

Guests of Different Ages



Age Level	Cognitive Development	Suggestions for Interacting with Guests of that Age
<p>Ages 3-7</p>	<p>Charmingly ego-centric Short attention span Literal Experience dependent Deals in the present Can't classify items in general categories (ex: mammals, reptiles, fish, etc.)</p>	<p>Ask if they have seen an animal like this before</p> <p>If possible, allow them to touch animal or biofact</p> <p>Ask child to observe & compare animal to him/her in abilities/characteristics</p> <p>Role play animal's movements/sounds & discuss why animal does this</p>
<p>Ages 8-13</p>	<p>Logical, but still needs experience Aware of past & present Understands/predicts some future events Able to understand/order items in a series Advanced classification skills</p>	<p>Discuss animal's life cycle as a story</p> <p>Start a story & then ask child to predict "What do you think happened next?"</p> <p>Discuss habitat & ask how they think the animal is designed to live there</p>
<p>Age 13 & up</p>	<p>Can comprehend abstract concepts Understands/creates hypothetical situations Has advanced predicting skills considering multiple variables Social consciousness</p>	<p>Describe Aquarium's research & conservation successes</p> <p>Start to describe a situation & then ask: "What do you think would happen if?"</p> <p>When appropriate, discuss human uses for aquatic animals/ habitats & how they can help protect them</p>

No doom & gloom before age 10

Please avoid discussing conservation issues with Guests under 10, as these can be difficult to understand, even frightening to young children. Instead, focus on the wonders of aquatic life: use the Layers of Conversation to discuss amazing animal info & the child's observations/experiences/feelings.

If we want children to flourish, to become truly empowered, then let us allow them to love the earth before we ask them to save it."