

Little Rock Zoo
Social Story – English Version
Last Updated 8/27/2023

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

This visual guide is meant to help young guests, guest with disabilities and their families plan their visit to the Little Rock Zoo. It is designed to be printed and arranged in an order that supports you during your zoo visit. Simply remove any pages that do not apply to you. The pages for snack and break can be dispersed anywhere in the story, and you can print more than one if needed!

We also included sensory triggers to help prepare those with sensitivities for a successful zoo trip. Look for these symbols to help you prepare:



Loud Noises



Smelly



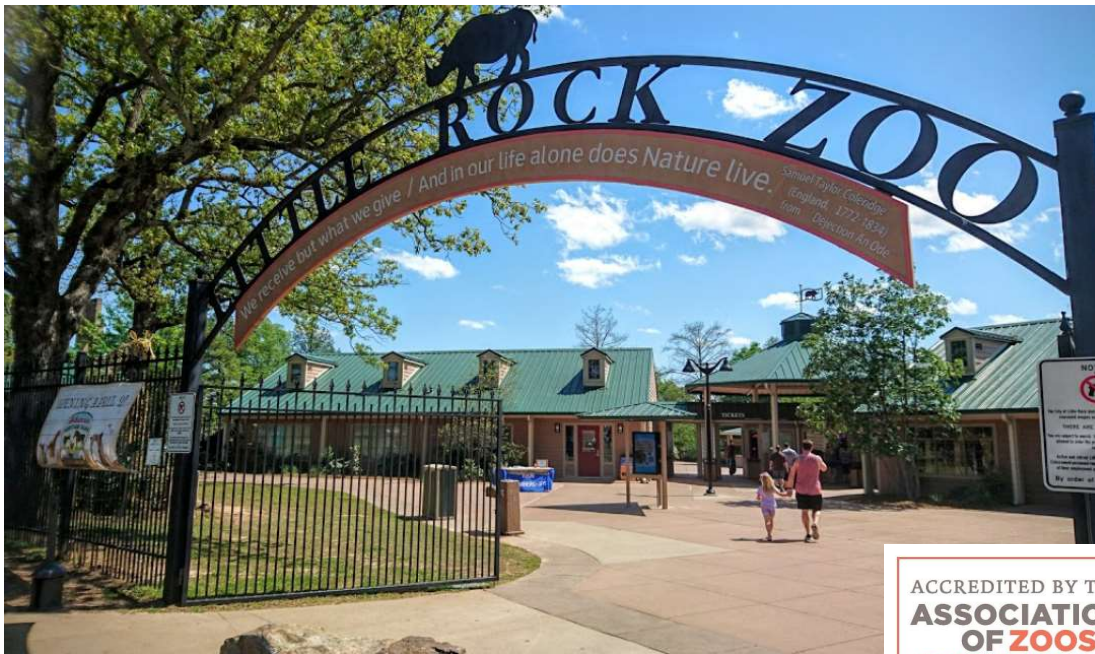
Shelter

Once you have arranged your social story, we suggest reading it a few times before your visit. This will help you know what to expect and have a better zoo visit.

The “Choices” page at the end of this social story has photos for other needs you may have during your visit.

TIPS

- If you or someone in your group is sensitive to noise and crowds, it is best to visit the Zoo during fall and winter when it is less crowded, or early in the morning before too many people arrive. Weekday afternoons (after school groups have left the zoo, after 2:00) can also be a calm time to visit the Zoo. You will find a sensory map at the end of this guide that can help you to find quiet spaces even during busy times at the zoo.
- If you or someone in your group would benefit from sensory tools such as noise-canceling headphones, weighted blanket, or fidgets, we recommend starting your visit at the Safari Trader Gift Shop where you can borrow these tools.
- The Little Rock Zoo spreads out over 33 acres! Because of its size it can be challenging to see everything in one visit. A little planning can help you enjoy the parts that matter the most to you! It can also mean a lot of walking, so comfortable shoes are a must!
- If someone in your group uses a wheelchair, please know wheelchairs can access most areas, but it can be challenging for some users.



