

Exploring Hollytrees Museum with your pre-school child

Ideas and tips to help you and your little person
get the most out of your visit





Welcome to Hollytrees Museum, I hope you have a fun day exploring!

Need to know

- Hollytrees is open Monday to Saturday 10am – 5pm
- Entry is £5 for adults, £3.50 for the first child and £1.75 for additional children. Under 4s are free. The whole family can go free when you purchase a annual museum pass
- There's a buggy parking space on the ground floor
- There are toilets outside the museum and on the first floor. The baby changing facilities are located in the public toilets near the play area in the park
- There is a lift to all floors
- Only water bottles are allowed when walking around, due to the precious items on display but we're small enough to be able to easily pop outside for a drink or snack
- There's lots of lovely spaces in the park to have lunch or a snack and there several cafés nearby
- There's no parking on site but there several pay and display car parks within a 5 minute walk. We're close to several bus route, including the park and ride and about a 10 minute walk from Colchester Town station

Before visiting...create anticipation

Talk to your pre-schooler about going Hollytrees Museum. Have you been to other ones? Have you the heard the word museum before?

Read some books together about museums and galleries: Some suggestions to get you started are;

- For very little ones choose **Maisy and the Museum** by Lucy Cousins
- **The Museum** by Susan Verde and Peter H Reynolds
- **Lost in the Toy Museum** by David Lucas
- **Katie and the Sunflowers** by James Mayhew (in fact there are a whole series of books with Katie looking at different artists).

Let your child be a part of planning the route and shape of the day, especially because Hollytrees is in a park - will you play before or after? Which way will you walk through?



Before visiting...be prepared

Look at pictures on the website together and talk about what you can see, plan which rooms you might like to visit together. Don't shy away from introducing little people to new specialist words like **exhibit, display case, Victorian, fragile** – they will enjoy using the new words on the day. You can find a floor map of Hollytrees on [THIS](#) page. If your child has sensitivities or additional needs, we also have a sensory map and visual story available on our website on the same page above. The museum is generally quieter after 2.00pm as any school visits will have left by then.

Discuss expectations of behaviour so your little people know in advance that their boundaries might be a bit different to normal – especially around what they can touch. There are some items on open display so sharing this information with your child will save you stress on the day. Remember, no one is expecting children to be silent; excited chatter and giggles brighten the day!



On the visit

Give your child some 'exploring' items in a small backpack: A magnifying glass, some paper and pencils, a children's digital camera or an old one you don't mind getting knocked about a bit **(or you could borrow one of our exciting Explorer Bags from the welcome desk)**. These can help them to have a sense of adventure and a bit of control over what they want to record and remember.

Let your child set the pace and follow their interests – draw their attention to things with 'wondering' questions (see below). Don't worry if you miss things, you can always come back and discover more!

Is it older than...?

What is it made from?

What do you think X was used for?

I wonder what X is thinking (for portraits)?

I wonder how old it is?



Plan for your visit to be about 30 - 45 minutes long, depending on your child's age and attention. You could always explore some of the museum then go and play in the park and come back for more later!

There are some hands-on activities to explore in the museum. First, in the Running The Home gallery there are some games and a play kitchen to play with. Then, in the childhood gallery there's a crawl through tunnel, toys and books to enjoy.



Be playful everywhere – museums and galleries should be fun places to explore and learn. Look for expressions on faces in portraits that you can copy, spot items of different colours, try to walk upstairs without making them creak! Have a look at our **50 ways to play** resource for lots more great ideas for fun in Hollytrees and the park.

For older children a good old game of I-spy is a great way to keep interest, while drawing their attention to some of the things you would like them to notice.

Following the visit

After you get home, why not try this...

- Talk about the day and get your child to tell someone else about their visit, using any new words they learned
- Make a scrap book with some photos and drawings from the day and maybe even leaves from the park too
- Using the book **Museum of Me** by Emma Lewis as inspiration, help your child to curate their own Museum of Me about themselves and invite family and friends to come for a tour. There is a template [HERE](#) for a paper-based version
- Use painting, play dough, Lego and small world toys to recreate and remember items and memories of the day

If you didn't see everything, plan another visit, perhaps inviting a grandparent or friend so your little person can be the 'tour guide'.



We hope to see you
again soon!

Colchester+Ipswich
Museums



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