Lincoln Park Zoo Virtual Summer Camp FAQ

Q. What will my camper experience during Lincoln Park Zoo virtual summer camp programs?

A. Our goal for virtual camp is for campers to have fun while remaining safe. During virtual camp, zoo educators will facilitate games, story-times, and other activities designed to keep campers engaged and active. Campers will get to meet zoo scientists and other experts who work to help preserve wildlife. Much of each camp day will take place in small groups through Zoom’s breakout rooms feature. In small groups, campers will be able to talk to one another and to zoo staff.

Q. How will virtual camp be different from e-learning during the school year?

A. While we certainly hope campers will learn about wildlife during virtual camp, our first priority is making sure that they have fun. Activities will be camper-centered, with their enjoyment in mind. While we may suggest activities that campers can do on their own or with their families that continue the themes of the camp, these are not required.

Q. What will my camper need to know how to do in order to participate in virtual summer camp?

A. Campers will need to know how to access Zoom via a web link, or have an adult able to initiate the program for them. Within Zoom, campers should have the ability to mute/unmute their microphone and turn their camera on or off, however instructors will be able to do this if campers cannot. We will remind participants on the Monday of each camp week how to do these actions. Older campers should know how to use the chat function. We ask campers to make sure their first name is displayed on screen.

Q. What do I need to do in advance to prepare my child for virtual summer camp?

A. Parents and guardians are asked to practice the Zoom functions above with their campers. For the younger campers, discussing how Zoom works (what happens when you’re muted, etc.) would be helpful in setting their expectations. On the morning of camp, you can log into Zoom and ensure that your child’s first name is displayed so that instructors can properly address them, and have a snack prepared or set aside. Finally, although our hope is that children can be relatively independent during virtual summer camp, you may consider setting some ground rules about where you will be if they need help. If your child seems to be experiencing technical issues or some kind of distress, zoo instructors may call or text you using the contact information provided in your registration. This will only be done if absolutely necessary.

Q. My camper has needs that require accommodations. What should I do?

A. Lincoln Park Zoo is committed to working with campers and their families to create an environment where all campers, with and without disabilities, engage in camp together. If your camper requires accommodations, please contact the camp leadership team at camp@lpzoo.org.

Q. Do I need to register for my camper to participate in virtual summer camp?

A. Yes, campers must be registered in advance to participate in virtual summer camp. Please register your camper at www.lpzoo.org/camps.

Q. What equipment or materials does my camper need to participate in virtual summer camp?
A. Virtual Conservation Campers (grades PreK-4) need an internet-connected device; paper; markers, coloring pencils, or crayons; scissors; glue or tape; and a daily morning snack. Virtual Zoo Crew Campers (grades 5-8) need an internet-connected device, paper or a notebook, a writing utensil, colored pencils or markers, and a daily snack. Headphones are optional for both groups. Campers in the same family may share their internet-connected device if they are participating in the same camp program.

Q. Will my camper get to see animals during virtual summer camp?

A. Campers will see Lincoln Park Zoo’s resident animals on their screens during virtual summer camp. Some or all of these may be on videos recorded specifically for virtual summer camp, and some may be live from the zoo at the time of camp if possible.

Q. What is the zoo doing to make sure campers are safe online?

A. Camper safety during virtual summer camp is of the utmost importance. The zoo will be following recommendations set forth by the FBI for the protection of campers participating in online Zoom sessions. Links to the zoo’s Zoom rooms and passwords will be shared only with registered participants. These will be changed at the start of each camp week. Zoo staff will utilize Zoom’s waiting room feature to allow only registered participants into the sessions. Instructors will have the ability to mute campers’ microphones and turn off their cameras if needed. For the safety of all participants, all Zoom sessions will be recorded; participants may turn off their cameras if they wish. We ask caregivers to make sure your camper is using the most up-to-date version of Zoom. Finally, it is our policy that disrespectful online behavior (i.e. cyber bullying) will not be tolerated. Zoo staff reserve the right to dismiss campers from virtual summer camp for their behavior if necessary.