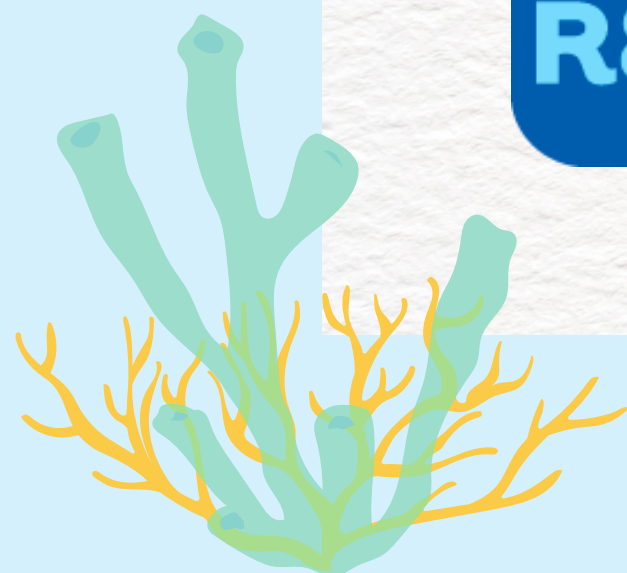




My Trip to the

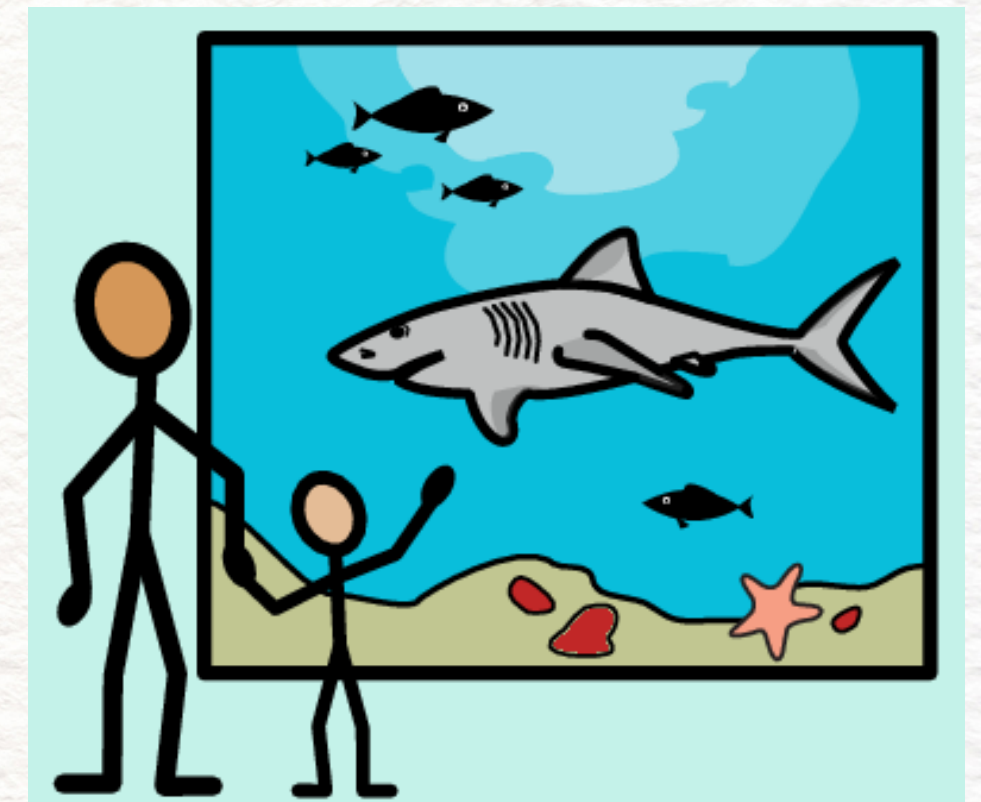
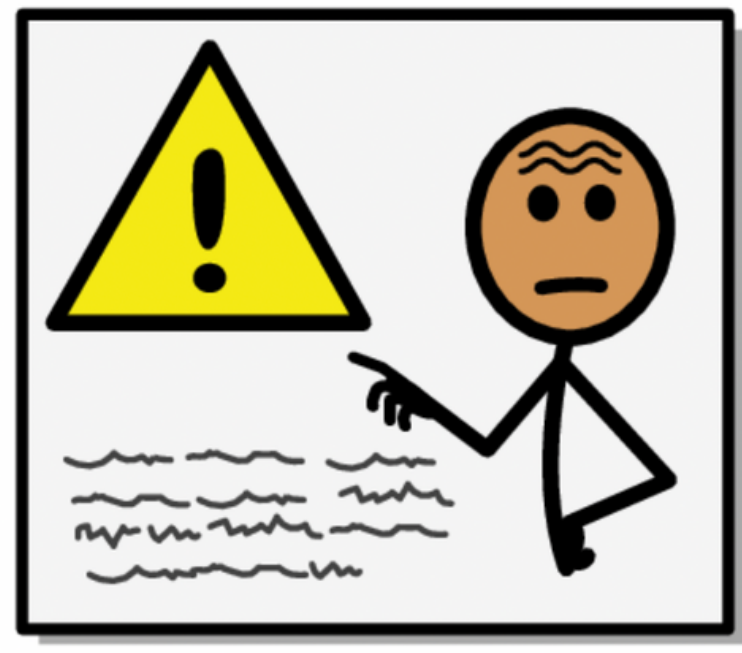


