

# My Visit to



A fun place where I can  
play and learn with my family

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This story was created to help children prepare for an upcoming visit to Explore & More Children's Museum. It is part of the "au-some evenings" pilot program which offers one special evening a month for children with Autism Spectrum and/or Sensory Disorders and their friends and family. A Powerpoint is available on Explore & More's website for children who may find it easier to listen and watch than read. <http://www.exploreandmore.org>.

The program was developed as a collaboration among Explore & More, [The Center for Autism Support & Education \(CASE\)](#) and [The Children's Guild Foundation Autism Spectrum Disorder Center at Women & Children's Hospital of Buffalo](#) who have been working together to make the museum experience more sensory-friendly and accessible to all children.

**Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD)** and autism are both general terms for a group of complex disorders of brain development. These disorders are characterized, in varying degrees, by difficulties in social interaction, verbal and nonverbal communication and repetitive behaviors. Autism statistics from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) identify around 1 in 88 American children as on the autism spectrum—a ten-fold increase in prevalence in 40 years. Careful research shows that this increase is only partly explained by improved diagnosis and awareness. Studies also show that autism is four to five times more common among boys than girls. An estimated 1 out of 54 boys and 1 in 252 girls are diagnosed with autism in the United States. For more information: <http://www.autismspeaks.org>.

**Social Narratives** – This story was modeled after Social Stories™ which were developed by Carol Gray in 1991. A Social Story™ describes a situation, skill, or concept in terms of relevant social cues, perspectives, and common responses in a specifically defined style and format. The goal of a Social Story™ is to share accurate social information in a patient and reassuring manner that is easily understood by its audience. Although the goal of a Story™ should never be to change the individual's behavior, that individual's improved understanding of events and expectations may lead to more effective responses. Although Social Stories™ were first developed for use with children with ASD, the approach has also been successful with children, adolescents, and adults with ASD and other social and communication delays and differences, as well as individuals developing normally. For more information: <http://www.thegraycenter.org/social-stories/carol-gray>

*We would like to thank Hodgson Russ for its generous support of this program.*



**Explore & More is a fun place where I can play and learn. This is a museum made just for children and their families. If I remember to use gentle hands, walking feet and my indoor voice, I can touch, play and explore many different areas and objects.**



**After our drive, we will walk up some stairs and go through a door.**



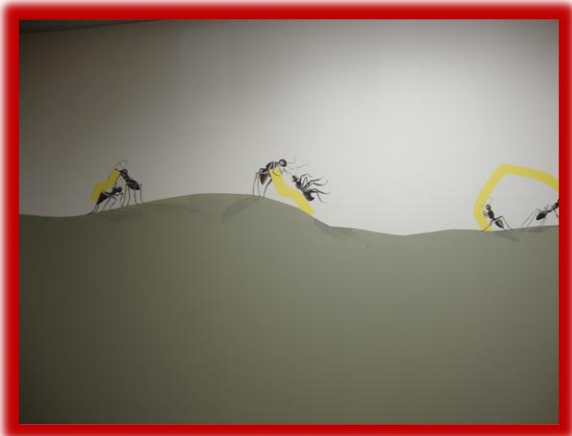
**Now we follow the signs.**

**I follow the red arrow ➡ and go right.**



**Now we go left. ⬅**

**See the little girl? Follow her pointed finger.**



**I see some ants on the wall.  
They look very busy. I will be  
busy playing nicely here too.  
I'm almost there!**



**We made it! Here is the door - I  
see the train!**



**I wait quietly while we check in at the  
Admission Desk. There are nice  
people here to help us.**

**There are a few rules I need to remember:**

**I use my walking feet.**

**I use my indoor voice.**

**I share and wait patiently for my turn.**

**I listen to grown-ups.**

**I use gentle hands and**

**I have fun!**

**People will be happy when I follow the rules.**



**There are so many things to do. I can.....**



**Drive a train or go for a ride**





**Make it Go.....I roll the ball down the maze or build my own track on the wall. It is fun to watch it go! While the ball is rolling, I will remember to use a quiet voice.**



**I can build with the little or really big blocks. Maybe I will make a house! Remember, I share blocks with my friends.**



**In the architecture studio, I can learn how buildings are made. I keep all four legs of the chair on the floor.**



**This area is the Netherlands – See the windmill? I can make it go. I can try on big wooden shoes if I remember to keep them on my feet.**



**Here is Vietnam – if I use gentle hands, I can feel the rice. They grow and eat a lot of rice in Vietnam. I can also look at the fish.**



**I can play a drum gently with my hands and make music in South Africa. I remember to take turns and share with my friends.**



**In Mexico, I can dance and listen to music. I can also make a “rubbing” using crayons and paper. A grown-up will show me how to do it.**



**I can make a mask, do a show or make butterflies and put them in the tree! I can ask for help if I cannot reach the tree myself.**



**If I’m careful, I can climb the stairs and look all around. Look, I’m taller than the grown-ups!**





**Look at the cool rocks in "Exploration Rocks." Some are sparkly, some are spotted, some are rough and some are heavy. If I use gentle hands, I can hold the rocks. Maybe I will find a fossil!**



**If I sit quietly in the boat, I can catch fish then sell my fish to others. I like the pretend ice – it is not cold!**



**I can explore the barn and farm and harvest the vegetables. I remember to keep the vegetables in the barn and market area.**



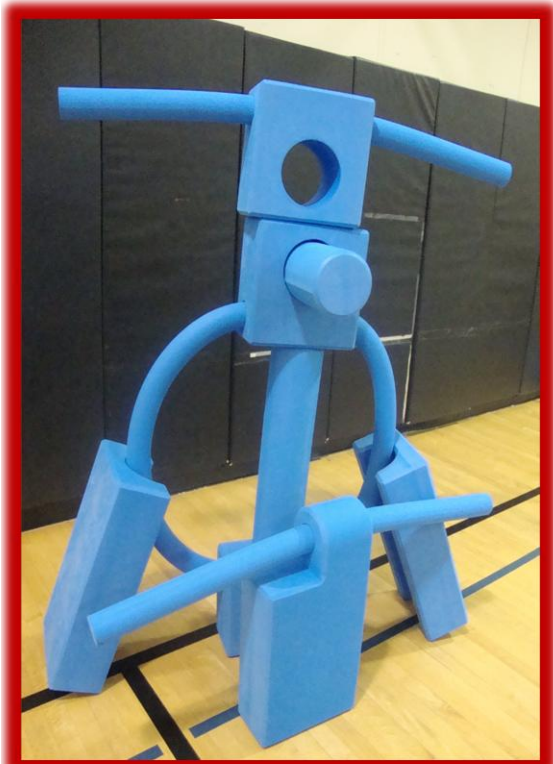
**I can put vegetables in the baskets and sell them in the market.**



**This looks like our city Buffalo! I can make the car move along the road that I build. I remember to walk around the tracks carefully.**



**Here is the art room. If I sit in a chair, I can color or draw and make pictures.**



**Imagination Playground is in the gym. I can play with the blue foam objects. It is so much fun! Look at this funny one – what do you think it is?**

**This is the one place where I can use my running feet but I still remember to follow directions and use my indoor voice.**

**If I remember to follow the rules, I will have fun at Explore & More! When I follow the rules, my friends and family are happy! I hope to visit soon!**