The Little Rock Zoo is accredited by the Association of Zoos and Aquariums which is an independent accrediting organization with the highest standards in animal care and welfare. AZA's rigorous, scientifically based and publically available standards examine the zoo or aquarium's entire operation. Meaning visitors of AZA accredited facilities can rest assured that they are visiting a fun, safe, and educational family experience. The Little Rock Zoo has been accredited since 2001 and is the only zoo in Arkansas accredited by AZA.

ABOUT THE ZOO

Our mission is to inspire people to value and conserve our natural world.

The Little Rock Zoo first brought the wonders of nature to citizens of Arkansas in 1924 with just two animals. Today, the Little Rock Zoo cares for over 400 species of animal and serves 300,000+ guests each year.

ACCREDITED BY THE
**ASSOCIATION
OF ZOOS &
AQUARIUMS**
The gold standard for
animal care & welfare



**ASSOCIATION
OF ZOOS &
AQUARIUMS**

SAFE
SAVING ANIMALS
FROM EXTINCTION

Additionally, the Little Rock Zoo is a participant in several Species Survival Plans (SSP) through AZA. These comprehensive population management and conservation programs insure the survival of endangered species. Participation in these programs has allowed the Little Rock Zoo to contribute to the survival of several threatened and endangered species like gorillas and tigers.



GETTING READY

When I come to the Zoo I come prepared to have a great day! I put on my comfortable shoes. The Zoo is big! Sometimes we walk a long time to see animals. If I get tired, I can ask for a break.

I bring sunscreen, water, and a rain jacket. I can bring a special stuffed animal or fidget that helps me stay calm.

RAINY DAY

If the weather is not great at the Zoo, that is ok! There are lots of animals to see inside buildings (Reptiles, primates, bird house, cheetah outpost, Arkansas Heritage farm) and many places to take shelter (Pavilion, Café Africa, Safari Trader Gift Shop, and Echo Dome) while we wait for the weather to get better.



PARKING

Parking is available right outside the Zoo entrance along Zoo Drive. Be careful as you walk from the parking lot to the Zoo entrance, there may be other cars and people around. Be sure to use the cross walk and look both ways before crossing the street!

Cost:
3.00 per vehicle

Members always park for
FREE



ENTRY

This is the entrance, where I wait in line for tickets, before going inside the Zoo. If I am a member, there is a special place for me to check in! The Safari Trader Gift Shop is nearby. This is where I can rent strollers, scooters, and Sensory Bags. I can find Zoo staff here if I get lost or hurt.

Tickets:

Adults (13+): \$12.95

Children (3-12): \$9.95 (under 3 FREE)

Seniors (65+): \$10.95

Military (with ID): \$ 10.95



IMPORTANT RULES

There are some important rules at the Zoo to keep both animals and people safe and comfortable. (That means I will see more of them!)

#1 Stay on marked paths and in guest areas.

#2 Do not throw food or objects into animal habitats. They have their own healthy food.

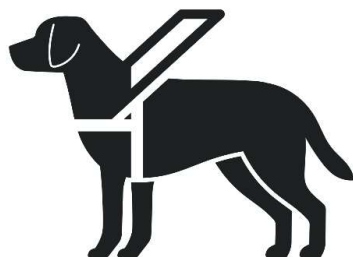


IMPORTANT RULES

- #3** Do not tap on the glass. If you want to see animals better, try waiting quietly or going to a different viewpoint!
- #4** Use quiet voices near animals.
- #5** Use recycling and waste containers throughout the Zoo.

I can follow these rules to make sure everyone has a good time at the Zoo.

SERVICE ANIMALS WELCOME!



Understanding our policy

We follow the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

A Service Animal, usually a dog, is trained to perform specific tasks for a person with a disability. Service animals are working animals, not pets and remain under their owners' control.

Examples of Service Animals

Guide dogs: Guide a person who is blind

Hearing dogs: Alert a person who is deaf to certain sounds

Medical alert dogs: Alert a person to seizures or other medical alerts

Service dogs: Assist with wheelchair or other services

Please Note

Companion animals such as pets and therapy animals used for emotional support are not protected under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and will be denied access to the Zoo.