MYSTIC AQUARIUM



Created by Quinnipiac University Doctor of Occupational Therapy Students:
Nulin Phrommavanh, Una Cooper, Emily Taft, and Sarah Hannon

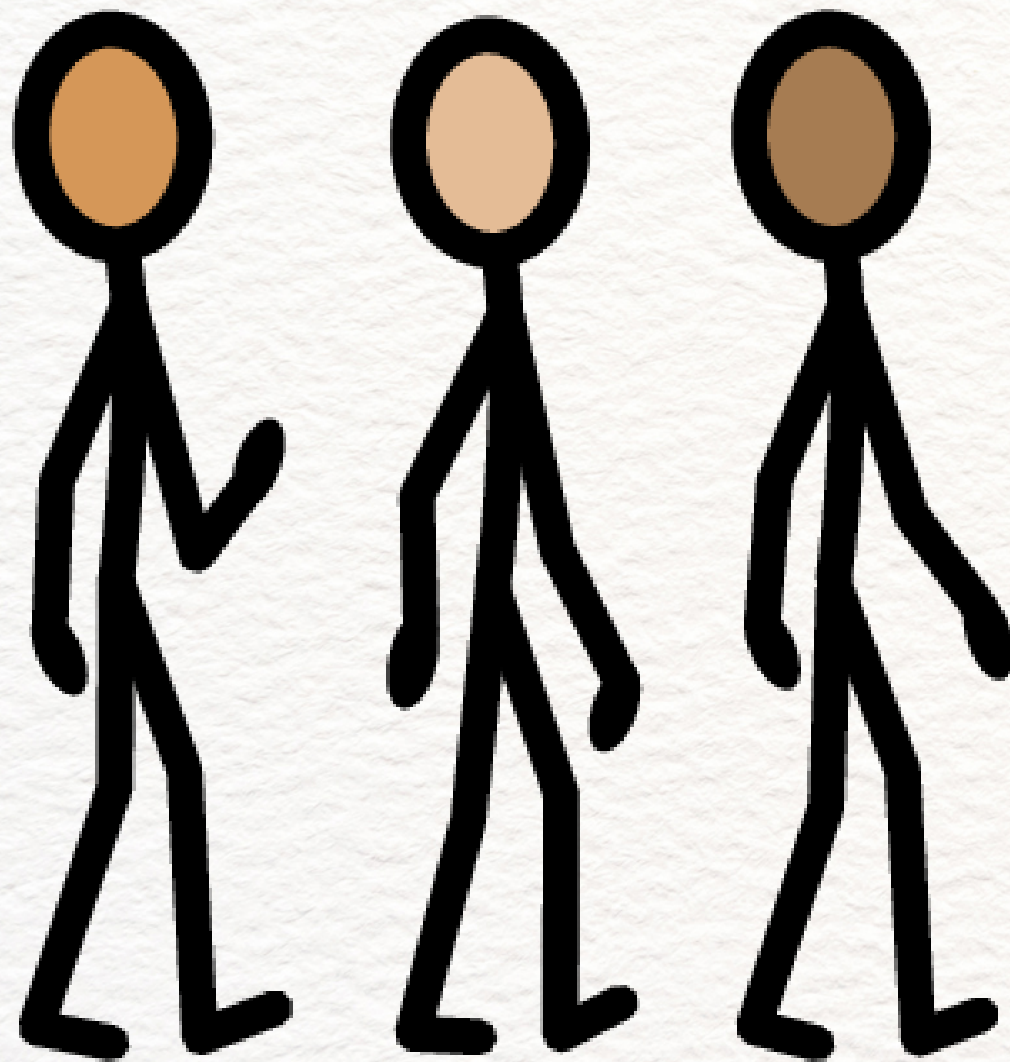
This social story is made to help me understand what to prepare for and expect during my trip to Mystic Aquarium. While I'm visiting, it's important to remember to listen and follow all directions from the adult I am with and the Mystic Aquarium staff members to ensure that the animals and I are safe while having fun!



