



Monterey Bay Aquarium
Free to Learn

Planning Your Visit





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Our Free to Learn Visit Philosophy

Viewing the Aquarium as a Resource

We encourage you to create learning and developmental experiences that align with your organization's goals.

The Free to Learn program provides complimentary admission to the Monterey Bay Aquarium for low-income, at-risk and underserved children, adults, and families through the non-profit social services organizations and government agencies that serve them. Because conservation of the ocean is a responsibility that all of us share, we provide an opportunity for people of all income levels to visit the Aquarium.

One of our primary goals is to help our Free to Learn partners plan meaningful Free to Learn visits for the individuals and families they serve. With this guide, we hope to inspire you to use the Aquarium as a resource to aid you in fulfilling your organizational mission and goals.

Here's how some Free to Learn partners have utilized the Aquarium to inspire their participants:

- PAPA'S, a research-based program in Watsonville supporting fathers in their role as parents, brought fathers and children to the Aquarium. Visiting The Secret Lives of Seahorses special exhibition, they witnessed the central role of the father in the unique breeding habits of seahorses. Because male seahorses carry the eggs and give birth, the participants were reminded of the importance of their own roles as fathers.

- The Boys and Girls Club of Monterey County visited the Ocean Travelers Plastics Gallery. They learned about the detrimental effects of plastic trash on animals and the environment. This experience was foundational to the club's summer camp "Reduce, Reuse and Recycle" curriculum.
- The Santa Cruz Homeless Service Center brought families to the Aquarium to experience the serenity of the underwater world. After experiencing the beauty and diversity of the ocean, they were inspired to paint a mural of marine animals in their community room.
- The Salinas-based Partners for Peace - Strengthening Families curriculum aims to increase communication and connections between family members as a gang violence prevention strategy. Experiencing the Aquarium together created meaningful and joy-filled memories for these families.

Orientation Meetings and Webinars

We offer orientation meetings at the Aquarium and via a webinar a few times each year to help make your Free to Learn visit meaningful and stress-free. We highly recommend attending one of these meetings in person or online; both offer an opportunity to meet with other Free to Learn organizations and discuss strategies to enhance your Free to Learn visit.

Attendees enjoy a personalized tour of the Aquarium while learning about the group check-in process, lunch logistics, and auditorium programs. Attendees also have the opportunity to develop sample itineraries for their groups. Aquarium staff are available at these meetings to answer questions and provide suggestions. They will also discuss the importance of conducting pre- and post-visit activities and discussions with your group to wrap up your Aquarium experience.

Looking beyond your visit, Aquarium staff will suggest future field trip ideas in Monterey and Pacific Grove that are free or low cost, offering more opportunities for the individuals and families you serve.

We encourage you to take advantage of this resource; we are here to help you achieve your program's goals through a well-organized and stress-free visit to the Aquarium.



Before Your Visit

Application Process

Online Application

If you have not already done so, apply online to become a Free to Learn partner. The application requires the following:

- A letter on your letterhead describing the mission of your program, the audience you serve, and how a visit to the Aquarium will further your program goals.
- A copy of your agency/ organization's IRS 501(c)(3) notification letter confirming your not-for-profit status (unless you are a government agency or higher education institution).
- Contact information and the details of your visit request, including the date, time, number and ages of participants, etc.

You can find the link to the application page at www.montereybayaquarium.org/education/free-to-learn

Once your organization has been determined as eligible, you can request a repeat visit without having to re-submit your letter and IRS 501 (c)(3) notification letter.

Confirmation Packet

When your application and/or visit request has been accepted, you will receive an email with your Order Number and Group Confirmation. You will also receive a Confirmation Packet, which will include:

- 1. Directions** that provide routes to the Aquarium from various locations.
- 2. Group Arrival** instructions that cover check-in procedures and parking instructions.

- 3. A Behavior Contract** for groups with children. Please review this contract with your group, sign, and return it to the staff at the Group Check-In office when you arrive.
- 4. A handout For Chaperones** (English and Spanish) that describes the responsibilities involved with this role.
- 5. Informational handouts** that explain 1) how your group can help protect the ocean during and after its visit by disposing of trash responsibly and 2) how your group can explore the neighboring tide pools in a way that will not harm the creatures living there.
- 6. A Nametag Template** for you to copy and print so that you can provide your group with nametags before arrival at the Aquarium.
- 7. A Map of the Aquarium** to help you plan out your visit before your arrival.

Before You Arrive: Checklist

- Check your Free to Learn Group Confirmation to make sure the information and dates are correct.
- To make corrections concerning arrival time or number of participants, call toll-free at (866) 963-9645.
- Confirm your transportation arrangements - carpool, vanpool, charter bus or public bus.
- Confirm drop-off time and location with drivers.

- Review the Aquarium's Behavior Expectations with your group.
- Prepare your chaperones and assign groups to chaperones.
- Browse the Aquarium website education page for [educational materials](#) to use with participants during your Aquarium visit.
- Visit the [Daily Schedule](#) on our website to plan your visit around daily feeding shows and auditorium programs.
- Prepare an itinerary for your chaperones.

