



The Florida Environmental Education Center "Zoo School"



Tampa's Lowry Park Zoo Mission: To Connect People with the Living Earth

For more information about the Zoo School contact:
Early Childhood Education Manager at (813)935-8552 ext. 308 or
jennifer.mclachlan@lowryparkzoo.org

HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY CHILD CARE LICENSING INFORMATION

License Number: CTA 430588

License Issued: 07/01/2015

License Expires: 06/30/2016

Tampa's Lowry Park Zoo Preschool is licensed by the State of Florida, Hillsborough County Child Care Licensing, and operates Monday through Friday, 7am-6pm. The license is posted at the entrance of the Zoo School. The laws and rules are available at the school. The school's licensing records, including compliance report forms and evaluation forms from the health, building, and fire departments, are available upon request.

Introduction to the Zoo School

Dear Prospective Zoo School Family,

Thank you so much for taking the time to inquire about our Early Childhood Education and Pre-school programs at Tampa's Lowry Park Zoo. The Zoo School is a year round preschool program licensed by the Hillsborough County and the curriculum developed meet Common Core Standard objectives. The Zoo School provides a unique environmental curriculum that includes hands-on experiences in science, math, reading, writing, art, music, health, and social skills. We believe that children learn through play and action – by touching, tasting, smelling, seeing and doing. Since each child is unique and learns at a different pace and in a different style, the curriculum is geared toward developmentally appropriate activities and includes both planned and free choice activities. The classrooms are organized to accommodate various activities that invite and encourage exploration and discovery. Our goal is to prepare the children for a life of learning by emphasizing problem solving and decision-making and providing opportunity and support for cognitive, fine motor, gross motor, language, and self-help development.

Our approach to curricula is unique and is specifically designed to incorporate to the extent possible all of the Zoo's resources and benefits. We use a combination of theme-based learning and quality curriculum programs and tailor them to best meet the needs of each student.

Thank you again for your time,

Jennifer McLachlan

MISSION OF THE FLORIDA ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION CENTER AT TAMPA'S LOWRY PARK ZOO (ZOO SCHOOL)

To provide a safe, clean, pleasant and caring environment in which each student may develop his or her physical, social, emotional, and intellectual potential at his or her own pace while fostering a respect for wildlife and wild places through unique Zoo interactions.

ZOO SCHOOL'S EDUCATION PHILOSOPHY AND APPROACH

Tampa's Lowry Park Zoo is an accredited zoo through the ASSOCIATION OF ZOOS AND AQUARIUMS (AZA). The Zoo School's philosophy and approach to education follows their Vision statement.

AZA VISION AND VALUES

The Association of Zoos and Aquariums envisions a world where all people respect, value and conserve animals and nature.

- **Conservation of the Living Natural World**—We value the living natural world and recognize the role of our animals as ambassadors. We value the integration of environmentally responsible practices into all aspects of our business.
- **Conservation Education for Members and the Public**—We value our roles as trusted messengers for the natural world and seek to accelerate positive conservation action through individual and collaborative educational efforts of AZA member institutions.
- **Animal Care and Welfare**—AZA cares deeply about animal care and welfare, within and beyond its member Zoos and aquariums, and is guided by Accreditation Standards, the Code of Professional Ethics, the Animal Acquisition/Disposition Policy, and science-based animal care standards.

ZOO SCHOOL PROGRAMS

Through the common love for the environment, animals, and children, the Zoo School staff provides students twelve months to Pre-K 4 year olds a unique year-round experience to foster young environmental advocates as the only school in the country run by an accredited Zoo. The Zoo School strives to create hands-on-learning opportunities for children based on creative environmental curriculum developed by individual teachers using the resources of Tampa's Lowry Park Zoo and colleagues. The Zoo School staff is encouraged to utilize and gain knowledge about various animals, as well as, incorporate classroom animal encounters and enrichments to enhance the children's natural interest in the world around them.

I could write a book about the things she (my child) has learned. I am amazed at how much she actually retains. Between telling me the letter that every animal starts with, and how the bats love bananas or the sound koalas make, it is wonderful!!!!

