

SENSORY GUIDE



ELMWOOD PARK
ZOO



CERTIFIED AUTISM CENTER

Elmwood Park Zoo is the first zoo in the world to become a Certified Autism Center (CAC). This designation, given by the International Board of Credentialing and Continuing Education Standards (IBCCES), is awarded to organizations that have completed a training and review process with the goal to better serve individuals with autism and other sensory needs. Elmwood Park Zoo welcomes guests of all ability levels and strives to ensure all of its visitors experience a memorable visit.



SENSORY GUIDE

Our Sensory Guide is available to assist you and your family in identifying exhibits and attractions that meet your sensory needs. Our scale features ratings for sound, touch, smell, sight, movement and complexity.

Sound



Amount of noise or sound you will hear

Touch



Amount of stimulation your skin will feel

Smell



Strength of odor you will smell

Sight



Amount of lights and sights you will see

Movement



Amount of movement for your body will feel
OR amount your body needs to move

Complexity



Amount of directions you will read or follow

GIRAFFE FEEDING



Guests can hand-feed giraffes from one of two observation decks. Our giraffe-feeding area has an elevated deck/platform that requires walking up a flight of stairs, as well as a lower deck that is wheelchair accessible.

Sound



MEDIUM

Touch



MEDIUM

Smell



LOW

Sight



LOW

Movement



MEDIUM

Complexity



MEDIUM

BIRDS OF PARADISE



Guests can see and interact with tropical sun conures inside the Birds of Paradise exhibit. Guests can hand-feed the birds, for an additional fee, but no fee is required to enter the exhibit. Our sun-conures are free flying and may land on you as you feed or walk through the exhibit. Wheelchair accessible.

Sound



HIGH

Touch



MEDIUM

Smell



MEDIUM

Sight



HIGH

Movement



MEDIUM

Complexity



MEDIUM

BISON FEEDING



Guests can hand-feed bison from a feeding deck located at the exhibit. Wheelchair accessible.

Sound



MEDIUM

Touch



MEDIUM

Smell



LOW

Sight



LOW

Movement



MEDIUM

Complexity



MEDIUM

CAROUSEL



Take an enchanting spin our carousel. Children under 42" must be accompanied by a person 14 years of age or older and ride on the inside row. Infants must be accompanied by a responsible person 14 years of age or older and must ride in a bench seat. This ride moves slowly in circles and has bright lights.

Sound



MEDIUM

Touch



LOW

Smell



LOW

Sight



HIGH

Movement



LOW

Complexity



MEDIUM

Movement felt when carousel is operating.

CATERPILLAR TRAIN



Children ride a giant Caterpillar as it tours through the Danella Garden, adjacent to the playground. Children under 36" tall must ride with a taller child. Infants may not ride.

Sound



MEDIUM

Touch



LOW

Smell



LOW

Sight



LOW

Movement



LOW

Complexity



LOW

Movement felt when train is operating.

BARN FEEDING



Guests visiting the barn can purchase feed to hand-feed the sheep and the goats. Wheelchair accessible.

Sound



MEDIUM

Touch



MEDIUM

Smell



MEDIUM

Sight



MEDIUM

Movement



MEDIUM

Complexity



MEDIUM

FACE PAINTING



Visit our face-painting deck next to the playground and transform into a tiger, zebra, giraffe, dinosaur and more.

Sound



LOW/MEDIUM

Touch



HIGH

Smell



LOW

Sight



LOW

Movement



LOW

Complexity



LOW

PLAYGROUND



Thomas Kimmel Playground is an interactive playground featuring three different play sites where kids can learn about conservation while having fun.

Sound



HIGH

Touch



HIGH

Smell



LOW

Sight



MEDIUM

Movement



HIGH

Complexity



MEDIUM

NATURE SHOP



The Nature Shop is packed with animal-themed toys and gifts, as well as exclusive Elmwood Park Zoo merchandise and apparel.

Sound



MEDIUM

Touch



LOW

Smell



LOW

Sight



MEDIUM

Movement



MEDIUM

Complexity



LOW

EAGLE SLIDE



Located near the entrance of the zoo, our eagle slide playground features a giant eagle nest at the top of a slide.

Sound



MEDIUM

Touch



HIGH

Smell



LOW

Sight



MEDIUM

Movement



HIGH

Complexity



LOW

TRAIL OF THE JAGUAR



Our Trail of the Jaguar exhibit features multiple indoor and outdoor viewing areas. The exhibit is home to jaguars, burrowing owls, an ocelot and other unique species. This space can be very crowded and loud at times.

Sound



MEDIUM/HIGH

Touch



MEDIUM

Smell



MEDIUM

Sight



MEDIUM

Movement



LOW

Complexity



LOW

WILDLIFE LODGE



Inside our Wildlife Lodge exhibit are monkeys, reptiles, bats and other species. This space can be very crowded and loud at times.

Sound



MEDIUM/HIGH

Touch



MEDIUM

Smell



LOW

Sight



LOW

Movement



LOW

Complexity



LOW

PERCUSSION GARDEN



The Thomas Kimmel Percussion Garden combines the joy of making music with the fun of a playground. Oversized drums, bells and xylophones make it easy for even the youngest musicians to create a beautiful composition. This area can be very loud.

Sound



HIGH

Touch



MEDIUM

Smell



LOW

Sight



LOW

Movement



MEDIUM

Complexity



LOW

TREETOP ADVENTURES



Treetop Adventures is located inside the zoo and features zip lines and obstacles up in the trees. Treetop Adventures offers courses for all ages. This activity requires following directions and a lot of movement.

Sound



LOW

Touch



HIGH

Smell



LOW

Sight



HIGH

Movement



HIGH

Complexity



HIGH



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DISCLAIMER

This sensory guide is made available by Elmwood Park Zoo. The information contained in this document is intended solely to provide general guidance for individuals with autism and sensory needs. In no event will Elmwood Park Zoo be liable for any consequences arising from the use of this information. Elmwood Park Zoo cannot ensure that the information displayed is current or completely accurate.