Calculate your arrival time

Note the check-in time on your Free to Learn Group Confirmation.

It is important that you arrive at your designated check-in time; groups arriving more than 15 minutes early may be asked to wait or may have to leave and return at the scheduled check-in time. Groups more than 10 minutes late may be subject to program cancellation.

On the day of your trip, please call toll free at (866) 963-9645 if you cannot make your assigned check-in time.

If someone in your party is late and not able to enter with the group, he or she will have to purchase a ticket to enter the Aquarium.



Before Your Visit

Planning the Experience to Achieve Your Goals

One of our primary goals is to help our Free to Learn partners plan meaningful visits for the individuals and families they serve. We believe a visit to the Aquarium can provide a rich intellectual, emotional, spiritual and developmental experience. We can help you design an experience in alignment with your organization's mission and goals.

Pre-visit Activities

The first step in planning a successful visit to the Monterey Bay Aquarium is to identify the developmental goals of your group. Once you have identified your goals, it is helpful to provide your group with some pre-visit activities to help them prepare for their experience.

Website Resources (see right)

Prepare your group ahead of time by taking advantage of the Aquarium's online resources before and during your visit. Visit our Education pages for materials organized by age and in both English and Spanish. Elsewhere, check out our podcasts, videos and live web cams. Share these resources with your chaperones and participants in advance to better prepare your group for their Aquarium visit.

Stay Connected on Social Media

Stay connected after your visit by following the Aquarium on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram.

Website Resources

Self-Guided Exploration Guides

- Print these bilingual guides, organized by grade level, and bring them with you to help children get the most out of exploring the Aquarium
- Take a look at our printable Aquarium scavenger hunt handouts for grades K-5
- Check out our comprehensive guides for kids and teens grades 6-12

Games & Activities

- Go on scavenger hunts with our six animal habitat posters for all ages
- Color, decorate and craft a sea otter lunch bag puppet, a shark totem pole or a penguin headband
- Use our animal fact cards to play "Critter Go Fish" or check out other games like "Bird Bingo" or the Kelp Crossword puzzle

Sea Searchers Handbook

- Enjoy a treasure of 90 hands-on activities in art, science, math and language arts
- Explore in-depth the rocky shores, wetlands, sandy shores, kelp forests, the open sea and the deep sea

Podcasts

- Learn about our animals, exhibits and cool ocean science in our "Aquarium of the Air" podcast
- Listen online, download or subscribe to our podcasts - we add new entries twice a month

Live Web Cams

- Observe the lively sea otters and playful penguins in their exhibits
- View our Kelp Forest exhibit or watch sharks, tuna and turtles swimming in the Open Sea exhibit
- Tune in during our [Feeding Show times](#) to hear interpreters describe the animals and explain their behaviors

Blog

- Visit and subscribe to the Monterey Bay Aquarium [Blog on Tumblr](#) to stay updated on the most current news

Aquarium App

- Download our app to access interactive maps and learn facts about our exhibits
- Use the app to keep track of and set reminders for the daily schedule of auditorium programs and feeding shows, and check off exhibits and activities as you complete them



Before Your Visit

Aquarium Activities During Your Visit

Participants in small groups with their chaperones typically spend three hours exploring the Aquarium. Often they do not have enough time to see every exhibit. We recommend that each group select three or four exhibits to explore in depth and make a plan to visit again.

In addition, as exhibits and featured Aquarium animals are always changing, we suggest you visit our website www.montereybayaquarium.org/visit before your visit and view the daily schedule and map.

Other activities to add to your itinerary include:

- Attending our interactive [auditorium programs](#) that cover exciting marine subjects. These 15-minute live programs delve into the deep sea, the lives of great white sharks and jellies, wild sea otter research, and much more. These are offered every 30 minutes starting at 11:30 AM and ending at 4:30 PM.
- Watching the daily [feeding shows](#) to see our husbandry staff interacting with the animals and learn how you can help them in the wild. Find feeding times on the [Daily Schedule](#) on our website, or text feeding to 56512 when you arrive to receive text alerts about unscheduled feedings and other exciting opportunities during your visit.
- Venturing outside to the Aquarium's decks to look through one of our telescopes for sea birds, sea lions and sea otters.
- Exploring exhibits designed for young children, such as the [Splash Zone](#) and the touch pools.
- Going to the beach! For children who have never been to the ocean before, this can be a memorable experience. See page 18 for information on three area beaches.



Before Your Visit

Recruiting and Preparing Your Chaperones

The Aquarium requires that you bring a minimum of one adult chaperone for every ten visitors age 17 and under. You are welcome to bring more chaperones, but 1:10 is the absolute minimum.

For groups bringing younger children or visiting during the busy summer hours, we recommend 1:5 instead.

If you arrive with less than one chaperone for every 10 visitors, your group will not be admitted to the Aquarium. All chaperones must be at least 21 years old.

