Camp-in Overnight Frequently Asked Questions

When are Camp-in dates offered?
Our Camp-in overnight programs are offered March – December on Fridays or Saturdays with the exception of Holiday weekends and special Zoo events.

What time do the Camp-in programs run?
Arrival time for our Camp-in programs is 6:30 pm the night of your program. There is a half-hour built-in for groups to arrive and get settled with the introduction starting at 7:00 pm. The program will end at 10:00 am the next day, but your group is welcome to stay at the Zoo during regular Zoo operating hours that day.

What are the costs and what does it include?
The cost is $40 per participant (adults and kids), and there is a minimum group of 15 or $600.00 required. The cost includes special after-hours Zoo admission for that evening and the entire next day, your group’s own room in our Conservation Education building, Camp-in counselor, evening Zoo hike including themed games and activities, a craft or activity, up-close animal encounters, an evening snack, Columbus Zoo patch, sleeping mats, breakfast, and a morning hike. Parking is also included. A $100.00 non-refundable deposit per room is required to reserve a date through our online reservation system. The deposit is applied to the balance of the Camp-in fees.

What if I have a Columbus Zoo and Aquarium membership?
While we greatly value our Columbus Zoo and Aquarium members, this program is an additional fee and is not included with membership. Due to the dynamics of our groups, our costs are kept as low as possible for all participants coming with a group.

When is the balance of the Camp-in program due?
The balance of your Camp-in program is due three-weeks prior to your event date. Please contact our Education Office at 614-645-3488 to arrange for payment of your final balance. Organizational checks or credit card payments are preferred. Please have individuals pay your group, so the group can pay in one transaction.

What is the maximum group size?
Our rooms accommodate 15 to 25 people. If you have a group of 25-29, please call our office as some of our rooms may hold up to 29. If you have 30+ please book multiple rooms.

What if my group is mixed ages?
Groups with mixed ages can be accommodated. Some of our regular topics can be adapted to fit for multi-aged groups and will depend on the age range of your group. Please contact us for recommendations by phone or email.
Camp-in Overnight Frequently Asked Questions

What if our group is smaller than the minimum required?
The group rate of $600.00 is based off of 15 participants and is the minimum fee that must be charged for a program. We can do the program with less, but the cost would remain at the 15 participant rate. The 15 can include adults and kids, so you can make up your group with whatever combination you would like. You could also include siblings, as long as they meet our minimum age requirement of first grade and above. (Exceptions can be made for kindergarten since some groups include this age group.)

For smaller Scout groups, we do suggest that they try to combine with another local troop/pack that would also like to come by contacting their Service Unit or District. We are unable to facilitate that process for you.

We also offer Family Overnight programs that are held on pre-selected dates throughout the year. These events are advertised separately from our group Camp-in programs. They are designed for a family to register and they have a different structure and cost. If you would like more information on the Family Overnight programs, please check out website under ‘Family and Adult Programs’ by hovering over ‘Discover.’

Can siblings come along?
All campers must meet the minimum age requirement of 1st grade and above and will be included in the total number of participants. No young campers please.
Exceptions can be made for Daisy Scouts, Cub Scout Lions or other community groups that include Kindergarteners.

What type of animal visitors do campers see?
Campers will have up-close encounters with our Education program animals. The animal visitors may include an opossum, armadillo, snake, turtle, lizard, invertebrates and amphibians. Program animals vary based on availability and we cannot guarantee a specific animal will be available on the night of your program.

What is your refund policy?
The Camp-in deposit required for your group is non-refundable. Once the balance has been paid, a refund of 80% can be given if the Zoo is notified of the cancellation two-weeks in advance. There are no refunds given with less than a two-week notice of cancellation.

What is your policy on inclement weather?
Our programs are held rain, snow or shine. Please come prepared for the weather. In the event of lightning the outside portion of the program may be re-arranged within the program time or inside activities will be substituted. The Zoo remains open during a level 1 or 2 travel advisory, but we will allow your group to reschedule if you feel it is too dangerous for your group to travel to the Zoo safely. During a level 3 travel advisory, the Zoo will close and all programs will be cancelled and either rescheduled or refunded at 100%.