INDIANAPOLIS ZOO

CAMP

Summer Camp Guidebook

Contact Information for Zoo Camp:

Email: edustaff@indyzoo.com

Phone: 317-630-2000

Please read this packet carefully to prepare for a great camp experience!

Welcome to Zoo Camp, an engaging and educational mix of Indianapolis Zoo exploration, games and activities.

Read on to make sure your camper is ready for the wild adventure that awaits!

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Camp Hours

Zoo Camp Check-in: 8:45am–9am

Zoo Camp Check-out: 3pm

Extended Care Hours: 7:45am–9am & 3pm–5pm

In the case of an emergency or delay preventing timely check-out of your child, please call the Zoo Camp Team at 317-630-2000.

Extended Care requires pre-registration and costs $45 for 3-day camps and $75 for 5-day camps. To register, please contact our Zoo Camp team prior to the start of camp.

For assistance, please reach out to our Zoo Camp team at edustaff@indyzoo.com or **317-630-2000**.

Respecting the Rights and Dignity of All Individuals

"Respect everyone and everything" is one of the first things campers will hear upon arriving at Zoo Camp. This rule is at the heart of everything we do. Counselors will guide campers through healthy ways to develop and demonstrate respect for nature, animals, property, each other and themselves. We strive to make Zoo Camp a place where diversity and differences are appreciated and celebrated, both in the natural world and in the classroom.



Camp Goal and Outcomes

While we have a variety of topics and experiences available, our Zoo Camp shares one common goal:

Campers will have enriching, hands-on experiences that will nurture an understanding and respect for wildlife and the natural world.

Throughout our camp and in line with our main goal, our counselors will use Zoo walks, teaching games, activities and hands-on experiences to promote physical, social, mental and emotional wellbeing. Our camps are designed to foster age-appropriate developmental skills, such as communication, self-confidence, respect and teamwork. In addition, we aim to develop and encourage respect for and engagement with nature and wildlife. It is our hope that campers will become ambassadors for the world we share. You can encourage this outcome by asking your campers some of these questions after camp each day:

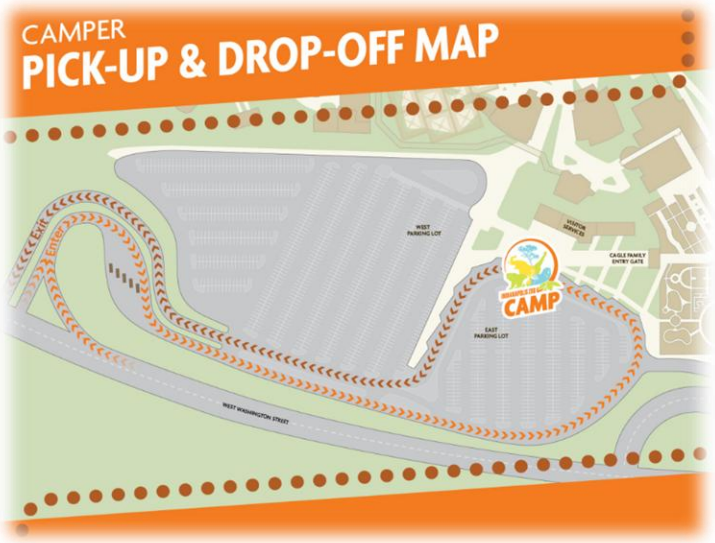
- *What animals did you see today?*
- *What did the animal look like?*
- *What did the animal eat?*
- *What was its habitat like? What was unique about it?*
- *What did you learn about today?*
- *What was interesting about it?*
- *What was your favorite activity today?*
- *What did you do today that you are proud of?*
- *What did you learn about others in your group?*
- *What did you learn about nature that you can share with others?*

 For assistance, please reach out to our Zoo Camp team at edustaff@indyzoo.com or **317-630-2000**.

Camp Day Check-in and Check-out Procedures

Where to Go

Check-in and check-out for Zoo Camp will be in front of the Visitor Services Center in the Zoo's east parking lot. Any changes in location will be communicated in the confirmation email you will receive one week before your child's camp. **In the event of severe weather, any changes to pick-up time or location will be communicated by email and/or text to the primary email/phone in CampDoc**. Please check this email if there is severe weather. Click here for a larger version of the map.