The chaperone's admission includes responsibility for a group of children, youths, or adults needing assistance during a visit to the Aquarium. The chaperone badge is your pass for exiting and re-entering the Aquarium with your group, and it must be visible at all times.

All of our Free to Learn visitors under age 17 must stay with their chaperones at all times while inside the Aquarium. This policy is for the protection of your participants and the safety and comfort of all visitors.

Chaperones are not only responsible for the behavior and safety of the participants—they also shape each participant's learning experience during the Aquarium visit. It is therefore important that you carefully select and prepare chaperones ahead of time. It is helpful to meet with them before the day of the Free to Learn visit. If that is not possible, make sure you provide them with written information and a schedule in advance. We have provided an informational handout, For Chaperones, in both English and Spanish in the Confirmation Packet.

Before you leave for the Aquarium, review chaperone responsibilities and share your expectations of the participants:

- Remind chaperones that they must stay with their group at all times.
- Let them know what activities you have planned for the participants and explain their role in those activities. Encourage chaperones to further stimulate learning by asking their group open-ended questions while exploring exhibits.
- Review the Behavior Expectations (see page 13). Provide chaperones with suggestions and procedures for managing groups.
- Explain the schedule for the day and how you will communicate with one another once you have arrived at the Aquarium.
- Provide each chaperone with a list of participants for whom they are responsible and introduce the participants to the chaperones.
- Provide each chaperone with the For Chaperones handout. The handout is available for you to print and distribute in English and Spanish; find it in the Confirmation Packet you will receive upon acceptance of your visit request.
- Be sure your chaperones know the times and places to meet for lunch and to leave for home.
- Let the chaperones know whether or not your participants will be allowed to visit the Gift and Bookstore.
- If your chaperones are also driving, provide them with maps and parking information. Remember: everyone must enter the Aquarium as a group. If anyone is late and does not enter the Aquarium with the group at the assigned entry time, he or she will need to pay full admission at the Main Entrance.



Before Your Visit

Planning for Lunch

Picnic Lunch

Make lunch a learning experience

An excellent way to teach your group about having a direct impact on the environment is to challenge them to pack trash-less lunches. Consider using cloth bags or lunch boxes instead of paper bags. Choose reusable containers instead of disposable wrappers.

For more ideas, visit

www.wastefreelunches.org

Gathering lunches

Please gather all lunches in large paper or reusable bags or boxes before arriving. At the Aquarium, lunches can be stored in small (16" x 23" x 30") coin-operated lockers.

Storing lunches

You can store lunches in the lockers along Hovden Way, just before the Member Entrance. The lockers are coin-operated, so make sure you bring quarters. You will need four quarters (\$1) each time you lock a locker. Place the quarters in the slot and pull out the key; you will need it to retrieve your lunches.

Please do not bring food or drink into the Aquarium

Groups are not allowed to eat or drink in the Aquarium, on the benches in front of the Great Tide Pool or on any deck areas. This includes the Aquarium Cafe and the seating areas outside the Cafe, unless the food or drink was purchased at the Aquarium.

The picnic area

The Aquarium provides a shared picnic area for our Free to Learn groups and school field trip groups.

The picnic area is outside between Wave Street and the Recreation Trail. There are no restrooms or drinking fountains at the picnic area.

For the safety of your group and other visitors, please do not eat lunches, sit or gather your students on the Recreation Trail; other pedestrians and bicyclists use this pathway.

Please be sure to reserve a lunch time with Aquarium staff upon your arrival at the Group Check-In office. Due to the unpredictable timing constraints of Aquarium visits, we are unable to reserve the picnic area for your group prior to your arrival. The picnic area is reserved on the hour and half hour, giving your group 30 minutes to enter, eat and exit before another group uses the same facilities. Please be timely so as not to impede on another group's lunch reservation.

In the spring, when school field trip numbers are high, the Aquarium may not be able to accommodate all requests for the picnic area. If you are visiting in the spring, you may want to consider having lunch on the bus or offsite at a park or bench before or after your visit. See page 18 for more information on local parks.

Eating lunch

When it is time for your group to eat, make sure that all group members get hand stamps as they exit so they can re-enter the Aquarium after lunch. Gather at your prearranged meeting place and walk to the picnic area.

If your lunches are stored in the lockers, send a couple of chaperones to the locker area ahead of time to retrieve them for the group.

Please keep it clean

After lunch, inspire your group to care for our planet by reminding them to clean up after themselves. Use the trash cans and recycle containers at the picnic area.

Additional Lunch Options

Meals are available at the Cafe. We serve a variety of sandwiches, salads and beverages. Snacks cost approximately \$4.00, beverages cost between \$3.00-\$5.00, salads cost approximately \$10.00, sandwiches cost between \$11.00-\$12.00, and kids meals cost approximately \$8.00. There are also many restaurants on Cannery Row next to the Aquarium. Other affordable options for getting lunch to eat at the picnic area include:

- **Papa John's** at 598 Lighthouse Avenue, Monterey (delivery)
- **Domino's Pizza** at 154 Country Club Gate Ctr, Pacific Grove (delivery)
- **Subway** at 296 Lighthouse Avenue, Monterey

Re-entering the Aquarium

After lunch, your group may re-enter the Aquarium by showing their hand stamps at any entrance. Group members accompanied by a chaperone wearing a chaperone badge may also re-enter the Aquarium through any door.



