

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



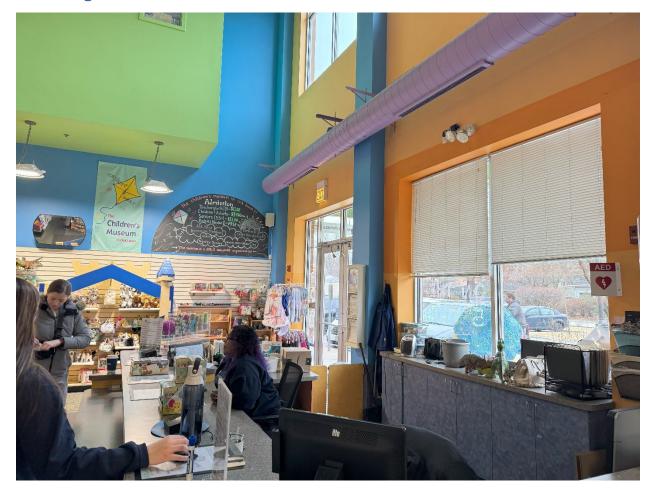
I am going to the Children's Museum in Oak Lawn!

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

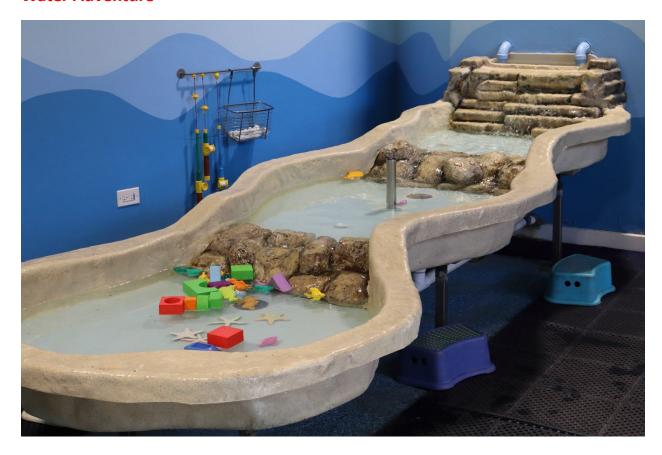
Each area of the museum has something fun to do!

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



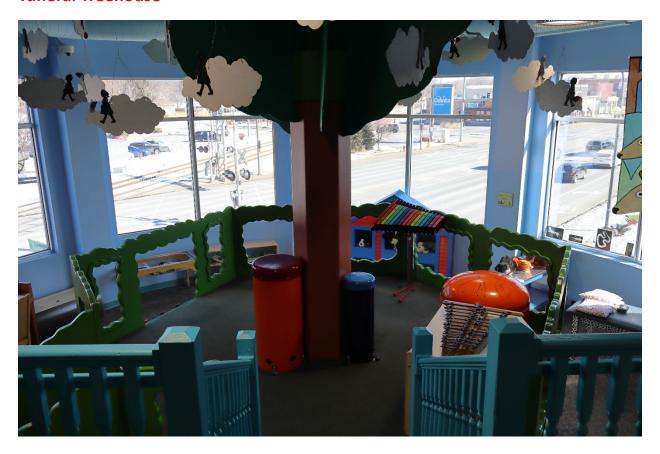
In the Moo Café, I can **cook and serve food** to my family and friends. I can dress up like a chef or server, take orders and prepare meals. I can even try milking **Clarabelle**, **the museum's official cow!**

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



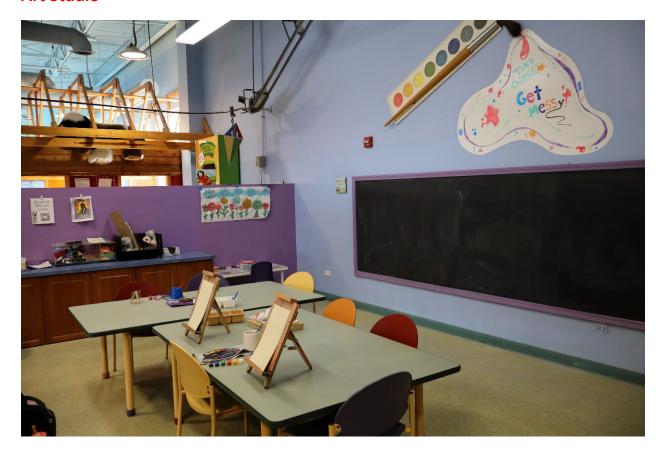
I can put balls and scarves into tubes and watch them fly through the air! I can move the flaps to change the direction of the air—can I guess where my scarf will go next?

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

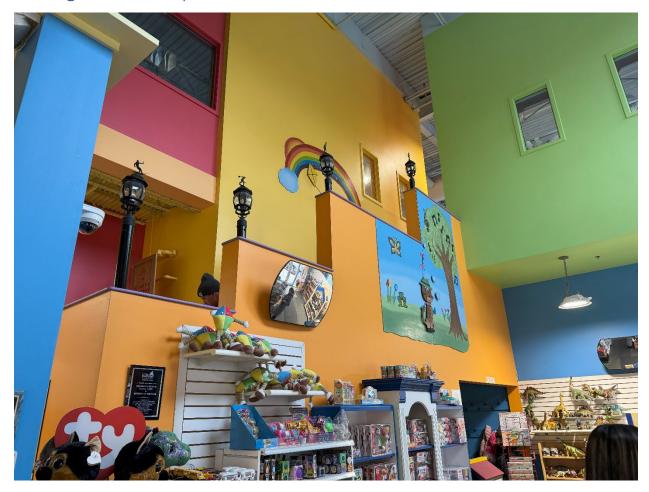
If I feel overwhelmed, tired, or need a break, I can go to a quiet space with my grownup.

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.