Check-in & Check-out Procedures

- If you encounter Zoo staff at the parking booths, simply let them know that you are dropping off or picking up a child in Zoo Camp. Please obey all stop signs and the speed limit of 15 mph.
- Enter the Zoo parking lot and continue straight toward Visitor Services Center until you reach the east (second) parking area. Turn left along the curbline and proceed until you reach the Indianapolis Colts Welcome Plaza and enter the car line.
- Pull up to the next available camp counselor. **Please stay in your vehicle.**
- At check-in, a Zoo Camp staff member will greet your child, help them out of the car, and make sure they have their belongings for the day. **Do not drop off a child without checking in with camp staff**.
- On the first day of camp check-in, you will be given a printed Camper Number placard for your child to streamline the check-out procedure. If you have multiple children riding together in one vehicle, you will receive only one number for all of them. If they will not all be riding together every day of camp, each camper will be assigned a different number.
- If you are signed up for more than one week of camp, you will receive a different number each week.
- Place your child's Camper Number on a visible part of your car's dashboard during camper check-out. **For your camper's safety, we will not release your child unless the appropriate check-out number or a photo ID is provided at check-out**. If the child will be picked up by someone else, the Camper Number can be written on a piece of paper and be presented at check-out. Remind anyone that is on your approved pick-up list to have their ID ready if they don't have the Camper Number placard.
- During check-out, staff members will use the Camper Number from your dashboard to coordinate getting your child ready and bringing them to your vehicle. **Please do not get out of your car in the pick-up lane.**
- Please contact our office if you are running late. Unless arrangements have been made at least 24 hours in advance, Parents/Guardians who fail to pick up camper(s) after 15 minutes of the scheduled pick-up time will be charged the aftercare fee, and campers will be brought to aftercare.
- In the event a camper is not picked by 5:15pm and we are unable to get in touch with a parent or guardian, the Zoo Security Team will be notified to assist with next steps.

Help Us Keep Everyone Safe

- For the safety of campers, parents, staff and other Zoo guests, **please remain in your vehicle during check-in and check-out**. Please pull out of line or park if you need to exit your vehicle to adjust car seats, attend to other children, obtain items from your trunk, etc.
- If you would like to speak with your child's counselor or another staff member, please park and walk up to the gate after you have checked your child in or out for the day.
- Please be patient. This process does take time, especially on Mondays. Help us speed things along by ensuring you have completed your camper health form and camper waiver.

Extended Care Information

The Indianapolis Zoo offers extended care from 7:45am–9am and from 3–5pm. Extended care costs a flat fee of $75 per week for 5-day camps and $45 per week for 3-day camps.

Extended Care requires pre-registration. To register, please contact our Zoo Camp team prior to the start of camp at 317-630-2000.

Extended Care Check-in

- Check-in for extended care begins at 7:45am and ends at 8:30am. Campers arriving after 8:30am will be checked in during general camp check-in.
- Please follow the same procedures for check-in that are listed in the previous section.

Extended Care Check-out

- Check-out for extended care begins at 3 pm. **If you do not need extended care on a given day, please reach out to our team so your camper will be present for the general check-out, otherwise you will need to park and enter.**
- Check-out for extended care takes place at the Hix Institute, which is located inside the Zoo. You will be emailed a pass to allow you to enter the Zoo to pick up your camper. Park and enter the Zoo via the exit gate.
- Campers must be picked up promptly by 5pm. A minimum late fee of $15 will be charged per camper picked up after 5pm, with an additional $1 per minute after 5:15pm.



In the event a camper is not picked by 5:15pm and we are unable to get in touch with a parent or guardian, the Zoo Security Team will be notified to assist with next steps.

Camper Information and CampDoc

All camper information forms, including health history and release forms, need to be completed and signed prior to camper participation in any camp. This summer, the Indianapolis Zoo is partnering with CampDoc.com, the leading electronic health record system for camps. All forms and waivers must be completed online. The CampDoc.com site is secure, encrypted and password protected. Only the Indianapolis Zoo Camp team will have access to your camper's information.



Having signed up for camp, you will receive an "Invitation" email from CampDoc.com. This "Invitation" email will include instructions on how to create and track your unique account. CampDoc.com sends out periodic reminder emails for incomplete information. These notifications will come from CampDoc.com, so please add this to your safe sender list to avoid accidental delivery to junk and spam folders.