Before Your Visit

Free to Learn Visit Planning Timeline

THREE WEEKS Before Your Trip

Obtain your Free to Learn Group Confirmation and Free to Learn Confirmation Packet.

Confirm your transportation

Duplicate and distribute maps and parking information for the bus driver and/or chaperone drivers.

If coming with other group leaders and chaperones, meet to determine the schedule and activities for the day.

TWO WEEKS before your trip

Confirm your chaperones

Provide them with necessary For Chaperone information handouts.

Conduct pre-visit activities with participants.

ONE WEEK before your trip

Make your lunch plans

Review page 8 for information on lunch logistics.

Collect permission slips from your group (if your organization requires it)

You might want to bring medical records or instructions for any participants who are on medication or who require special medical attention.

Review the Behavior Contract with your group and sign it

Bring your signed Behavior Contract, located in the Confirmation Packet that you received with your confirmation email.

Prepare nametags for participants

You can find a nametag template in your Confirmation Packet.

Assign groups

Assign a chaperone to each group prior to your arrival.

THE DAY OF Your Trip

Distribute nametags

Introduce chaperones to the participants in their groups before arriving at the Aquarium.

If picnicking at the Aquarium, collect lunches and place them in large paper or reusable bags or boxes for easy coin-locker storage (bring quarters).

Review your plans

Review your plans, expectations and schedule with your participants, chaperones and group leader(s).

When you arrive, **select a group meeting place** for lunch and/or departure and inform your participants and chaperones.

Review emergency procedures with participants and chaperones

Exchange cell phone information between all adult chaperones and group leader(s).

See page 14 for more on emergency procedures.



Arrival

Arrival Procedures

When you arrive at the Aquarium, the first thing the Group Leader should do is check in with an Aquarium Ambassador.

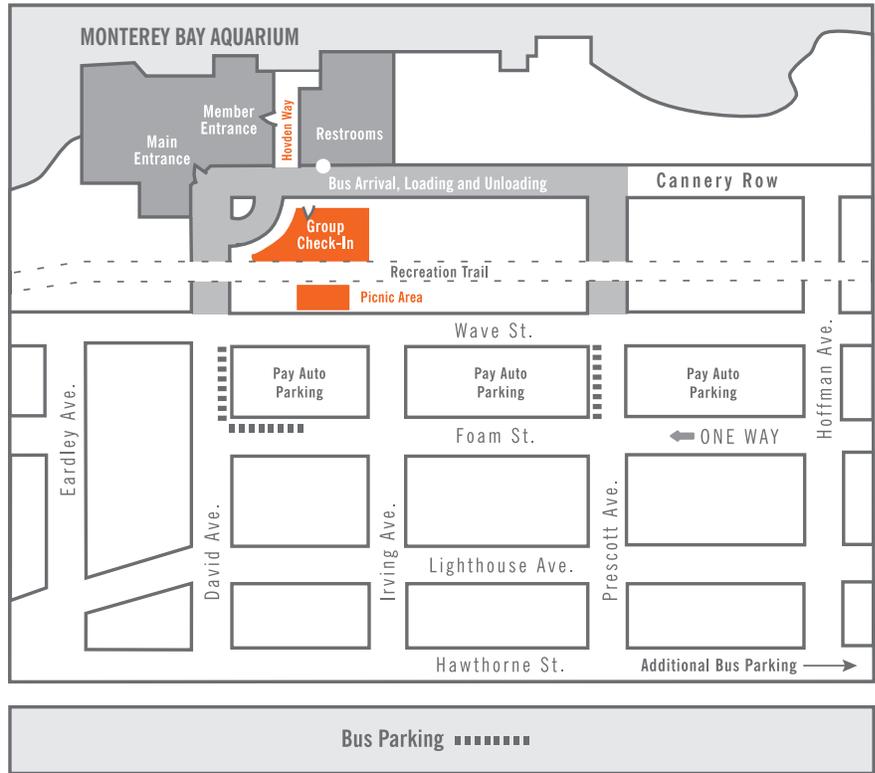
If you arrive by bus, ask your group to unload and gather in Hovden Way while the Group Leader goes to the Group Check-In Office.

If you arrive by car, gather your chaperones and participants at the end of Hovden Way, where you will find benches overlooking the bay. When all participants have arrived, the Group Leader should proceed to the Group Check-In Office, located across the street from Hovden Way, to meet an Aquarium Ambassador.

At the Group Check-In Office, give the Aquarium Ambassador the name of your group as listed on your Free to Learn Group Confirmation, and let him or her know that you would like to check in.

Restrooms are located on Hovden Way across from the Member's Entrance.