Today I will be going to visit Mystic Aquarium to see the many marine animals that live there. Just like different people have different needs, the animals have unique needs, too. Aquarium staff have special rules for visiting each animal so that they stay happy and healthy. These directions make my visit safe and fun, too!



When we arrive at the Aquarium, I may need to wait in line. The line might be short, long, quiet, or noisy. At the Information Booth, I can ask for a KultureCity sensory bag that can help me process my emotions during my visit.



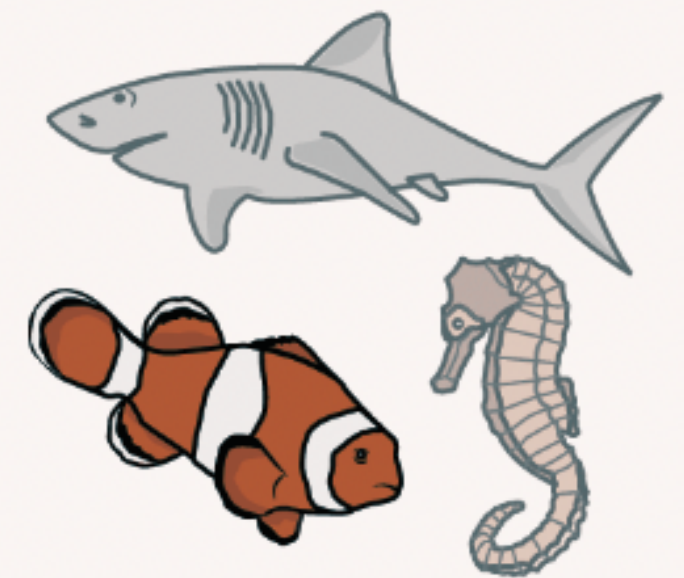
As I go inside the Main Gallery, the light will be much darker, so my eyes might need time to adjust. It may also be louder inside. The Main Gallery has many different marine habitats and animals for me to explore!



