Let’s go to the Zoo!

Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium
Metro Parks Tacoma
Planning a trip to the zoo is fun. There are some things I need to do to prepare.
I will wear comfortable clothing and shoes for walking long distances. I will wear a jacket if it is raining.
I can bring food and water for when I get hungry and thirsty. We can also buy snacks and drinks at the zoo if my parents decide to.
Each person going to the zoo needs a ticket. We can buy tickets from our computer at home and skip the lines. Or, we can purchase tickets at the booths when we get to the zoo. We might need to wait in line for a few minutes until it's our turn. This is okay.
I will put my ticket under a reader with the barcode facing up so it can be read by a computer. When the light turns green, I can walk through the turnstile.
Inside the zoo there are a lot of things to see. I can look at maps and signs to help me find my way.
If it gets too loud or too crowded for me, I can get a sensory bag. A staff member in the Carousel can help me get a bag. The sensory bags have items that will make me feel calm. I can use the fidget tools in my sensory bag to help me stay calm and enjoy the Zoo with my family/group.

Sensory Bags Available Here

www.kulturecity.org
I might see a peacock roaming around. I will look at their pretty feathers, but will not feed or chase them, they like to be left alone.
The cement paths take me to the animal exhibits. I walk safely everywhere I go.
If I am not sure where to go, I can ask a person in a shirt with a polar bear on it. They will help me find my way.
The animals I want to see will be behind a fence or glass. This is their home.
If I want to talk to an animal, I can wave, smile, or speak softly. The animal may get scared if I climb on the fence or tap on the glass.
Some animals may come close to me. It might be fun to get a closer look. I will follow the directions of the Zoo Keeper who is caring for the animal. It is also okay if I want to step away from the animal.
Sometimes the animals are playing where I can’t see them. It is okay if I don’t see every animal at the zoo.
Zoo staff members wear a uniform and a nametag. I can talk to a zoo staff member if I want to learn more about an animal. I will try to wait until they are not talking to someone. Waiting my turn to talk makes everyone happy.
When I visit the Asian Forest Sanctuary, I may see tigers, gibbons, and porcupines. These animals change exhibits every day so I may see animals in a different place each time I visit. I may not see every animal. This is okay.
When I visit Budgie Buddies*, the birds may fly around me. These small birds are colorful and fun to watch. The best way to see a budgie up close is to be quiet and move slowly. If my parent decides, I may buy a seed stick to feed the birds. I will hold the stick out very still like a tree branch for the bird to land on. I will not touch the birds.

*The Budgie exhibit is closed during the cold winter months.
I can see different kinds of animals at the Wild Wonders Outdoor Theater. I will check the schedule to find out what time the next encounter is.
In the summer, I can watch a 30 minute show at the theater and learn about the cool things animals can do. Animals may fly above me. I can check out a Sensory Bag with headphones, fidget toys, and a weighted lap pad to help me enjoy the show. A staff member can help me check one out.
I can visit the playground in Kids’ Zone. Sometimes it is very busy with many kids climbing, sliding, and laughing. I will make sure to stay within sight of my adult. If I need a quiet place to take a break, I can sit on a bench near the goat yard.
The goats are fun to watch. They may jump and play with each other. I can pet them gently on the back if I want to. If my parents decide, I can buy pellets to feed the goats. I will hold the pellets in a flat, open hand and the goats will use their soft lips to pick up the food.
When I visit Stingray Cove, I will listen carefully to the staff member and follow their directions on how to touch the rays and sharks. It is okay if I just want to look at the rays and sharks.
If I want to touch the rays, I will push my sleeves way up so they don’t get wet. I will touch the rays with two fingers gently on their wings or fins. I will touch the sharks gently between the fins on their back.
When I visit the Pacific Seas Aquarium, I will see lots of ocean animals. I will also see words moving along the wall. These tell me how people are connected to the ocean. I can choose a word on the kiosk that tells how I am connected to the ocean and then watch it float along the wall!
On the ramps in the aquarium, I will walk through the "Shimmer". This art looks and moves like the reflection of water. I might get excited. I will walk down the ramp making sure not to run into other aquarium visitors. It's okay to not like walking through the Shimmer. I can close my eyes and hold someone's hand to help me feel better about walking through it.
When I visit the Tidal Touch Zone, it may be busy and I may have to wait my turn. This is okay. I will touch the animals gently with one finger and will not pull or lift the animals. Some of the animals will feel soft and slimy, some will feel hard like a rock. It is fun to learn about the sea stars and anemones.
If my parents decide, I can ride the carousel. After my parents buy tickets, I will wait in line until the staff member opens the gate. Then I will walk to the carousel animal I want to ride. If someone else gets to that animal first, I will choose another carousel animal to ride.
When it is time to leave the zoo, I will walk calmly through the turnstile. If I don’t want to walk through the turnstile, my family and I can go through the gate near where I scanned my ticket. I will remember to close the gate behind me.
I can always come back to the zoo on another day.
I can learn more about the different animals I want to see at the zoo by visiting their website before I arrive.

www.pdza.org
Thanks for visiting!