

Stroller Brigade

A guide to the National Zoo for visitors with young children



Olmsted Walk

Olmsted Walk is the Zoo's main walkway, running downhill from the Visitor Center. The following list highlights stops along Olmsted Walk that are fun for young children and are stroller accessible. Stops are in order of occurrence from the Visitor Center. See the Zoo map for location information and for additional information about the Zoo.

Cheetahs - Check out the fastest land animals in the world. See if you can spot the cubs or get an up-close view of one of these magnificent cats in the middle yard.

Zebras - The zebra exhibit offers perfect viewing of these striped wonders from several vantage points.

Elephant House - If it's BIG animals you want to see, then this is the place. Whether inside the building or out, you'll have a tremendous view of elephants, hippos, and a giraffes.

Great Ape House - You may want to take a trip around the back of the Great Ape House to see the gorilla family, including a juvenile. These apes are usually outside in the morning.

Gibbons - Across from the Great Ape House you'll find the acrobats of the Zoo. Stop by and enjoy the high-flying antics of these graceful primates.

Reptile Discovery Center - If the children like big and scaly, slither behind the Reptile Discovery Center to find the Komodo dragon, the largest lizard on Earth!

Think Tank - You may find some orangutans sunbathing in the outside area in front of the building. They can also travel between Think Tank and the Great Ape House on the O Line, which stretches across the towers situated between the two buildings. Look up to see if an orangutan is on a platform or cable overhead.

Great Cats - The children will roar with excitement along with the lions and tigers. There are even kid-sized viewing windows. Take the kids on the Tiger Tracks Trail to learn all about what it is like to be a tiger.

Kids' Farm - Learn where your food comes from while playing in the Pizza Garden, and help care for the animals in the Caring Corral.

Valley Trail

Valley Trail is a little steeper than Olmsted Walk, but has many more shaded areas. See the Zoo map for location information and for additional information about the Zoo.

Bird House - It may be far, but the Bird House is exciting to visit. Check out flamingos, toucans, ducks, and some lesser-known birds that are equally as fun to watch. They are full of color, movement, and sound.

Free-ranging Golden Lion Tamarins - Just about midway on the Valley Trail, from about mid-May to mid-October, golden lion tamarins explore their forest home. Look for these small, gold-colored monkeys, roaming freely in Beaver Valley. If you can't find the tamarins, ask a volunteer to point them out.

Beavers - Near the river otters and Mexican wolves, you can watch the second largest rodent in the world swim and slap its tail on the water.

Sea Lion Pool - You'll find places to sit comfortably while watching the sea lions swim. And don't miss the underwater observation window at the lower end of the pool. Seeing a sea lion swim by makes quite an impression.

Where are the Dinosaurs? You'll find a bronze cast of a Tyrannosaurus rex skull and fossilized foot print in the Predators Alcove of the Great Cats exhibit.

Fun places to explore with children 5 and older

How Do You Zoo? - Located in the Visitor Center, this exhibit encourages children to pretend to be Zoo animal keepers, veterinarians, and commissary workers. The exhibit is open to the public on Saturdays and Sundays from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Parental supervision is required.

Cheetahs - Kids can spot, stalk, and chase down a meal on the Predator and Prey Trail. They can race a cheetah, comparing their time for the distance a cheetah can run in a second, marked by yellow lines on the walkway. They can even find out if they weigh as much as a gazelle or a water buffalo, or somewhere in between.

Tiger Tracks - Located at the Great Cats exhibit, this interactive path will astound you with facts about growing up as a tiger.

Amazonia Exhibit and Science Gallery - Strollers must be left outside but Amazonia, located at the lower end of the Valley Trail, is an explorer's dream. This exhibit recreates the Amazon River and rainforest. The lower floor showcases many colorful river fish in four huge aquaria. Upstairs, the rainforest is home to birds, monkeys and frogs moving throughout the exhibit. The Science Gallery, accessed through Amazonia, has hands-on objects and computers, restrooms, and water fountains.

Amenities

Visitor Center - Here you will find information, Zoo maps, restrooms, water fountains, and the Zoo Bookstore with a well-stocked children's section.

Panda Plaza - Right near the Elephant House, Panda Plaza has restrooms, food, a National Zoo Store, information booth, and stroller rentals. If you have a FONZ Household membership, pick up some free popcorn for the children.

Reptile Discovery Center/Think Tank - The booth between these exhibits offers information, beverages, and snacks like cookies and ice cream.

Police Station - Across from the Great Cats exhibit are restrooms, water fountains, emergency response units, and the lost and found.

Mane Restaurant - Located just down the hill from the Police Station, the Mane Restaurant offers a full menu of snacks and meals. Enjoy sit-down dining indoors or outdoors at the picnic area. Stroller rentals and an information booth are across from the restaurant.

FONZ Household Memberships

What a great deal!

Free parking while you visit the Zoo

Discounts on Zoo stroller rentals

Conservation Kids' Club offers free snacks for kids wearing their Kids' Club button

Members-only events that are great for the family: Zoo Morning, Snore & Roar sleepovers, Birthday Parties, Classes, Camps, and more

Discounts on special-event tickets: Guppy Gala, Boo at the Zoo, and more

10% discount at National Zoo Stores

And much, much more!

Ask for a membership brochure at any information booth or join online at www.fonz.org.