

2025 - 2026

NEW JERSEY STATE MUSEUM

EARLY LEARNING FIELD TRIP GUIDE PRE-K TO 1ST GRADE

EXPLORE OUR FIELD TRIP GUIDE!

- [TEACHER RESOURCES](#)
- [GALLERY EXPLORATION](#)
- [WORKSHOPS](#)
- [PLANETARIUM SHOWS](#)
- [RESERVATION & FIELD
TRIP POLICIES](#)



PLAN YOUR MUSEUM ADVENTURE TODAY!

**SCIENCE, HISTORY, ART -
IT'S ALL UNDER ONE ROOF!**

- Engage with hands-on workshops designed with NJ curriculum standards in mind
- Book a Planetarium show to explore space and the planet we call home
- Learn directly from Museum experts
- Explore new ideas in our exhibits



TEACHER RESOURCES

We are currently developing new teacher resources for you to use before or after your visit to the Museum. These resources can help prepare your students for learning at the Museum, and keep the learning going once you're back in the classroom! Check our [Digital Resources tab](#) on our website, and keep checking for more resources as we post them.

Look for the **Small Explorers** gallery guides available throughout the Museum to help your students explore the galleries before or after your programs. These guides, designed for children ages 0-5, include objects to find with related classroom activities.



Level 3, Pretty Big Things

L3 Raggedy Andy
c. 1969
Knickerbocker Toys



- ★ This doll's name is Andy. Andy also has a sister named Ann.
- ★ Andy and Ann used to be the most famous dolls in the world!
- ★ Would you play with Raggedy Andy?





Level 2, American Perspectives

L2 The Music Lesson
(Harlem Series #27), 1943
Jacob Lawrence b. 1917



- ★ The man and boy are playing piano.
- ★ This painting reflects a time called the *Harlem Renaissance*.
- ★ During the Harlem Renaissance, many African Americans created new forms of art, literature, and music.





Level 2, Written in the Rocks

L2 Hadrosaurus foulkii
80.5-78.5 million years ago



- ★ Hadrosaurus was discovered in Haddonfield, NJ.
- ★ It became New Jersey's State in 1991.
- ★ It was originally displayed standing upright like a kangaroo.





Lower Level, A Much Moved People

L2 Iroquois Doll
Early 1900s



- ★ Many Native American dolls were made out of cornhusks.
- ★ These dolls are dressed in the style of the 1800s.
- ★ Do you have any favorite dolls?



GALLERY EXPLORATION

Gallery exploration is an important part of any field trip to the New Jersey State Museum.

Keep the learning going outside of your workshop or Planetarium program by planning time to allow your group to explore our four floors of exhibits.

WRITTEN IN THE ROCKS: THE FOSSIL HISTORY OF NEW JERSEY

Our Natural History gallery on the 2nd floor is very accessible to young learners. Step back through time and explore ocean life, birds, reptiles, and mammals. There are fossil and rock touchable stations throughout the gallery – so keep an eye out for the signs that indicate what you can touch! Our live paleontology lab is also in this gallery, and if you're lucky, there may be a museum paleontologist working on something during your visit that you can talk to. However, please keep your students out of the Discovery Den, as it is a space reserved for families and is not designed for school groups.



NEW JERSEY'S ORIGINAL PEOPLE, CULTURES IN COMPETITION & A MUCH MOVED PEOPLE EXHIBITIONS



Archaeology & Ethnography exhibits are located on the lower level and encompass two galleries and the hallway between them. In “New Jersey’s Original People,” young students can enjoy seeing a reconstruction of an archaeological dig site and learn how the Lenape made pottery during the Woodland Period. There is an interactive station in the Woodland Period room of the “Original People” gallery, as well as lift-up panels.

AMERICAN PERSPECTIVES: THE FINE ART COLLECTION

Our Fine Art gallery on the 2nd floor has a wide range of art on view, including paintings, sculpture, photographs, drawings, collages and more. While there is nothing that can be touched in this gallery, we encourage young students to take their time appreciating the art and getting inspired.



