

VMFA EARLY CHILDHOOD GROUP VISIT CHECKLIST



A VMFA Early Childhood group visit provides young learners with a meaningful, age-appropriate introduction to VMFA's rich environment and supports classroom learning.

For some of your students, this may be their first visit to a fine arts museum.

We want all children to feel comfortable visiting VMFA and to know that it is a place where they are welcome.

We hope your visit will be a fun and memorable experience that fosters an early appreciation for art and self-expression.

BEFORE YOUR VISIT

- Please make sure you have **one adult chaperone for every 5 students**. We ask that you not go over the 1:5 ratio for adults (unless you have students with special needs) because we have found that additional adults can sometimes be distracting to the students and we have limited space in our classroom, galleries, and art studio.
- Please arrive on time. If you are running late, please phone the Early Childhood Educator at 804.340.1564 or Lori Coffey at 804.340.1343.
- Please arrive 15 minutes early if your group would like to visit the restrooms before the program begins.
- Print the [bus parking map](#) for your driver. Note the location of the **School Group Entrance**--this is where your driver will drop off/pick up your group (look for the big blue sign on the sidewalk.)
- If you would like to reserve the indoor lunch room, contact specialevents@vmfa.museum. Early Childhood Programs does not make reservations for the lunch room. This space is not available during the summer.
- Prepare your students by reviewing the “**museum manners**” (below) and having a discussion about what it means to visit a fine arts museum. (What is a fine arts museum? What will they see? What will they do?)
- Visit our website for additional educational resources that can help you prepare for your visit: <https://www.vmfa.museum/learn/>



WHEN YOU ARRIVE

- Have your driver drop your group off at the **School Group Entrance** (look for the big blue sign on the sidewalk) where you will be greeted by an Early Childhood Educator.
- Provide the educator with the total number of children and adults in your group.
- Let the educator know if you have reserved the indoor lunch room or if you plan to eat outdoors at the museum.
- Make sure your driver knows what time to meet your group at the **School Group Entrance** for departure.



DURING YOUR VISIT

Use Your “Museum Manners”



- Walk like a slow-moving turtle while in the museum.
- Remember to use **museum hands** in the galleries (hold hands together like they are giving each other a hug). Please help us protect the artwork by not touching the works of art, walls, platforms, or glass cases.
- Stay together. It is important to stay safe and to not wander away from the group.

Other Important Gallery Guidelines

- Food, drinks, and gum are not allowed in the galleries.
- **Backpacks are strongly discouraged in the galleries.** If you need to bring a backpack (carrying medical supplies) into the galleries, it must either be worn on the front of the body or carried by hand.
- **Non-flash** photography is allowed in the permanent collection galleries and in most special exhibitions.
- If you visit the Sculpture Garden, please remind students that **touching and climbing on the outdoor sculptures is not allowed.**



GUIDELINES FOR TEACHERS AND CHAPERONES

- Stay with the group at all times. It might be crowded if other school groups are visiting.
- Please put cell phones on vibrate or silence to limit distractions. This will allow you to enjoy the visit and to be fully engaged in the program.



- In the galleries, gently remind students to use “museum hands” and walking feet. It may be necessary to hold the hand of an active child to help ensure that they do not get too close to the art.
- Museum educators love to hear the students’ ideas and try to ask open-ended questions that spark creative responses, rather than questions that result in YES or NO answers. Although it can be hard at times, please resist the temptation to answer questions for the students.

- In the art studio, the PROCESS is more important than the end result. Allowing children to create their art with the freedom to experiment with materials and make their own choices builds confidence and independence. So, sit back, relax, and enjoy watching the students delight in their art making.



AFTER YOUR VISIT



- Encourage students to visit VMFA again with their families! VMFA is open 365 days a year and general admission is always **FREE!**
- Explore [VMFA’s permanent collection](#) online. Print and display images of works of art that your students saw during their visit in your classroom.
- Have a discussion with your students about the works of art that interested them and ask what they might still be curious about. Let their curiosity guide further explorations of art.
- Have your students create their own open-ended, process-based art that represents their visit to the museum or is inspired by a work of art that intrigued them. Learn about the benefits of process-based art [here](#).
- Visit VMFA’s YouTube channel to view educational videos in the [Early Childhood playlist](#).

Questions? Contact the Early Childhood Educator at 804.340.1564 or earlychildhood@vmfa.museum.