



YourSPCA.org || 300 Harlem Road
716.875.7360 || West Seneca, NY 14224

SPCA Camp Handbook



Dear Parent/Guardian,

Thank you for registering your child in the SPCA Serving Erie County's Camp. We are excited to share our time with you and are sure that your child will have a great time.

Our goal is to embrace and support your child's passion for animals while helping to encourage compassionate, caring attitudes towards all life. Your child will be exposed to different parts of the shelter that he/she may not normally get to see while meeting different animals. These positive experiences will all be fostered through engaging, fun, interactive activities.

Throughout the week we will be learning, exploring, and interacting with animals. To ensure that your child is prepared for the week, please read this entire handbook outlining our policies and procedures. This book will help you know what to expect and will answer some of the questions you may have.

If you have additional questions, please contact one of the administrators listed below. Thank you for sharing your summer with us! We cannot wait for the fun to begin!

Regards,

Director of Humane Education Christine Davis
(716) 875-7360, ext. 262
christined@yourspca.org

Humane Educator Danielle Talbot
(716) 875-7360, ext. 245
daniellet@yourspca.org

Humane Educator Katherine Gillette-Cockerill
(716) 875-7360, ext. 234
katherineg@yourspca.org

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SPCA Camp Handbook

You will see on the camp application room to address any of your child's special/medical issues. Please notify us of any of your child's special needs, allergies, dietary restrictions, developmental delays, communicative needs, emotional needs, or other additional requirements. In regards to these issues, we prefer to speak with you directly in order to ensure your camper is receiving proper care and attention while at camp; if you fill in this part of the application, a camp administrator will contact you by phone to ensure our full understanding of your child's special needs. After that conversation takes place, SPCA counselors will forward to you a medical form to be filled in by your physician. Thank you.

Camp Hours:

SPCA camps run 9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. General check-in runs 8:45 a.m. - 9:15 a.m. and general pick-up runs 3:45 p.m. - 4:00 p.m. Extended morning and afternoon care is available at an additional cost for all camps and can be added at any time.

Extended morning care: 7:45 a.m. - 8:45 a.m.

Extended afternoon care: 4:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.

Arrival and Parking: Camp will begin and end each day in the SPCA's Education Center, located at our 300 Harlem Rd., West Seneca shelter. Parents should park near the Lipsey Clinic at the SPCA and walk their children into the Education Center. There will be signage to guide parents and children to the door located between the Lipsey Clinic entrance and Adoptions entrance. This will lead to a hallway which leads to the Education Center.

Sign-In/Out: To ensure the safety of your campers, an authorized person must sign a child IN and OUT before and after each session. We require daytime phone numbers where parents can best be reached, should we need to call you for any reason during the day. Campers are not allowed to sign themselves in or out.

Anyone picking up a camper must show a photo ID and be listed on the authorization form. When registering, please list all approved persons including yourself. Photo ID is not necessary at the time of drop off. We appreciate your patience; your child's safety is important to us. Should you need to add a name to the list, the person who originally completed the authorization form must send the name in writing to HumaneEducation@yoursPCA.org or call 716-875-7360, ext. 262.

Late Fees: Those who routinely pick up and/or drop off outside of general care hours will be charged for extended care. \$5 will be charged for the first fifteen minutes and an additional \$5 for each 5-minute period thereafter. Parents who do not pick up by the end of extended care (5:00 p.m.) will be charged an additional fee of \$5 up to 15 minutes late, and \$1 for each minute afterwards. If parents are running late for any reason, please call to let us know.

Early/Late Pickup: If you need to pick up your child before the end of the day, please notify a counselor during drop-off so that we can make note of it and have your child ready. Should you need to pick up early due to an unexpected reason, please notify us as quickly as possible. If you are going to be late, please notify us as quickly as possible.

Absences: If your child will be absent from camp, please notify a counselor in advance or call us that day. You will not be reimbursed for any days missed. If your child is sick, he or she must be fever-free for 24 hours in order to return to camp.

Illness: If your camper becomes ill during a camp session, a camp counselor will contact you immediately. At that point you will be asked to pick him/her up within one hour. If your child has been sick prior to camp, please let a counselor know.

Emergency Authorization: In the event of an emergency that requires you to pick up your child early from camp, please call 716-875-7360 ext.262 or 716-821-2014 *if possible* prior to pick-up.

Dress Code:

- The best clothes for children to wear are clothes that are comfortable and can get messy. Whether interacting with animals, playing games, or completing crafts, children might get dirty.
- Campers must be prepared to go outside. Please send weather-appropriate clothing, raincoats instead of umbrellas, if applicable. Campers may always want to pack a sweatshirt as the Education Center may be slightly cold.
- Shoes must cover the foot completely. This helps to ensure the safety of your child as we encounter many different landscapes on our campus, both indoors and out, and we interact with animals. Shoes that expose any skin of the bare foot (sandals, flip flops) or shoes that interfere with walking will not be permitted and children will not be allowed to participate.
- We encourage campers to wear sunscreen and bug spray. Campers are welcome to bring additional sunscreen and bug spray with them. The sunscreen and bug spray must be labeled and campers must be able to self-apply.