Please plan to review, complete, and sign ALL materials at least **two weeks** prior to your camp date.

Camper Expectations

At Zoo Camp, we strive to help all children have an exciting and enjoyable camp experience. For their part, all campers are asked to follow our main Zoo Camp Expectation: Respect Everyone and Everything

- We ask campers to respect other campers, their counselors, Zoo staff, parents and other Zoo guests.
- We also ask campers to respect the animals, plants, Zoo grounds and exhibits.
- Please help your child to have the best experience possible by discussing our Zoo Camp Expectation with them before their first day of camp.
- For their safety, campers also must follow any additional expectations communicated by their counselors to participate in Zoo exploration, behind-the-scenes tours and animal encounters.

Campers will be given three opportunities ("chances") to improve unacceptable behaviors. Continued violation of camp policy (three chances lost) will result in permanent removal of a child from the camp session.

- Campers that violate the Zoo Camp Expectation will usually receive one or more warnings and verbal coaching from camp counselors on correcting the behavior. Repeated unacceptable behavior will result in loss of one "chance." The counselor and Camp Coordinator will discuss why the chance was taken away with the child and a call will be made to the parent/guardian. We will also discuss what else the camper could do and come up with a plan to avoid losing any other chances.
- Loss of a chance may result in restriction from participating in certain camp activities.
- If the safety of others (people or animals) is concerned, camp staff may not issue warnings. We have a zero-tolerance policy when it comes to any kind of violence. If a camper endangers themselves, an animal or anyone else, a chance will automatically be taken away.
- If a camper must leave camp due to behavior, **no refund will be issued**.

Emergency Communications

- Any notifications, such as change of pick-up due to severe weather, exposure to illness or other emergencies, will be sent out by the Zoo Camp team through CampDoc via email and/or text. Please ensure the contact information on your profile is correct.
- In the event of inclement weather, please be sure to monitor your email to ensure you do not miss any changes to pick-up or drop-off.

Safety and Healthcare Policies

By enrolling in Zoo Camp, you acknowledge the benefits and risks of play and agree to hold your child responsible for following the rules and regulations of Zoo Camp.

- Please indicate on your camper information form any medications, allergies or other medical conditions that your child may have while at Zoo Camp.
- For safety purposes, the Zoo does not permit anyone to visit campers.
- Indianapolis Zoo Camps operate without a nurse or physician on site. The Indianapolis Zoo Security Team is certified in first aid, CPR and Automatic Emergency Defibrillator use (AED) and is always on site.

Injuries and First Aid

- If your child is injured while at Zoo Camp, staff trained in first aid may administer treatment for minor cuts, scrapes, splinters, bug bites and other minor injuries. The Indianapolis Zoo Security Team is primarily responsible for first aid.
- Parents/guardians will be notified during pick-up of any minor injuries and the care provided, or immediately for any injury requiring more than basic first aid. By enrolling in a Zoo program, you are authorizing emergency medical attention for your child. If emergency attention is required, parent/guardians (or the designated emergency contact) will be notified immediately.

Medication Policy

- If your child has allergies or asthma that require the use of an EpiPen/inhaler and can administer it themselves, they may have it with them. **Zoo staff are not allowed to administer any medicine to campers.** EpiPens and inhalers must be clearly labeled with the child's name and dosage. The camper must have it with them throughout the day. Zoo staff will not be able to carry any approved medications for campers.
- **If your child has prescription medication that must be taken during camp, a caregiver must come to the Zoo to administer it.** Arrangements need to be made with the Zoo Camp team prior to the camp session. Please include your child's name, the camp title and week that they will be attending in your email.

Camper Illness

- For the safety of everyone, we ask that camp staff and campers stay home if they are feeling sick.
- If your camper shows signs or symptoms of issues including, but not limited to, lice, severe coughing, pink eye, sore throat, fever or vomiting, you may be asked to pick up your child.
- Campers should be symptom-free for 24 hours prior to returning to camp.
- The Indianapolis Zoo reserves the right to refuse entrance to camp or send a camper home for any illness.