Arrival Map





Arrival

Arrival Procedures

For admission to the Aquarium, groups are required to have at least one chaperone for every ten visitors age 17 and under. You are welcome to bring more chaperones (for groups visiting during the summer or with small children, we recommend one chaperone for every five children), but 1:10 is the absolute minimum. If you arrive with less than one chaperone for every ten youths, your group will not be admitted into the Aquarium.



Group Check-in Office



Hovden Way

At the Group Check-In Office, an Aquarium Ambassador will:

1. Collect the following required paperwork

- Your Free to Learn Group Order Number (found in your Group Confirmation email)
- Your completed and signed Behavior Contract within the Free to Learn Confirmation Packet
- A short form you will complete upon arrival that provides a final count of the number of adults (over 18), chaperones (over 21), youth (ages 13-17), children (ages 3-12) and infants and toddlers (under 3 years) in your group

2. Issue Chaperone and Group Leader badges

- ALL adults must wear the Aquarium badge provided in a visible location. The badge is your "ticket" into the Aquarium. As long as group members are with an adult wearing a Chaperone badge, they are welcome to enter and exit the Aquarium throughout the day.



Chaperone Badges

3. Distribute wristbands

- We strongly advise young children put on paper wristbands when they check in. The Ambassador will have these available. Parents or chaperones should write their name and cell phone number on these wristbands in case the children should get lost or wander from the group; our security staff can then call the parents or chaperones.



Arrival

Arrival Procedures

This is a self-guided visit; to get the most out of your time here, make sure to look at the map beforehand to plan out your visit. Once inside the Aquarium, remember to use the Volunteer Guides, wearing nametags and red jackets, and the Teen Conservation Leaders, wearing blue vests, to answer your group's questions regarding the exhibits—they are here to help you get the most out of your visit!



Volunteer Guide wearing nametag and red jacket



Teen Conservation Leader wearing blue vest

4. Reserve the picnic area for your group if you plan on eating lunch here

- The picnic area is reserved on the hour and half hour, giving your group 30 minutes to enter, eat and exit before another group uses the same facilities. Please be timely so as not to impede on another group's lunch reservation, and please use the trash and recycling cans to clean up after your group.
- You can store lunches in the coin-operated lockers along Hovden Way, just before the Member Entrance.
- See Planning for Lunch on page 8 for more information.



Lockers



Picnic Area

5. An Ambassador will provide your group with a brief orientation

- These short orientations provide your group with current Aquarium information as well as familiarize your chaperones and participants with the Aquarium's layout and behavior expectations.
- After the orientation, an Ambassador will escort your group into the Aquarium for your self-guided visit.
- If anyone is late and not able to enter on time with the group, he or she must pay full price admission at the Main Entrance.
- When your group leaves the Aquarium for lunch, be sure to get a hand stamp for re-entry.

6. Changing or cancelling your visit

- If the person named on the reservation will not be the Group Leader on the day of the visit, you must contact us with the correct person's name at least 48 hours in advance. Please call toll-free at (866) 963-9645.
- If you would like to bring more people than are listed in your Free to Learn Group Confirmation, please call toll-free at (866) 963-9645 to request a change. Groups arriving with more people than the approved number must pay full general admission rates for all additional persons over the number on the reservation.
- If you will not be able to make your scheduled visit, you must call our Sales & Reservation Center toll-free at (866) 963-9645, Monday through Friday.



Arrival

Behavior Expectations

In addition to going over your own behavior requirements, please review the Aquarium's Behavior Contract with your participants and chaperones. An Aquarium staff member will collect your signed copy of the Behavior Contract, found within your Free to Learn Confirmation Packet.

The Monterey Bay Aquarium is a place of learning, fun and discovery! To make sure that all visitors have a great time at the Aquarium, it is important to abide by these behavior expectations:

- Groups with children must stay together as a group. Participants and chaperones must stay with their group at all times inside the Aquarium, out on the deck, in all Gift and Bookstores, in the picnic area and in the Aquarium Cafe.
- Be courteous and respectful of other visitors. Talk quietly and walk through the Aquarium; running is not permitted.
- Use the stairs, leaving elevators available for those who need them. For your safety, please no playing on the escalator.
- Be respectful of the Aquarium exhibits and building. Use books or clipboards to write against instead of walls, windows or exhibit labels. Climbing on exhibits or railings is not allowed.
- Help care for the animals. At touch pool areas, touch the animals gently and always keep them under the water. Do not disturb exhibit animals by tapping on the windows. Feeding birds and wildlife is discouraged as this can be harmful to animals.
- Keep food, drinks and gum outside the Aquarium. Free to Learn groups are not allowed to eat sack lunches or drink beverages inside the Aquarium, on the benches in front of the Great Tide Pool or on any deck areas. This includes the Aquarium Cafe and the seating area outside the Cafe dining room.
- Please respect our Aquarium neighbors. If groups are permitted to visit merchants on Cannery Row, please make sure they are accompanied by chaperones and demonstrate appropriate behavior.



