



# Exploration Station

## Field Trip Guide & Group Information



Exploration Station®

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# Exploration Station®

A facility of the Bourbonnais Township Park District

## **About Us:**

Late in 1987, Marilyn O’Flaherty, a retired Bradley art teacher, presented the concept of a hands-on exploration and discovery museum for children to the Bourbonnais Township Park District. The Exploration Station® opened its doors on July 28, 1990 through the efforts of dedicated and inspired volunteers. The Park District adopted the concept and soon began work on developing a children’s museum under the leadership of Mrs. O’Flaherty.

In October 1997, a 10,000 square foot facility to serve as a permanent home for the Exploration Station® was opened on the Perry Farm Park grounds. While Exploration Station® serves a 65-mile radius, visitors from more than 45 states and 25 foreign countries have explored in the museum.

## **Our Philosophy:**

Exploration Station® is a play-centered interactive learning facility with an emphasis on developing a child-centered environment that fosters a love of learning, cultivates curiosity and exploration, and promotes self-expression and discovery. Exploration Station® is a welcoming, lively, and immersive environment that helps to stimulate learning through imagination, creativity, and discovery.

## **Our Mission:**

To develop a tolerant, safe, joyful space where all children can be fully immersed in the world of creativity and knowledge, so they may feel free to be completely themselves and learn about the world around them. Exploration Station® is a place for hands on discovery, creative play, and—of course—exploration!

# Planning your Visit

## Group Fees

### **For Public Hours Field Trip**

*Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Fridays after 10am*

**Fee per child— \$5**

**\*1 free chaperone (adult 18+) for every 5 children**

**Fee per additional adult— \$3**

- Provides **2 hours** of time in facility
- MPR/lunch room access is NOT included
- Includes 10% off gift shop merchandise for group members
- Total fees include a non-refundable **\$100 Reservation Fee**, which must be paid in full at the time of booking
- Public groups must have a **minimum of 10 children** and a **maximum of 50 children**
- Groups must be paid in full upon trip arrival, no exceptions.

### **For Private Hours Field Trip**

*Mondays after 10am*

*Thursdays mornings from 10am to 2pm*

**Fee per child— \$5**

**\*1 free chaperone (adult 18+) for every 5 children**

**Fee per additional adult— \$3**

- Provides **2 hours** of time in facility
- Includes MPR/lunch room use for 2 hours
- Includes 10% off gift shop merchandise for group members
- Total fees include a non-refundable **\$200 Reservation Fee**, which must be paid in full at the time of booking
- Private groups must have a **minimum of 30 children** and a **maximum of 180 total guests**
- Groups must be paid in full upon trip arrival, no exceptions.

## Extra Fees

### **For Use of Multi-Purpose Room**

*Available option for public groups*

This **additional fee of \$75** allows groups to access the lunch room/MPR for **2 hours**

*\*This fee does not include provided lunch.*

### **For Extra Hour of Time in Facility**

*Available option for public and private groups*

This **additional fee of \$55** allows groups to use the Exploration Station facility for an additional hour, providing a total of 3 hours in the Exploration Station

**\*Groups are first come, first serve and contracts with pre-reservations will be required for all group visits.**  
*We do not accept groups at the door without a proper reservation and confirmation.*

**\*Illinois PreK-12 schools have the option to receive free Museum Entry for their field trips.**

*Free Entry **only includes general admission** between the operating hours of 10:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. Tuesday, Wednesday, and Friday with no additional services including orientation, storage for coats/lunches, or use of lunch room.*

*Free entry groups meeting above criteria must reserve **at least 30 days prior to trip date.***

## **Step 1: Gather your group information**

We need to know:

- Contact information for contract (name, organization, phone, address, email).
- Date of trip
- Arrival and departure times
- Special accommodations needed
- Total number of students.
- Students age (ex: 5-7) Students grade (ex: k-1st)
- Estimated Adult Chaperones. **You receive 1 free adult chaperone for every 5 children.** Each child with special needs will also receive a free adult chaperone if necessary. (head start and at risk are not considered special needs)
- Lunch Plans (using our MPR, eating outside, more than one lunch time during visit)

## **Step 2: Contact the Exploration Station** at (815) 802-2924 to speak to our Guest Services Coordinator.

Groups can reserve Mondays or Thursday mornings, when the museum is closed to the public, for a **private group trip** on a first come, first serve basis. Other weekdays are based on capacity limits from Tuesday through Friday. Some dates fill up quickly so we recommend booking as early as possible. Trips must be booked at least 14 days prior to the desired trip date. We know educators are busy, so we also take reservations via email. Please contact our Guest Service Coordinator at [explorationstation@btpd.org](mailto:explorationstation@btpd.org) to get started. When requesting reservations via email, please include all information from **Step 1** so a contract can be started.

**Step 3: Confirm your visit** with the applicable non-refundable **reservation fee** (\$100 or \$200) and a **completed and signed contract** to finalize your reservation. **The completed contract and reservation deposit fee must be sent in and paid at last 14 days prior to the date of the trip to confirm your spot.** Please verify that all information including the number of students is correct prior to your visit; once the contract is signed changes cannot be made to number of attendees within 14 days of reserved trip date. Please note that the non-refundable reservation fee will not be refunded for cancellations, or no shows.