Contacting Parents/Guardians

- Each camper's health form contains contact information and designated alternate contacts if the parents/guardians cannot be reached.
- Parents/guardians will be notified during pick-up of any minor injuries and the care provided.
- Parents/guardians will be notified immediately by phone of any injury requiring more than basic first aid. By enrolling in a Zoo program, you are authorizing emergency medical attention for your child. If emergency attention is required, parent/guardians (or the designated emergency contact) will be notified immediately.
- The Indianapolis Zoo reserves the right to send a camper home for any illness. If a camper is feeling too ill to participate in the program, the parent/guardian may be called. If a camper shows signs or symptoms of issues including, but not limited to, lice, sever coughing, pink eye, sore throat, fever, or vomiting, the parent/guardian will be called and may be asked to pick up the child.
- In the event that the call is not answered, camp personnel will leave voice messages on answering machines that appropriately communicate the need for a parent to call the camp. If the first listed contact does not answer, attempts will be made to reach the next listed contact. All contact, successful and unsuccessful, will be documented.

Sun Safety Information

We will spend most of our time outside, so it is important to be sun smart! Here are some important steps you can take to help your camper to be safe in the sun while at Zoo Camp:



- Make a plan
  - Please check the weather before leaving the house and plan accordingly.
  - The UV index is a helpful tool in planning your sun protection. Check your UV index forecast here.
- Clothing
  - Please remember to dress your child in light-colored clothing to help us keep them cool in the heat.
  - Hats and sunglasses are encouraged! These accessories not only will make your child feel like a movie star, but they will also help protect their eyes and face from the sun.
- Sunscreen
  - We recommend sunscreen of at least SPF 30. Please apply sunscreen before dropping off your child.
  - Camp counselors will remind campers to reapply sunscreen after lunch. Lotion is best to avoid getting sunscreen in campers' eyes.
  - Per Zoo policy, camp staff cannot physically help your child apply sunscreen. They will, however, advise the campers about how much sunscreen to put on.
- Shade
  - Zoo Camp includes plenty of opportunities to rest in the shade throughout the day.
- Water
  - Staying hydrated is important in the heat. Please make sure your child has a reusable water bottle with them. We will remind your child to drink lots of water.

What to Wear

- **Your camper will be issued a camp t-shirt on Monday.** We ask that they wear the camp shirt each day of camp. If you ordered extra shirts, they also will be distributed on Monday, along with shirts for any additional camp weeks the child is signed up for.
- The best clothing to wear to Zoo Camp is comfortable play clothes. Zoo Camp creativity and activities can get messy!
- We will go outside in rain, sunshine, heat or cold. Please be sure to have your child dress appropriately for the day's weather. Light-colored and lightweight clothes will keep them cool on hot days. An extra layer for cool or rainy days or indoor spaces may be useful.
- Wearing masks or face coverings is allowed but not required at this time.
- **Shoes MUST completely cover the feet, have rubber soles and always remain on during camp.**
    - *Sandals, Crocs, Heelys shoes or any other shoes that expose skin are not permitted* for the safety of campers and of our animals during camp. If your camper does not have the correct shoes, they will not be able to participate in certain activities until the correct shoes are brought.



Allergy Precautions

- To protect campers with nut or shellfish allergies, we establish an allergy-free table for lunch. **Please contact us if you wish for your child to sit at the allergy-free table**. If your child has a different allergy but you want them to eat at an allergy-free table, please contact the Zoo Camp team.
- There are many activities that campers may participate in depending on their age and the camp topic. The activities below could be a problem for campers with either nut or shellfish allergies.
    - Nut allergy activities:
        - Budgie (lorikeet) feeding: Budgie sticks are stored in an area with nuts—the feeding sticks do not have nuts on them.
        - Behind-the-scenes tour of the Commissary: Peanuts in mesh bags—possible allergens in the air
        - Kangaroo Crossing: Cockatoo feed has peanuts in it—possible allergens in the air
        - Macaw Presentation: Macaws are fed peanuts during the presentation—possible allergens in the air
    - Shellfish allergy activities:
        - Flamingo feeding: Krill is fed to our flamingos and is a type of shellfish
        - Flamingo Mingle: Flamingos eat krill during the encounter and may choose to nibble on campers' hair, shoes, etc.—campers could be seated behind other campers and not have any exposure
        - Shark touch tank/ray feeding: Animals are fed various fish and shellfish—water will have some fish and shellfish in it
- **Please contact the Zoo Camp team if your camper should refrain from participating in any of the above-mentioned activities.**

For assistance, please reach out to our Zoo Camp team at edustaff@indyzoo.com or **317-630-2000**.

