

## **Welcome to the ACM Reciprocal Program**

Thank you for your supporting your local children's museum through the purchase of a family museum membership with ACM Reciprocal Program benefits. Rated by *Real Simple* magazine, *Nick Jr. Family* magazine and others as one of the best values for families, the ACM Reciprocal Program provides free admission for a minimum of four (4) visitors from the same household to the more than 165 ACM museums that participate in the ACM Reciprocal Program Network. The ACM Reciprocal Program is an affordable way for families to play while on vacation or visiting a long-distance relative.

## **Finding an ACM Reciprocal Program Museum**

- Visit the ACM Web site, [www.ChildrensMuseums.org](http://www.ChildrensMuseums.org), to find a current list of ACM Reciprocal Program participants.
- Not all ACM member museums participate in the ACM Reciprocal Program.
- Some ACM Reciprocal Program museums restrict free admission privileges under specific circumstances. Valid restrictions are listed in the ACM Reciprocal Program Participant roster.
- During the year, there may be changes to the list of participating museums. While ACM makes every attempt to post updates as soon as possible, it is always a good idea to call ahead before visiting.

## **ACM Reciprocal Program Admission Policies for Families**

- Family visitors must present a valid ACM Reciprocal Membership Card to receive free admission for a minimum of four (4) individuals from the same household. (ACM Reciprocal Program admission benefits apply to families with less than four individuals.)
- Check with any museum you plan to visit as admission policies for more than four family members vary from museum to museum.
- Reciprocal admission privileges do extend to special exhibits.
- Reciprocal privileges do not extend to discounts for gift shop or café purchases, museum special events, programs, summer camps or birthday parties.

## **ACM Reciprocal Membership Cards**

A valid ACM Reciprocal Membership Card should include:

- The ACM Reciprocal Membership logo
- An expiration date on the card that has not passed.
- Cards issued after July 5, 2009, must list at least one adult family member by name.
- The adult listed on the card is present at the time of admission. (Museums may request a photo ID from the cardholder.)
- Note: Cards issued before July 5, 2009, are not required to list at least one adult family member by name.

### **Why visit a children's museum?**

Children's museums are fun, interactive gathering places where families can learn and play with other families. Many children's museums are located in major travel and tourism destinations. They are inclusive, non-judgmental environments where kids can be kids and lifelong learning is nurtured. More and more families visit children's museums each year for unique, face-to-face fun, enlightenment and shared experiences not found in traditional museums or other popular destinations.

### **Children's Museums and Vacations**

Adults plan vacations, and while parents and caregivers do their best to build-in activities for their children, many of these activities require adult-like strength, skills or knowledge. That's not the case at children's museums. Peek inside a children's museum and you'll see babies and toddlers touching a variety of textures, stacking blocks, crawling through a tunnel or blowing bubbles. Take another look inside a children's museum to see boys and girls enter a 19th century ship where they hoist a net full of fish, take part in a fishing derby, raise and lower sails and semaphore flags, all the while building an understanding of maritime history. Say *adiós* to rigid rules: at children's museums the general rule is: Please Touch! Children's museums produce programs and exhibits that transcend age and experience, and empower children to set their own pace - important features for young vacationers who can get overwhelmed by being away from home and exhausted from an action-packed itinerary.

### **Welcoming Places**

Due to the interactive nature of children's museums, most families can participate in exhibits regardless of their language fluency. Many museums provide signage and literature in more than one language. Kids will be delighted to find furniture, props and materials scaled to their size. Additionally, many children's museums create opportunities within exhibits for children and family members who use wheelchairs, or who rely heavily on their sense of sound or touch because of differing abilities.

### **Make the Most of Your Trip to a Children's Museum**

- Call ahead or visit a children's museum Web site  
By checking-in ahead, you can learn about seasonal programs, permanent and traveling exhibits, admission days and costs, as well as if the museum has a café or allows visitors to bring their own snacks and beverages. The size, type of exhibits and operations differ greatly among children's museums, which means each children's museum offers a unique experience. When arriving at a museum, study the map of the gallery floor and check the daily performance and activity schedules.
- Let Your Child be the Guide  
While it may be tempting to nudge your child along so that the family can see every exhibit and participate in every activity in order to get the full "value" of the museum, your child may equate quality rather than quantity as the best indicator of time well spent. So go ahead and let your children explore just one or two exhibits.
- Support Your Child's Learning and Play Styles  
One of the best ways to do this is by asking questions that don't require a yes or no response. Such as: What do you think will happen next? Why do you think the (object) works that way? After you leave the children's museum, you may find yourselves in a place that reminds you of an exhibit. Use these moments to reflect with your children about the museum experience and how it compares with the present environment. Be prepared for some surprising discoveries!