Backpacks: Campers may bring backpacks daily to hold their items (lunch bags, water bottles, jackets, etc.). If it may be necessary, please feel free to send an extra set of clean clothes. All items should be labeled.

Hats and Sunglasses: Permitted, but optional. Campers will not be able to wear these items indoors.

Camp T-shirts: Campers participating in summer camps will be required to wear their SPCA Camp T-shirts on the first day of camp for each participating week. At this time, campers participating in vacation day and breaks camp will not be required to wear an SPCA Camp T-shirt.

SPCA lunch bags, water bottles, hats, sweatshirts, and additional camp T-shirts are available for purchase.

Water, Snacks, and Lunches:

- Campers are encouraged to bring labeled water bottles (preferably reusable, without misters) to camp.
- Snacks will be provided daily in the morning and afternoon. Parents are welcome to pack extra snacks for their children. If your camper has any allergies or dietary needs, you will need to alert us to these and possibly pack your own snacks.
- Lunch is **not** provided. All lunches must be brought from home. If a camper forgets a lunch, you will be notified and given an opportunity to bring a lunch. If you are unable, a sandwich will be ordered from a nearby shop. You will be charged \$4 - \$6, plus a \$5 service fee. Payment will be due when you arrive to pick up your child.

Please note: we are unable to heat food for your child, so please pack items that can be stored and eaten at room temperature. If needed, we can refrigerate your child's lunch.

Camp Policies: We ask that all campers adhere to SPCA Camp policies and rules at all times so that camp can be an enjoyable and educational experience for all. Our camps promote kindness and compassion for both pets and people, and campers are expected to show kindness and compassion to animals, staff members, fellow campers, volunteers, and customers while at camp. The SPCA aims to help campers understand how to be kinder and more compassionate, and how to appropriately interact with animals.

SPCA Camp Rules: All campers must agree to the following:

“As a kid who cares about animals, my community, and myself, I will always:

- Be kind to pets and the people who love them
- Listen to and follow directions
- Stay with my group
- Find my calm and remain quiet in the presence of animals
- Wait my turn
- Speak calmly
- Show respect for the SPCA and help keep it clean
- Stay safe, learn, and have fun!”

Behavior Management: Our staff uses positive behavior management, however, if a camper cannot show appropriate behavior or breaks camp rules, a time-out and removal from the group may occur. If negative or disruptive behavior continues, our staff will contact a parent/guardian to help remedy the situation. We may ask for a child to be picked up early and, in some cases, the child may be asked to not return if behavior does not improve. In this event, the SPCA will not issue refunds for any days missed.

Medication: SPCA Camp staff is certified in first aid and CPR. Employees, volunteers, or other representatives are not permitted to administer any medications or medical treatment. If your camper is likely to need medication in an emergency, such as an inhaler or EpiPen, you must have a physician complete a “Permission to Self-Administer Medication” form and send the medication to camp each day. In the event of an emergency, staff can assist with preparing medication, but campers must be able to self-administer.

Interacting with Animals in the Shelter: Campers may have the opportunity to interact with dogs, cats and other animals at SPCA, depending on animal availability. While the SPCA does our best to provide a calm, stress-free environment for homeless pets, there are several factors that we are unable to control. This can cause animals in the shelter to experience levels of stress unlike pets who are in homes. We encourage you to have this discussion with your child prior to coming to camp.

Although we try our best to only select animals who may not be frightened in new environments, it’s important to remember that the animals at SPCA at any point might be scared. Campers should not run up to them, put their faces or hands close to their heads, or make a lot of noise. Please instruct your campers to listen to counselors when they tell them how to interact with animals they are meeting for the first time. Our animals may not act like pets at home...but with campers’ help, these animals will find new homes where they can relax and be comfortable.

Camp Checklist:

What to Bring:

- Snacks (if there are any allergies or dietary needs)
- Lunch
- Labeled, reusable water bottle
- Labeled sunscreen/bug spray (also apply before camp)
- Raincoat/poncho/sweatshirt (no umbrellas)
- Any medication including EpiPens and inhalers that your child may need
- Books are permitted to be used in extended care

What Not to Bring:

- Money or objects of monetary/sentimental value
- See section about phones/cameras below

The SPCA is not responsible for any items that are lost, stolen, or damaged.

Cameras/Phones: The SPCA Serving Erie County's camp is an "UNPLUGGED" camp. We want to ensure that your child is immersed in an exciting, engaging environment which enables them to participate in activities, games, and interactive experiences with their peers, SPCA professionals, and our animals. Therefore, campers will not be allowed to utilize personal electronics including cell phones, tablets, computers, or gaming devices during camp. **All personal electronics should be left at home.** If campers do use any personal electronics, SPCA staff will hold those devices in the office until the end of the day when parents or guardians pick them up.