dark



noise

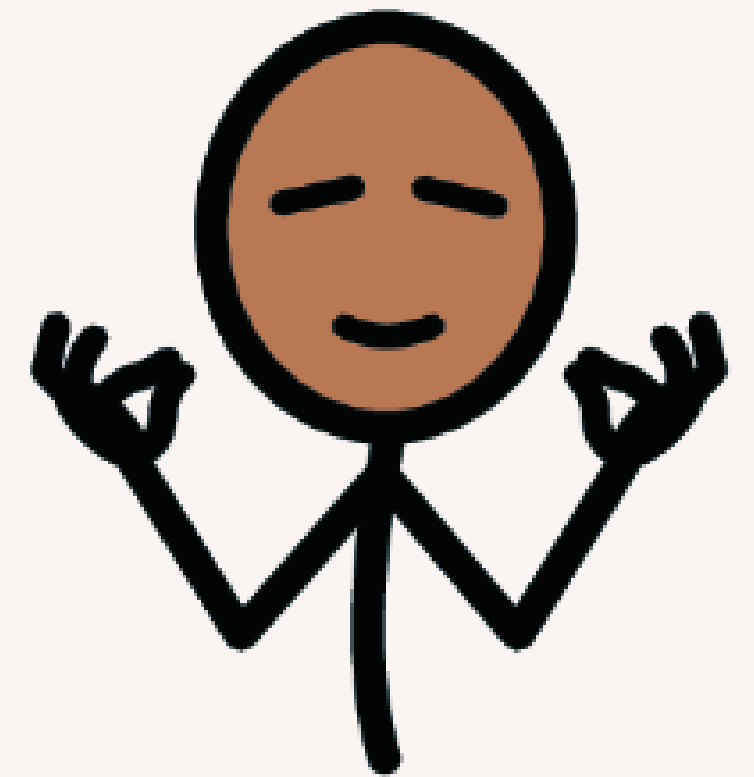


If I am feeling overwhelmed, I can go back outside, or I can look for a Mystic Aquarium staff member in blue or navy blue to take me to the Quiet Room if it is available. The Quiet Room is located in the Main Gallery and has items in there that will help me calm my body.

calming room ★

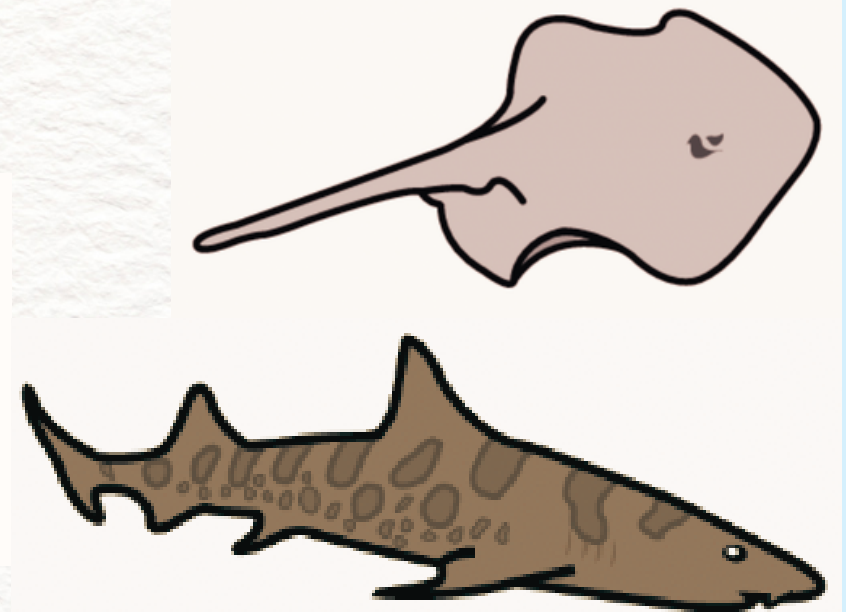
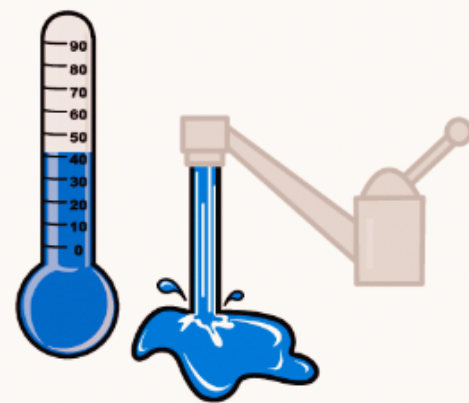
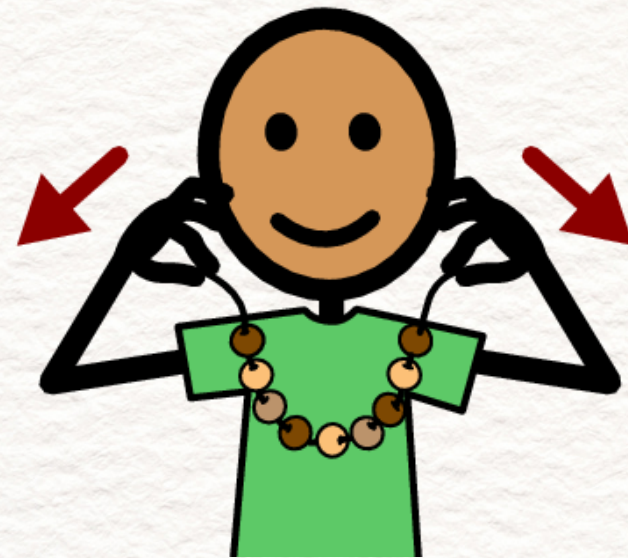


