

With a focus on conservation and education, Niabi Zoo continues to pursue ways to impassion each of our guests to not only learn but take action to help preserve species and habitats. This includes connecting a diverse audience (cultural, socioeconomic, gender identity, neurosensory, etc.) to animals and nature in a way that is relevant, respectful and sensitive to their needs. To do so, Niabi utilizes the proven practices and programs of KultureCity as so many other zoos have done to create a safe, nurturing space where children and adults with sensory needs can more fully enjoy the Zoo's amenities.

Challenges with sensory regulation, or sensory needs, are often experienced by individuals with autism, dementia, PTSD and other similar conditions. One of the major barriers for these individuals is sensitivity to overstimulation and noise, which can certainly occur in a place like the Zoo. Niabi provides Sensory Inclusion Bags and identifies areas in the Zoo that may require noise-cancelling headphones as well as quiet areas if one needs to rest and take a break from all the excitement at the Zoo.

PREPARING FOR MY TRIP TO NIABI ZOO

I'M GOING TO THE ZOO TODAY!

I will get ready at home and prepare the items I plan to bring with me to go visit the Niabi Zoo in Coal Valley, Illinois. This could include snacks, drinks, fidget devices, noise-cancelling headphones, and whatever else I need to enjoy my experience at the Zoo.

WHEN I ARRIVE

I will need to purchase tickets on-line or at the Admission Booth before entering. I need to remember to wait in line for my turn and stay with my group/family.

SENSORY INCLUSION BAGS

If I would like to check out a bag filled with items that can help lessen sensory overload, I can do so free of charge at any Admission Booth. Each bag includes:

- 1 pair of Noise-Canceling Headphones
- Multiple Unique Fidget Tools
- 1 VIP Lanyard to help prepare staff to provide assistance if needed

By request, I can also check out a weighted lap pad as it may help me relax while on the train, carousel, or just to rest.

At the end of my visit, I will need to turn in the Sensory Inclusion Bag at the Wild Things Gift Shop near the exit of the Zoo so that others can use the bag to help them enjoy the Zoo.

MAP

I can download the Zoo map to help me decide where I would like to go first so I can see all the animals and to identify each quiet zone in the Zoo if I need to take a break.

QUIET AREAS

If I start to feel overwhelmed I can look for a bench or grassy area to sit where there aren't many other people. Here I can take a break and relax away from all the excitement. When I feel ready, I can rejoin the fun!

HEADPHONE ZONES

In areas that might be busy or loud, the headphone zone sign will help me prepare to put on my noise reducing headphones so I feel more comfortable and less likely to get overwhelmed.

ANIMAL EXHIBITS

The zoo has many rare and interesting animals. I will have lots to look at and explore. These areas can get busy from time to time so I should be prepared to wear my noise reducing headphones if necessary. It is important that I follow instructions when at the Zoo to keep the animals and myself safe!

STAFF

Some of the Zoo's staff will be on-grounds in a Zoo uniform with a name badge. I can ask them questions about the Zoo or the animals. I will wait my turn to ask my question.

FOOD

If I get hungry, I can bring my own food and drinks with me or I can visit the Treehouse Snack Shack across from the Wild Things Gift Shop to buy something to eat and drink.

RESTROOMS

If I need a restroom break during my visit at the zoo, there are many options available. I can check one the zoo maps or ask a friendly staff member where the closest one is.

HAVE A GREAT DAY!

Knowing what to expect will help me have a great day at Niabi Zoo!