



Visitor Guide for Individuals with Sensory Sensitivity or Specific Sensory Needs

A visit to the Dallas World Aquarium can be inspiring, educational, and exciting. Our guests come from all over the world and from all walks of life. Our goal is to create the best experience for all of our guests, and we know everyone is different with respect to their needs and comfort levels.

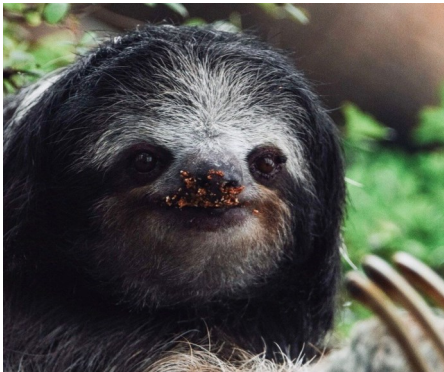


Sensory processing and sensory regulation difficulties are not uncommon for people with autism, PTSD, dementia, or other similar conditions. A visit to a zoo or aquarium can be challenging for these individuals as they often experience sensitivity to overstimulation and noise. As zoos and aquariums can sometimes get crowded and loud, we know this may create a barrier for some in enjoying the experience.

This guide is designed to help set you up for success if you experience sensory sensitivity or have specific sensory needs. We hope the information contained within can help you plan and prepare for your trip. We look forward to having you visit us at the Dallas World Aquarium!

Preparing for your Visit

Prepare at home by gathering items that help make you comfortable in public places. These may include noise-cancelling headphones, fidget devices, or anything else you might need to enjoy your time at the Dallas World Aquarium.



Get a Head Start

Explore our website (www.dwazoo.com) and download our Field Guide ahead of your visit. It includes detailed maps, descriptions of our various exhibits, and indicates locations of restrooms and our rest area. It also shows the locations of our three restaurants and includes a full menu for each, so you know what is available. Looking over the Field Guide prior to your visit can help orient you a bit and help you decide how you want to spend your time. It can be found on the home page by clicking VISIT DWA.

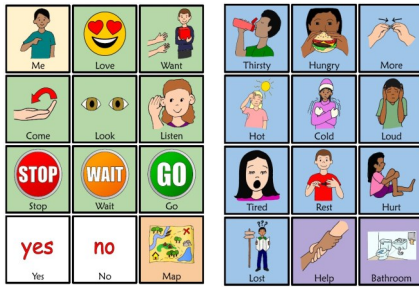
Arrival

You may need to wait in a line at the Admissions desk before entering the Aquarium, so be prepared. You can save some time by purchasing tickets online through our website before arrival. You can also purchase parking in our lot there as well, which can also save you time.

You will receive a paper copy of the Field Guide upon arrival as well. This will help orient you as you make your way through the Aquarium.



AAC Communication Tools



For non-verbal individuals, or those who occasionally find themselves unable to verbalize, we offer both an 8.5" x 11" Dallas World Aquarium-specific AAC communication board as well as a smaller communication card with select important symbols. These tools can help you communicate more comfortably and are available both in laminated form at our Admissions desk (please return to a staff member before you leave) and by downloading them from the home page of our website. Click on VISIT DWA, then click on ACCESSIBILITY. They can be found there in both English and Spanish.

Animals and Exhibits

The Dallas World Aquarium is world-renowned for our beautiful, immersive exhibits and the incredible animals under our care. There are areas that can get a little congested and loud, so it may be helpful to have noise-cancelling headphones and/or fidget devices available to help you feel more comfortable so you can enjoy observing the animals in their naturalistic exhibits.



Staff Members



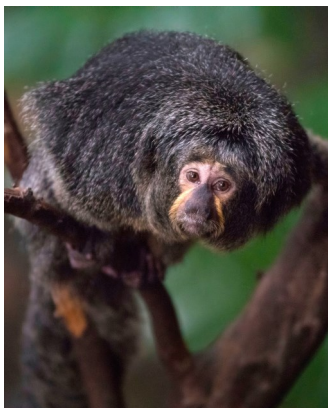
While at the Aquarium, you can easily identify our staff members by their uniforms. Please do not hesitate to ask them any questions you may have. They are friendly and happy to help.

Rest Area

Being in an unfamiliar place, especially if it gets crowded or noisy, can be overwhelming. If you start to feel this way, consider visiting our rest area. It is off to the side and a great place to take a break and relax.

Food

We offer three restaurants with varied menu options throughout the Aquarium. Two of these restaurants, Jungle Café and eighteen-O-one, are open year-round. The third, Café Maya, is open every day from March through August, and Friday through Sunday (as well as holidays) from September through February.



Restrooms

We have restrooms located throughout the Aquarium. There are water bottle refilling stations located at most restrooms. You can look at your Field Guide or ask a staff member for directions to the nearest one.

Enjoy your visit!

Preparing in advance can truly help make your visit to the Dallas World Aquarium a great one. And stay tuned – we are currently developing new methods designed to make us even more inclusive moving forward.