

Kids in Museums Manifesto

The Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery (TMAG) commits to ensuring a family friendly visit by:

1 Saying 'hello!' and welcoming every visitor. Curators, volunteers, front of house and café staff are all part of the family friendly experience.

2 Being positive and doing away as far as possible with the word 'no'. Telling visitors what they can do at the door, not pinning up a list of things they can't.

"Staff don't show a sense of superiority – we're not being taught, we're treated as learners, as if we're all learning and exploring together."

3 Sharing stories with each other and listening. Families can be experts too.

"I like visiting TMAG and being with my family here – it's child friendly, not too grown-up."

4 Beginning at birth. Museums are social, sensory, stimulating places – perfect for babies and toddlers. It's never too early to visit.

"Although my son was very quiet in the activities he spoke about them at home in the weeks following. He is fascinated by the butterflies and when Coco (caterpillar puppet) became a moth."

5 Connecting generations. Grandparents are increasingly important in museum visits. Conversation between generations should be at the heart of what we do.

6 Inviting teenagers in and letting them hang out. Asking them if they want to get involved and valuing their opinions. Museums can lead in celebrating teenagers' contributions.

7 Reaching beyond our 'four' walls to new visitors. Asking how we can help make a visit possible. Taking responsibility for the hurdles outside, even if they're not put up by us.

8 Being flexible in our activities, events and family offer. Families come in all shapes and sizes. Designing programmes with all sorts of families in mind.

"We loved the opportunity to draw animals together and learn about them while visiting different parts of the museum. My kids really loved watching me draw too and also to see other children drawing together."

9 Keeping our social media and website family friendly and up-to-date, so visitors can easily find what's available and prepare for their visit.

10 Creating a comfy, safe place for children and families. Museums can be havens and make visitors feel better. Making sure the toilets are always pleasant and having room for prams and baby changing facilities. Providing somewhere to leave coats, bags and prams, scooters and skateboards.

"My son now has parts of the museum he adores and that he now considers his!"

11 Being the core of our community, with spaces where families can get together and talk.

"My kids love coming to TMAG. They like seeing other children there, listening to the staff and visiting the Antarctic room especially."

12 Not saying shhh! If children and young people are being noisy, let's ask ourselves 'why?' Because they're excited? Great! Capture that excitement. Because they're bored? Give them something meaningful to do.

13 Saying 'please touch!' as often as we can. Everyone finds real objects awesome. Directing children and young people to things that can be handled, teaching respect and explaining why other things can't be touched.

14 Giving a hand to adults as well as children. Sometimes it isn't the children and young people who are shy – parents need our support too. Producing guides, trails and activities so everyone can join in.

15 Being aware of different families' needs, including those from diverse cultural backgrounds and those with and without disabilities. Using our imagination with signs, symbols and words understood by all and designing everything we offer to be equally accessible.

"It's not like a book where you go from front to back – you can start anywhere you want, you get to choose, learn on your own terms, be your own boss."

16 Making the most of our different spaces, outside as well as inside. The café, gardens, stairways and reception areas are valuable parts of the museum too.

17 Providing healthy, good-value food, and unlimited tap water. Our café should reflect the same family-friendly values as the rest of the museum.

18 Making the visit live on. Building relationships with our family visitors and letting them know we want to keep in touch. Involving them in long-term decision making at the museum. Giving them a reason to come back. Families can be our best advocates.

19 Walking the talk by implementing children's and young people's ideas. Consulting with the TMAG Children's Reference Panel, implementing the great ideas, growing closer to our community, and reflecting their future.

"Visiting the museum opened my eyes to the interests of my child."

"The eye spy program helped us explore the museum and look at objects more closely. It was great for my daughter who needed some more 'structured' learning before starting school."

