VISITING ZOOTAMPA AT LOWRY PARK
Note to Caregivers

**Bug Spray and Sunscreen:** We recommend applying bug spray and sunscreen as a majority of your time with us will be spent outdoors. The Manatee Circle Fountain and Wallaroo Station splash pad is typically open during regular park hours, so slip resistant water shoes and a change of clothes are recommended for those using the water elements.

**Food and Drink:** We have various food locations throughout the Zoo. Those with additional dietary needs have the option of bringing a small quantity of specialty items for personal consumption. No straws, please, for the safety of our animals.

**Arrival:** The Zoo’s regular operating hours are 9:30 to 5:00 p.m. daily. As you arrive at the Zoo, Security conducts hand held electronic wanding and bag checks before entry. No weapons are allowed.

**Quiet Areas:** Our Zoo is quite large, and you will find a number of areas within the park where you can stop and sit. While the volume of noise is not controlled during our regular hours, it is our experience that several areas exist that some of our guests have found suitable to use as quiet areas. These include: at the Penguin Conservation Center (near the Jungle Carousel), Lake Sharon area (near ZooVentures Theater), and at the front entrance next to the Tours and Guest Services Booth. There are also benches to sit on at the Manatee Circle and throughout Zoo Boulevard. If you need assistance locating a quiet space, please ask a Zoo employee or volunteer.

**Guest Assistance:** If you are in need of assistance, please speak with a member of Zoo staff. If your child gets separated from your group, please speak with Zoo staff for assistance. Questions in advance of your visit can be answered by contacting our Guest Relations team at 813-935-8552.
Sensory Key

There are lots of things to see here. It might be bright or hurt my eyes in places where I see this. I can wear sunglasses or cover my eyes.

There are lots of things to hear here. It might be loud in places where I see this. I can wear headphones or cover my ears if it gets too loud.

When I see this there will be things I can taste here. I do not have to put anything in my mouth if I do not want to.

There might be a strong smell in places where I see this. I can hold my nose or cover my nose with something that smells good.

There are lots of things to touch here. There might be things that I feel uncomfortable touching when I see this. I do not have to touch anything that I do not want to.
Planning the Visit

We will go to the Zoo with
__ our family
__ our class
__ our friends

We will eat
__ before the Zoo
__ at the Zoo
__ after the Zoo

We will
__ see the animals
__ go on rides
__ shop in the gift shop

We will be at the Zoo
__ in the morning
__ in the afternoon
__ all day
Guidelines

• We will use our walking feet in the Zoo.

• We will keep our feet on the ground. We will not climb on any railings or exhibits.

• We will keep our hands to ourselves. We will NOT touch the animals, unless an employee says it is okay.

• We will be respectful to the animals. We will not yell or make loud noises.
Arriving at the Zoo

When we arrive at the Zoo, we will go toward the main entrance of the Zoo. We will show the security guard what we have in our bags and stand still while they wave the wand over us. As soon as we are checked, we can go to the front gate. The wand will not hurt.
Arriving at the Zoo

We will go to the front gate to purchase our tickets. We will wait our turn. Sometimes we will wait for a short time. Sometimes we will wait for a long time. Both are okay. After we pay, we will get our tickets.
Arriving at the Zoo

When we have our tickets, we will enter through the main entrance. We will give the tickets to the employee who will scan them for us.
Rides or parts of the Zoo might be closed. We can look to see if there are any closures at the ticket booth or Guest Services. We might be disappointed that something is closed, but there are still plenty of things to do.
We can walk to the Guest Services Booth to get a map. The maps will be in front of the window.
We can ask the employee at the booth to rent a sensory bag. If I don’t want this, I do not have to get it. Sometimes we will have to wait. That is okay.
The sensory bags have items I can use during our visit if I need a break. We will return these items before we leave the zoo.
We will look at the map and decide where we will go. The Zoo is very large. We might not get to see the entire Zoo in one visit. Either way, we will have fun seeing the animals.
The Zoo is broken up into Primate World, Asian Gardens, Wallaroo Station, Safari Africa, and the Florida Boardwalk. Each area will have different animals. We will see signs telling us where to go to get to these areas. The Manatee Fountain is a great place to start.
We might need to use the restroom while we are at the Zoo. We can look at the map for the closest restroom. Restrooms are shown with this symbol.
If we plan on eating at the Zoo, we can look at the map to tell us where the restaurants are located. Somedays all of the restaurants will be open. Other days only some of the restaurants will be open. Either is okay.
Shopping

The Zoo has places to shop for souvenirs. We might want to look at these gift shops. Maybe we will buy something today. Maybe we will wait and buy things another time.
Rides

There are many rides at the Zoo. We might go on rides, or we might wait for another day. If I go on the rides, I will listen to the employee and follow the rules.
While we are at the Zoo, we might need to throw something away. We will look for the trash cans and recycling bins.

Sometimes we might get tired and need to sit down. We can look for benches for us to take a break at.
In certain areas, we can interact with the animals. We can find social experience stories at Wallaby Walkabout, Lorikeet Landing, Stingray Bay, Giraffe Feeding Station, and the Petting Zoo. If I would like to see a scripted story, we can ask an employee to look at a copy.
A lot of people like to enjoy the Zoo. Somedays the Zoo is crowded. When the Zoo is busy, there might be people already looking at an animal. That is okay. We can wait patiently for our turn, or we can go see another animal and come back later.
The animals live in different types of homes. We might see fences or posts in front of the animals. I will keep my feet on the ground and not climb or sit on the posts. I will keep my hands to myself. I will not put my hands through the fences or posts. This will keep us and the animals safe.
Animals make noises, just like we do. They might be new sounds to us that seem scary. The animals are not trying to hurt us. It is their way of communicating. If an animal is being loud and I don’t like it, I can cover my ears or move to a different area. I will use a quiet voice when I am near an animal.
The Zoo will have different smells than what we are used to. Some of them I might not like. That is okay. I can breathe through my mouth or cover my nose.
The Zoo is an exciting place. There are a lot of things to see and do. We might see something fun up ahead. I will use my walking feet and stay with my adult. That way I stay safe and get to enjoy the different parts of the Zoo with my friends or family.
If I get separated by accident, I will look for a zoo employee. Employees may be wearing different shirts or jackets, but will all have a zoo nametag. They will help me.
In Wallaroo Station we will see a water play area. I will stay out of the water, unless the adult with me says it is okay. I will need to bring extra clothes that can get wet if I plan on going in the water. Maybe we will play in the water area, or maybe we will wait for another day. Either one is okay.
When we go to see the manatees on the Florida Boardwalk, we will go through a tunnel. The tunnel is dark. I do not need to be afraid. I will be safe. Sometimes the tunnel can be loud. I can cover our ears if I do not like the noise.
In the Manatee Tunnel we will see snakes behind glass and fish in aquariums. I might want to get an animal’s attention. I will keep my hands to myself. I will not tap on the glass.
We will go through a long tunnel to get to Safari Africa. The tunnel can be dark. I will be okay. We might hear loud voices in the tunnel. I can cover my ears if I do not like the noise. On the other side of the tunnel, we will see African animals.
We will walk to the exit when it is time to leave. We might be sad to leave. It will be okay. Maybe we can come back to the Zoo another day!
ZooTampa at Lowry Park has teamed up with the Center For Autism & Related Disabilities at the University of South Florida to provide support and assistance with the goal of optimizing the potential of people with autism and related disabilities. Please utilize the resources provided to properly plan for your visit to ZooTampa at Lowry Park.