Planning Your Preschool Field Trip

Preschool trips to the Library generally include a special storytime, followed by a brief introduction to what is found in the children's area, what you can do at the Library, and/or time to play in our Learn and Play Space (LAPS). Preschool visits typically last about an hour.

These visits are arranged on a first come, first served basis, and are subject to staff and room availability. Requesting a trip at least two weeks in advance gives us time to arrange for staffing. To request a visit, please use our online form to Schedule a Library Visit, or call the Library at (812) 349-3050.

If you want to bring a group to the Library for independent play in LAPS, and do not expect formal storytime or other programming from a librarian, we still appreciate a courtesy call to prepare our staff for a group visit.

Preparing Your Group for the Field Trip

There are many things you can do to prepare your group for a trip to the Library. We recommend you introduce some of these concepts and activities to your group before the trip to help make the visit a fun and meaningful experience for your group.

- **Show and Tell**
  Show the children your library card and ask if any of them have visited the Library. Explain that your library card allows you to borrow books and other materials from the Library. When you return those items you may get others. Materials at the Library belong to everyone in our community. We all share them and take turns using them.

- **Bring a Library Book to Class**
  How can they tell that the book came from the Library? Point out the spine label on the side and the barcode label on the back. After you share the book with your class, explain that you will take it back to the Library when your class visits. Remind your class about this conversation when you arrive at the Library and place the book in the return slot.

- **Questions and Answers**
  A library also is a place to find answers to your questions. Librarians can help you find answers or good books to read. Questions often begin with the words: Who, What, When, Where, Why and How. Maybe your group would like to think of a question they would like the librarian to help them answer.

- **Check Out!**
  Library cards are free to residents of Monroe County. If you want your class to check out books on their own library cards on the day of the tour, you'll need to arrange for children to apply for and obtain library cards in advance of their visit. The Library has an online application form for people to use. Or, invite parents to apply for a library card for their preschool child.

- **Vocabulary**
  Here are a list of words related to the Library you could introduce to your group:

  - library
  - books
  - librarian
  - borrowing
  - downtown
  - reading
  - helpers
  - sharing

  Ask a Librarian
  Contact
  Hours & Locations
Behavior
See our Advice for Adults Bringing Children to the Library. The Library also has general Behavioral Rules that explain appropriate behavior while in the Library. The general rules have to do with being considerate of other people, taking care of shared materials and shared space, and acting in a safe way. It's always helpful to remind children before they visit that the Library is a place used by many people, some of whom are studying or reading. In the Library, we speak in an "indoors" voice; we act in a safe manner by not running or climbing inside; and we take care of the library by handling books with care, not banging on computers, and putting away puzzles or puppets used in the room.

The Day of the Field Trip
Here you'll find a list of fun things to talk about with your class on the day of your visit.

Outside the Library

- Notice the Library's setting. It's on a major street in downtown. On the south (Kirkwood) side of the building, take note of our limestone bears. These bears are name Sunny (the bear walking alone), Luna (the bear holding the cub), and Snowdrop (the baby bear).

- Point out the signs in front of the Library. There's the general sign that says what this building is, as well as signs that post the library's hours and the word "open".

- There also are places outside the Library to return books and other materials when the Library is closed. There are book drops at each entrance and at the Main Library, there a drive-thru pick-up and return window off the Library's parking lot.

- How do people get to the library? There's a parking lot in back for cars, a bus stop in front of the Library, bicycle racks near the entrances, and many people walk to the Library.

Inside the Library

- Entering from the south (Kirkwood) side of the building, after coming down the steps, you'll see the first floor
checkout desk and our large atrium. The atrium is a good place to pause and gather your group (be forewarned that sound echoes loudly in this space!). Explain that the Library is used by all types of people; books for grownups are on the second floor, children's books are downstairs.

- It's also a good place to pause and remind children about the behavior that is expected in the Library. Many people use the Library as a reading space, so we use our "indoors" voice. We'll stay together as a group, act in a safe manner, and take care of shared books or toys.

- Next, come into the Children's area to meet the librarians -- we're glad to have you visit!

**After the Visit**

Encourage your group to talk about your visit to the Library. Here are some prompts you can use to facilitate a conversation:

- Who remembers seeing:
  - a place to ask questions?
  - a place to check out books?
  - a drinking fountain?
  - a puzzle table?
  - a train table?
  - a bathroom?
  - an outdoor observation area?
  - a place to hang up jackets?

- What was your favorite thing to see at the Library?
- Who thinks they will visit the Library again?
- Did you like the story the Librarian told? (You can even help your group retell the story to encourage storytelling)

For more suggestions on preparing for a field trip, see: Redleaf, R. *Open the Door - Let's Explore More!*

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*Support the Library*
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**Monroe County Public Library | (812) 349-3050**
303 E. Kirkwood Avenue, Bloomington, IN 47408

**Ellettsville Branch | (812) 876-1272**
600 West Temperance Street, Ellettsville, IN 47429

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(function () { var x = document.createElement("script"); x.type = "text/javascript"; x.async = true; x.src = (document.location.protocol === "https:" ? "https://" : "http://") + "libraryh3lp.com/js/libraryh3lp.js?14734"; var y = document.getElementsByTagName('script')[0]; y.parentNode.insertBefore(x, y); })();

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