**Step 4: Talk with your group** and get them excited about their visit! Ask them what they think they will learn and see when they visit. What are they most excited about? Plan for each child to bring their own lunches or snacks if the group plans on eating lunch during their trip. Inform chaperones to bring extra money for gift shop items if desired. Teddy Mountain stuffed animals can be purchased for \$9 (8 inch) and \$13 (16 inch) each with the 10% discount that private and public groups receive. The gift shop kiosk will be available 30 minutes before a group's departure time. Gift shop items range from \$1 up to \$15.

**Step 5: Arrive for the visit.** Please bring your **check in form** that is attached to this packet with you. If it is not already paid, the full balance for the trip will be due upon arrival. We accept cash, checks, and card payments. **Checks made out to B.T.P.D.** We recommend paying in full before the trip date to make the check in process easier for your group.

# Procedures:

## Before You Arrive

Please be sure **all** chaperones are aware of the following procedures. You may make as many copies as necessary to distribute the information.

Please go over these procedures at your facility or en route to the museum.

- **All children must be assigned to an adult.** There should be 1 adult chaperone for every 5 children at the minimum. **All chaperones must stay with their assigned children at all times** including exhibit exploration and purchasing items from the gift kiosk. Chaperones should interact with their assigned children. **Please keep cell phone use to a minimum.**
- Please have all lunches and personal items labeled. Large groups may want to bring bags/boxes to keep each class's lunches together. For groups who reserve the lunch room, lunches may be stored in the room until lunch time. Coats and other personal items will be placed in designated bins located in the front lobby.
- Outside lunches: Picnic tables are located throughout the Perry Farm Park. Tables are first come, first serve. The pavilion and/or gazebo may be rented for the day by other groups. Please be respectful to patrons in these paid and reserved spaces.
- All food and drinks must stay in the MPR/lunch room. This includes water, coffee, and snacks.
- Please remember to use your **walking feet** inside the museum.
- The toddler area, Little Squires, located in the castle room is for infants and crawlers only.
- **Field trip reservations are for 2 hours only**, unless the fee for an additional hour was paid. Groups are welcome to visit the Perry Farm Park after their designated time in the Exploration Station for no additional fee.
- Restrooms are located down the first hallway just left of the stop light. Outside restrooms are located in the pavilion.
- **Please pick up exhibit areas before moving to the next exhibit.**

## Upon Arrival

- Please remain on the bus until the museum staff directs you into the building.
- Have 1 representative for the entire group enter the museum to check in with the admission clerk. Please give your check-in form to the clerk with the number of children, adults, infants, and children with special need that are present.
- An Exploration Station staff member will board the bus and give a brief orientation.
- Groups that paid for and reserved the lunch room will have access to the lunch room for the entirety of their 2 hour visit. The lunch room has a capacity of 56 persons, please consider this when determining how to split up larger groups into multiple lunch times. Please do not enter the lunch room until your group has been announced by staff.



# Exploration Station

## Check In Form

Please bring this form with you the day of your field trip. Have a representative check in with the museum's admission clerk.

### Attendees Today

\_\_\_\_\_ **Number of Children** (over 12 months of age)

\_\_\_\_\_ **Number of Children** (under 12 months of age)

\_\_\_\_\_ **Number of Adults** (teachers/staff/chaperones)

\_\_\_\_\_ **Number of Participants with Special Needs** (Head start and at risk groups are not considered special needs)

### Lunch:

We will be eating: \_\_\_\_\_ Inside MPR \_\_\_\_\_ Outside

Our Multi-Purpose Room is equipped to hold 56 people at a time. Larger groups are asked to split up for lunch to meet capacity limits. Groups will have access to the room for the total 2 hours of their trip to eat whenever they like. How would you like your groups announced for lunch?

**Group #1:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Group #2:** \_\_\_\_\_



# Exploration Station

## Exploration Station Exhibits

### Exploratown

Exploration Station Railway  
My House  
Fire Dept./Hospital  
Emotions Room  
Shop-A-Lot Market  
Lickety Split Soda Shop & Diner  
Wreck Resort (auto repair/raceway)  
Pet Clinic

### Castle Room

2 Story Medieval Castle  
Puppet Theatre  
Stable  
Merlin's Sensory Lab  
Little Squires (infant area)

### Up, Up & Away

Air Fountain  
Amazing Airways Air Tubes  
Flight Simulator  
Creative Flight  
S.T.E.A.M. Lab

### Back Area

Paleontology  
Train Table  
Gravity Wall  
Temporary Exhibit  
Music Room



## Outdoor Attractions

### Patio Area (Open May-September)

Picnic Tables  
Grass Play Area  
Sensory Activities

### Perry Farm Park Amenities

170+ acres of prairie, meadows, woods & canyons  
4.2 miles of walking trails  
Indian Caves  
Nature Preserve  
Perry Farm House  
Barns with Farm Animals  
Animal Food Vending Machine (takes quarters)  
Fruit Tree Orchard  
Barnyard Theme Play Ground  
Picnic Areas  
Pavilion & Gazebos