



## My Visit to the Children's Museum in Oak Lawn

*A Social Story to Help Me Prepare for My Visit*

### Notes for Caregivers

This Social Story is designed to help children with autism, sensory processing differences, and/or anxiety prepare for a visit to the Children's Museum in Oak Lawn.

The museum is a hands-on, interactive space filled with exciting exhibits for learning and play. It can be a high-sensory environment, with bright colors, different sounds, and children moving around. Please plan accordingly if your child has sensory sensitivities.

We offer a **Sensory Friendly Play Session every Sunday from 9am-10am**. This low-sensory play session is for families with children who would benefit from a more relaxed atmosphere at the museum. Please note that pre-registration is required. Please register each person attending the play session. In order to maintain a sensory friendly environment, we do limit capacity. Tickets available on the website.

### What to Know Before You Visit:

- The museum provides **Sensory Kits** at the front desk. These include noise-canceling headphones, sunglasses, fidget toys, and other helpful items.
- The museum can be noisy, bright, and busy, especially on weekends and school holidays. Consider coming for Sensory-Friendly Sunday Mornings.
- There are family restrooms available.

This guide walks children through what they may experience, helping them feel prepared and confident for their visit.

## Getting Ready for My Visit



I am going to the Children's Museum in Oak Lawn!

Before we go inside, I might see a lot of **bright colors** and **big windows**.

Other families will be arriving too. Some children might be **laughing, talking, or running** because they are excited.

If it is busy, I will stay close to my grownup while we wait to go inside.

## Checking In at the Front Desk



When we enter the museum, we will stop at the **Front Desk** to get our tickets.

There might be a **short line**, and I will wait my turn. While I wait, I can look around at the decorations or hold my grownup's hand.

At the Front Desk, we can ask to borrow a **Sensory Kit**.

The Sensory Kit has:

- **Noise-canceling headphones** if there are loud sounds.
- **Sunglasses** if the lights are too bright.
- **Fidget toys** if I want something to hold in my hands.
- **Planning tools** to help me decide on what to do at the museum.

I will return the Sensory Kit before I leave.



## Exploring the Museum



The museum has **many different areas** to explore!

Each area has something **fun, hands-on, and exciting** to do.

### What I Might See and Hear:

- Some areas are **quiet and calm**, while others are **noisy and full of movement**.
- I might hear **music, talking, and different sounds** from exhibits.
- There are **big structures, colorful lights, and things that move**.

I will **walk** instead of run, to keep everyone safe.

I will **wait my turn** if other children are using an exhibit I want to try.

If I need help, I can ask a **museum staff member**. They wear **shirts with the museum logo**.

## Exhibits I Can Explore

Each area of the museum has something fun to do!

### Race is On



At this exhibit, I can learn about **gravity, motion, momentum, force, and energy**. I can roll a ball down a ramp and try to land it in a bucket. I can also race my ball down a roller coaster—does it have enough momentum to make it to the end? I can even take a quick trip down the slide to feel human momentum in action!



## Water Adventure



Water moves in many different ways! In this exhibit, I can explore how **water flows, falls, and makes things float**. I can create waves, make water move through pipes, and feel the splashes. If I don't want to get wet, I can wear a smock.

## First Responder Friends (Police Car, Ambulance, Fire Truck)



I can sit inside a **real fire truck, ambulance, and police car** and pretend to be a first responder! I can put on firefighter gear, drive the fire truck, and learn about fire safety. I can also step into the ambulance and see how paramedics help people.

## Health Quest



I can pretend to be a **doctor or nurse** and take care of patients! I can use tools like a **stethoscope**, check heartbeats, and learn how doctors help us stay healthy. There's even a special drum that beats to the rhythm of my heart—what happens to the beat when I jump or run?



## Friendly Market



I can pretend to **shop for groceries**, **check out items at the register**, and **restock shelves**. This market is just my size, with lots of food choices! I can practice math skills by adding up prices and deciding what to buy.

## Route 66 Travels



I can go on a **road trip adventure** and explore the sights and places along Route 66!



## Moo Café



In the Moo Café, I can **cook and serve food** to my family and friends. I can dress up like a chef or server, take orders and prepare meals. I can even try milking **Clarabelle, the museum's official cow!**



## Dream Theater



I can be an **actor, director, or audience member** in my own play! I can dress up in costumes, use puppets, or take center stage. If I can imagine it, I can perform it!

## Tuneful Treehouse



This **treehouse** has **multiple levels** to explore! I can **climb**, **crawl**, and **discover hidden tunnels**. When I reach the top, I can play **musical instruments** and enjoy the view!



## Build-It Workshop



In this area, I can **build, experiment, and create!** Sometimes, I will use **tools**, and other times I might build things like **ramps, towers, and bridges**. The activities change, so there is always something new to explore!



## Airways



I can put balls and scarves into tubes and **watch them fly through the air!** I can move the flaps to change the direction of the air—can I guess where my scarf will go next?

## Build Your Own Racetrack



I can **design my own racetrack and race toy cars** down the track!



## Art Studio



I can **paint, draw, and create my own masterpiece!** There are lots of different materials I can use to **build, sculpt, and decorate** my artwork.



## Taking a Break is OK

If I feel **overwhelmed, tired, or need a break**, I can go to a **quiet space** with my grownup.

I can:

- Sit down and **breathe**.
- Use my **fidget toy**.
- Put on my **noise-canceling headphones**.
- Close my eyes and take a **deep breath**.

I can take as much time as I need before I go back to play.

## Visiting the Gift Shop



Before I leave, I might visit the **Gift Shop** with my grownup.

The gift shop has:

- **Books, toys, and souvenirs** from the museum.
- Things I can buy to remember my visit.

My grownup will let me know if I can pick something to take home.



## Saying Goodbye



When it is time to go, I will **walk with my grownup to the exit.**

I had **so much fun** at the museum!

I can come back another day to explore and play again.