SERVICE ANIMALS

The Little Rock Zoo welcomes any well-behaved service dog accompanying their handler on zoo grounds.

As you enter with your service animal, a staff member may inquire about the tasks your service animal is trained to perform. They will inform you of rules you'll need to follow on zoo grounds with your service animal- this is for the health and well-being of both your service animal and the zoo animals. Staff will announce a description of your service animal to make zoo staff aware of his presence on zoo grounds.

For the health and safety of our animals and your service animal these areas are currently closed to Service Animals: Tropical Bird House, windows near the lion exhibit, viewing decks of Cheetah Outpost, & the Arkansas Heritage Farm. Please move on if you notice any animals appearing agitated.



BARRIERS AND FENCES

Barriers and fences are in place to help keep both people and animals safe. It's important to stay on the designated paths and not to cross any barriers.



ENRICHMENT

Enrichment at the Little Rock Zoo is defined as the process of providing animals with choices and control while eliciting species appropriate behaviors that exercise the body and stimulate the mind.

ANIMAL HUSBANDRY

Animal husbandry involves the care of zoo animals. As caretakers for animals, part of our work is maintaining their health and well-being.



Pictured: A staff veterinarian listens to a cheetah's heart while his keeper rewards him with a treat for participating in the procedure. He is free to leave at anytime if he chooses.

ANIMAL TRAINING

Training keeps animals' minds and bodies active and builds a positive relationship with their keepers. It also helps them keep an eye on their health without resorting to more invasive techniques.

VET CARE

Our dedicated veterinary staff specialize in keeping our animals healthy.



SEEING ANIMALS

Being patient can be hard, but I will wait politely to view the animals. I remember that other people are trying to see the animals too.

It is okay if I don't see every animal at the Zoo. Zoo animals are still wild, and they do what comes naturally. If I don't see an animal right away, I can wait a moment. It may be hiding, blending in, or resting.

Some animals may be 'off exhibit.' This could be for a variety of reasons like weather, animal needs, or general upkeep.



STAYING SAFE

If I need help, I can ask staff or volunteers questions about animals! Staff at the Zoo wear **BURGUNDY**, **GREY**, **BLACK**, **BLUE** and **RED** Polos or Sweatshirts. I can tell if someone is a volunteer because they wear a **LIGHT BLUE** or **LIGHT GREEN** t-shirt or sweatshirt.



HYDRATION STATIONS

Staying hydrated is important! I can find water stations if I need a drink in a few places in the Zoo, or I can ask for help finding a break place.



HISTORIC CAROUSEL

I can ride the carousel at the Zoo. There are lights and carnival music in the carousel pavilion, that sometimes can be loud. I wait my turn to buy my ticket. When I find a seat I like, that is where I stay. I hold on and stay seated until the ride is over. I ride around in a circle, moving up and down; it might be bumpy. When the ride is over, I get up from my seat and we leave the carousel pavilion.

Cost:

\$3.00 per person.

Two and under are **FREE**

Sometimes the operator will need to take a break, be sure to check for signage indicating when they'll be back.



ARKANSAS DIAMOND EXPRESS TRAIN

(WEATHER PERMITTING)



I can ride the train at the Zoo. I wait my turn to buy my ticket at the train depot. It may be loud or crowded. I can come back at a quieter time if I need to.

When I find a seat I like, that is where I stay. I hold on and stay seated until the ride is over. I ride around in a big circle, and it might be bumpy. When the ride is over, I get up from my seat and we leave the train depot.

Cost:

\$3.00 per person. Two and under are **FREE**

Sometimes the operator will need to take a break, so be sure to check for signage indicating when they'll be back.





FEEDERS

There are feeders all over the Zoo. When I see one I can purchase some food and feed the fish and turtles at the nearby pond.

Feeders are out daily, weather permitting, and cost 25 cents.



PLAY

There are a few playgrounds in the Zoo I can explore and play! I ask my group if I want to climb and play here.

