A Social Guide for attending a Birthday Party at the Peggy Notebaert Nature Museum
Introduction

The Nature Museum is a place where we can learn about nature and science! There are outdoor nature trails, and indoor exhibits that have live animals, art, preserved specimens, playrooms, and more.

We can read this story to get ready for our visit.

We will learn how to enter the museum, how to move around the building, what activities may happen during a birthday party, and where we can go if we need help during our visit.
Entrance

This is the entrance to the Nature Museum.

On our way inside, we will walk past lots of plants and maybe some animals too.

We can walk through any of the doors to get into the lobby.
The Lobby

When we walk through the front doors we will be in the lobby. There might be a lot of people in the lobby, or it might be noisy. This is okay, there are other places in the museum that will be quieter.
Checking in at the Front Desk

The worker at the front desk will help us figure out where we need to go. We might have to wait in line until it is our turn.

When it is our turn at the desk, we can tell the worker we are here for a birthday party. The worker may ask for our names or our email addresses.

The front desk worker can answer our questions and direct us to where the party is taking place.
Coat Check and Sensory Backpack

We can borrow a sensory backpack from coat check. Inside the backpack, we can find fidget toys, noise cancelling headphones, take a break books, and a turtle plush. We can use the backpack for the whole visit.

We may have to wait in line at coat check, or ring the doorbell so a worker knows we need help. This is okay.
Helpful People at the Museum

There are lots of people at the museum who can help us if we need something. Everyone is friendly, kind, and happy to meet us.

If we have questions, we can ask a Guest Experience Associate, a volunteer, or a security guard. They will help us find an answer.

If we can’t find our friends or family, all of these people can help us find them.
Getting Around the Museum

There are lots of indoor exhibits on the first and second floors of the museum. The third floor has one outdoor exhibit.

We can use the stairs to get to the second floor, or the elevator to get to the second and third floors.

If we need to sit down and eat away from the party room, we can sit and eat at the tables in the lobby.

We can also sit outside in the Ravine if the weather is nice.
Party Plan

Most of the party will happen in the party room, but there may be time to explore other exhibits as well.

When it is time to move to a new exhibit, a museum worker may ask us all to line up so we can travel together as a group. We may have to wait while our friends line up.

The worker will lead us to different exhibits. They are here to help and guide us through our day.

No matter where we go, we’ll come back to the party room again before we go home.
Party in the secret forest

Most birthday parties happen in an exhibit called the Secret Forest. Inside the Secret Forest there will be tables and chairs, and a rack with hangers for our coats.

There are also lots of places to play. There is a jungle gym that we can climb, and a slide that we can slide down. There is a tent that we can crawl inside and play. It may look darker inside the tent. We can walk into the tent to see what is inside. There is also a boat that we can climb on and pretend to steer.

It may be crowded in the Secret Forest. This is okay. We will take turns, use our walking feet, and keep a safe body while playing.
Critter Connection

During the birthday party, a museum worker and an animal may come to visit. We can meet the animal and learn about them. If we don’t want to meet the animal, that is okay. We can play in the party room.

To keep the animal safe, we will listen to the instructions from the museum worker. We can look closely at the animal, but we cannot touch the animal until the worker says it is okay.

We will take turns touching the animal. When it is my turn to touch the animal, I will clean my hands with hand sanitizer. This helps to keep the animal healthy. We will touch the animal very gently, and follow instructions from the worker.
Craft

During the birthday party, a museum worker may come to visit and teach us how to make a craft. The worker will give instructions and materials to make the craft. I can ask the worker or my adult for help if I need it.

If I don’t want to do the craft, that is ok. I can still play in the party room while the others are crafting.
Natures Playspace

During the party, we may go to an exhibit called Nature’s Playspace. Nature’s Playspace is a fun place to splash, climb, and play. We can also learn about local habitats here.

Nature’s Playspace has an area with water tables where we can play and explore. We might get wet playing in the water, this is okay.

Nature’s Playspace also has a treehouse with a curvy slide and a tunnel that we can crawl through. There are different kinds of animals and nests that we can climb in and on.

It might be crowded, so we can remember to take turns, use our walking feet, and keep a safe body while playing.
The Butterfly Haven

During the party, we may go to an exhibit called the Butterfly Haven. This exhibit is a room made of windows that has lots plants, a waterfall, small birds, and over 1000 butterflies from all over the world.

Some people work in the Butterfly Haven. They are there to make sure butterflies do not escape the exhibit. One of these workers is right by the entrance. I can say hi.
The Butterfly Haven

In the Butterfly Haven, butterflies might fly close to us, or even land on us. That is okay, butterflies cannot hurt us at all, but it might tickle a little if they land on us.

If we do not want a butterfly on us, we can gently shake our bodies so the butterfly flies away. Butterflies are very delicate, so we should not try to touch them.
The Butterfly Haven

When we are ready to leave the Butterfly Haven, another worker at the exit might ask us to look in the mirror to make sure we don’t have any butterflies on us. They also may look in our bag, just to be sure butterflies aren’t hiding inside.
Taking a Quiet Break

If we need a quiet place to take a break, that is okay. We can ask a museum worker for help. A worker can let us into the private Quiet Room if it is available. We can use the quiet room as long as we need to.

In the Quiet Room, there is a couch, a chair, a desk, noise cancelling headphones, books, and more.
Leaving the Museum

When it is time to go, we will be sure to drop off the sensory backpack if we borrowed one.

We may have to wait in line at coat check, or ring the bell so a worker knows we need help.

When we are ready to exit the museum, we can exit out the door we entered through in the lobby.
Leaving the Museum

Some people like to visit the Nature Museum all day, and some people like to visit for a short time. Both are good visits. The most important thing is that we enjoyed our time at the Nature Museum.