

Things to do with pre-schoolers

Borrow a **Pre-Schooler Bag** from the front desk. We then suggest sitting with your child or children on the floor about three feet away from an artwork you want to explore. We ask that you discourage them from getting too close to the art and avoid touching.

1. Help them identify colors in the artworks. You can use the color wheel in the Pre-Schooler Bag to help them locate and identify colors they see in the artworks.

2. Talk to them about shapes and lines. They can form the lines and shapes they see in the art using the pipe cleaners in the Pre-Schooler Bag.

3. You can also use the VTS questions with pre-schoolers.

Teach children about art museum behavioral expectations, particularly:

- No touching the art or the walls or the cases.
- Stay 3 tiles from artworks
- Speak quietly
- No running
- No eating or drinking
- No backpacks or big bags
- Photography okay (no flash)
- Stay with an adult or older teen.



If you enjoyed your visit, we hope you become a **FAMi**ly member. Two visits a year for a family of four nearly pays for an annual membership. You also get discounts for workshops and in our store, plus so much more!

How do I talk to my kids about art?



A Parents' Guide on engaging children during a Museum visit

You let them do the talking!

When young children come into a museum for the first time, they can easily be overwhelmed by the building, the people, and the visual stimulation. It is your job as a parent, guardian, and/or teacher, to help them focus on the art—whether it is a painting, a drawing, a sculpture, a decorative work, a relic from the past, or an installation that fills a whole room.

You can have the child select a work of art they are attracted to. You can stand in front of the artwork or, if the gallery is not crowded, you are even invited to sit on the floor (or a bench) in front of the work with your child.

There is a technique that many museums around the world utilize called **Visual Thinking Strategy or VTS**. The beauty of VTS is its simplicity—anyone can be a facilitator with just a little practice. You don't need to know any history or facts about the artwork, the artist, or even the title. You do not have to like or understand the work yourself, but you can help a child see and appreciate it for him or herself—and you may just get the added benefit of walking away with a new understanding and appreciation of an artwork, too!

What is VTS?

Visual Thinking Strategy (VTS) is a research-based teaching method which has been shown to improve critical thinking and language skills through focused observation. It was developed for working with groups of students, but can easily be adapted by anyone to work with one or more children.

If you and your child or children want to learn more about an artist or artwork, be sure to read the wall labels. Sometimes it's fun to wait until after you have visually explored the artwork to read the labels. If you want more information on an artist or exhibition, our reception desk has a binder you may borrow while in the Museum.

How do you employ VTS?

When you walk into a gallery, watch for cues from your kids. See what catches their eye, and see where their direction focuses. Walk up to the artwork with them. Kneel down to their level or sit with them on the floor or on a bench a few feet away from the artwork and ask them:

1. What is going on in this picture [sculpture, room]?

Wait for them to respond. Repeat back what they just said and then ask them the second VTS question.

2. What do you see that makes you say that?

Again, listen to the response and repeat it back; then follow-up with the third question.

3. What more can you see?

Listen to their response. Repeat their answer back each time they respond, and then repeat the series of questions again or ask more directed questions to help them discover more (i.e., "Why do you think that is blue instead of red" OR "Do you think she looks happy or sad? What makes you say that?").

Try not to be judgmental. Let children explore the art through their eyes, not yours. There are no right or wrong answers. You will be amazed and impressed by the ability of children to see and find things you may not have observed. But the most important benefit is that you and your child get to explore and discover with each other, making your visit to the Museum much more meaningful and memorable.