I can ask for help finding one if I want to play.





BORROWING TOOLS

I can borrow tools inside the Safari Trader Gift Shop to help me throughout my journey. I ask the zoo staff in the gift shop for a KultureCity Sensory Bag and my guardian exchanges an ID card while I am borrowing the bag. When I am done at the Zoo, I give the tools back at the Safari Trader Gift Shop.





BATHROOMS

There are bathrooms all over the Zoo. If I need to use the bathroom, I tell my group. We can look at the map and find one, or we can ask staff or volunteers at the Zoo. All of the bathrooms have an accessible stall. Some bathrooms are family bathrooms, so a guardian can help me!



TRASH & RECYCLING

There are recycling and trash bins throughout the Zoo I can use to get rid of my trash.

If I dine at Café Africa, I can leave my items at the table and staff will dispose of my items in the proper bins.



BREAK

The Zoo is a fun place for me to visit, but sometimes it can be overwhelming. I make sure I tell the people in my group if I am tired or uncomfortable. If I need a quiet break or space to move my body, I can find great places to reset or run and play. I can ask for help finding a break place. It is okay to take breaks. Animals take breaks too!



Because the Zoo has partnered with Kulture City I can look for signs to help me find quiet areas to take a break.

QUIET PLACES

These are some of the quiet areas that can be found throughout the Zoo.

If I need to use one, I can tell my group. We can look at the map and find one, or we can ask staff or volunteers at the Zoo.



Cheetah Outpost

- Cool /out of the weather
- Secluded
- Includes tactile opportunities
- Benches /seating
- Naked Mole Rat exhibit is dark and quiet
- Access to secluded patio areas
- Escape from animal noises and smells



Cafe Africa - Elephant Viewing Patio

- Shaded
- Secluded
- Chairs /seating
- Quiet if no one is using



Lemur Viewing /Amphitheater

- Sandwiched between amphitheater and lemur habitat
- Shaded
- Secluded from crowd
- Benches /seating



Bear Viewing

- Somewhat shaded
- Vending machines
- Not usually very crowded
- Little/no animal noises or smells

This review of quiet areas around the zoo was created through a partnership with Dr. Maci Parrish.

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These are some of the quiet areas that can be found throughout the Zoo.

If I need to use one, I can tell my group. We can look at the map and find one, or we can ask staff or volunteers at the Zoo.

Pond Viewing

- Bench seating
- Calming view of water/pond
- Secluded from animals and people



Conservation Learning Center Pond Viewing

- Very secluded
- Calming view of water/pond
- Usually shaded



Pygmy Slow Loris Habitat

- Very secluded
- Shaded area
- Dark
- The hut blocks out much of the animal/crowd noises
- Usually not crowded, only a few guests can enter at a time due to the narrow pathway



This review of quiet areas around the zoo was created through a partnership with Dr. Maci Parrish.

The color of the sections above corresponds to the color of the area they are located. Each Quiet Zone is marked by a ★



This review of quiet areas around the zoo was created through a partnership with Dr. Maci Parrish.



SNACK

I can visit Café Africa for food and refreshments or to rest, cool down, or use the restroom. This can be a busy and loud area during lunch hours, but is full of friendly staff faces. I can ask them if I need anything.





SIAMANGS

Siamangs can be very loud when they are talking to one another. They are letting each other know where they are and that they are safe. I can use my headphones if they are too loud, or ask my group if we can move to a new area.





PENGUINS

I can see penguins above and below water. Penguins are great swimmers! Penguins sometimes call to each other. They are very loud for such small animals. Penguins eat fish, so they smell fishy – especially their poop!



TROPICAL BIRD HOUSE

Aviaries are open spaces where birds can fly. I will be in the same room as the birds. When I enter an aviary I go through two sets of doors. I close the doors behind me before I open the next doors. That way the birds will not get out.

I can watch the birds move around but I shouldn't touch them. Birds might get close to me in the aviary. They might surprise me when they sing or fly, but they will not hurt me. If I move quickly or make loud noises, it can make the birds fly around. If I don't like the aviary, I leave calmly.