~ Zoo School Parent

OUTDOOR PLAY/ZOO HIKES

Students are outside on a regular basis, so children are asked to dress accordingly. Zoo Hikes are class excursion into the Zoo for any number of purposes, which provide opportunities to practice, demonstrate, introduce, and explore concepts and skills from **every** content area. Often the destination of a Zoo hike is an animal exhibit, however, depending on the day's purpose, it may be a behind-the-scenes animal encounter or ride.

ENRICHMENTS AND FEEDINGS

Frequently, classes have the chance to aid the animal staff by preparing and/or delivering an "enrichment" or special snack or activity to our Zoo animals. For example, classes may clip some "browse" or branches from our hibiscus in our garden to feed to the giraffes or prepare fruit to add to the Aldabra tortoise diet.

ANIMALS IN THE CLASSROOM

The Zoo Schools provides a model program where children connect with animals and learn the importance of conservation. Observing and caring for animals instills a sense of responsibility and respect for life. Animal Ambassadors from the Zoo's Education Department visit classrooms and provide up-close and personalized animal encounters. Examples include: 3 Banded Armadillo, Chinese Water Dragon, and Eastern Screech Owl. With this connection to animals also comes the emphasis of proper hygiene and hand washing. All children who handle animals are instructed to wash their hands immediately after handling them.

All of the animals in the classrooms are the property of Tampa's Lowry Park Zoo's Animal Collection. Currently each classroom has African Millipedes which are cared for by Zoo Staff from the Outreach Program.

BREAKFAST, LUNCH, AND SNACKS

Tampa's Lowry Park Zoo DOES NOT provide lunch or snack for the students.

SCHOOL YEAR CALENDAR

Early Childhood Education (ECE) and Pre-K runs on a 12 month academic year cycle (August - August).

ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS/Class Size and Staff/Child Ratios

1's Class (Child must be 12 months by November 1)

The 1's class staffing consists of 1 Lead Instructor and 1 Assistant Instructor. Additionally the class will receive additional support for a part time Support Instructor. Parents can select from a 2, 3 or 5-day/week schedule.

Class size is limited to 12 students. The program offers an engaging, developmentally appropriate curriculum that includes monthly themes supported through Zoo hikes, playground time, music, storytelling, art and crafts and center time. Toddlers will begin working on social and emotional skill development and will have teachers that provide a strong focus on language and physical skill (gross and fine motor) development. This is a safe, nurturing environment that provides young children with a great introduction to preschool.



Zoo School will always hold a special place in our heart. Both my children made the best of friends, learned how to be respectful and caring, and gained so much knowledge on animals and our planet. It was a beautiful experience.

~ Former Zoo School Parent

2's Class (Child must be 2 years by October 15)

The 2's class staffing consists of 1 Lead Instructor and 1 Assistant Instructor. Additionally the class will receive additional support for a part time Support Instructor. Parents can select from a 2, 3 or 5 day/week schedule. Class size is limited to 11 students. This program encourages independence and the curriculum focuses on social, emotional, intellectual, creative, and physical development of each child. Teachers guide the children in a positive nurturing environment, while encouraging language development, creativity and exploration of the natural world around them.

3's Class (Child must be 3 by October 1)

Each 3's class staffing consists of 1 Lead Instructor and 1 Assistant Instructor. Additionally the class will receive additional support for a part time Support Instructor. Parents can select from a 2, 3 or 5 day/week schedule. Class size is limited to 12-18 students (number is dependent on classroom location). Teachers provide developmentally appropriate curriculum in an environment that promotes problem solving abilities and critical thinking skills. Teachers and families work together to promote independence in each child. Fine motor and hand-eye coordination skills are an ongoing focus throughout this year to develop hand and finger strength and dexterity in preparation for writing. Thematic units provide options for intellectual curiosity and develop emerging reading readiness skills, preparing them for entrance into the 4 year old program

Pre-K Class (Child must be 4 by September 1)

Each pre-k class staffing consists of 1 Lead Instructor and 1 Assistant Instructor. Additionally the class will receive additional support for a part time Support Instructor. Parents can select from a 2, 3 or 5 day/week schedule. Class size is limited to 12-18 students (number is dependent on classroom location). The Prekindergarten program provides an environment that challenges and engages children. This program uses children's natural curiosity and wonder to motivate them to become engaged in their own learning, preparing them for Common Core standards as they enter into Kindergarten. Themed lessons throughout the year not only cover crucial language arts and math curriculum but also provide students with well-rounded experiences touching on many areas such as art, music, science, social studies, physical education, social emotional learning (such as recognizing emotions, and empathy, friendship skills and problem solving), character education, self-help and independence skills.

