

YOUR CHILD'S FIELD TRIP TO THE NATIONAL AQUARIUM

We are excited to share our world of aquatic wonder with your child's school group!

Your child's teachers have arranged for their class to attend a National Aquarium field trip. We look forward to welcoming their school group and are happy to provide the following information and suggestions for you to help them make the most of their visit.

WHAT YOUR CHILD WILL SEE AND DO

After checking in, students, chaperones and teachers will head through the Aquarium's main entrance where they will see the *Allegheny Cascades*, an exhibit representing a Western Maryland stream with native fish and a 35-foot-tall waterfall. Next, groups head upstairs to *Australia: Wild Extremes*, which introduces students to a typical Northern Australia river gorge. Encourage your child to look up, down and all around in this exhibit, where students will learn about the species that have adapted to this harsh environment, such as the pig-nosed turtle, laughing kookaburra and freshwater crocodile.

Next, in our *Blue Wonders* exhibition, your child will travel to a breathtaking Indo-Pacific coral reef filled with sharks, rays and a green sea turtle. From there, students will explore other fascinating ecosystems, such as *Maryland: Mountains to the Sea*, *Living Seashore* and *Upland Tropical Rain Forest*. Throughout the Aquarium, your child will have the opportunity to see the unique environmental adaptations of many different organisms. The *Atlantic Coral Reef* and *Shark Alley* exhibits allow children to safely experience the thrill of underwater diving with tropical fish and large sharks.

Crossing an indoor pedestrian bridge brings students to the Aquarium's Pier 4 Pavilion. Here, they will find the *Jellies Invasion* exhibit, where they can marvel at beautiful jellies species drifting through specially designed habitats. Pier 4 is also home to *Dolphin Discovery*, where students can view the amazing adaptations of the Atlantic bottlenose dolphin and learn about these incredible mammals.

YOUR CHILD'S SAFETY IS OUR PRIORITY

To ensure that your child's National Aquarium experience is as safe as it is exciting, all visiting school groups must adhere to established chaperone-to-student ratios. Make sure your child knows that sticking with their assigned chaperone and group is important and the best way to see as much as possible during their time here.

For the viewing enjoyment of all guests, lighting throughout the Aquarium may be dim, and your child will sometimes be moving throughout the building by escalator or move-a-lator. Therefore, we suggest that all guests wear hard-soled shoes that fit securely. Soft-soled shoes such as flip-flops or crocs may increase their likelihood of tripping or becoming injured.

ENGAGE YOUR CHILD BEFORE THE TRIP

- Remind your child that it is great to ask questions.
- Ask your child to make predictions about what they may see at the Aquarium.
- Encourage them to practice being patient; if they are still and quiet, animals may venture out of hiding spaces where they will be easier to spot.
- Explore our website to help your child understand what to expect from their field trip experience. Many—but not all!—of the species on exhibit here are profiled at aqua.org/animals.

WHAT TO ASK YOUR CHILD AFTER THE TRIP

- What did you learn today? How can you use this knowledge at school and at home?
- What was the most interesting animal you saw today? Have your child explain what the animal looks like, where it lives and what it eats. If your child doesn't remember, visit aqua.org/animals to learn more.
- What can we do to help animals like those living at the Aquarium? Create a conservation plan at home that can help protect animals and our planet.

FAMILY TIME

Now that your child has experienced the wonders of the aquatic world at the National Aquarium, participate in activities together that can help bring conservation knowledge into your home. The following are suggested activities.

CRAFT TOGETHER: OCEAN DIORAMA

Materials:

- Paper (card stock or thick paper works best)
- Small box (try an old shoebox)
- Crayons
- Markers
- Tape
- Yarn
- Colored Pencils

Instructions:

- Decorate your small box to look like an underwater habitat. Draw and color rocks, coral, seaweed, scuba divers, submarines, etc.
- Draw ocean animals on the paper, color them and cut them out.
- Use yarn to suspend your sea animals from the top of the box, so it looks like they are swimming.

BOOKS THE WHOLE FAMILY CAN ENJOY

"The Salamander Room" by Anne Mazer

"The Shaman's Apprentice: A Tale of the Amazon Rain Forest"
by Lynne Cherry and Mark J. Plotkin

"A House for Hermit Crab" by Eric Carle

"The Marine Biology Coloring Book, Second Edition" by Thomas Niesen

"A Hot Planet Needs Cool Kids: Understanding Climate Change and
What You Can Do About It" by Julie Hall and Sarah Lane

"Why Should I Recycle?"; "Why Should I Protect Nature?" and
"Why Should I Save Energy?" by Jen Green

"All the Way to the Ocean" by Joel Harper

TAKE ACTION

- Volunteer at a National Aquarium conservation event to help restore local ecosystems. For a list of upcoming events, visit aqua.org/support/conservation.
- We have always needed the ocean, and now the ocean needs us. To learn more about how your family can make a difference, visit aqua.org/conserve.

HELPFUL WEBSITES

National Aquarium: aqua.org

National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration: oceanservice.noaa.gov/kids

Environmental Protection Agency: epa.gov/kids

Chesapeake Bay Program: chesapeakebay.net

HINTS FOR FUTURE VISITS

Visit aqua.org for ticket sales as well as the best times to visit, hours, directions, dining options and opportunities for our community to visit for less. Click on our Plan Your Visit and Community pages to learn more.

Become a National Aquarium member:

Enjoy unlimited admission for one year; VIP express entry through the member entrance; members-only events throughout the year; discounts on parking, tours, guest tickets and special experiences; and more.