REPTILES

The Reptile House is cool and dark. I can see all kinds of reptiles and amphibians up close. I walk quietly and calmly from exhibit to exhibit to see the animals. I don't tap on the glass. I can see animals better when I am quiet and calm.

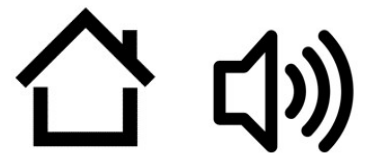




PRIMATES

Here I can see primates like the spider and capuchin monkeys. They may jump around or make noises if they're playing. If it gets too loud, I tell my group and we go somewhere else.

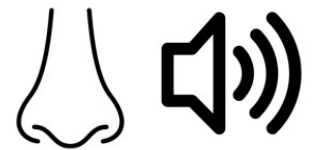
Here there's an open area where I can take a break if I need to.





ELEPHANTS

Elephants are big animals that need a lot of space. You can see them from a few areas in the Zoo. You may smell their hay and manure or hear them trumpet as they talk to one another.



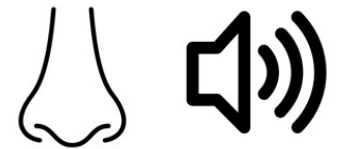


SAVANNAH OVERLOOK

The overlook allows us to see a lot of different types of animals.

I may see anteaters, crowned cranes, and maned wolves! Sometimes the cranes can be noisy, I can use my headphones or move on to a different part of the Zoo if I don't like this.

I smell a skunky odor when I get near the maned wolves. They use this smell to tell other animals where their territory is. If I don't like the smell, we can move on.





BIG CATS

I can see big cats eye-to-eye or from up high. Lions, tigers, and jaguars live at the Zoo. Sometimes they call out loud and sometimes they lay down and nap. Sometimes they hide in the trees so I might have to look hard (to find them).



CHEETAH OUTPOST

The Cheetah Outpost can be a nice place to rest and learn about cheetah conservation. Inside you can also see naked mole rats and some reptile exhibits.

The outside viewing area allows you to see the cheetah exhibits. Look carefully, they're surprisingly well camouflaged and can be hard to *spot*!

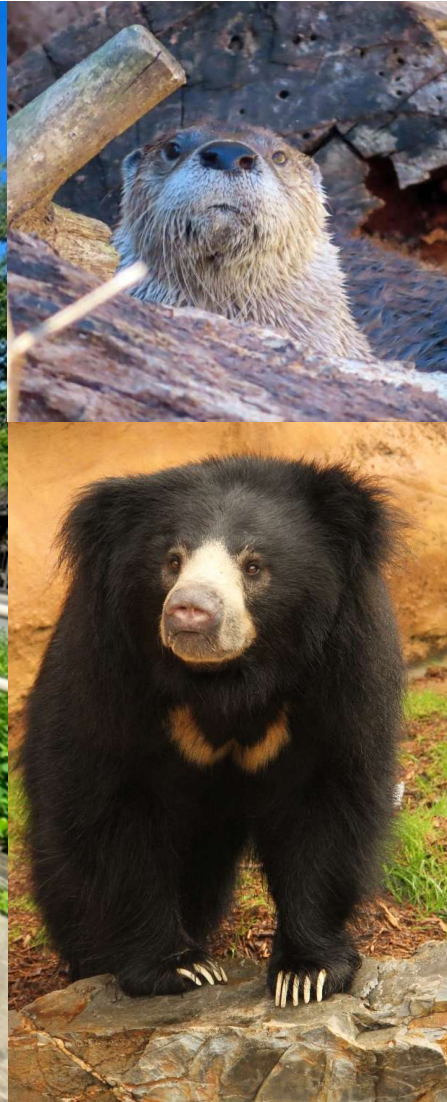




VELDT

A veldt is a type of landscape that is flat and covered in grass and low scrub brush. Lots of African animals can be found in this type of landscape like zebras, wildebeest and other large antelopes.