PRETTY BIG THINGS: STORIES OF NEW JERSEY HISTORY

Our Cultural History gallery on the 3rd floor presents objects that tell stories of New Jersey history. Admire china and ceramic, quilts, historical toys, furniture, and more. While exploring, young students can color their own State seal, design a quilt, and practice joinery techniques with a wooden puzzle.



ECOSYSTEMS AT RISK: THREATENED & ENDANGERED IN NJ



Our first floor temporary exhibit, “Ecosystems at Risk,” will be on display until March 2026. The exhibition introduces students to New Jersey animals and environments that are in decline. Young students will enjoy learning about the different animals and plants throughout our state. There are some panel interactives and a chalkboard for students to share their commitments to the environment.



RECENT ACQUISITIONS: FINE ART

Our second floor temporary exhibit, “Recent Acquisitions: Fine Art,” will be on view through December 2025. Students can discover some of the latest additions to the Fine Art collection, many on view to the public for the first time. We suggest students visit this exhibit in tandem with our “American Perspectives” gallery to continue growing their creative minds.



SPIRIT OF '76: THE BICENTENNIAL



Opening in February 2026, “Spirit of ‘76: The Bicentennial” showcases an assortment of never-before-exhibited artifacts and art produced fifty years ago as part of the energy and excitement of the Bicentennial. Young students can make their own button at an interactive station. We suggest visiting both “Power to Change: Revolutionary Stories from the New Jersey State Archives,” opening in April 2026, and this exhibit for students to appreciate the past and present celebrations of our nation.

POWER TO CHANGE: REVOLUTIONARY STORIES FROM THE NEW JERSEY STATE ARCHIVES

Celebrate the 250th anniversary of the American Revolution with this exciting exhibition, opening in April 2026. Developed in collaboration with the New Jersey State Archives - the keeper of our state's most important documents, the exhibition highlights rarely seen foundational federal and state documents, including New Jersey's original 1787 copy of the Ratification of the U.S. Constitution. Visitors will explore how revolutionary ideals, fought for by our founders, influenced our government and laws, and allow for continued reinterpretation and adaptation today.



WORKSHOPS

Enhance your field trip with hands-on experiences, which support New Jersey's curriculum standards. Our early learning workshops are designed for preschool to 1st grade and incorporate elements of play and inquiry-based learning.



Workshop FAQs:

- **How long is a workshop?** Workshops are 45 minutes long.
- **How many students can fit in one workshop?** Workshops can accommodate groups of 15 to 30 students.
- **What should I do if I have multiple classes on the same day?** Large groups will be divided into multiple sessions, often with two workshops occurring at the same time in our two classrooms.

DINO MOTION

Discover how dinosaurs and other prehistoric animals moved through their environments as we combine science and imaginative play.



Overview: In this workshop, learning is split between the gallery and the classroom. In our natural history gallery, museum educators lead students through an exploration of footprints and fossils. In the classroom, students explore how scientists interpret trackways and collect scientific information. As a class, students examine a pre-made trackway, then students measure individual, full-size dinosaur footprints using a variety of units of measurements. Finally, students make their own dinosaur environment to take home using dinosaur stamps, including a footprint stamp to make their own trackway.

DINO MOTION

Suggested Skills: While the following skills are not requirements for your students to have, if your students do have them it can lead to deeper learning outcomes.

- Familiarity with dinosaurs and fossils
- Knowledge that different items can be bigger or smaller than the other
- Ability to count up to 20
- Understanding of how different animals move

Note – The content of this workshop can be adjusted to accommodate 2nd grade students by incorporating averages into the measurements section and prompting a deeper conversation about the classroom trackway and the fossils in the gallery.



Related Galleries: While some of the workshop takes place in our “Written in the Rocks” gallery, there is still plenty to explore in the natural history gallery before or after your workshop! Take a look at our mammal corner, including modern mammals and Ice Age animals. Don’t forget to touch the mammoth and mastodon bones that are available for physical interaction!

PLANETS ON PARADE

Meet our favorite star and the planets in our solar system through kinetic learning.



