Social Story

A Family Guide to the Delaware Children’s Museum

Created by the DCM Education Department
A Letter to Parents

Dear Parents,

It is an honor to welcome your family to play and make memories at the Delaware Children’s Museum. Every visit to the Museum should be an exciting learning experience. We know that every visitor will encounter the exhibits in his or her own way. To ensure that children with autism spectrum disorders (ASD) and their caregivers have a great experience, we have provided this social story for you to use prior to your visit.

A social story describes a situation, concept, or social skill in a way that is meaningful to people with ASD. A social story helps caregivers prepare a child with ASD for a specific experience, ensuring greater understanding and a better outcome for everyone involved. The ultimate goal of a social story is to ensure a positive visit for children with ASD and their caregiver, as well as encourage others to be sensitive toward visitors with ASD.

We hope that you enjoy your visit with us and come back again to play some more!

Warmly,
Your friends and supporters at the Delaware Children’s Museum and Autism Delaware

An Overview of the Delaware Children’s Museum

Hours:
10am - 3:00pm, Tuesday through Thursday, and holiday Mondays
10:00am - 8:00pm Friday
10:00am - 5:00pm Saturday and Sunday
Closed on Mondays, Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Day, and Easter Sunday.

Where:
The Big Yellow Building in Riverfront Wilmington, 550 Justison Street, Wilmington, DE 19801.

Tickets:
$8.75 general admission (12 months and under are free); Members are always FREE.

Parking:
FREE parking is directly across the street from the restaurant’s parking lots—a quick and easy stroll to the DCM. Please help us be good neighbors and do not park in front of the nearby restaurants.

Coat Racks:
Please leave coats and umbrellas at the coat racks, located past Studio D, outside of the public restrooms or on the wall behind the Stratosphere.

Restrooms:
There are two bathroom locations in the Museum. Public restrooms are past Studio D and feature private and handicapped accessible stalls, stools for hand-washing at the sinks, and changing tables. Several private family restrooms are next to the ECOnnect exhibit; each is handicap accessible and include a changing table.

Important Numbers:
Main Museum Phone (302) 654-2340
Guest Services (302) 442-6861
Membership & Events (302) 442-6856
Field Trips & Outreach (302) 442-6857

Just the Facts

Maps:
1. Use your inside voice.
2. Keep your shoes on and use your walking feet.
3. Take turns, share, and put toys away after play.
4. Stay and play with your grown-up; adult supervision is required.

"Kids led the way to play!" The DCM environment works best when your kids can count on your participation. Please use your cell phone sparingly while visiting the DCM.

Rotating exhibits may be noisy. Be sure to ask our Museum floor staff in blue shirts for help if you are in need of assistance.

For folks with limited mobility, our Stratosphere features an elevator that is handicap accessible.

Most Importantly: Play • Create • Explore • Discover Together!

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Most Importantly: Play • Create • Explore • Discover Together!
I am going to a big, yellow building called the Delaware Children’s Museum. The Museum is a place where I can play, explore, and learn. There will be a lot of fun things to do with my family and friends while I am there. When I enter, it may be busy and noisy.

I will be welcomed by a happy staff person in a blue shirt. I will be patient as my family waits in line for our tickets. After we pay admission, I can play in the exhibits. I will stay with my grown-up and use my walking feet at all times. I can find a staff person if I need help.
This is a big structure that I can climb inside. There may be a lot of other children playing in the Stratosphere so I will wait my turn. My grown-up can climb with me if it makes me feel safe.

I enter the Stratosphere at the bottom and climb up to the top. There are tight spaces and many ways I can choose to climb. If I don’t want to crawl through the Stratosphere, I can walk up the stairs to the top.
In this exhibit, I will learn how to help my body be the best it can be. I can test some of my skills and exercise with the help of my grown-up. Other children may be exercising too, so I may have to wait my turn to use the equipment.

This colorful exhibit is called Structures. I will use many shapes to create designs and explore new building materials. I can learn about buildings from all around the world.
I can pretend that I am a builder and dress up in a construction worker outfit. I will accept other people in my space and build structures with them.

This is a big exhibit called ECOnect. I will learn about nature and explore different habitats. I can create hurricane sounds with the wind machine, make a paper butterfly soar into the air, read books, and even go fishing!
In the Eco House, I can pretend to be a gardener and learn how to save energy in my home. I will take turns on the slide and not put the pretend vegetables in my mouth. None of the animals and bugs that I see in this exhibit are real.

There is a water table in this exhibit! I can wear a vest, if I want, to help my clothes stay dry while I play in the water. It is OK if I get wet. I can play with boats and change the gates to make the water move. I can pretend to be a pirate and an explorer!
In this exhibit, I will learn about things that GO! I can pretend to be a train conductor or a car mechanic. I will use my walking feet and be careful around young children. I can read a book in the train tunnel with my grown-up.

There is an aquarium in this exhibit! I can watch all of the cool fish swimming in their home. I will use my inside voice and won’t splash in this water so the fish don’t get scared. If I ask a staff member, they will teach me about all of the fish in the tank and can help me touch a starfish!
I may hear loud noises in the Training Wheels exhibit and will have to share the tools, trains, and gears. I can go to the quiet nook with my grown-up if I need a break from playing.

This exhibit is called Bank On It. I can learn how to earn, save, and spend money wisely. There are computer games in this exhibit that make noise.
In this exhibit, I can pretend to buy groceries, write a check, and own a lemonade stand. I can play on the slide, but might have to wait my turn.

Sometimes the staff members at the Delaware Children’s Museum lead a group activity in the STEM Program Room. I am welcome to join this activity if I want. It may feel like a noisy and busy space. If I want to leave the activity and keep playing, that is OK.
In Studio D, I can make art and play with fun materials. I will have to share the supplies with others. It is OK if I get messy. I can wear a smock to keep my clothes clean and wash my hands in the sink when I am finished.

This area can be quiet. If I need a break from playing in the exhibits, I can sit on the mat and play with puzzles. I can snuggle up with a grown-up and read stories.
There are two bathroom areas at the Museum. I will ask a grown-up to come with me when I need to use a bathroom. I will remember to flush the toilet and wash my hands when I am finished.

This is the gift shop at the Museum. My grown-up can take me there at the end of my visit. I can ask them to buy me a book or toy. Sometimes they will say “yes” and other times they will say “no.”