

Zoo Birthday Information Package

For any booking questions, modifications or cancellations, please contact our birthday party booking office directly:

Phone **780-442-1442**

Email cmsbirthdaybookings@edmonton.ca

Your Birthday Party

Included in the Program Fee

The following is included with your program fee:

- A themed program delivered by an interpreter
 - 1.5 hr program (for 2.5 hr party package)
- A one-hour room rental
- A birthday t-shirt for the birthday child. Youth sizes S-XL are available in purple, yellow, blue and green. Please indicate your size and colour preference to your interpreter.
- The birthday child will receive:
 - One family single admission pass to a City Attraction (Edmonton Valley Zoo, Muttart Conservatory, or John Janzen Nature Centre.)

Optional Add-ons

Extra birthday shirts are available for an additional cost. These must be requested at the time of booking the party. No refunds or additions will be accepted once the booking has been placed.

Birthday Party Preparation

Interpreter Contact

The interpreter assigned to lead your program will contact you a few days prior to your party to confirm details with you. If you have not heard from your interpreter at least 48 hours prior to your party and have questions about your program, please call the program coordinator at **780-496-3924**.

Group Size & Adult Supervision

The maximum number of people (including parents and siblings) for your party is **30**. A minimum of 4 adults are required to stay with your group at all times and assist with supervision. Additional parents and children/siblings will be asked to pay facility admission fees and tour the facility on their own (during facility operating hours only). Additional participants can re-join the group for the room rental portion or after the program ends.

For after-hours birthdays, additional parents/children are not permitted to tour the facility on their own or remain within the buildings on their own. Please be aware that our party rooms can accommodate approximately 40 individuals in total.

If you have a large group (exceeding the maximum group size), you are welcome to book a second birthday program with another interpreter. Both birthdays can then join together for the cake and presents (with room rental), or a picnic on-site.

Special Needs

To help us deliver the best birthday party we can, please inform your interpreter about children with special needs in advance of the program. This includes:

- Learning Disabilities
- Physical Disabilities, including mobility issues
- Medical Concerns, including allergies
- Behavioural Issues

Program content and activity locations can be changed to include students with special needs.

**Please advise your interpreter of any allergies the children have or indicate any allergy concerns at the time of bookings. The Zoo is not a nut-free or fragrance-free facility, as many animals eat seeds and nuts as part of their diet, and receive daily enrichments that may include scents (including extracts and spices). Common allergens encountered at the zoo include fur, feathers, dust, pollen, straw, and hay.*

Clothing & Footwear

Please be prepared to spend time outdoors, as portions of the program will be conducted outdoors. We strongly recommend that ALL participants dress for the weather. Guests should be comfortable with spending at least 20-30 minutes outdoors (or up to 10 minutes if it's very cold), since guests will spend time walking from the EdVenture Lodge to the Saito Centre and in between buildings to visit animals. In poor weather, we cannot guarantee that the entire 2 hr program will be spent entirely indoors. Your interpreter will allow for more indoor time in inclement weather.

It is important to dress for hot sunny weather (hat, sunscreen, bug spray) as well as cold or wet weather (jacket, extra sweater, raincoat, hat, mitts, snow boots, and appropriate

footwear). For hot sunny days, we also recommend that each participant brings a refillable water bottle.

For your group's safety and comfort while walking around the zoo, we recommend comfortable, closed-toed footwear. This is especially important for any behind-the-scenes portions of the program or running games.

Facility Guidelines

To ensure visitor safety and continued enjoyment, there are some rules that we ask all program participants to abide by at the Edmonton Valley Zoo:

- When indoors, use quiet indoor voices.
- Treat all artifacts and animals with respect
- Remain with your interpreter at all times unless otherwise noted.
- Remain on paths at all times. Do not climb on or over fences or buildings.
- Do not feed leftover food to animals, throw items into animal enclosures, or bang on enclosure windows
- Obey boundaries set up by your interpreter during games or activities.
- Groups are responsible for cleaning up after themselves. Remember to:
 - put all garbage and recycling into appropriate containers
 - remove any unwanted items from the party room
 - pack up all items and be ready to leave the party room on time

What to Bring:

Food

You are responsible for supplying all food, cake, beverages, plates, cups, napkins and utensils for your party. Adult supervisors will be responsible for preparing food items, and cleaning up. Please note that on-site food preparation facilities are limited (no stove or microwave available). We recommend easy-to-prepare or pre-made food items. You are welcome to bring your own kettle, coffee maker, or slow cooker for making warm beverages or heating food items.

You have access to:

- Tables and chairs, with generic table cloths
- Fridge for food storage (in separate room); there is no freezer
- 2-3 Electrical outlets (bring your own slow cooker, kettle, or other appliances*)

**Excluding BBQs, indoor grills or personal outdoor grills. These cannot be used on-site.*

Ordering Take-Out:

Groups are responsible for making their own advance delivery and payment arrangements for ordering take-out (i.e., pizza) to be delivered to the Zoo. Please meet the delivery person at the front entrance of the Zoo to accept delivery & provide payment.

The Edmonton Valley Zoo does not provide food or beverage service equipment, with the exception of tables and chairs.

There are no BBQ units for use or rental on-site. You cannot bring your own BBQ unit for use at the Zoo.

Decorations

You may bring in your own decorations for your room rental, including:

- Table cloths
- Table-top decorations
- Banners
- Party hats
- Candles for the cake

The following items are not permitted on-site:

- Balloons & kites
- Sparklers & other fireworks
- Items needing to be stapled or nailed to walls
- Items needing to be hung from the ceiling

If you have any questions about materials you wish to bring, please discuss with your interpreter when they call you prior to your party.