Overview: This workshop is a great way to introduce young children to our solar system! Through physical activities, students learn the order of the planets and how they orbit around the Sun. We first introduce what the Sun is, what shape it is, and what it does for our planet Earth. Then we explore what an orbit is, through educator demonstration and student hands-on exploration with our Orbiting Game. Once students have become familiar with the different planets in our solar system, it's their turn to make their own planet to take home!

PLANETS ON PARADE

Suggested Skills: While the following skills are not requirements for your students to have, if your students do have them it can lead to deeper learning outcomes.

- Familiarity with the properties of our Sun and Earth
- Understanding that the Earth moves around the Sun (i.e., why we have years)
- Knowledge of 2D and 3D shapes, like circles and spheres

Note – The content of this workshop can be adjusted to accommodate 2nd grade students by encouraging students to lead the discussion on our Sun, Earth, and planets and prompting more in-depth thinking while they make their planets.



Related Galleries: Explore the Magic Planet in the Planetarium lobby with your students! Here, you can learn about each planet in our solar system. The exhibits along the hallway as you enter the Planetarium can also be exciting for students to examine.

PAINT ME A STORY

Art and storytelling go hand in hand as we discover how art can tell stories and engage our minds and bodies.



Overview: Students start this workshop in our fine art gallery with a story time that introduces the ideas of visiting an art gallery and all the things art makes the character think and feel. Then, museum educators take students through a guided exploration of our art gallery, stopping at a few pieces and examining art. Our last stop in the gallery is a piece of art where all the students work together to make a story from the art on the wall through play-based learning cues. In the classroom, students get to practice being artists themselves, and spend the rest of the workshop making their own masterpiece.

PAINT ME A STORY

Suggested Skills: While the following skills are not requirements for your students to have, if your students do have them it can lead to deeper learning outcomes.

- Familiarity with primary and secondary colors
- Knowledge of basic artmaking techniques
- Ability to identify and express feelings

Note – The content of this workshop can be adjusted to accommodate 2nd grade students by spending more time discussing artwork in the gallery and incorporating more detailed painting techniques.



Related Galleries: Feel free to return to “American Perspectives” to keep exploring more artwork! Pay attention to the different types of art in the gallery – painting, sculptures, collages. Feel free to encourage chaperones to prompt similar interpretations or play-based learning as done in the workshop with new pieces. Art can also be found throughout the Museum, not just in the “American Perspectives” gallery! Prompt your students to point out art as they explore the other galleries.

NEW

CYCLE OF LIFE

Discover how animals and plants get their energy to survive by exploring the food web of the New Jersey Pinelands.



Overview: In our newest workshop, students will be introduced to animals and plants who call the Pinelands home through artmaking and kinetic learning. This workshop starts with a discussion about what food webs are, why they are important, and a demonstration of the animals and plants in the Pinelands using puppets. Students will be assigned an animal or plant in the food web and make headbands to wear and take home. Then, students work together to form a physical food web in the classroom. The workshop concludes with an exploration of our natural history gallery and a prompt to observe food webs outside their classrooms and at home.

CYCLE OF LIFE

Suggested Skills: While the following skills are not requirements for your students to have, if your students do have them it can lead to deeper learning outcomes.

- Familiarity with different types of animals and plants
- Knowledge of how we gain energy from food

Note – The content of this workshop can be adjusted to accommodate 2nd grade students by spending more time discussing what food webs are and encouraging students to create multiple food webs.



Related Galleries: While some of the workshop takes place in our “Written in the Rocks” gallery, there is still plenty to explore in our natural history gallery before or after your workshop! Take a look at our prehistoric animals, including our Hadrosaur and Dryptosaurs. Prompt students to think about food webs in ancient environments, and don’t forget to touch the fossilized footprint!

PLANETARIUM SHOWS

From the prehistoric jungles of Antartica to the moons of Jupiter, we have shows for all age groups and interests!



Planetarium FAQs:

- **How long is a Planetarium show?** All workshops are 45 minutes long and include a Sky Talk about the New Jersey night sky.
- **What happens if we are late?** Planetarium shows begin promptly at the scheduled time. We are unable to start the show late or issue refunds for late arrivals.
- **How many students can fit in one Planetarium show?** The Planetarium can accommodate a total of 140 people. Larger groups will be split into two or more shows.
- **Are teachers and chaperones included in the total count?** Yes. All students, teachers, and chaperones must be included in the total count when reserving the Planetarium.