fidget toys ★



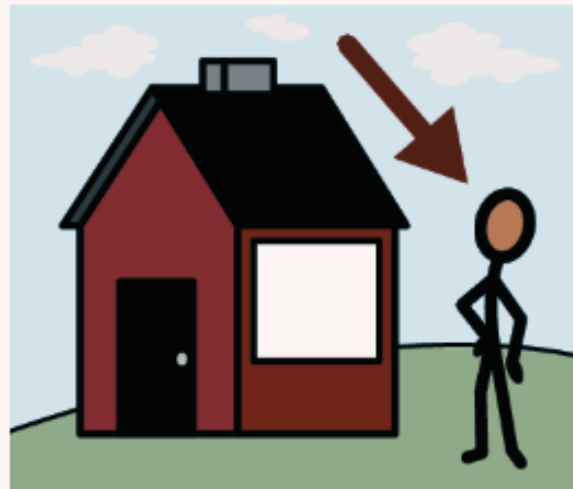
The Mystic Aquarium staff will let me touch certain animals if I want to! Some animals that I am allowed to touch are sting rays, sharks, and crabs. The touch exhibits are located inside and outside of the Main Gallery. There will be a staff member talking in a microphone that may be loud, but it is important to listen to their directions. Before touching the animals, I need to:

1. Wait for my turn.
 2. Wash my hands.
 3. Remove any jewelry.
 4. Find an empty spot around the exhibit and only use two fingers to touch the animals.
- The water may be cold!
5. Wash my hands when I'm done.

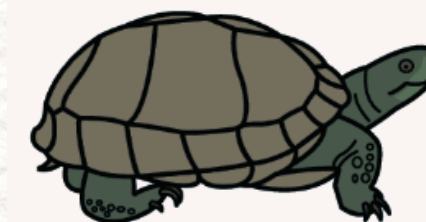


When I am ready to go outside, I can explore the many animals who live in the outdoor exhibits, like beluga whales, sea lions, seals, turtles, and penguins. I may hear unusual noises, like the bark of the sea lions, whistles and squeaks of the belugas, other guests talking, small boats in the water, or the Aquarium staff sharing animal facts with a microphone. I will remember not to drop or throw anything into the exhibits, because doing this could hurt the animals.