Arrival

Helpful Information

Assigning Groups

We recommend that you form groups prior to arriving at the Aquarium. Please remember we require at least one chaperone for every ten children age 17 and younger. If you arrive with less than one chaperone for every ten children, your group will not be admitted to the Aquarium. Chaperones must be at least 21 years of age. We have found that a group size of four or five persons working with one chaperone is most effective, especially with children under age 8 and when visiting during summer when the Aquarium is most crowded.

Nametags

For groups with children, we recommend that all participants wear nametags that include the organization name and the name of the chaperone. Listing the participant's name on the nametag is optional. We recommend nametags that adhere to the participants' clothing or hang around their neck. A photocopy master is included in the Confirmation Packet.

Wristbands

An Aquarium Ambassador can also provide young children with wristbands on which parents or chaperones can write their name and cell phone number in case children get lost or wander from the group. Our security staff can then call the parents or chaperones.

Hand Stamps

Having your hand stamped at the exits allows you to re-enter the Aquarium.

Group Leader and Chaperone Communication

Communication between chaperones and group leaders is vital to a well-organized field trip. Please be sure to provide all chaperones with the group leader's contact information. We recommend that you collect chaperone contact information as well.

Emergency Procedures

Participants should know they can ask for help at the Information Desk and from anyone wearing a Monterey Bay Aquarium name badge or uniform. If a participant gets lost, go to the Information Desk near the Main Entrance. If a participant gets injured, ask anyone wearing an Aquarium name badge to call Security, and an officer will report to the location of the injured person. Chaperones are responsible for communicating with their organization officials in the event of an injury.

In the rare event of an emergency requiring evacuation of the Aquarium, all participants and chaperones should exit the building at the closest available exit and meet on the Recreation Trail. While organizing your group, please be prepared to follow all instructions from Emergency Response Team representatives. Account for all members of your group and confirm with an Emergency Response Team representative. Chaperones are responsible for communicating with their organization officials if an emergency significantly impacts their Aquarium visit schedule.

Gift and Bookstores

Chaperones and participants are encouraged to visit our Gift and Bookstores, where you will find items related to the Aquarium's exhibits and animals and the Monterey Bay area. Children must be accompanied by a parent or chaperone while shopping. Please allow no more than ten students per chaperone in the store at a time.

Each of our four stores offers a slightly different assortment of plush toys, books, apparel, games and more. The stores also offer eco-friendly items, including reusable mugs, water bottles and bags, and offer several items that are \$10 or under, including tax:

- Small plush of popular animals (sea otters, penguins, turtles and more)
- Colorful pens, pencils and patches
- Postcards of animals you'll see on your visit
- Small toys and various sizes of balls
- Infant & toddler books (*Pup's Supper* is available in English and Spanish)
- Children's souvenir jewelry

In addition, our ***Ocean Wonders: Inside the Monterey Bay Aquarium*** DVD is a good way to introduce your group to the Aquarium before your arrival, or to remember your visit on the way home, if your vehicle has a video monitor. The optional narrative track on the DVD will entertain as well as educate – great for teachers and parents. You can purchase the DVD at the Aquarium Gift and Bookstores or order it by contacting our customer service department at 831-648-4952 or toll-free at (877) 665-2665.



Arrival

Recommended Exhibits

Preview these recommended exhibits—and all of our exhibits—on our website:

www.montereybayaquarium.org

Tentacles: The Astounding Lives of Octopuses, Squid and Cuttlefishes

Walk through a display of centuries of art depicting human fascination with other-worldly tentacled creatures; experience this timeless attraction as you take in colorful live exhibits of octopuses, squid and cuttlefishes. The mysteries of these intriguing creatures are revealed as you learn the unique ways in which each species moves, hunts its prey and hides from predators. See how human understanding of these creatures has evolved over time, but our fascination remains.

iViva Baja! Life on the Edge

Explore the wild coast of Baja California in our newest special exhibition: iViva Baja! Life on the Edge. Life thrives on the edge of sand and surf in this unique and fragile place, but its future hangs in a delicate balance. Discover the extraordinary creatures living in sun-scorched deserts, lush mangrove forests and colorful coral reefs. You'll also learn how the Aquarium and other conservation groups are working to keep these lives on the edge also in balance.

Ocean Travelers Plastics Gallery

Located in the Open Sea Wing, this exhibit uses art installations and sculptures to explore the impact of marine debris on ocean wildlife such as Laysan albatrosses, humpback whales and green sea turtles. The stunning artwork is made from everyday plastic items that frequently find their way into our waterways and into the oceanic food web.

In this exhibit, learn five ways to help protect our ocean animals:

1. Bring your favorite reusable bag to stores and refuse plastic bags at the checkout counter.
2. Use a reusable water bottle - made from aluminum, stainless steel or bio-plastic - instead of multiple disposable plastic water bottles.
3. Choose ocean-safe home and garden products.
4. Always take old paint, used motor oil and other toxic products to a waste disposal site.
5. Join others for a beach cleanup, or pick up trash in your neighborhood or local park. Stop litter on land before it reaches the sea.



