

Children's Museum of Virginia

A Sensory Guide to the Exhibits



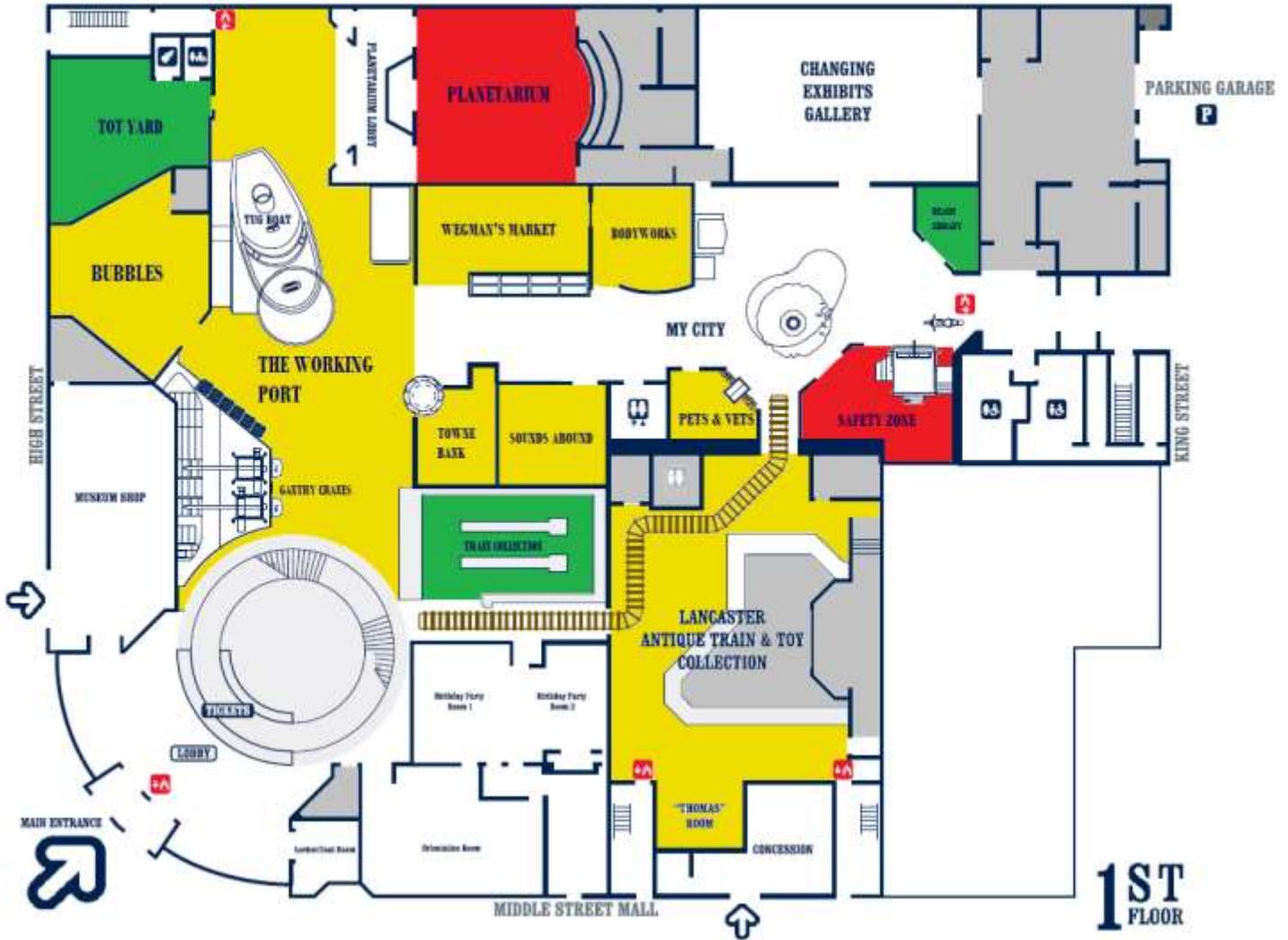
Sensory Guide created by Tabitha Williams, OTS in collaboration with the Children's Museum of Virginia and the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga Occupational Therapy Department

Accessibility Information

If you need assistance during your visit, please notify a museum staff member or volunteer. Look for a museum-logo shirt or museum badge.

- Noise-reducing headphones and weighted vests are available to check out at the Admission Desk on a first-come first-serve.
- School day afternoons are generally a less busy time to visit the museum.
- Both floors of the museum are wheel-chair accessible via elevator.
- A limited number of adult and child wheelchairs are available to check out at the Admission Desk on a first-come, first-serve basis.
- Restrooms on the first floor have automatic-flush toilets while restrooms on the second floor have manual-flush toilets.
- Family restrooms are located on the first floor of the museum in Tot Yard and the second floor of the museum in Cre-ART-ivity.
- For additional resources including museum trip social stories visit the accessibility page at [LINK](#).

