



Frequently Asked Questions

Q: What kind of school is Will Smith Zoo School?

A: Will Smith Zoo School is a nature-based preschool for children age three to five. Students spend at least half of their day outside engaging in a rich play environment. They visit the zoo daily, and our curriculum focuses on the zoo animals and plants. We also strive to foster a love for local wildlife.

Q: What is a NAEYC Accreditation?

A: NAEYC is the National Association for the Education of Young Children. In March 2020, Will Smith Zoo School became a NAEYC Accredited Early Learning Program. Programs with this accreditation promote high quality early learning and follow specific guidelines to ensure students' success.

Q: What classes are offered?

A: We offer 2-, 3-, and 5-day classes. 2-Day classes are on Tuesdays and Thursdays. 3-Day classes are on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays. 5-Day classes are Monday through Friday. All classes are mix-aged.

Q: What are the hours of operation?

A: The school day is 9:00 A.M. to 2:00 P.M. For an additional fee, we offer extended care from 8:00 A.M. to 9:00 A.M. and 2:00 P.M. to 5:30 P.M.

Q: What is the cost to enroll my student?

A: To secure a new student's spot for the upcoming school year, there is a non-refundable registration fee of \$500. The 2-day program costs \$405/month plus an additional \$65 if enrolled in extended care. The 3-day program costs \$575/month plus an additional \$95 if enrolled in extended care. The 5-day program costs \$845/month plus an additional \$145 if enrolled in extended care.

Q: Are meals provided, or do the students bring their own food?

A: Lunch is not provided and must be brought by the student. We offer one snack during the school day. A second snack is provided to students staying in extended care after their designated rest period.

Q: What are the teacher to student ratios?

A: Our ratios are one staff member to eight students. Each class has two staff members for 16 students. All of the classes are mix-aged to allow them to learn at their readiness and play with students at their social age.

Q: What are the requirements for my student to attend?

A: Students must be three to five years old to enroll, and must be toilet trained. To hold a student's spot, the registration fee must be paid. Prior to the start date, an immunization record must be submitted along with the enrollment packet.

Q: Do we accept under-immunized students?

A: We do not accept under-immunized students. All enrolled students must meet the vaccination requirements for their age group, or have a plan in place to receive required vaccinations. Our school requires students to be immunized to meet the Texas Minimum State Vaccine Requirements for Child-Care Facilities.

Q: How does the school and teachers communicate with families?

A: Emails are frequently sent to families from administrative staff and teachers. Classroom Newsletters are sent to families at the end of units. The school and teachers use Classtag to make class specific announcements and share pictures/videos. We frequently hold parent workshops to communicate philosophy and invite families to experience parts of our school day. Parent Conferences are held before school starts and at the end of the school year. Meetings with staff can be requested if necessary.

Q: How are children assessed?

A: We assess students through observation on school readiness guidelines set by Texas Education Agency and on nature connectedness.

Q: What kind of precautions are in place in light of COVID-19?

A: Frequent hand-washing, good personal hygiene, and frequent sanitation/cleaning of classrooms have always been in place at Zoo School, and we encourage our students to continue these positive habits at home! Some of the new changes we have adopted include: screening all students and staff upon arrival; having drop-off and pick-up outside of the school gate; keeping classes "self-contained" (not combining classes or sharing a common space); serving only individually-packaged snacks; and not having visitors on campus. Please refer to our Family Pandemic Policy for more details.