One World, One Sky

Pre-K to 1st grade; Available in Spanish upon request

One World, One Sky: Big Bird's Adventure begins on Sesame Street when Elmo's friend, Hu Hu Zhu, visits from China. Big Bird, Elmo and Hu Hu Zhu talk about some of their favorite constellations and realize we all see the same stars! Elmo and Hu Hu Zhu then blast off to the Moon where they learn that the Moon is a very different place from the Earth. They even pick the North Star as their friendship star to always remind them of their shared joy of looking up at the sky together. Watch the trailer [here](#).



Magic Tree House: Space Mission

1st grade



Travel through space with the brother-sister duo Jack and Annie, and their Magic Tree House! When they discover a note with a mysterious riddle, the siblings will go on a journey as they meet an astronomer, astronaut, and even the writer of the riddle. Audiences will learn about the planets, stars, what it is like to live in space, and where we are going in the future. This exciting voyage will carry visitors far into the cosmos, where Jack and Annie nearly get... well, we don't want to give it away! The adventure is just beginning. Based on the beloved book series by Mary Pope Osborne. Watch the trailer [here](#).

Earth, Moon & Sun 1st grade

Explore the relationship between the Earth, Moon and Sun with the help of an amusing character Coyote (adapted from Native American oral traditions). Examine how the Earth, Moon and Sun work together as a system, with a look the Moon's orbit, craters, phases, and eclipses. Young children and audiences of all ages will appreciate learning the science behind the myths. Watch the trailer [here](#).



RESERVATION & FIELD TRIP POLICIES

Cost & Discounts: The New Jersey State Museum has free admission. Planetarium shows are \$5 per person, including chaperones. Workshops are \$5 per student. A minimum of 15 students is required to reserve any program. We offer a 20% discount for Trenton Public School District schools and Title 1 schools. It is the responsibility of the group making the reservation to notify the reservationist if eligible for one of the discounts.

Online Reservation Form: Please use our [online reservation form](#) to submit your reservation request. Use this guide to explore options at the Museum before submitting the reservation request. After submitting your request, our reservationist will review it. If no other information is needed, they will build your itinerary and send a confirmation email. To help you plan your visit, we have created an orientation video. You can watch it [here](#).

Bulk Orders: If you are interested in making five or more reservations in a school year and will be paying for all with one PO, contact our reservationist directly at reservations.NJSM@sos.nj.gov. You will get a personal account representative who will work with you to schedule all of the trips.

Payments: All payment is due before arrival, and payment is required for the entire group in one payment, we do not accept deposits or partial payments. Reservations must be pre-paid in full, two weeks prior to your field trip date.

Arrival & Late Policy: Please have an arrival time in mind when making your reservation. We suggest arriving at least 15 minutes before the start of your first program. If your group is over 100 students, we suggest arriving at least 30 minutes before your first program. We are unable to hold Planetarium shows for late arrivals. If you are late, we can try and accommodate your original reservation, but cannot guarantee that. If you are more than 30 minutes late, your first program may be cancelled without a refund.

RESERVATION & FIELD TRIP POLICIES

Chaperones & Code of Conduct:

- We request 1 chaperone per 5 students for our youngest visitors, ages 6 and younger.
- Chaperones are required to stay with students at all times, and chaperones must be included in the total number of seats for the Planetarium.
- You can find the full Code of Conduct [here](#).

Available Lunch Spaces :

- Lunch room reservations are no longer accepted.
- Limited seating (up to 60) is available indoors on the Museum's first floor on a first come basis.
- Please keep your students together so that there is seating available for other groups.
- Groups must limit their lunch to 30 minutes.
- Outdoor seating for up to 150 people is available at picnic tables around the Museum.
- Groups may also picnic on the front lawn.
- There is no alternate space in the case of inclement weather.
- Lunches should be stored in bins inside the Museum's main entrance; students are not permitted to carry food or drink through the Museum.

We can't wait to see you and your students!