First Floor



MAP KEY

- | | | | |
|---|-----------------|---|-------------------|
|  | Male Restroom |  | Emergency Exit |
|  | Female Restroom |  | Nursing Room |
|  | Family Restroom |  | Staff Access Only |
|  | Elevator | | |

SENSORY KEY

-  Low
-  Moderate
-  High

*Please Note: Crowd sizes will impact sensory levels. Consider school day afternoons for a quieter time to visit the museum.

Second Floor



2ND FLOOR

MAP KEY

	Male Restroom		Emergency Exit
	Female Restroom		Nursing Room
	Family Restroom		Staff Access Only
	Elevator		

SENSORY KEY

	Low
	Moderate
	High

*Please Note: Crowd sizes will impact sensory levels. Consider school day afternoons for a quieter time to visit the museum.

First Floor

There is one family restroom located in *Tot Yard* with an automatic-flush toilet and a foldout changing station. The main bathrooms on this floor have automatic-flush toilets and wall mounted changing station.

The nursing room located in *Tot Yard* can be a quiet space to calm down when it is not in use.

The Working Port

Visual:

- Bright lights are positioned along the outside of the tug boat.
- A rotating mural is on the wall beside the tug boat.

Auditory:

- This area may be loud if the museum is busy.
- The fish clank when they to fall back into the water.

Tactile:

- Children can use fishing rods to catch magnetic fish and put them back into the water by finding the correct match in the puzzle box.
- Children can move the cargo box from the ship to the truck using levers and buttons.

**The lever only needs to be moved once rather than held making it accessible to children with motor control difficulties.*

Bubbles

Visual:

- This area has a color changing bubble wall which might be visually stimulating.

Auditory:

- This area may be loud if the museum is busy.

Tactile:

- Children can use different objects as bubble wands to see if they create the same shape bubbles.
- Children can stand on the large platforms and pull the rope to create a giant bubble.
- The bubble solution may feel slimy if it gets on your hands. Paper towels are available to wipe hands off as needed.

Olfactory:

- This area has a strong smell from the bubble solution.

Tot Yard

Visual:

- Bright lights are positioned over the bench and bookshelves for reading.
- This area has a view of the color changing bubble wall which might be visually stimulating.
- This area contains many colorful murals and puzzles which might be visually stimulating.

Auditory:

- This area is generally quieter than the rest of the museum.

Tactile:

- Small toys and puzzles for younger children are available in this area.
- The soft furniture in Tot Yard may provide a calming sensory experience.

Lancaster Train Exhibit

Visual:

- Trains move along the tracks in the area.
- Bright lights are positioned along the cases housing the train collection

Auditory:

- This area may be loud if the museum is busy.

Tactile:

- Children can push buttons to work items on the train display.
- Toy trains are available to play with in Toddler Tracks.

Towne Bank

Visual:

- A movement based video game in on the floor in this area.

Auditory:

- **The “money tube” system creates a loud air whooshing noise.**
- The game in this area chimes repeatedly.
- The safes in the corner beep when inputting the pass code.

Tactile:

- Children can practice writing checks.
- **Children can send and receive the money tube from the “drive-thru”.**
- Children can break money into smaller amounts by stepping on it in the movement based video game.

Wegman’s Market

Visual:

- Vivid, colored displays might be visually stimulating.
- Bright lights are positioned over the food displays and cash registers.

Auditory:

- This area may be loud if the museum is busy.
- The chickens and cow in this area make noises which might be startling.

Tactile:

- Children can shop for groceries or be the cashier in this area.
- Children can milk the cow and collect eggs from the chickens.

Bodyworks

Visual:

- X-rays in this area light-up when the buttons are pressed.
- Lights around the base of the giant teeth change colors from yellow to white while being brushed.
- A model skeleton is hanging in a display case in this area which may frighten some children.

Auditory:

- This area has residual noises from surrounding exhibits and may become loud when the museum is busy.
- **The “burping” exhibit creates a loud unexpected noise when activated.**

Tactile:

- **Children can put together a puzzle of the body’s organs.**
- Children can pretend to be a doctor or dentist in this area.

Sounds Around

Visual:

- There are colored spotlights in this area positioned over the instruments.

Auditory:

- This area may be loud if the museum is busy.
- Many instruments with different sounds are available to play in this area.
- The phones on the wall in this area play music samples which can be heard throughout the room when the music is quiet.

Tactile:

- Children can play the instruments by tapping, striking, or plucking.

Pets and Vets

Visual:

- There are brightly colored kennels and signs to read in this area.

Auditory:

- This area has residual noises from surrounding exhibits and may become loud when the museum is busy.

Tactile:

- Children can pretend to be a veterinarian using the plush animals in this area.
- Children can crawl through the dog house to enter and exit this area.

Safety Zone

Visual:

- There is a video about a fire station in this area which might be visually stimulating.
- The fire has flashing lights which are motion activated.
- The fire engine lights can be turned on and flash.
- The police motorcycle has head lights and emergency lights which can be turned on.

Auditory:

- This area is loud.
- **This area has a fire engine siren and horn, fire sounds, and “dispatch” can be heard speaking loudly.**
- The motorcycle horn can be activated making a sudden unexpected noise.