Contacting Camp Counselors: A phone number will be provided to you so that you can contact an SPCA humane educator during the day. That phone will be with an educator at all times during camp. If you must call during the day, please contact us at that number.

Cancellation Policy:

- **Single-day** camp registrations are non-refundable.
- Six weeks prior to the first day of participation in **break** camp, a non-refundable processing fee of \$50 will be retained.
- From six weeks through two weeks prior to participation in **break** camp, a deposit equal to 50% of the camp cost will be retained.
- **Full-week summer** camps: If your child is registered in advance, a place is reserved for him or her. If, prior to June 1, we learn your child will, in fact, not be attending camp after that place has been reserved, a non-refundable processing fee of \$50 will be retained. From June 1 through two weeks prior to camp, a deposit equal to 50% of the camp cost will be retained.
- No refunds will be given 14 days prior to or after the start of any **week-long** camps.
- If your child is absent or on vacation during the registered week, camp fees will not be returned or prorated.
- All refund requests must be submitted in writing.
- Approved refunds will take a minimum of two weeks to process.

Frequently Asked Questions

Can I change the week of camp that my child is already registered for?

- If there is a space available, you may switch your child to a different session. A \$10 transfer fee will be applied. Transfer requests can be made to Christine Davis, director of humane education, at (716) 875-7360 ext. 262.

How are campers grouped?

- For summer camps, groups are as follows by age: 5 - 7, 8 - 10, 9 - 11, 12 – 14.
- For vacation and break camps, groups are as follows by age: 5 - 7, 8 – 10.
- The groups may be together during the before or after care sessions, at the time of drop off or pick-up, and at lunch.
- Age grouping may differ due to low enrollment at the SPCA's discretion.

Can my child be grouped with siblings or friends?

- If their ages fall in the same age grouping, they will be grouped together.
- If their ages fall in different age groupings, they will be in different groups.
- We reserve the right to cancel the registration of a child registered in a session that doesn't match his or her age or grade.

Are there any staff members certified in first aid or CPR?

- Yes! The SPCA's full-time humane educators are certified in both.

What is a typical day at camp?

Camp is different each day, but some activities may include:

- Indoor and outdoor games.
- Crafts or making toys for the animals.
- Lessons related to the day's topic, kids, and animals.
- Q & A with SPCA staff, including veterinarians.
- Observing medical and surgical procedures, if applicable.
- Learning to care for animals.
- G-rated videos during lessons, lunch, or extended care.

Who designs your camp curriculum?

- The SPCA's camp curriculum is written by our in-house education team. Our camp curriculum is designed to empower children to care for animals not just in their homes, but in their communities. Camp is designed to help children foster positive, long-lasting relationships all while having fun, meeting animals, and making friends.

What are the camp counselors' or humane educators' qualifications?

- Each group of campers will have an SPCA humane educator as the lead instructor. These humane educators are full-time staff members who work with children and adults all year long. Each educator has a minimum of a bachelor's degree in an education, health, or related field. These professionals are also first aid and CPR-certified. All humane educators have completed required background checks, interviews, job applications, and reference checks.
- One camp counselor will be paired with a humane educator weekly. Those counselors are seasonal staff members hired specifically to help with camp. They have completed all required SPCA background checks, interviews, job applications, and reference checks.
- Volunteers and interns will work with groups based upon availability. These volunteers and interns have completed the required SPCA volunteer orientations, applications, required background checks, and interviews.

Can children who have special needs participate?

- If parents of children with special needs would like to register their children, please contact Director of Humane Education Christine Davis, 716-875-7360, ext. 262 prior to or upon completing registration.
- We will work with parents/guardians to accommodate campers with special needs, learning disabilities, or other needs. However, we must be notified of these during the registration process to ensure that the SPCA's camp session will be a successful, positive experience for your child.
- The safety and success of campers is a definite priority of ours. Please think about the following when considering our camp for your child:
 - Your child will be around animals. If you feel that he/she may act in a manner that an animal may interpret as dangerous, then this camp is not recommended.
 - Some activities will take place outside on uneven terrain. Parents of campers with mobility issues should take this into consideration. In some situations, special accommodations may need to be made for your child. For example, if the terrain is uneven, rocky, or not appropriate for wheelchairs, another shelter experience will be created for your child.

- Although we try our best to accommodate special needs, we are unable to provide one-on-one instruction or personal care. If you are able to provide an aide, then we would be happy to work with both. Even with an aide, your child cannot stray from the group as we are ultimately responsible for the care of your child while in the program.
- If you would like to tour the SPCA prior to deciding whether our camps are appropriate for your child, contact the Director of Humane Education Christine Davis today at 716-875-7360 ext. 262.

Will I be able to provide any personal feedback, or feedback on my child's experiences at camp?

- Yes! We strongly encourage you to complete the camp survey that will be provided to you after your child's participation in one of the SPCA's camp programs. Our goal is to ensure that you and your child have a positive experience. Therefore, we encourage you to not only complete this survey but to communicate with us regularly, if necessary!



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