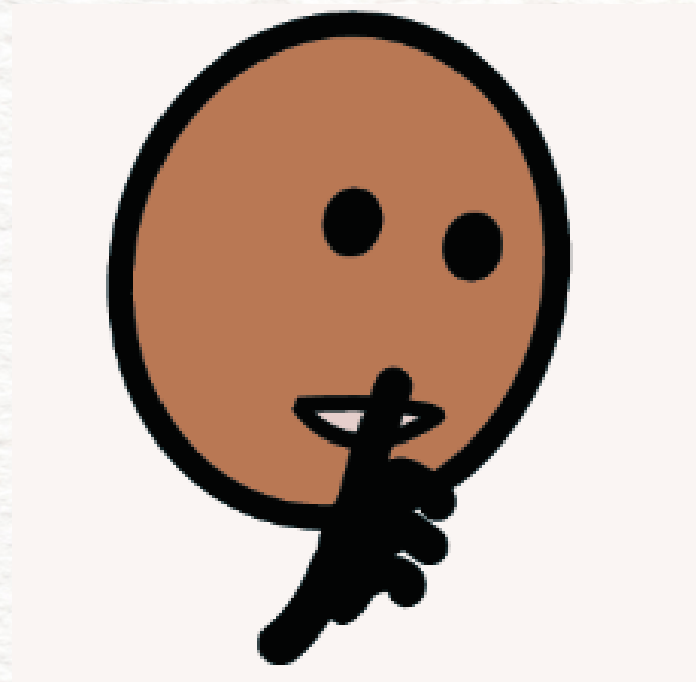
outside



noise



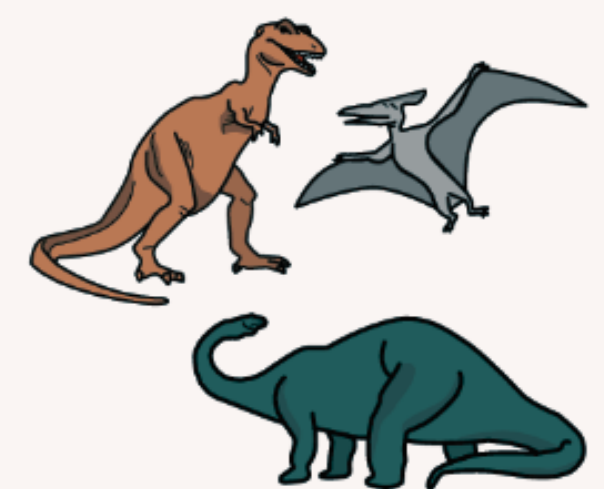
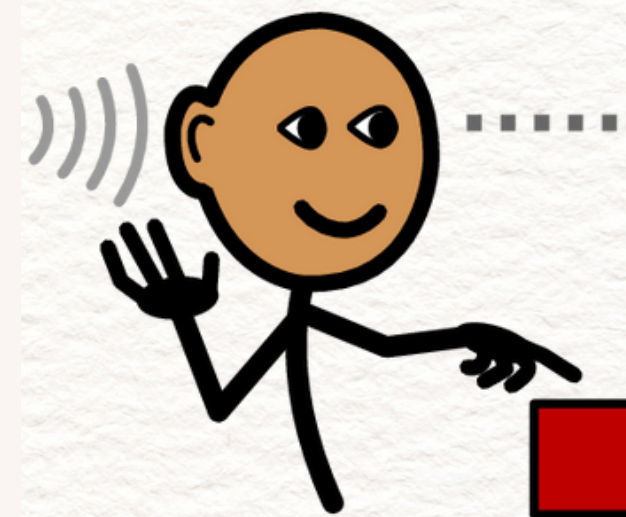
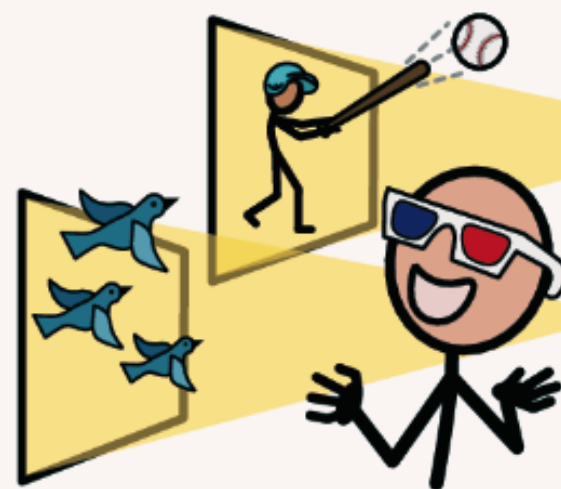
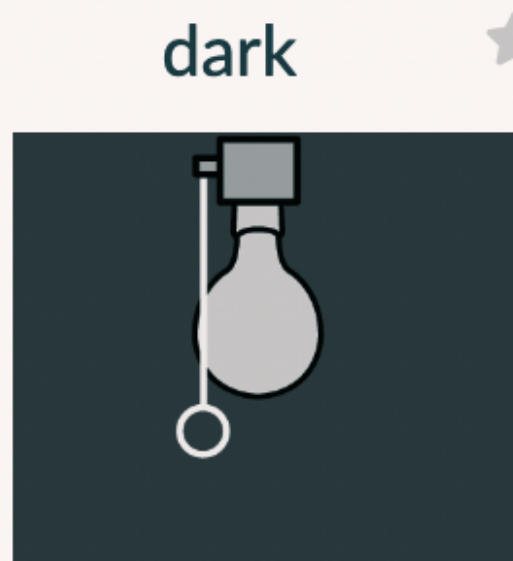
While I'm outside, I can look for the KultureCity Quiet Areas located throughout the Aquarium. These Quiet Areas will allow me to sit and take a short break for water, a snack, or to calm my body.



