

Chaperone Sheet

Dear Chaperone,

Your role as a chaperone is crucial while your group visits the Maine State Aquarium. You will have the opportunity to help us make your group's visit a fun, memorable and educationally rewarding experience.

The information on this sheet will help you guide students through the Aquarium. As a chaperone, you will be responsible for ensuring that Aquarium rules are followed. The best way to do this is to keep the students actively engaged in learning, and to make sure that they know the rules before the trip.

Rules:

1. No running is allowed in the building or on the Aquarium porch.
2. No banging on the glass. The sound and vibration of tapping disturbs all of the animals.
3. No climbing on exhibits.
4. Do not remove animals from the touch tank area.
5. Do not grab the tails of the sharks or skates. Gently touch these fish.
6. Throw all trash in the garbage cans.
7. Stay with your chaperone at all times. Do not wander from the group.

Your role as a chaperone:

Children will be fascinated by the animals in the Aquarium. They will become most interested in the touch tank and the shark tank spending only a few seconds at the other tanks. The best service that you can provide is to focus their attention on the tanks located in the rock wall and get them to look, think, and ask questions. You do not need to know the answer to all of their questions but say "I don't know - how could we find out?" (Further observation? Other students? Graphic panels? Aquarium Guide? or Research?)

At any tank you can ask the students to:

- Identify the animals by using the species labels near each tank.
- Observe the animals in the tanks. Find the ways that they are adapted to feeding, moving, holding on, protecting themselves, and to their environment. Find an animal that is camouflaged.
- "Adopt" one animal and watch it for three minutes. How did it behave? How much time would it take scientists to observe an animal and become an expert on every aspect of its behavior?
- How many animals are in this tank? Answer quickly, then spend a full minute looking and counting.

At the aquaculture tanks (mussels, oysters, and salmon), you can ask the students:

- What is aquaculture? Why are we farming the ocean?

At the shark tank, the students can get up close and personal with the sharks and skates but do not allow them to grab these fish by their tail.

- What are these small sharks called? Locate a spine in front of each dorsal fin.
- Gently rub the shark's skin from back to front. What does it feel like?
- If a skate is swimming at the surface, gently flip it over to discover its underside features.
- A skate's egg case is often called a mermaid's purse. Hold one up to the light to see if there is a developing young within. It takes a whole year before the baby skate hatches out.

At the touch tank, the students may pick up and release the animals gently. Support them with 2 hands.

Discover Mollusks (Clams, mussels, snails, scallops and oysters all have hard shells and soft bodies.)

- Moon Snail: What is the gooey, muscular part? (Touch its foot until it pulls it completely into its shell.)
- Scallop: What are all of the blue dots on the edge of the scallop? Why does it clap its shells and squirt water?

Discover Arthropods (Horseshoe crabs, lobsters, crabs, and barnacles all have jointed legs.)

- Horseshoe Crab: Does it use its tail as a weapon? (Place it down on its back and observe its tail action.) Locate its eyes, mouth, and book gills.
- Lobster: Hold it near the surface of the water in case it attempts to escape. How does it move? How old might this baby lobster be? What does it use its claws (pincher and crusher) for?
- Crab: Identify the green crab, rock crab, hermit crab, and toad crab. (Be careful, they all have claws!) Which one is living in a snail's shell? Which one looks like a spider?

Discover Echinoderms (Sea stars, sea urchins, sea cucumbers, and sand dollars are spiny skinned.)

- Sea Star: How many suction cup tube feet does it have? Find the mouth in the center and an eyespot at the tip of each arm.
- Sea Urchin: How many teeth are found in its mouth? What might it like to eat?
- Sea Cucumber: Find its 5 rows of tube feet. It might squirt water on its own, do not squeeze it.