



## Mini Camp 2025

### Philosophy

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Our education environment is designed to support inclusive and collaborative learning, promote STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) exploration and discovery, and empower students to reach their full potential.

### Prior to Coming

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Please complete your student's online registration (including all medical, liability, and photo permission releases) at least one week prior to your program start date. Review the important information and guidelines addressed in this letter.

### Contact and Emergency Numbers

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All activities will be conducted at the Texas State Aquarium main campus, located at 2710 N. Shoreline Blvd., Corpus Christi, TX 78402.

Students may not receive direct phone calls or text messages while in TSA's care. If you need to reach your student, or you have an emergency during program hours, please call or contact TSA Education staff at these numbers:

- (361) 881-1218 Nicole Gaertner, Education Director
- (361) 653-2605 Nicole Odom, Education Manager
- (361) 881-1230 Texas State Aquarium Information Desk

## Daily Check-in and Check-out

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Check-in and check-out are conducted under the blue tent-tops on the side lawn behind the ticketing booth. In the case of severe weather, check-in and check-out will be in the Aquarium lobby.

### **Check-in begins at 8:30 a.m.**

Early arrivals will not be signed in until 8:30 a.m. Late arrivals should report to the information desk in the main lobby.

**Check-out is at 3:30 p.m.** Only adults on the Permission List with a VALID PHOTO ID will be allowed to check-out students. **Please arrive promptly to check-out your student.**

As a reminder, the TSA is not licensed by the state as a child-care facility, and before/after program care will not be available.

In case of severe weather, please call for instructions on early release, day cancellations and/or change in pick-up locations.

## Cancellation/Refund Policy

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Cancellation / refund requests must be submitted to [educationservices@txstateaq.org](mailto:educationservices@txstateaq.org). For cancellation notices received at least two-weeks prior to the program start date, a refund of 50% can be accommodated. For cancellation requests received less than two-weeks from the program start date, your payment will not be refunded. The success of this program depends on complete participation and payment from all registrants. We do not offer refunds or pro-rated fees due to illness or weather conditions.

Please also note that each camp requires a minimum number of enrollments or may be subject to cancellation. If we are unable to host the camp due to insufficient participation, you will receive notification of camp cancellation and a complete refund at least one week before the program start date.

## What to Bring

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- Tote bag or backpack
- Water bottle – Students will have access to water throughout the day and will be encouraged to refill their bottles or cups
- Lunch and (2) snacks – all food items should be nut free and not require refrigeration or heating
- Sunscreen and bug spray
- Hat with brim
- Change of clothes, in case of incident
- Light jacket or sweatshirt

All items should be labeled with the student's name. The Aquarium is not responsible for lost or stolen items. Please be sure to check that your students have all their belongings at the end of each day.

## What Not to Bring

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- Electronic devices or toys of any kind.
- Money to purchase lunch, snacks, beverages, or gift shop items as students will not be allowed to shop.
- You can shop TSA's online giftshop by visiting the link here: [Shop & Support - Texas State Aquarium](#) or scan the QR code below:



## Student Dress Code

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Please dress your student(s) for activities that include being active, creating art projects, conducting science experiments, and so much more. Activities will take place both inside and outside the Aquarium facility. Clothing should be appropriate for daily weather and classrooms that can be chilly. Footwear should be comfortable, closed toe (no sandals, flip-flops, etc.) and

fit properly. Please do not dress your student in the following: skirts or dresses (unless wearing shorts underneath), open-toed shoes (sandals, flip flops, etc.), or clothing that's too big or too small (this can be a safety hazard during play and activities).

## Safety Notice

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Your student's safety is important to us. Please note the following policies to ensure the health of fellow students, our guests, and staff:

- All employed staff and volunteers are screened and have successfully passed reference and background checks.
- All Education staff members are certified in First Aid/CPR/AED, and have completed training in child abuse awareness and prevention with TrainRight, Inc.
- The Education team holds experience working with children, developing age-appropriate curriculum, and have extensive training in facility protocols for safety and performance.
- We have increased sanitation of high-touch surfaces, and all group materials will be sanitized between uses.

## Bullying Policy

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To ensure all our students have a safe, enjoyable experience, we ask that you review and share the following information with your student.

- We strongly encourage parents and students to report bullying immediately.
- Do not participate in or initiate bullying. The Texas State Aquarium has a strict no bullying rule; no form of bullying (physical, verbal, etc.) will be tolerated.
- Parents will be contacted if bullying does occur and the offending student may be asked to leave for the day, and exclusion for the rest of the week may be considered (dependent upon offense and at discretion of staff). Refunds will not be issued if your child is asked to leave due to behavioral issues.

## Corrective Action and Discipline Policy

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Positive reinforcement approaches and strategies will be used to promote and support respectful and positive behaviors during camp. When disruptive or negative behaviors do arise, camp staff may use the strategies below to address the issue.

- Re-explain and describe expected behaviors and actions during camp activities, including cause and effect of behaviors and actions.
- Model for and directly instruct/guide correct behaviors and actions of students.
- Speak with the student independently about behavior or action, jointly agree on approved/correct behavior expected in future.
- Re-direct student behavior to positive and appropriate behavior, either in the same situation/location or to an alternative place or activity (e.g., instead of not sharing pencils at table, ask camper to help pick up puppets).
- Stand next to student or ask student to sit/stand next to camp staff.

Should additional corrective action be necessary, or if disruptive or negative behaviors persist or accelerate, parents/guardians will be notified during the day or during pick-up and these steps may be taken (as appropriate):

- Removing participation in a camp activity, or “privilege” (e.g., playing a game or touching an animal);
- Taking a “time out” from camp activities and spaces by sitting with one of their camp counselors, or with another camp counselor/staff, on the side from fellow students.
- Contacting parents/guardians immediately for a phone conversation with student, and/or immediate pick-up of student.
- Elimination from camp (no refunds will be granted if this occurs)

We respect and understand each child is an individual. We recognize each student will respond to and engage in different ways. We aim to provide the most positive and enjoyable environment for all our students. If you have specific strategies for communication during tough or emotional moments that work best with your student, please share these with staff during check-in or contact the Education Director ahead of time at [ngaertner@txstateaq.org](mailto:ngaertner@txstateaq.org). We try to accommodate and include best practices strategies whenever we are able.