Post-Visit

Conserving Our Ocean: What You Can Do

The Monterey Bay and its coastline are part of the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary. The Sanctuary protects the many marine habitats, plants and animals living along our coast.

Activities that could harm the ocean's health, such as oil drilling, are prohibited. But many others, such as fishing, boating and exploring the coastline are allowed.

Visiting the rocky shore can provide your group with an exciting look at ocean plants and animals in their native habitat.

- **Watch what goes down your drains and gutters.** Remember much of what goes down your drains and gutters eventually finds its way into the ocean. Use environmentally-safe home and garden products. Dispose of toxic material properly.
- **Keep things clean.** Make sure your trash is placed in a trash can.
- **Reduce, reuse and recycle what you can.** Get your family to help.
- **Cut back on plastic.** Bring your favorite reusable bag to stores and refuse plastic bags at the checkout counter. Use reusable water bottles made of aluminum, stainless steel or bio-plastic instead of disposable plastic water bottles. Use one product multiple times instead of using one-time use products.
- **Save water.** Every drop is precious.
- **Save energy.** Simply lower your use of heat or air-conditioning in your home and turn off lights, appliances and power strips when not in use. This helps reduce **carbon pollution, which impacts ocean chemistry.**
- **Buy local produce and shop sustainably.** Whether dining out or eating in, our choices count. Ask for seafood that is fished or farmed in ways that keep the ocean healthy. Our [Seafood Watch](#) pocket guide and [free app](#) make it easy to choose.
- **Refuse to buy or collect key chains, mirrors and other souvenirs made from dried sea creatures.** Millions of seahorses, corals and other marine animals are collected alive and dried as souvenirs. These products spell serious trouble for declining seahorse populations. Protect seahorses and other marine animals by pledging to avoid these sea life souvenirs.
- **Tell others what you have learned and what you are doing to help the oceans.** Spread the word to friends and family.



Post-Visit

Additional Opportunities for Free or Low-Cost Experiences

The cities of Monterey and Pacific Grove and other local communities offer a multitude of opportunities to engage your group in unique ways that complement a visit to the Aquarium

Indoor Activities

Pacific Grove Museum of Natural History

The mission of the Pacific Grove Museum of Natural History is to inspire discovery, wonder and stewardship of our natural world.

165 Forest Avenue
Pacific Grove, CA 93950
(831) 648-5716

www.pgmuseum.org

Admission:

Free for all scheduled school groups and Monterey County residents.

Adults: \$8.95

Youth 4-18, students and military with ID: \$5.95

MY Museum

MY Museum, a playground for the mind, offers young children and adults the chance to engage their creativity and enjoy various hands-on exhibits.

425 Washington Street
Monterey, CA 93940
(831) 649-6444

www.mymuseum.org

Admission:

Adults: \$8.00

Children: \$8.00

Children under 2: Free

National Steinbeck Center

The mission of the non-profit National Steinbeck Center is to build community and celebrate creativity inspired by the words of John Steinbeck. Families can enjoy exhibits in literature, history, agriculture and art, as well as participate in special events and educational programs.

One Main Street
Salinas, CA 93901
(831) 796-3833

www.steinbeck.org

Admission:

Adults: \$14.95

Monterey County Residents: \$10.95

Seniors (over 62), students, teachers and military with ID: \$8.95

Youth 13 - 17: \$7.95

Children 6 - 12: \$5.95

Children 5 & under: FREE

Carmel Music Society

Carmel Music Society offers free or discounted tickets to students to encourage them to attend concerts and experience performances by renowned classical artists. These world-class musical performances are offered every year from October to June.

(831) 625-9938

www.carmelmusic.org

Admission: A limited number of free tickets are available to K-12 students whose adult companions only pay \$10 per ticket ("Free + \$10"). Each adult may bring up to two students and each student may be accompanied by up to two adults at the special \$10 price.

Outdoor Activities

Monterey's Path of History Tour

Monterey's Path of History Tour lets adults and children learn about Monterey's history as the Spanish capital of old California and its subsequent governance under the Mexican flag. Free walking tours take visitors through adobe houses and gardens to explore Monterey's architectural heritage and the history of the Spanish and Mexican families that settled Monterey.

www.seemonterey.com/things-to-do/historic-attractions/adobes/

Monarch Butterfly Sanctuary

Pacific Grove, nicknamed "Butterfly Town, U.S.A.," lets adults and children see beautiful Monarch butterflies in their natural habitat. The best time to visit the sanctuary is from October until February.

