

Frequently Asked Question

1. What is the child to staff ratio for you The Reptile Store Summer Camp?

As of this year our camper to staff ratio is 5:1 when registration is at capacity for any given session. Most city run camps are 10:1! We feel we need more staff and LIT's to make the camp more interactive with the animals!

2. At The Reptile Store Summer Camp what is the girl to boy Ratio?

We tend to have 2 girls to every 3 boys campers on an average week.

3. How does transportation to camp and to trips work?

Currently, all transportation from home to camp, and camp to home is the responsibilities of the parents. When it comes to trips, all transportation between the camp and the trip location is provided and covered by camp. The transportation company we use is Attridge Bus Company.

4. What is the real level of danger of animal's encounters?

With any animal encounters there an inherent risk and for this reason we keep a very low camper to staff ratio to increase supervision and safety. All encounters are with experienced and trained staff and are only open to campers who we feel are prepared and capable to take part in a safe manner. In our four-year history of our camp we have never had an animal related injury.

5. Do you welcome and meet special needs campers?

We are more than happy to meet any special needs and do on a regular basis. We have met the needs of plenty of physical, mental, and social disabilities including but not limited to Tourettes, OCD/ODD/ADHD, Urticaria Pigmentosa, Crohn's disease, Diabetes, as well as assistive walking measures.

6. Is The Reptile Store Summer Camp wheel chair accessible?

Yes, all of our programs and guest speakers can be performed in fully wheelchair accessible areas. We also find no problem in the accessibility of the buses that we take to reach of our trip destinations and all locations are also wheelchair accessible.

7. Is your staff trained in first aid or have other accreditations?

Yes, it is a staff requirement that all first aid and CPR accreditations are up to date. We also have staff with extra accreditations such as degrees, diplomas, certified teaching certificates, and UMAB (Understanding and Managing Aggressive Behaviors). On all trips our staffs are required to carry a fully packed first aid kit in each group.

8. Are all of your staff police checked?

Yes. Staff is not able to work in our facilities without an up to date police clearance form that has been issued within a couple months prior to start of camp.

9. Where can I find what my child needs to bring everyday to camp?

Follow this link and click on "What should I to bring to camp!"...

10. Does The Reptile Store Summer Camp provide lunch?

Lunch may be purchased by filling out a camper lunch form, which must be handed in by sign-in at the beginning of the day. This form can be printed off the camp website or requested at sign-in. It is strongly advised that on Trip Days children bring their lunch. It is often very expensive to purchase food at many of the facilities we visit.

11. How much down time is there during the day?

We pride ourselves in having no downtime throughout the day. The entire day from drop-off to pick-up is completely scheduled with such things as animal handling, crafts, games, guest speaker etc. Saying this, there are still scheduled periods of the day where the kids are allowed a bit more supervised freedom such as in parks and splash pads. For a sample week long schedule click here!

12. What type of guest speakers do you bring in on base days?

Our guest speakers vary every year and offer a very wide range of subjects. Our guest speaking segments have involved some of Canada's most prestigious breeders of exotic songbirds and snakes, Mountsberg Wildlife Centre, Green Venture, Royal Botanical Gardens, Scienstational Snakes, Parrots Club of Southwestern Ontario, and more!

13. Where and what park and splash pad is used on base days?

The park that we use during our base day is located on the corner of East Ave. and King William St. in Hamilton. Prior to the park being used by our campers our staff is sent over to do a check and clean up of the field area and park structures. The splash pad that is at the pool is also supervised by two city employed certified lifeguards.

14. How do you ensure my child's safety in public?

Other than our staff to camper ratio, our number one way to ensure the safety of our campers is the brightly coloured camp shirts that are mandatory for everyday at camp. This ensures in large crowds such as in a zoo that constant head counts can be performed fast and effectively and that we can easily identify any campers from public and can see if any are reaching the clearly set out boundaries.

15. What if my child has a fear of a specific animal at camp?

We always promote the attempt to get pass the fear of any animal based first around learning about the animal and gaining a respect through their knowledge. Campers at any time have the ability to not take part in the handling or work with an animal if they feel the experience is too much for them.