HOURS OF OPERATION/TUITION

Early Childhood Education (ECE) and Pre-K

The Academic day runs from 8:00am - 2:30pm

The Extended Care hours are 7am--6:00pm. Extended Care can be purchased for an additional cost.

MONTHLY TUITION PRICES

	5 Day Class (M-F)	3 Day Class (M, W, F)	2 Day Class (T, Th)
Preschool * (4 years old classroom)	\$588 Monthly	\$427 Monthly	\$343 Monthly
Early Childhood Education (1-3 year old classroom)	\$657 Monthly	\$456 Monthly	\$351 Monthly
Optional: Extended Care (7:00am - 6:00pm)	\$220 Monthly	\$180 Monthly	\$140 Monthly

***PRICE POINTS ADJUST AT THE BEING OF A NEW SCHOOL YEAR NOT BASED ON YOUR CHILD DATE OF BIRTH**

- **Sibling Discount**—A sibling discount is offered to those with more than one student attending a Zoo School program. Families pay the highest regular price tuition for the first student, and each student after that will receive a **5%** discount.

RESERVING SLOTS FOR CHILDCARE

Tampa's Lowry Park Zoo offers a free waiting list for families that are interested in enrolling into our program. We will refer to the waiting list and will contact families once we have space that fits the needs of your waiting list request.

When space comes available we will schedule a tour and if our facility meets the needs of your family we will provide you with a Registration Packet.

Our waiting list link is: <http://www.lowryparkzoo.org/education/kids-programs/early-childhood-education>

Once you place your child on the waiting list, here's what to expect going forward:

- Prospective students are typically on the waiting list for an average of 18-24 months.
- We will refer to the waiting list and contact interested families when space becomes available. Once you have added your name to the waiting list there is no need to re-submit your information as the waiting list carries over from year to year.
- Group tours are scheduled throughout the late spring, summer and fall. We will email families on the waiting list as updated group tour dates are determined.
- In order to limit distractions in the classroom as students are learning, individual tours cannot be accommodated until a slot that fits your family becomes available.
- Although enrollment occurs throughout the school year whenever a space comes available, the primary active enrollment period occurs in March and April for the following academic year.
- We will notify families through email once enrollment is filled for a school year. Families will continue to remain on the waiting list and will receive future group tour dates.
- For specific questions feel free to email the Early Childhood Education Manager, Dana Peña- dana.pena@lowryparkzoo.org

TAMPA'S LOWRY PARK ZOO SCHOOL ADMISSIONS POLICY

The Early Childhood Education and Pre-K program at Tampa's Lowry Park Zoo School is designed to meet the developmental and learning needs of children not only to enrich their lives in the present but also to prepare them for attending public or private elementary school and to have the desire to be life-long learners.

- Students are admitted without regard to race, color, creeds, sex, national or ethnic origin.
- Students are expected to comply with the school's rules and procedures and meet development and behavioral standards as a condition of continuation and re-enrollment.
- Preference is given in admissions decisions to Zoo Employee families and to siblings of currently enrolled students.
- In the event of a waiting list situation, admissions decisions are made on the basis of applicants' relative qualifications, rather than dates of application.
- Parents are expected to respond within 1 week upon receipt of an offer of admission for their child. This includes paying the \$200 registration fee and returning the completed registration pack to Management at Zoo School.
- Shot and Physical forms from your Florida Pediatrician must accompany your registration packet or by your child's first day of school.



** All admission decisions ultimately reside with Zoo School Administration.