM Zoo Tour | 8. Activity |
| 4. Snack/Outdoor Free Time (Weather Dependent) | 9. Snack/Indoor Free Time |
| 5. Activity and/or Craft | 10. Activity |
| | 11. PM Wrap Up |

Summer Camp Paperwork

If a camper attended Adventure Camp during the school year, does the paperwork have to be filled out?

Yes. For security and confidential reasons, this paperwork is required to have dates indicating when it is valid. Thus, every season of programming we have to have new paperwork on all campers.

If my child attended Sunset Zoo's summer camp last year (2016), do I have to complete new forms?

*No. However, upon enrollment you need to email Jared Bixby at bixby@cityofmhc.com if you did not request a copy of your child's forms from last year with your child's full name and date of birth. In addition, please send us any changes in your information, like updated phone numbers, address, other adults authorized to pick up your child, and any other changes that might impact how we provide care for your child. **This CANNOT take place the day you drop your child off for camp. You will be asked to complete new forms if this is not done PRIOR to first day in camp.***

Does the Emergency Authorization form have to be notarized?

No, it is not required to have this form notarized but encouraged. Parks & Recreation and Sunset Zoo have taken steps to have notaries on staff so this service can be provided for free on these required forms. You may also have a witness sign the form instead of a notary.

What if paperwork is not completed before the first day of summer camp?

Campers will not be allowed to stay with the camp if their paperwork is incomplete or not turned in. Parents/guardians will be given the opportunity to complete required paperwork when dropping off their camper if not done in advance. Our KDHE license requires us to have certain paperwork on file for each camper enrolled. Thus, campers onsite without paperwork is in violation of our license.

Do immunization records really have to be provided with the paperwork?

Yes. You can provide this information by completing the form provided or submitting a copy of the child's Kansas Certificate of Immunizations (KCI).

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My child has seen the doctor in the past year; do I really need to take them back to the doctor just so they can attend summer camp?

No. Our license through the Kansas Department of Health and Environment indicates any of the following forms may be substituted for the one provided: Kan-Be-Healthy Assessment Form, Physician Health Assessment Form, or a School Health Assessment Form.

Summer Camp Supervisors

Do you conduct background checks on your staff?

Yes. The City of Manhattan conducts background checks on all staff and volunteers. In addition, all staff and volunteers working with children are included on our KDHE license, and they run a KBI background check on all individuals listed.

How do you hire your summer camp supervisors?

All our summer camp supervisors have graduated high school and have experience working with children and/or animals. Many of our summer camp supervisors are made up of our program assistants. These are staff that work year round at Sunset Zoo delivering education programs to school, scout, church, and other groups. In addition, our license through the Kansas Department of Health and Environment sets minimum training and experience standards for staff, which include training in child development, identifying signs of child abuse and neglect, and First Aid/CPR.

How does Sunset Zoo staff its summer camps?

Each summer camp will have a lead supervisor that will be responsible for the activities. In addition, we schedule support summer camp staff to assist the lead supervisors and coordinate activities between the different camps depending on total enrollment.

Other Questions

Do Sunset Zoo's summer camps take field trips?

Nature Navigators are the only camp that can travel, but this is still not a weekly activity. Animal Crackers and Summer Safari do not go on field trips unless they are within walking distance. An example of a walking field trip would be to City Park and/or the Manhattan Arts Center. All field trips will pertain to the week's theme, and notices/permission forms will be given out before a field trip is taken.

Does Sunset Zoo provide food for campers during summer camps?

Sunset Zoo provides AM and a PM snacks during camp. Campers must bring a sack lunch or money to purchase lunch from the concession stand. We ask that lunch being purchased from the Zoo's concession stand be taken care of with staff at drop off. We have forms that parents can complete and attach money to with change being provided at pickup.

Can a parent eat lunch with their child?

Yes. Parents are welcome to join their child in camp for lunch or pick their child up and drop them back off after lunch. If you want to join us, you can use the same preorder form if you'd like to purchase lunch from our concession stand. This will keep you from waiting or even having to pick up your food. If you want to pick up your child for lunch, you will need to sign them out and back in upon return.

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Will campers visit the gift shop?

Sunset Zoo offers select items campers may purchase at a discounted rate. These items are listed on a checklist available to all families each week. Payment for items must be made at the time the checklist is returned, and campers will be provided the items purchased near the end of the day on Friday.

Will campers interact with animals during summer camps at Sunset Zoo?

All camps include the use of animals from our education animal collection. These animals are utilized during school and other programs conducted throughout the year. They are used to being handled by trained staff and volunteers, as well as being around groups of people. Campers will NOT enter animal exhibits, but will visit animals in the zoo every day.