



## **Day of Discovery April 14, 2018**

We are excited to have you and your family join us for Day of Discovery at ZooTampa at Lowry at Lowry Park. Our Day of Discovery event will provide special needs families with unique programming, special animal encounters, and enrichment activities. Our goal is to make this day a sensory friendly opportunity for you and your family to create unforgettable natural connections through fun games, activities, animal mingles, and rides. Below you will find a list of tips to help you plan ahead and make the most of your time with us.

### **Preparing For Your Day of Discovery**

We recommend bringing the following items with you to the event:

- **Ear Protection**

While the Zoo will open early for this private event, and music will be off, the Zoo can still be very noisy with the animals on habitat and other guests' voices. Ear plugs or headphones may contribute to a less intense experience for your family member. You may bring your own, or we will also have ear plugs available at no cost (while supplies last).

- **A Sensory Toy**

Keeping your loved one calm might be an issue due to the sights, sounds, scents and busy activity around the Zoo. Have a sensory toy on hand—like a stress ball or other calming item—to help prevent or assist him or her from experiencing sensory overload. We will also have a pool of Distract Packs with sensory and fidget items available for checkout at no cost while supplies last.

- **Bug Spray and Sunscreen**

As the weather warms up, it's always a good idea to apply a layer of sunscreen and bug spray. A majority of your time with us will be spent outdoors. The Wallaroo Station splash pad will be open, so slip resistant water shoes are required for those using the water elements.

- **Food and Drink**

A continental breakfast (juice, coffee, water, fruit, muffins and breakfast sandwiches, including gluten-free options) will be available at a nominal cost. 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.

- **A Safety Bracelet or Nametag**

If appropriate based on your specific circumstances, place a bracelet, nametag or some variety of visual identification on your child. Include his or her name, all important medical information, and anything else that should be known. Please include your name and contact number as well.

### **At the Zoo**

- **Arrival**

The Zoo will open early for this event. As you arrive at the Zoo, you will check-in at the front gate at the main entrance. You will be provided with event wristbands, plus a ticket for each child for a free mining game and a free photo coupon per party/family. After checking in, you will proceed down Zoo Boulevard toward the Jungle Carousel for special event activities. You must arrive between 8:00 – 9:00 a.m. to be checked in for the event. Once you arrive, you are welcome to stay at the Zoo after its regular opening time

of 9:30 a.m. Please be aware that conditions will become louder, game options, and food options and pricing will change, and the crowds will likely increase after 9:30 a.m.

- **Quiet Zone**

Several quiet areas have been designated during the event: These include a quiet area located in Wallaroo Station near the pony barn, at the Penguin Conservation Center (near the Jungle Carousel), and at the front entrance next to the Tours and Guest Services Booth. There are also benches to sit on back at the Zoo Boulevard. If you need assistance locating any of these spaces, please ask a Zoo employee or volunteer.

- **Activity Path**

The activity path leading to the Jungle Carousel and outside the aviary will feature hands-on activity stations which will be led by Zoo staff and volunteers. All activities will wrap up promptly at 9:15 a.m.

- **Rides**

Several rides are located within the designated event area. These include the Jungle Carousel, Tasmanian Tiger Coaster, Lil' Joey's Caravan, Boomer's Flying Bananas and Overland Express ride. The carousel music will be off, but the actual operation of each of the rides themselves can add some noise. See the interactive event story on our website for more detailed information about our rides.

- **Games and Face Painting**

The Catch a Croc game (with modest prize for all players), and the basketball hoop game will be open for our event guests at no charge until 9:15 a.m. Each attendee will also receive a coupon for a free sluice mining game at the Wallaroo Mining Company. Face painting will also be offered in the Pavilion near the Flyin' Bananas ride.

- **Animal Encounters and Mingles**

The Wallaby Walkabout, Wallaroo Australasian Aviary and the petting zoo will both be opened early for the event. The koalas and wallabies are also expected to be in their habitat for the event. Up-close animal mingles will be held from 8:15 to 8:45 am in the barnyard by the pony barn

## **Guest Assistance**

If you are in need of assistance on the day of the event, please speak with a member of Zoo staff. If your child gets separated from your group, please speak with Zoo staff for assistance.

## **Special Thanks**

A special note of appreciation is extended to our event sponsor, The Lowry Murphey Family Foundation, Inc., and our photo sponsor, Zootastic. We also acknowledge the generous efforts of Autism Shifts and the Center for Autism & Related Disorders (CARD) at USF for their efforts in helping to make this event a success. We also recognize the support of our The Learning Academy, Autism Speaks and the Diversity Action Coalition and applaud their efforts to promote inclusive experiences.



*Days of Discovery 2018 has been brought to you as part of a collaborative event series with the Museum of Science and Industry and the Florida Aquarium in support of the City of Tampa's "Autism Friendly Tampa" Initiative.*