



KidsPark

Frequently Asked Questions

It's my first time visiting KidsPark, how will my child do in a new place with new people?

The short answer is: kids thrive at KidsPark and can't wait to come back. Really. It may happen on their first visit or after a few visits of getting used to a new place.

The long answer is: you know your child best and they have their own way of adjusting to new experiences, just like adults. They may be joiners, watchers, explorers or resisters. We assist each child to make his or her transition easy and positive. In our twenty plus years of experience we have found:

Joiners are children who enter a KidsPark center and see bright colors, a fun play space with lots of toys and other kids having a good time. Their initial reaction is to join in; just like being at the neighborhood park. Our teachers just need to show them around, especially where the restroom is and go over the basic play rules.

Parents can support their children's confidence and eagerness by saying, "Good-bye, have fun and see you soon." If you come for a tour before your visit, be prepared for a fuss when you leave. These kids want to stay and play.

Watchers are children who need a few minutes to observe the area and people before they pick their spot. We give them time and space. Then, if needed, we assist with suggestions, guide them into an activity or introduce them to a group.

Parents can support a child who is a Watcher by allowing them the time to adjust. Instead of watching them or giving direction, let the desk person know you will call in 15-20 minutes to be sure they are engaged. Or, let us know you would like a confirmation call. Sometimes, a tour of the center before their first visit will build excitement so they will look forward to coming. Parents can help by talking about the favorite toy or activity the child saw so they can begin to plan their visit and what they will do first.

Explorers are children who are non-stop and need to check-out every inch of the KidsPark center. These kids are usually individual participants who need the freedom to roam to feel comfortable before they pick an activity. Our open floor plan allows choice in many activity centers. Our teachers give them every opportunity to be independent and will encourage them to try group games and art projects later, once they have explored the center to their initial satisfaction.

Parents can support a child who is an Explorer by letting them roam instead of insisting they immediately join a group and "get started".

Resisters are children who are uncomfortable with change and may need time to make any transition. We often have parents say these kids need time at home to transition from play to bedtime or breakfast to running errands. It is not unusual for these children to have some hesitancy in a new environment. In these cases, we definitely recommend a tour before their first visit to ward off apprehension.

Parents can support a child who is a Resister by repeatedly, a day or two before their visit, positively describing what will happen and what a treat they are planning for them. Perhaps mention you are looking forward to seeing the picture they are going to draw for you – it will go on the refrigerator. Or, plan a special lunch when they are picked up. We also encourage parents not to prolong the good-byes – a kiss and a hug and off you go with a smile works best for the child. If you show you are upset, your child will be upset. And, most importantly, keep the first visit very short – 30 minutes at most. If they understand a clock, tell them the specific time you will be back so they have reassurance. Get your child used to transitions by making visits to KidsPark a routine once or twice a week, lengthening the stay each time, until your child is comfortable. It is very important to try KidsPark before you need us for a critical appointment that will require a few hours. Also, let us help. Be ready to let our teachers comfort your child. Bringing a small comfort toy or blanket is also a good idea. And, check with the center for suggestions on what day and time you should visit – less busy times may ensure a more positive experience for your child.

Keep in mind, kids change. A Watcher may become a Joiner. A Resister may become a Watcher. They may change as they grow or they may change based on their mood, their energy level or what they did yesterday. Don't we all?

In all cases:

- Consider naptime – bring your child when they are rested and ready for a new experience.
- If your child is a Resistor or a Watcher, it is best to introduce them to KidsPark during a slower time period. We would suggest weekday mornings when elementary schools are not on break.
- When dropping off siblings of different ages, say, "Have a great time!" Never say, "Take care of your little sister/brother." That's our job. Kids of different ages will want to do different things. We want all the kids to have a great time. Also, what happens when little sister/brother comes without big sister/brother? They will feel unprepared.
- Make the experience positive for you and your child, without implying "Mommy Guilt". Say, "I'll be back soon" rather than, "I don't want to leave you, but I have to."

Why do I feel so guilty when I leave my child and do something for myself?

Moms tend to feel guilty doing something for themselves without their kids.

But, remember, when children attend adult type of activities, often times it's not fun for them and inevitably they act-out or have a melt down. If you end up saying "no" more often than "yes", your child is being put in a negative situation where they cannot succeed and feel good. Don't touch, don't run, don't talk, don't climb.... doesn't sound like a good time for anyone. When your child is at KidsPark "it's a win-win situation" – they have a fun place to play while you get to keep an appointment or have time to do something for yourself.

Parenting experts say if you take care of yourself, you'll see the positive results in your children. At KidsPark we say "**Happy kids. Happy parents.**" So, cut yourself some slack. And, remember, KidsPark is a treat for your kids – you're giving your child an opportunity to create his/her own experience, learn to socialize and, most importantly, have FUN. They will thank you!

How can I leave my child? I don't work outside my home so it is my job to be with my children.

Every job includes a break. As the primary nurturer and caretaker, you need to be taken care of, too. It is realistic to expect there will be times when you cannot be with your child – going to doctor appointments, attending meetings or enjoying the new fancy restaurant. Plus, as the parent, it is your role to schedule or coordinate key learning experiences for your child. That “job” entails instilling confidence, practicing transitions and becoming school-ready. KidsPark assists with these goals and others – like exposure to many art media, music, games, dance, stories, cooking, science, to name a few.

What will my child do while he/she is at KidsPark?

Our play space offers many entertaining and learning activities through a mix of teacher-organized and child-initiated activities in both group and individual settings. Kids choose. Play components are selected to promote cooperation, socialization, listening skills and motor development. Each month there are featured activities that include cooking, arts and crafts, sensory exploration or hands-on science.

Who will be caring for my child?

The KidsPark staff are hired because they are energetic, creative people who enjoy interacting with children, and are:

- Certified in First Aid and CPR
- 1:8 Child to staff member
- Screened by the Department of Justice
- Trained in Early Childhood Education and Recreation
- Required to attend staff development and skill building workshops and classes

KidsPark exceeds state licensing requirements by providing an average teacher-child ratio of 1:8. In addition, there are usually at least 2 staff members on site at all times. If a child needs one-on-one attention, another teacher is available to the group.

Do I have to make an appointment?

No appointment necessary. But, if you are concerned about your child transitioning on their first visit, call your center to check on the best times to come when it may not be as busy.

Do I need to register before my first visit?

You can register onsite as it just takes a few minutes. Or, if you like, you can print our Registration Form and bring it with you already filled out. Click on your center location to find the appropriate form(s). Check your center's rates for their one-time registration fee.

My toddler wears diapers, is that okay?

Absolutely. Diapers are welcomed. If your child is in diapers, bring a spare.

What if my child is potty training?

If your child is toilet training, bring extra clothes in case they are too busy playing to stop. (We will remind them!)

Should I bring a meal or snack?

Snacks of 100% apple juice and crackers are complimentary at 10am, 3pm and 8pm. Meals can be purchased for lunch at noon or dinner at 6pm. Or, you are welcome to bring a meal or snack with you. Please, if possible, do not pack any products with peanuts.