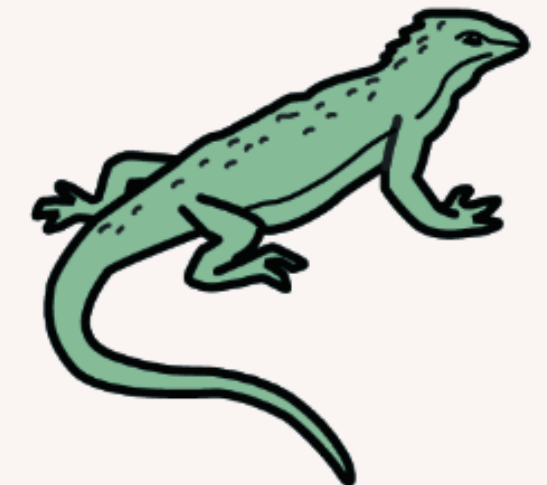
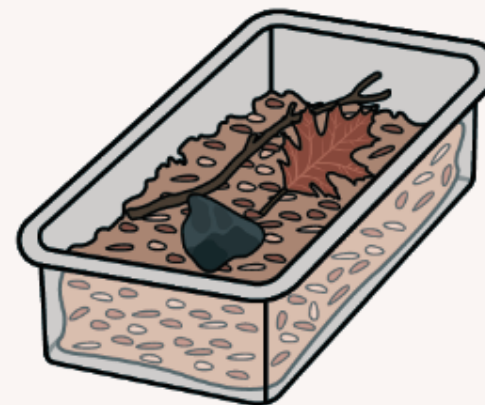
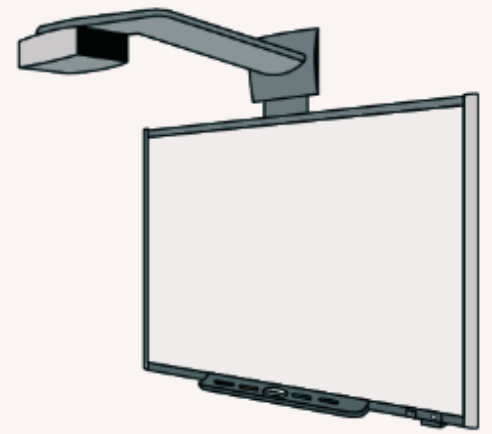
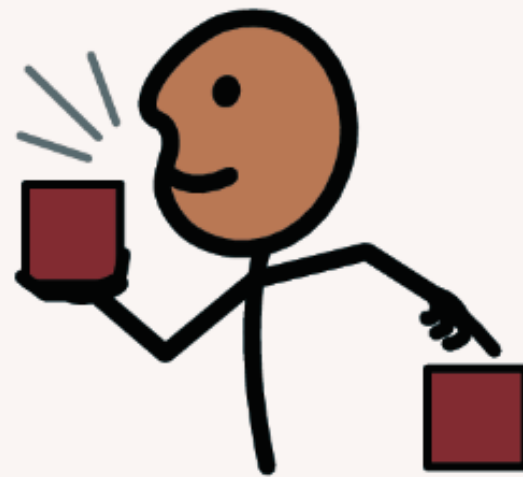
During my visit, I can also choose to attend the sea lion show. The show will last for about 30 minutes. There may be many other people at the show, so I might want to sit off to the side in the blue-painted sections to have less people around me. During the show, there will be loud microphones, music, and changing lights. The sea lions make barking sounds, but that is just their way of greeting us!