What to Bring & What Not to Bring



- **Backpack**. Campers need to bring all their belongings for the day in one backpack. Please make sure the camper's name is on the backpack and all items they bring with them each day can fit in a single bag.
- **Reusable water bottle**. A reusable water bottle should be brought with campers each day. Water refill stations and drinking fountains are available throughout the Zoo.
- **Lunch and a small, labeled snack**.
    - Help us conserve habitats and natural resources by packing a lunch that avoids single-use plastics.
    - As we will often take the snacks with us on our Zoo walks, please make sure snacks are separate from your camper's lunch! Help us by having your **camper's name** clearly printed on their snacks.
    - Campers **cannot** purchase food at the Zoo, so please make sure they bring their lunch and snack.
    - If campers are staying for extended care hours, please pack an extra snack.
    - **Campers are not allowed to share food, even among campers in the same family.**
- **Sunscreen**. See "Sun Safety" above. Also send insect repellant If your child is susceptible to bug bites.
- **Raincoat or poncho** (weather-dependent). We do not allow umbrellas in Zoo Camp, but we will be out exploring rain or shine, so please dress your camper accordingly.
- **Camera** (optional). Cellphones are allowed for **taking photos only**.
    - No photos may be taken in our behind-the-scenes areas.
    - If a camera or cellphone becomes a distraction or isn't put away when the camp counselors ask for it to be, the counselor may collect it and return it at the end of the camp day. Campers may be asked not to bring the cellphone back to camp for the rest of their camp session.
    - **Please help your campers stick to our cellphone policies by refraining from texting or calling them throughout the day.**



- **Personal Property Policy:**
    - Under no circumstances are alcoholic beverages, tobacco products, illicit drugs, weapons of any kind or pets (apart from service animals) allowed at Indianapolis Zoo Camp at any time.
    - We kindly ask that the following items **not** be brought to Zoo Camp:
        - Video games
        - Toys or plush animals
        - Money
            - Campers **will not** have the opportunity to purchase lunch, snacks, pressed pennies or souvenirs while at camp.
        - Jewelry/valuables
    - The Indianapolis Zoo is not liable for loss, damage or theft of personal property. Please leave valuable items at home.

Frequently Asked Questions

1. **What if I need to cancel my child's camp?**
   Refunds are available up to 45 days prior to the program start date. If the Zoo must cancel a camp or a portion of a camp, the Zoo will refund for the canceled days.
   - If you need to cancel within 45 days of your scheduled camp program, you may transfer to a similar program during the summer if requested at least two weeks prior to the program and if there is room in the camp.
   - No transfers are allowed within two weeks of the program start date.
   - Refunds will not be issued for no-shows for any camp program regardless of reason.
   - To cancel or request a transfer, please contact the Zoo Camp team.

2. **What are the requirements to participate in camp?**
   To participate in the Indianapolis Zoo Camp, campers must:
   - Be between the ages of 6 and 12
   - Be able to follow simple directions and communicate needs and interests
   - Be willing to spend the week outside and engage in group activities
   - Be able to manage self-care tasks, such as eating and using the restroom, without assistance*
   - *For individuals with extra care needs, please see "How do you accommodate campers with accessibility or special needs?"

3. **Can my camper multiple weeks of camp?**
   Campers may attend multiple weeks of camp, but please note that we do repeat titles throughout the summer. We highly recommend campers not repeat titles during the summer.

4. **My child has a sibling or friend. Can they attend together?**
   There will be a question in your online parent/guardian portal where you can add the name(s) of the other campers you would like to be grouped with your camper. We will do our best to accommodate these requests. Additionally, please note that we cannot enroll campers in programs if they do not meet the age requirements for that camp.

5. **What does a typical day of camp look like?**
   Each camp group may have different schedules each day to avoid having too many campers in the same place. Please note that sometimes the schedules change due to weather or animal availability. Each day of camp can look very different, but we try to include a few basic elements throughout the week:
   - Zoo walks — a guided walk through a Zoo exhibit area
   - Animal chats across the Zoo
   - Behind-the-scenes tours
   - Lessons on the camp theme (including animal artifact items and activities)
   - Indoor and outdoor games centered around the camp's theme
   - Hands-on activities based on the camp theme

   Additional activities such as animal feeds, behind-the-scenes tours and rides may be included in some camps depending on the topic and age of campers but are not guaranteed.