Ridge Road, Between Lighthouse Avenue and Short Street
Pacific Grove, CA 93950
(831) 648-5716

Hours: Dawn to dusk.

www.cityofpacificgrove.org/visiting/monarch-butterfly-sanctuary

Admission: FREE



Post-Visit

Additional Opportunities for Free or Low-Cost Experiences

Continued

Outdoor Activities

Tidepooling in Monterey and Santa Cruz Counties

Monterey and Santa Cruz counties boast beautiful tidepools to explore with friends and family. Some recommended locations in Monterey include Point Pinos, Asilomar State Beach and Point Lobos State Reserve, or Natural Bridges State Beach in Santa Cruz. For information about additional tidepool locations throughout California, visit the site below. Also, see our information concerning tidepool guidelines in the Confirmation Packet. monterey-bay.noaa.gov/visitor/TidePool/maps/selectmap.html

Viewing Wildlife at Hopkins Marine Station

From the secure vantage point of the Recreation Trail just past Hopkins Marine Station, located two blocks from the Aquarium, adults and children can observe harbor seals as they rest on the warm sands of Hopkins Marine Life Refuge. Please don't disturb the seals in any way.

120 Oceanview Boulevard
Pacific Grove, CA 93950
(831) 655-6200

hopkinsmarinestation.stanford.edu/

Local Beaches and Parks Beaches

After your group has learned about the ocean at the Aquarium, we highly recommend a visit to one of our many neighboring beaches to experience

the ocean! For groups with children, encourage your participants to bring a change of clothes in case they get wet while playing along the shore. The following beaches have public access, and the Window on the Bay (Municipal/Del Monte Beach) has public restrooms.

If your group is feeling particularly inspired by what they learned at the Aquarium, bring trash bags and do a beach clean-up! It's a great way to protect the incredible ocean and its wildlife that you have spent the day experiencing.

McAbee Beach City Park

McAbee Beach, situated in the middle of Cannery Row, is the smallest beach in Monterey and is a very short walk from the Aquarium. Families can dip their toes in the water and watch as kayakers and scuba divers explore the ocean from this popular launch site. Visitors can find this hidden gem at the foot of Hoffman Avenue.

www.seemonterey.com/things-to-do/beaches/monterey/

San Carlos Beach Park & the Coast Guard Pier

San Carlos Beach Park is one of the most popular diving locations on the West Coast. Located at the end of Cannery Row, it is a walkable distance from the Aquarium, but also has a paid parking lot. Adults and children can explore the beach and stroll along the nearby Coast Guard Pier, where visitors can spot California sea lions napping on rocks, sea birds nesting or sea otters nestling in the kelp.

www.monterey.org/Services/Harbor-and-Marina/Breakwater-Cove-Marina-CG-Pier

Window on the Bay, Waterfront Park (Municipal/Del Monte Beach)

This beach is only a short drive away from the Aquarium and is well worth stopping by on your way out of town. Monterey's Window on the Bay Park borders Monterey State Beach, Del Monte Avenue and the Monterey Bay Coastal Recreational Trail. Families can enjoy the beautiful view while playing volleyball, picnicking or having a BBQ. For reservations, call: (831) 646-3866.

monterey.org/Services/Parks-and-Beaches/Window-on-the-Bay

Parks

Dennis the Menace Playground

Dennis the Menace Playground, located in El Estero Park Complex, offers children the opportunity to play, slide, swing and climb to their hearts' content. Other fun activities include lake paddleboats, BBQ picnic areas and an exercise course. For reservations, call: (831) 646-3866.

Hours: Open daily from 10 AM to dusk. Closed on non-holiday Tuesdays, September - May.

monterey.org/Services/Parks-and-Beaches/El-Estero-Park-Complex

Pacific Grove Parks

Pacific Grove offers 28 parks, open spaces and recreational facilities for the enjoyment of both residents and visitors.

www.cityofpacificgrove.org/living/recreation/parks

Monterey County State Parks

Monterey County offers 20 state parks and beaches for families to explore. Some of these include Monterey State Historic Park, Monterey State Beach and Asilomar State Beach.

www.co.monterey.ca.us/parks/



Post-Visit

Additional Opportunities for Free or Low-Cost Experiences

Continued

California Missions

In the early days of California history, twenty-one Spanish missions were established to bring Christianity to the indigenous people living here. Families can visit these missions to learn more about California's history. The cities of Carmel, San Juan Bautista and Santa Cruz are home to three of these missions.

Carmel Mission

3080 Rio Road, Carmel, CA 93923
(831) 624-1271

www.carmelmission.org/museum/

Hours: 9:30 AM - 7:00 PM every day

Admission: Adults: \$6.50

Seniors: \$4.00

Children 7 and up: \$2.00

Children under 6: FREE

San Juan Bautista Mission

406 Second Street
San Juan Bautista, CA 95045
(831) 623-2127

www.oldmissionsjb.org

Hours: 9:30 AM - 4:30 PM every day

Admission: Adults: \$4.00 Seniors:

\$3.00 Children 5 and up: \$2.00

Children under 5: FREE

Santa Cruz Mission

144 School Street
Santa Cruz, CA 95060
(831) 425-5849

www.parks.ca.gov/?page_id=548

Hours: 10:00 AM - 4:00 PM

(Mon., Thurs. - Sat.)

12:00 - 4:00 PM Sunday

Admission: FREE

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