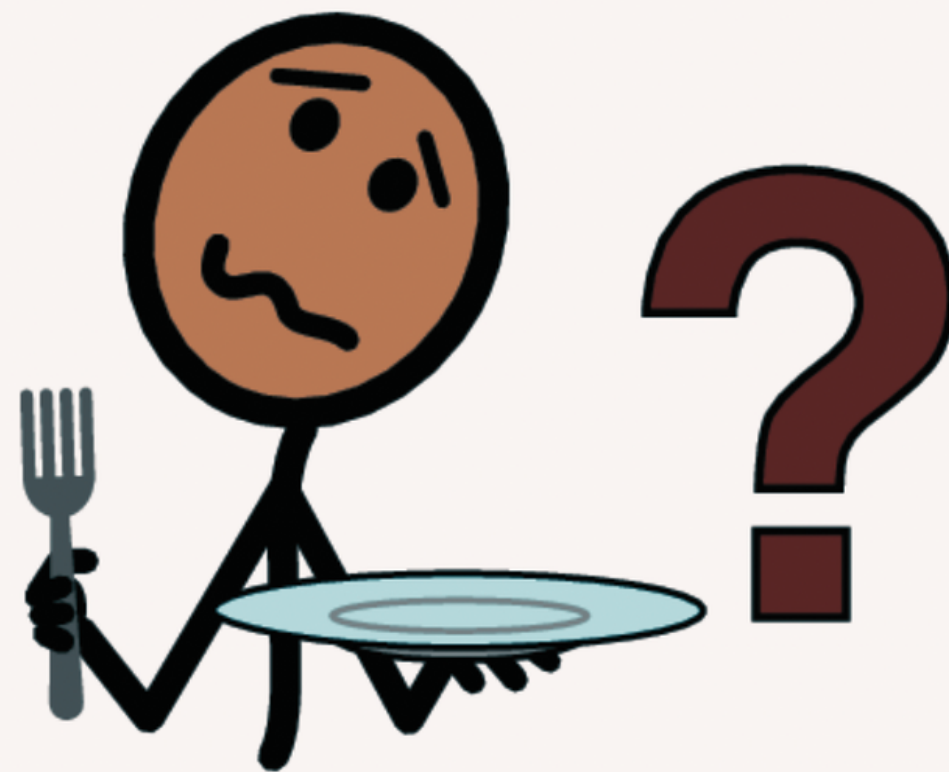
During my visit at the aquarium, I may also pay an extra fee to visit Dino Seas, to see ancient sea creatures, frogs, and reptiles. Once inside the exhibit, it will be much darker. As I walk in, the floor will light up, and it will feel like I am entering the ocean. I know I'm safe, because it is all pretend! I will see life-sized creatures that move, but they are not dangerous, because they are not real. I can watch two short movies in the theaters. During the movies, I will wear the 3D glasses to help me see fun special effects, like animals that look like they are coming out of the screen. I may smell things, feel water droplets on my skin, and feel as if I am moving because of these special effects.



In the Dino Seas exhibit, there will be many sensory experiences such as flashing lights, loud sounds, and new smells. I can also leave the exhibit at anytime if I need to. There will be interactive bright screens, a sand table, and a play space inside for me to explore. Before I leave the Dino Seas exhibit, I can spend time in the frogs! and reptile sections and see some unique animals from all over the world!



If I'm hungry, I can go to the Saltwater Cafe for food. There will be many different smells and sounds at the cafe. I can choose to sit inside or outside at a picnic table. At the end of my visit, I can visit the gift shop. It may be busy and loud with other excited guests inside. I'll need to wait my turn in line if I do decide to buy a gift.



snack



gift shop



I will have such a fun day at Mystic Aquarium! After I see all the exhibits that I want to see, it will be time to say goodbye to my animal friends. I will get ready to go home, but I will be excited to come visit again!