6. **Will there be a lot of walking?**
   The Indianapolis Zoo is a large space, and there will be a lot of walking. Make sure your child is prepared with comfortable walking shoes that have closed toes and heels. Socks are recommended for comfort. socks.

7. **Will my child get to interact with the Zoo animals?**
   For everyone's safety, direct contact with exhibit animals is not possible. Campers may have the opportunity to get up close to certain animals in the behind-the-scenes areas. We do occasionally have opportunities for animal interaction with our Ambassador Animals. We do not ever guarantee that campers will touch animals during their camp experience.

8. **Does camp still run in inclement weather?**
   - Zoo Camp will run rain or shine. Our Zoo Camp staff are trained in how to respond in inclement weather (thunderstorms, excessive heat, etc.)
   - Please check the forecast when getting your camper ready for the day!

9. **Can I pick my child up early or drop them off late?**
   Zoo Camp has activities scheduled all day long. We highly recommend letting your child enjoy the full range of what we have to offer by allowing them to experience the entire camp session.
   - If you must drop off late or pick your child up early on a particular day, please contact the Zoo Camp team in advance. Include the date and time your child will be arriving late or picked up early.
   - Please remind the camp counselor during check-in so that we can ensure they are ready for pick-up at the designated time. Your child will be brought to the check-out area near the Zoo's Exit gate.
   - For your camper's safety, we will not release your child unless the appropriate check-out number or a photo ID is provided at check-out. If the child will be picked up by someone else, the Camper Number can be written on a piece of paper and be presented at check-out. Remind anyone that is on your approved pick-up list to have their ID ready if they don't have the Camper Number placard.

10. **Who are the camp counselors? Who is the Camp Coordinator?**
    All camp counselor staff members are selected for excellence in children's programming. Our camp counselors have a wide array of backgrounds and experiences. All have had previous experience with children and have cleared required background checks required by the State of Indiana.

    The Zoo Camp Coordinator is Nadia Lovko. She is a full-time Education Program Specialist in the Indianapolis Zoo's Education team.

11. **What is the adult-to-child ratio? How will the campers be grouped?**
    - We follow the recommendations of the American Camp Association for staff-to-child ratios.
      - 6- to 7-year-olds, 1 counselor to every 8 campers
      - 8- to 9-year-olds, 1 counselor to every 8 campers
      - 10- to 12-year-olds: 1 counselor to every 10 campers
    - Campers will be in these smaller groups as they go around the Zoo but will join other groups for lessons and games.

12. Can you accommodate children with special needs?

Physical, academic and social needs will be accommodated to the best of our ability.
To best accommodate and formulate a great plan of action for a child with special needs, please contact the Zoo Camp team as soon as possible.

- Please indicate which camp your child is attending, the nature of the special needs and any other information you feel that we need to create a great camp experience for your child.
- Please also let us know if your child has a behavioral treatment plan.

Please note that while the Zoo does not employ specific individuals certified and trained to support special-needs children, we do have experience accommodating different types of special needs. **However, if your child is not able to function in a group setting without one-on-one attention, our staffing may not be sufficient. In that instance, please contact us to discuss your specific situation.**

13. My child needs to take medication during the hours of Zoo Camp. What do I do with my child's medication?

- If your child has allergies or asthma that require the use of an EpiPen/inhaler and **can administer it themselves,** they may have it with them. **Zoo staff are not allowed to administer any medicine to campers.** EpiPens and inhalers must be clearly labeled with the child's name and dosage. The camper must have it with them throughout the day. Zoo staff will not be able to carry any approved medications for campers.
- **If your child has prescription medication that must be taken during camp, a caregiver can come to the Zoo to administer it.** Arrangements need to be made with the Zoo Camp team by email prior to the camp session.
    - Please indicate which camp your child is attending, the nature of the needs, and any other information we need to create a great camp experience for your child.
    - Please also let us know if your child has a behavioral treatment plan.

14. Zoo Camp qualifies as childcare for the week. What is the Indianapolis Zoo's Federal Tax ID number?

The Indianapolis Zoo's Federal tax ID number is 351074747.

15. Who do I contact if I have more questions?

If your questions were not answered in our FAQ section, please reach out to our camp staff at **edustaff@indyzoo.com** or **317-630-2000** with any questions you have!

We can't wait to welcome your children on their first day of Zoo Camp at the Indianapolis Zoo!

