



PORTLAND MUSEUM of ART

Tips for an Engaging Visit

Let the children be the gallery guides *Allowing children to choose art they are drawn to, rather than choosing for them, helps develop their interests.* Giving children ownership of the art museum experience and freedom will result in a more impactful experience. It can be difficult to relinquish control to the young ones, but the rewards can be profound.

Lead by example *Modeling visual and verbal engagement with the art encourages kids to do the same.* Children look to the adults in their lives as role models for behavior, and so the best way for them to develop an interest in the arts is to see you do the same. Look! Talk! Take your time! Note: it's OK to sit on the gallery floors (but there are gallery stools and cushions available in the coatroom if you'd prefer).

Less is more *Limit your visit to a few pieces that spark your children's curiosity, and they'll remember the experience longer.* The PMA is a big museum. You can shrink it down to child-size by selecting just a few galleries and spending most of your time there. Try to manage the amount of stimulation your child receives, and the impact will often be greater (this works for adults, too!). You can always come back another day—we promise there will be new art and more to explore.

Ask open-ended questions *Asking questions with no "right" answer affirms unique ideas, encourages creative thinking, and stimulates language skills.* These questions prompt dialogue by encouraging children to look deeply, speculate, and use their imagination. Some examples include: What's going on in this picture? What is your favorite part of this work, and why? If you could ask the artist a question, what would you ask?

Mind your museum manners *Knowing the rules prior to the visit will make your visit smoother.* Give the art some space (don't touch and stay at least 18 inches away). Walk instead of run. Leave food, drinks and backpacks in the coatrooms. Are you drawing in the galleries? Use pencils only, please. While at the PMA, you will notice Gallery Officers throughout the museum. It is their job to protect the art. They will remind you of these museum manners if you forget.

Take photos! *Photography helps connect children and adults with the artwork.* Spend the extra time to take a picture of work you admire—or better yet, let your children take one. You'll have a tangible memory when you get home (you can also look for a postcard or card of your favorite piece in the PMA Store). Please remember museum manners and don't use flash or video. And if you see  please do not take a photo.

Don't stop talking about art once you leave the PMA galleries *Show children how dialogue that is inspired by an art museum can be continued everywhere.* Whether you are looking at a postcard, poster, mural, or children's book, you can have the same types of conversations as you did today. Art is everywhere, and museums teach us how to appreciate it.