

Virginia Zoo Homeschool Program:

Frequently Asked Questions



- **How do I register?** Book online at <https://virginiazoo.org>. If you have a question or need assistance with registering your participant, please call (757) 441-2374 ext. 264 or email the Virginia Zoo's Education Department at vazoo.education@norfolk.gov. Our education staff will be in the office Monday through Friday from 9am-4pm. Due to the high volume of calls, please leave a message and allow at least one business day for your call to be returned.
- **What does a typical program series include?** Each semester-long series consists of four monthly one-hour programs. Each of those programs includes hands-on activities and an animal encounter. Families will also receive online access to photos and additional learning resources to explore between programs.
- **Can I register for just one program?** This year, we are switching to a semester-long class schedule to simplify the booking process and enhance the learning experience. Due to limited program capacity, we are unable to sell single-program tickets.
- **Does the program ticket include general admission?** Yes, general admission for the participant on program dates is included with your ticket.
- **Can I get a discount?** Discounts are available for Zoo Members! Check out our website for exact pricing. Members will need to log into their account before registering and the discount will be applied automatically at checkout.
- **Why is the booking system asking me to renew my membership before registering for my program?** Your membership must be active on the day of the first program for the discount to be applied. If your membership will expire before a program takes place, then you will be prompted to update it during the booking process. Once renewed, your membership will extend to one year past your current expiration date.
- **How many participants are in each program?** We can have up to 24 participants at a time in each of our Homeschool Programs.
- **Are adults allowed to attend the programs?** This program is designed for participants to attend independently, and we encourage adults to explore the Zoo during the program. Discounted general admission tickets are available for non-member adults, and details for these tickets will be sent after registration. However, if your child requires additional support from an adult during the program, please reach out to us after booking at vazoo.education@norfolk.gov.
- **What learning accommodations can the Virginia Zoo provide for my child?** The Virginia Zoo is passionate about providing an educational and engaging learning experience for all learners. Reach out to us at vazoo.education@norfolk.gov and let us know how we can best provide your child with the resources they need to be successful in our programs.

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- **How strict are the age divisions?** Programs are designed specifically for the advertised age group. All participants in the 6-9 age group must be 6 years old by the start of the first program date. If your child turns 10 during the series, you may choose whether to register them for the 6-9 age group or the 10-13 age group, but they must stay in the same group for the entire series. If you are concerned about the suitability of a particular program for your child, please contact us at vazoo.education@norfolk.gov and we will be happy to discuss the program with you.
- **Can participants younger than 6 years old participate in your homeschool programs?** Participants must be a minimum of 6 years old. For younger students, we recommend our free early childhood programming: <https://virginiazoo.org/school-programs/early-childhood/>.
- **What happens if I need to cancel my registration?** You must cancel *more than 3 weeks* from the start of the series to receive an 80% refund (not including registration fees). There will be no partial refunds for individual missed programs, but participants who miss a program will still have access to the photos and digital resources made available online. There may be no refund in the rare event that a participant is sent home and not allowed to return for a serious or chronic behavioral problem.
- **What happens if the Zoo is unable to run the program due to inclement weather?** The Virginia Zoo is open rain or shine, so we will run the program as long as the Zoo is open! If the Virginia Zoo closes to the public due to inclement weather, the program will be rescheduled to a later date and an email with more information will be sent out to all participants. For questions, please contact the us at vazoo.education@norfolk.gov or (757) 441-2374 ext. 264.
- **What time should we arrive for our program?** Please arrive 5-10 minutes before the program begins.
- **Where do I pick up and drop off my participant?** Check-in is in front of the Zoo, on the right-hand side by our Administration classroom (just past the giraffe statue).
- **What do I do if we are running late?** Just call or text us! Our Education Department cell phone number is 757-536-4749.
- **What should my child bring?**
 - Water Bottle: Participants may bring a refillable water bottle with them. There will be an animal encounter during the program, so snacks and drinks other than water are not allowed in the program space.
 - Appropriate Attire:

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- While we will mostly be inside, it is possible that a portion of the program will include an outdoor activity.
- We recommend that our youngest participants pack an additional change of clothes, just in case.
- You may want a light jacket in case your child gets cold indoors!
- Camera: Your child is welcome to bring a camera to document their experience. **Cameras may only be used during the animal encounter, and they must be able to turn the flash feature off during animal encounters as flashes may startle or scare our animals.**
- **Can my child bring a phone or other technology with them?** Participants are highly encouraged to leave cell phones (unless using it to take pictures) and video game devices at home or in their bags during the program. Please note that the Virginia Zoo is not responsible for broken or lost items. **If technology becomes distracting, we will ask that your child leave the device at home for future programs.**

After registration, you should receive a confirmation email with your booking receipt. One week before your program, you will receive a reminder email from our staff with additional program details. If you have any additional questions, please contact us at vazoo.education@norfolk.gov or at **(757) 441-2374 ext. 264.**