Tactile:

- Children can pretend to drive a fire engine or put out a fire.
- Children can sit on a police motorcycle and operate the lights and horn.

REACH Library

Visual:

- **This area has cartoon characters from children’s books on the walls which might be visually stimulating.**
- Bright lights are positioned over the couch for reading.

Auditory:

- This area has residual noises from surrounding exhibits and may become loud when the museum is busy.

Tactile:

- Soft furniture and a rocker are available for reading and this area can be used as a place to calm down when needed.

Second Floor

There is one family restroom located in CreARTivity with a manual-flush toilet and wall mounted changing station. The bathrooms on this floor have manual-flush toilets and wall mounted changing station.

CreARTivity is usually a quieter area of the museum. Rocking chairs and benches are available in Crossroads Gallery to sit and rest if needed.

My House

Visual:

- Bright lights are positioned inside the house.
- Items in this area light up when activated.

Auditory:

- This area has a video playing about recycling outside of the house.

Tactile:

- Children can press buttons, pull handles, and turn knobs to explore how energy is used in homes.

The Great Oak

Visual:

- A giant bee hangs from the ceiling outside of the giant oak which might be startling to some children.
- Bright lights are positioned above the food chain puzzle.

Auditory:

- This area may be loud if the museum is busy.
- Various animal sounds can be heard inside the giant oak tree.

Tactile:

- Touch boxes provide both smooth and rough textures for sensory exploration.
- Children can walk through the giant oak or crawl through a tunnel.
- Children can lift flaps and slide pieces to learn more about animal behavior in different seasons.

Weather

Visual:

- Lights flash in this area on occasion to simulate lightening.

Auditory:

- Rain and occasional thunder sounds in this area produce unexpected noises which might be startling to some children.

Tactile:

- Children can feel a gentle wind vortex similar to a tornado.

The Solar System

Visual:

- This area has low lighting.
- A sun lights up brightly when activated to show the phases of the moon.

Auditory:

- Residual noises from neighboring exhibits may be heard in this area including thunder.

Tactile:

- Children can turn the bottom of the Phases of the Moon table to see how the earth and moon move around the sun.

Marvelous Machines

Visual:

- Circus-type lights are positioned along the ceiling in this area.
- Vivid primary colors on the exhibits in this area may be visually stimulating.

Auditory:

- This area is loud.
- The Fantastic Motion Machine makes sudden unexpected noises as the balls move through simple machines.
- **Newton's Cradle makes a loud noises when the balls hit against one another.**

Tactile:

- Children can practice using simple machines in this area.

Unseen Forces

Visual:

- This is a low light area.
- The Plasma Sphere produces visible current which shifts and moves that may be startling to some children.
- The Energy Fortune Teller has bright lights surrounding the exhibit which light up when the cranks are turned.

Auditory:

- Dancing Fillings plays different songs at a medium to loud volume when the buttons are pressed.

Tactile:

- Children can play with the exhibits to feel the force of magnets.
- Children can touch the Plasma Sphere to see the current move towards their hand.

Fluid Dynamics

Visual:

- Natural lighting through the large paned windows in this area may be bright depending on the weather conditions outside.
- Vivid primary colors on the exhibits in this area may be visually stimulating.

Auditory:

- This area may be loud when the museum is busy.
- There are air sounds present in this area from the inflation of the hot air balloon and Air Stream Antics.
- The rockets produce a loud unexpected noise when launched.

Tactile:

- Children can bounce on the seats to see how much air pressure they create.
- Children can feel the rush of air coming from Air Stream Antics.

Catch-a-Wave

Visual:

- This area has low lighting.
- Freeze Frame uses bright flashing lights to make shadows which may bother some children with visual sensitivities.

Auditory:

- The exhibits in this area are generally loud.

Tactile:

- Children can turn and move dials to produce sounds.
- Children can strike a tuning fork with a mallet which may result in stimulating vibration of the hands and arms.

CreARTivity

Visual:

- This area has many different forms of art for children to look at.

Auditory:

- This area is generally quieter than the rest of the museum, but it may become loud if the museum is busy.

Tactile:

- Children can explore different forms of art by drawing, building, and designing.

Recollections

Visual:

- This area has low lighting.
- Colorful lights on screen follow movements in the room which may be visually stimulating.

Auditory:

- Instrumental music plays in this area at a medium volume.

Tactile:

- Children can dance and move throughout the room while the screen shows their outline and lights following them.

Performance Stage

Visual:

- Spotlights are positioned over the stage in this area.
- Light shapes can be changed by which may be visually stimulating.

Auditory:

- This area may be loud if the museum is busy.
- Different sound effects are played in this area when the buttons are pressed.

Tactile:

- Children can dress up in different coats provided to put on a play.
- Children can use puppets to put on a show.
- Children can press different buttons to create light and sound effects.

Please Note: Dr. Forces Travelling Energy Extravaganza has flashing circus lights around the entrance which may bother some individuals with light sensitivities or seizure disorders.