

John Ball Zoo Society's Zoofari Classes 2011-2012:

Frequently Asked Questions

What will my child do in a Zoofari class?

Zoofari classes are unique, fun, hands-on learning experiences! Each class follows its particular theme and uses a variety of age-appropriate methods to stimulate the learning process, including zoo or museum tours, games, stories, hands-on activities, craft activities, up-close animal encounters, and more. At the conclusion of each class, participants will be given a take-home packet that includes a variety of puzzles, coloring, word searches, and craft ideas to help bring the class's curriculum content home for extended learning.

What's new this year?

This year promises several exciting updates to our popular program. Many of these are based on feedback we've received from past participants and parents.

- More classes for 3-4 year olds with parents! These have always been popular, and now they are consistently on Friday mornings from 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.
- Zoofari classes at the Grand Rapids Public Museum! We have received a lot of positive feedback from our younger child classes being held at the Grand Rapids Children's Museum while the zoo is closed – now we are able to offer a similar experience for our older child classes at the Public Museum.
- Easier registration process. In addition to our phone and mail-in registration, we now offer our Zoofari patrons the ability to send their registration form online via e-mail.

Which class is right for my child?

We provide classes for ages 3 years to 10 years old, and most of the age groups have several themes/topics choices. Every class will be a fun and unique learning experience that utilizes the zoo or museum setting, but we suggest you talk with your child about which classes s/he is most interested in and choose together.

Can my child attend programs for older students?

No. Students will be strictly limited to classes fitting their current age. Older or younger siblings can cause disruption to the learning process. So for the benefit for all class participants, we cannot allow younger or older children to attend.

Can you accommodate children with special needs?

John Ball Zoo will make reasonable accommodation for students with special needs to attend class. This includes but is not limited to allergies, medical conditions and social/learning needs. Receiving adequate information from guardians is crucial for our success. Any information given is kept strictly confidential. Please notify us of your child's needs as far in advance as possible to allow us to best prepare a quality experience for your child. Any student who poses a safety hazard to themselves or others will be dismissed from the program. If your child requires 1:1 supervision, you may be asked to assist in finding an assistant for him/her.

What kind of supervision will my child have during class?

We are committed to providing a safe and nurturing learning environment that features excellent supervision. The emotional and physical well-being of each child is a responsibility we take seriously. Each class has their own room with a qualified instructor and one educational aide and class sizes are limited. You can expect your child to have a safe and fun learning experience!

Can I stay with my child during class?

Only classes that specifically require a parent/guardian (all 3-4 year old classes & 5-6 year old class at the GRCM) allow for you to stay with your child. Due to space limitations and class design, it is best if parents/guardians separate from their child at the drop-off location. Most children, while perhaps experiencing a brief moment of anxiety, overcome their fears and participate more quickly without a parent present. If you think your child cannot remain in class without you after a few minutes, please consider waiting another year.

Do you provide snacks?

A small snack and drink are provided for all class participants. We ask that you do not send a snack with your child unless medical/special needs warrant. Please list on your registration form if your child has any food allergies. All classes take frequent drinking fountain & bathroom breaks.

How can I get my child into the class s/he wants?

Enrollment is limited and classes fill quickly! We suggest you register as early as possible to provide the best chance at securing a spot for your child.

Can I register my child for multiple classes?

Absolutely! The prices listed are for each individual class. If your child's birthday occurs during the Zoofari season, please accommodate by signing up your child for the age-appropriate classes for when they occur.

Can I get my child on a waiting list if a class is full?

Yes. There is no charge to sign up on a waiting list and all full classes maintain one. We will update the Z's Kids Page website with any classes that are currently full. While there is no guarantee an opening for your child will become available, we do encourage you to add your child's name. We will notify you as quickly as possible if such an opening occurs. If classes are full, you can register for a wait list by calling 616-336-8951 or e-mailing us at guestprograms@johnballzoosociety.org

When will my child's registration be confirmed?

Confirmations will be processed within one week of the zoo receiving the registration. Confirmations are emailed if an email address is provided with registration; otherwise it will be sent via mail. Email confirmations returned as undeliverable will be sent via mail. If you wish to register your child for a class occurring that week, we urge you to do phone or online registration to insure we receive your registration request, and that it is processed prior to the class date.

When do classes start and end? What happens if I am late dropping-off or picking up my child?

Classes are offered either from 10:00 AM–12:00 PM or from 2:00–4:00 PM. We ask that you arrive 10 minutes prior to the class start time for check-in. We are unable to provide child care before, between or after classes. If you and your child arrive late and do not see someone at the drop-off area, proceed to the office in the zoo administration building. Missed activities may not be made up. Parents may be required to accompany their children into the zoo to find their class.

What if I have to cancel or change my child’s registration?

In the event you must cancel, money will be refunded (less a \$10 processing fee) ONLY with at least 2-days notice. Changes in registration must be made in writing and emailed, faxed, mailed or dropped off at the Zoo Administration.

Mail: John Ball Zoo – Zoofari Classes
PO Box 2506
Grand Rapids, MI 49501

Email: guestprograms@johnballzoosociety.org

Fax: (616) 336-3907

What happens if the zoo cancels a class?

In the event the zoo must cancel a class (due to severe weather or low enrollment), money will either be refunded to the participants or credited to a different upcoming class. In the case of severe weather (i.e. blizzards or ice storms), if Grand Rapids Public Schools are listed as one of the cancelled school districts, the zoo will cancel & attempt to reschedule any classes occurring on that day. For classes occurring on Saturdays, the guest programs staff will make the determination either the day before or the day of and will call all participants. Please list the best contact phone numbers on your registration form.

Who do I contact if I experience any problems or have questions about registering?

Please call the guest programs department staff at (616) 336-8951 for any questions or concerns. Or e-mail at guestprograms@johnballzoosociety.org