Wild Dolphin Cruise
Notes for parents, teachers and other caregivers...

If children have sensory or behavioral challenges, you may want to be aware of the following considerations, and prepare accordingly:

- Children may need to be prepared for the small chance they will not see dolphins while on the tour. They will see a lot of wildlife and learn a lot about the water and history of the area.

- The Wild Dolphin Cruise at The Florida Aquarium earned Dolphin SMART recognition in 2011, after successfully demonstrating responsible viewing and advertising of dolphins in the wild and educating patrons on the importance of dolphin conservation. A downloadable children’s activity booklet can be found at: http://sanctuaries.noaa.gov/dolphinsmart/pdfs/dskids_guide.pdf

LOWER DECK

- People sitting on the seats in front will most likely be splashed with water when the boat is moving. This might be fun for some children!

- The sound of the engines is quite loud. Some parents keep their smaller children inside, and they can be loud if they are running around and laughing etc.

- There is a counter where snacks and beverages are sold. Children may need preparation for whether they will be allowed to buy food & beverages or not during the cruise. The choices may be limited, and not what is expected if they have specific food preferences.

- Restrooms are on the lower deck. People will be coming & going from those areas. Toilets are flushed in these restrooms with a white button on the wall. There may be a noticeable odor from the chemicals used in the restrooms on board.

UPPER DECK

- The wind blows fairly strong when the boat is moving at its top speed. Parents will want to keep track of any toys, books or other carry-a-longs that might blow away.

- The narrator stands on the upper deck as he or she is speaking, and the speakers may be loud.
We are going on the Wild Dolphin Cruise! First, we will buy tickets to the Florida Aquarium...

...then we will buy extra tickets for the Wild Dolphin Cruise
When it is time to go outside, we will walk through Café Ray

Then we will walk down these steps
We will follow the signs

Then we will wait with the other people who will go on the boat with us

WAIT UNTIL 15 MINUTES BEFORE THE BOAT LEAVES
We are waiting for this boat.

Not this one. This is a different boat. Maybe we will visit the American Victory boat another day.
We can sit or stand on the lower deck, inside or outside. Inside, there is air conditioning. It will be dry if it starts raining.
We can throw trash or recycle plastic bottles in these containers near the snack bar on the first level.
There are safety materials and instructions posted on the inside area of the first level. Restrooms are here too, if we need to use the restroom.
There are nice people who can give us information, or can sell snacks or drinks if we will be having any on our trip. If we are not having snacks or drinks on the boat, maybe we will have some before or after the boat ride.
Outside, we can stand, along the sides...
We can sit up front. If we sit here, maybe we will get splashed with water when the boat is moving.
Or we can walk up the stairs and go to the top deck.
First, we will listen to safety instructions. We will learn where the life vests are and what to do if there is an emergency.
BOAT RIDE LASTS ABOUT 90 MINUTES

When the boat starts moving, someone from the Florida Aquarium will begin talking to us through the loud speakers.
We will learn about all the places we can see from the boat: The Port of Tampa, Harbour Island, Davis Islands, the special wildlife islands, and the living creatures in and around the water we travel on.
Maybe we will be very lucky and see some dolphins. Maybe the dolphins are swimming somewhere else. We will see a lot of very interesting birds and other creatures, so it will be OK if we don’t see dolphins on this trip. Maybe another day!
If we see dolphins, it is important to watch them swim and play from a distance. We are not supposed to throw any food or other things to them. The dolphins are wild, and need to find their own food and have fun with other dolphins.
These rules say we cannot throw anything from the boat into the water! Why not? It is important to keep the water clean for people and animals. Some things people might throw in the water can make the water dirty, or the fish, dolphins, turtles or birds very sick. We want to be sure all the creatures stay healthy and safe!
When the boat returns to the dock at the Florida Aquarium, we will be told to find a seat, and to sit down and wait for the cruise to be over. After the boat stops at the dock, we will wait in our seats until we are told it is OK to get off the boat. Then we will walk to the exit. Maybe we will wait in line a few minutes it is OK.
We will tell the Florida Aquarium people, “Thank you!” as we walk off the boat. We will return to the Aquarium building. Maybe we will see more exhibits, or maybe we will go home.

See you next time!
Created for The Florida Aquarium by

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