Please Leave These Items at Home

For health and safety considerations of both humans and animals, we ask that you do not bring to the Zoo:

- Pets or other animals*
- Your own BBQs or indoor grills (for preparing food on-site)
- Your own fruits, vegetables, and other food to donate to the Zoo or for feeding the animals
- Bicycles, children's scooters, or inline skates (for use and/or lock-up)

*Service dogs that are accompanying persons with disabilities are permitted. Please be prepared to present your documentation for your service dog to the cashiers at the front gate. Service dogs without appropriate certification will not be permitted to enter the Zoo.

Booking, Payment & Cancellation Procedures

Booking

- Bookings must be made at least **6 weeks** in advance.

Payment

- The cost of your booking is shown on your program confirmation. **Payment in full is required at the time of booking** in order to reserve a spot.
- Payment can be made by cash, cheque, Visa, MasterCard and American Express. Please have cheques made payable to The City of Edmonton, and write your booking confirmation numbers on your cheques.
- Payment can be made on the phone at the time of booking, or in person at any City of Edmonton facility.

Program Cancellation

- **You are required to provide written notice of cancellation of the birthday party via email to cmsbirthdaybookings@edmonton.ca.**
- Cancellations with 8 - 30 days' notice are subject to a fee of 50% of the program cost.
- Programs cancelled with less than 7 days' notice will be charged the full program fee.
- Programs run rain or shine. In the event of poor weather, **you must call 780-442-1442 or email cmsbirthdaybookings@edmonton.ca** if you are not coming.

***Please note:** even if you have already talked to your interpreter prior to the program and have expressed interest in cancelling/re-scheduling, you will need to call or email our birthday booking agent to formally request a change to your program booking.*

Arrival/Departure Procedures

Parking

All invited guests must park in the public (main) parking lot, at the bottom of Buena Vista Road.

Early Access to Site (for set-up)

You may arrive a **maximum of 15 minutes prior to your birthday program** to bring in food and decorations to set-up for the party. You must make early arrival arrangements directly with your interpreter when you speak to him/her prior to your program.

Start and End Meeting Locations

Your program may begin/end outside of our facility's regular operating hours. If your program begins outside of our regular hours, the facility doors will be locked upon your arrival. Please do not be alarmed; wait at the front gate, and your interpreter will let you in! Please advise any parents picking up their children after-hours that they will need to wait until the program end time. The facility will be locked to the public for the duration of the program. **Please visit our website at edmonton.ca/valleyzoo to check our most up-to-date hours of operation.**

If you are unsure where to meet your interpreter when you arrive, ask Guest Services to radio the interpreter for you.

Guest Arrival

Invited guests park in the main parking lot (entrance at the bottom of Buena Vista Rd.). Please ask guests to meet you at the front gate or in the birthday room a few minutes before the program start time, so that the program can begin on time. If you are expecting any late arrivals, we suggest you provide guests with your cell phone number, so that they can call you to determine your location upon arrival. Late arrivals can also ask staff at Guest Services to radio your interpreter to determine your group's location.

Morning Parties

Guests should arrive as close to the start time as possible. If you arrive to find the doors locked, the interpreter will be at the gates to let you in shortly. The doors will not be unlocked until the facility is open to the public, so late arrivals will be unable to get in on their own until the facility opens. If possible, provide guests who will be arriving late with your contact number to reach you, so that they can be let into the facility upon arrival. Pick up location is at the front gate.

Afternoon Parties

Guests should let Guest Services know they are here for a birthday and will be directed to the party room area. During our winter season (Thanksgiving weekend – Mother's Day weekend), any parents wishing to pick their children up from the party room will need to arrive at least 15 min before the party ends. Otherwise, the front gate may be locked until the group returns to the front gate to exit.

After-hours & Evening Parties

Your program will begin and end at the front gate of the zoo. Outside of our regular hours, the front gate will be locked upon your arrival. Your interpreter will let you in 15 minutes prior to the party start time. Please advise any parents picking up their children after-hours that they will need to wait until the program end time. The facility will be locked to the public for the duration of the program.

No member of your party can remain inside the Zoo after-hours once the party has ended.

Program Activities

This program includes activities that occur both indoors and outdoors. Activities will include a guided animal visit to see some of our indoor and outdoor animals, interpreter-led discussions about animal features and animal information, a few small animal encounters*.

** For more details about which animals may be included in your program, please ask your interpreter. Please let him/her know in advance, or at the time of booking, if your group has any specific requests or concerns with types of animals that may be brought out for encounters (i.e., if you do not want any snakes brought out during your program). Our selection of tractable animals can include reptiles, birds, mammals, and amphibians. Most, but not all, of our tractable animals are touchable by members of the public.*

Other activities may include developing a simple enrichment to deliver to an animal, touching/handling of animal artifacts, a craft, games, and learning-based activities. When your interpreter calls to confirm your program, please inquire about program activities that may be included. When possible, the interpreter will try to include activities that feature your child's favourite zoo animal. When your interpreter calls, you can tell him/her know what your child's favourite zoo animal is, and if your child prefers crafts or games for inclusion in the program. We cannot guarantee any encounters with specific animals, as this is dependent on animals' health on the day of your program.

Programs do not automatically include time for a snack or bathroom break, but this can be incorporated into your program, especially with younger children. Please confirm with your interpreter when s/he calls, or just prior to the start of your program, if you would like to include a mid-program break.

Please Note: For after-hours birthday programs, no member of your group can wander around the Zoo on their own. Your group must remain together with your interpreter.

Questions?

Please visit our birthday FAQ website at:

http://www.edmonton.ca/attractions_events/edmonton_valley_zoo/birthday-party-faq.aspx

You may also call the program coordinator at 780-496-3924.

We look forward to seeing you at the Edmonton Valley Zoo!