16. How vigorous is your staff training?

Our staff training is a fairly vigorous, manual-based, structured training program. Our training program totals 5 days, in which we cover and refresh such things as proper animal handling, animal knowledge, first-aid and CPR, common camp scenarios, managing groups of kids, team building, and how to run games and crafts.

17. When do parents get to come to camp?

YES! Parents are welcome to attend Adult Camp which takes place after all of our summer camp sessions are over (Refer to Adult Camp section for more details). Parents are also welcome to come watch their children in one of our two weekly camper animal presentations and pizza party!

18. Is every session and/or year follow the same curriculum?

No, all session and vary in trips and/or guest speakers...therefore no weeks are the same! All of our staff also have a wide range of specialties from how feathers are specialized for flight, exotic fish care and even scientific cadaver dissections!

19. What have you done each year to better the camp for my children?

We have made it our goal to focus on what we can do to better our program and to further the level of education of our campers. Over the last four years, we have evolved from a two-week program ran out of a single room focusing on animal care and first time interactions, to a 9-week program ran out our own complex with zoo trips, educational speakers, and on site parrots, fish, arachnids, reptiles and more! We graciously take any suggestions and make many attempts to ask and give parents the chance to voice their opinion.

20. What happens if I need to drop off my child before the scheduled time or have to pick him up later than the scheduled pick-up?

If given advanced notice we can commit to giving you an earlier drop off or later pick-up time. Unfortunately due to having to extend the hours of a staff for supervision of the camper, an additional fee of \$15 will be charged. The earliest drop off time is 7:45 a.m. and the latest pick up is time is 5:30 p.m.

21. Can my child actually fail the L.I.T. program?

Yes, your child can fail the L.I.T. program. Saying that, passing the program is generally based on a work completion basis, and is everyone top priority. Anybody that has been unable to complete the program has either not completed the minimal bookwork or hasn't made an effort to complete task assigned during their hands on week. We do take into account that all L.I.T.s are still young and usually haven't ever had a true job

before. The seriousness of our L.I.T. program is due to the fact that all staff that is hired on is drawn from our list of previous and current L.I.T.s due to having the knowledge of their experiences and capabilities.

22. How hands on does The Reptile Store Summer Camp actually get on trip days?

During our trip days our campers get almost as much hands-on experiences as we do during a base day! Our camp has even been allowed more access than camps that reside in the zoos themselves. We have done everything from hand feeding giraffes to holding month old cougar cubs! We have worked really hard at maintaining and amazing g relationship with our field trip organizations. It is through our hard work and dedication, and the children's positive attitude and wiliness to learn that we are granted these privileges!

23. How do I register my child for The Reptile Store Summer Camp?

You can register your child for any camp sessions a few different ways. You can register online at www.reptilestorecamp.com just click this link!. You can download a registration form here...fill it out and bring it back into the store to reserve your spot. You can also just drop by The Reptile Store, we will have the forms printed out for you!

24. Where do I drop off my child for The Reptile Store Summer Camp?

Both the drop off and the pickup locations is at The Reptile Store Summer Camp unit. We are located one unit west of The Reptile Store in Hamilton Ontario. The stores address is 467 King St East, Hamilton. Click here for a map!

25. Is The Reptile Store Summer Camp fully insured?

Yes of course we are fully insured. Many camps are operating right now without sufficient insurance or even without insurance at all! We carry 2 million dollars liability insurance, the same or more than most zoological facilities!

26. If an emergency comes up at home how can I get a hold of my child while he/she is at camp?

Our Summer Camp Director carries a cell phone at all times. This phone number will be given to you on the first day of camp, in case any situations arise. The camp director also has email access during the course of the day, even while we are on field trips! The Reptile Store is always open during camp hours, and their phone number is 905-521-9990.

27. Do Campers need to bring money with them?

Lunches are usually available on all camp days at an extra fee. We also usually allow campers to visit souvenir shops at the zoos, although we reserve the right to refuse a child's chance to shop for poor behavior. In the past about half of the children come with some money, and the other half does not. We are not responsible for any lost money! Our staff can safeguard your child's spending money for the day, if you choose.

28. What if my child cannot, or does not want to participate in a certain activity at camp?

Your child will not be forced to participate in any activity in which he or she does not feel comfortable participating in or is physically unable to. For safety and proper supervision, it is required that your child be present at all activities.