Ostriches frequent these areas with these large grazing animals. Together they have formed a great partnership. The grazers stir up insects for the ostriches to eat, while the ostriches help alert the other animals to approaching dangers.



BEARS & OTTERS

I can see bears and otters here. The path is a big circle so I can decide which way to go with my group; right or left. I'll see river otters playing in their stream. Sometimes they can be noisy while they play.

I can also see bush dogs, sloth bears, and a grizzly bears here. Some of these animals can choose which exhibits they want to be in, so I have to look closely as I explore so I don't miss them.





SMALL CARNIVORES

Carnivores occupy the top of the food chain, they have sharp teeth and claws that help them to catch prey. Here I can see carnivores from all over the world!

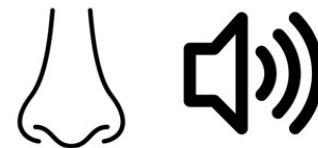
Fossa are Madagascar's top predator, keeping lemur populations in check. Caracals live in the plains of Africa while the red fox can be found throughout North American and Europe.



ARKANSAS HERITAGE FARM

During my visit I can visit the Arkansas Heritage Farm. I smell the hay, feed, and manure in the animals' pens. I pet the goats, sheep and miniature horses gently.

They will walk around the pen. I move slowly so I do not scare them. If they get surprised they might run around. They have a break area for when they want to be alone; I give them space if they are taking a break. If I get uncomfortable, I can leave the area to take a break too!





WATER FOWL

I can smell the flamingos even before I see their pink feathers. If I don't like the smell, I can move on.

I may see ducks and other birds around the pond near the flamingo exhibit. Sometimes they'll get closer to me, especially if I am feeding the fish. But they will not hurt me.





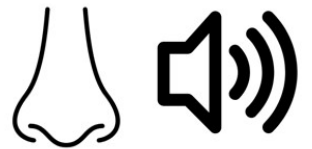
GREAT APES

Gorillas, chimpanzees and orangutans are Great Apes that live at the Zoo.

Chimpanzees can be very loud. Sometimes they call out to one another. Sometimes they make elaborate displays, tossing toys and making lots of noise. If they are too loud for me I can wear headphones or move to another area with my group.

Gorillas are generally quieter, but sometimes they're extra stinky. I can move on to a new area with my group if this is too much for me.

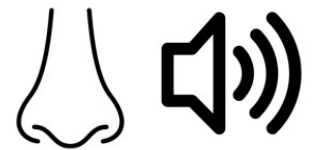
If I'm having trouble seeing I can move to get a better viewing angle. The orangutans even have a window where I might see them up close!





LEMURS

Close to the Great Apes you can see the lemurs. Often they are lounging about but sometimes they get loud when they're excited, making barking noises as they communicate. I can use my headphones or move onto a new area if this is too loud for me.





SAFARI TRADER GIFT SHOP

I can rent or borrow a variety of tools from the Safari Trader Gift Shop, like a KultureCity Sensory Bag, stroller, or mobility scooter. I can also purchase snacks, toys, and souvenirs here.

Rentals:

Single Stroller: \$9.00

Double Stroller: \$12.00
(\$5 deposit on all strollers)

Wheelchairs: \$12.00

Electric Scooter: \$25.00 (Driver's License held during rental)

All rentals must be returned to the Safari Trader Gift Shop by 4:00 p.m.



GOING HOME



See you later, alligator! Thanks for joining us at the Little Rock Zoo! We have two ways to exit the Zoo.

1. Exit through the Safari Trader Gift Shop
2. Use the "After Hours" gate at the end of the gift Shop
 1. Follow instructions posted at the gate.

CHOICES

I can use the choices map to help tell people what I want and need. I can point to pictures to explain what I want.

BATHROOM



BREAK



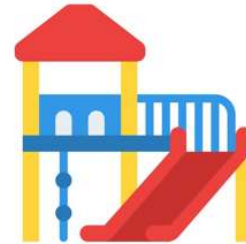
TOOLS



SNACK



PLAY



LEAVE THE ZOO

