

Chaperone Tips

Thank you for being a chaperone for your group. Here are some suggestions to help you have a great visit:

Discover at a Walk: For the safety of the children you are supervising and for the safety of all our other visitors, we ask that students walk within the Museum's grounds. We know that it is often difficult for children to contain their excitement about being in a new place and feel the need to explore faster by running ahead. Playing a game while navigating from one area to the next can help young children slow down and stay within your sight. Play Simon Says, Mother May I, or Red Light, Green Light in between buildings to help prevent your group from running ahead.

Explore Snack Areas: Please don't allow your group to eat inside any of the exhibit halls. Food and drinks can easily leave messes and stains; we want the exhibit spaces to remain clean for all our visitors. If you have food or drinks for your group, please enjoy them at any location outside the exhibit halls. There are benches located throughout the Museum as well as picnic tables in front of Lookout Cove.

Provide Room for Imagination: We ask that groups spread out within the Museum. Too many people and too much noise can overwhelm a child's senses. There may be babies and young visitors at the Museum who can be easily inundated by older children. Having small groups spread throughout the exhibition areas allows your children to have the space they need to let their imaginations soar. Please be aware that Tot Spot has a height limit that is enforced for the safety and enjoyment of the Museum's youngest visitors. We ask that group visitors do not play inside of Tot Spot.

Allow Time for Immersion: We know there are many areas to explore at the Museum and you want your group to be able to visit all of these areas, but please don't rush. Allow children time to satisfy their creative needs. Try to move through the exhibits at the pace of the children and plan on spending a minimum of 15-20 minutes in each space. This is especially true in Studio 10 where it might take the children several minutes to decide on their creative process and to begin their artwork. Do not feel pressured to see everything in one visit. Free passes for a return visit will be provided to each child after the group visit so that families can return on their own to continue exploring.

Adults can Play Too: Children delight in co-play with an adult. When you say, "yes," and join in you may feel silly paddling an imaginary canoe or acting afraid of a pretend shark, but playing along ensures that children learn new vocabulary and helps children stay engaged with the activity for longer. We ask that chaperones keep cell phone use to a minimum while they are in charge of their small groups. Engaging with the children helps keep the group together. There is no correct or wrong way to use the exhibits. Encourage children to explore and discover different ways to use the space or an object. We only ask that you please take care not to damage an exhibit.

Connect through Conversation: Another way to help a child immerse in an activity and to also become connected with the child's interactions is to ask open-ended questions. Open-ended questions have many possible answers and lead to further learning. They encourage children to create, to experiment, make predictions, develop ideas, and solve problems. They have no wrong answers; they are tools for helping children try out different ways of thinking and talking about the world.

Some examples would be: "I wonder what would happen if...?" "Why do you think that happened?" "What do you notice?" "How (else) could we use this...?"