

Welcome to Kensington Nature Center!

We have created this Social Story as a preview guide for individuals with Sensory Processing and Autism Spectrum differences and their parents and caregivers to assist in preparation for their visit to the center.

Please feel free to bring what you need for making the visit a success, including:

- Wagons or strollers
- Communication boards or devices
- Sensory and adaptive accessories and equipment
- Snacks/drinks (but please consume these outdoors)
- If it is more comfortable for you and your child, you may use the staff restroom located near the front desk in the lobby. A staff member can point you in the right direction.
- Check with staff for suggestions on lower noise areas that may be suitable for breaks.

Please be mindful that:

- We understand when it comes to your child, you are the expert and best know how to address their needs. We expect that a parent or caregiver will accompany their loved one through the visit.
- Since you are the expert, we would greatly appreciate your feedback. Please complete an evaluation located at the front desk so we can learn what worked and how we can continue improving.
- Throughout the trails around Kensington Metropark Nature Area there are close edges and boardwalks to ponds, lakes, and wetlands. On all of our trails, there are many elevated boardwalks and bridges over the Huron wetlands and Wildwing Lake.
- Visitors must always stay on the trail pathways.

We look forward to seeing you and your family during your visit to Kensington Metropark.

# **My visit to Kensington Metropark Nature Center**



## Park Entrance



To enter Kensington Metropark, we will first stop at the toll booth. Here we will buy our park pass or have our car sticker scanned. Then we can continue driving into the park.



## Outside Nature Center Building, Parking Lot/Entrance



When we arrive, I will first see the entrance sign to Kensington Metropark Nature Center.



## Outside Nature Center Building, Parking Lot/Entrance



Once we park, I see two ways to go. On one side of the parking lot is a paved walkway to the Nature Center Building and on the other side is a Trail Map with stairs to the trails.



On the path down to the Nature Center I see a small pond on my left and a larger pond on my right. I make sure to walk in the center of the path, so I don't go off the trail.



## Outside Nature Center Building, Parking Lot/Entrance



Once I get closer to the Nature Center I see that there is another trail map ahead of me that I can use to see the trail rules, names of the trails, and lengths of the trails.



To my right is Kingfishers Lagoon. There are signs here that I can read, a spotting scope I can use to see far away, and benches for me to take a rest. Sometimes in the warmer months, there is Fish food for 25 cents a handful for me to feed to the fish in the lagoon.

## Outside Nature Center Building, Parking Lot/Entrance



To my left is the turtle pond. Since there is no railing I am careful when I approach the pond to not get too close. Past the pond, I can see the pavilion. This is a good rest and snack spot.



Time to head into the Nature Center. Across from the Nature Center Building I see another resting area. If I want to eat a snack here I can, but I will be sure to not let any of the animals share it with me.



## Outside Nature Center Building, Parking Lot/Entrance



I see the Nature Center in front of me and the trails on my left.



Heading towards the Nature Center there is a door to my left that is a hallway to the bathrooms.

Here I can get a drink of water or use the restroom if I need to.

\*The restrooms have automatic lights that may take a second to turn on. The hand dryers are also automatic and are very loud when used.

## Lobby



In the Nature Center Lobby, I can say hi to a Nature Center Interpreter and ask them any questions about animals and nature I may have. There is no fee or check in at the Nature Center, so I don't have to say "hi" if I don't feel like it. Sometimes in the lobby it is busy and loud, but I won't be here long.



I may be able to check out a sensory-friendly backpack from the Interpreter at the front desk if they are available during my visit. Inside the backpacks are sunglasses, headphones, and some toys to help me focus and relax.



## Exhibit Room



In the room to the left I see a lot of bright colors and items to play with. Sometimes it is crowded in this room, sometimes it is not. I can use the pieces in my backpack to help me if I need them.



To my left and right there are live animal tanks. I am careful to keep my hands off the glass and stay quiet near the animals, so I don't scare them. I also see some touch screens that I can touch to watch videos of animals and stools to help me to see the animals and screens better.



## Exhibit Room



Sometimes next to the Fish Aquariums is a bookshelf with puzzles I can play with and books I can read. I can carry them over to the couch and picnic table to play with them. I remember to ask nicely if I see something I want to use and someone is already using it. I will wait for my turn. While I wait I can relax on the couch and look out the window at the wildlife in the lagoon.



In the corner of the room I see a large display I can play with by laying, moving, watching, listening, and touching.

## Chickadee Room



The next room is the Chickadee Room. This room can sometimes have a strange smell and I don't have to go in there if I don't want to. This room has a lot of animal mounts for me to observe and a touch table and touch test I can play with if it is available.



## Great Blue Heron Room



Back through the exhibit room and past the front desk is the Great Blue Heron room. Sometimes this room is closed for a class and I can see it the next time I visit, but today it is open. In this room I see more live animals and a lot of animal mounts. I remember to not touch the animal mounts and to do my best to stay quiet near the live animals.



## Outside of the Building and the Nature Trails



Back through the lobby and out the front door I can see the #1 trail marker. It looks like there are two paths to go down. To the right is the amphitheater and a path to trail marker #16.



The amphitheater is a spot where I can relax, eat a snack, or look for wildlife. Past the amphitheater is a path that I can use to get to the back of the center.



## Outside of the Building and the Nature Trails



It leads us to Ranger, the Red-tailed Hawk! I can read the sign to learn about Ranger and observe him in his enclosure. I do my best to be quiet to be sure that I don't disturb him.

## Outside of the Building and the Nature Trails



I can pick any trail to go for a hike. In the winter time I might be able to buy bird seed for 25 cents a handful to feed the small songbirds. I am sure to chat with a Nature Center Interpreter about how to do this before I go out on the trail. Many animals make their home in the park, so it is important that I always keep my feet on the trails and stay out of the water. Throughout the year sometimes the trails are wet and muddy, sometimes the trails are dry and dusty, and sometimes the trails are snowy and icy. The trails are made of mixed gravel, sometimes they are hilly and sometimes they are flat. It is important to wear the appropriate gear when visiting to ensure I have fun while hiking and exploring the park on the nature trails!



**My favorite thing today at Kensington Metropark Nature Center was**

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# Kensington Metropark Nature Center Building Map

