Visiting an Art Museum
10 Tips for Families

1. Pick up a map when you first enter the museum and take a minute to familiarize yourself with the museum’s layout.

2. At the information desk ask if there is a brochure with children’s activities, tips for families, or an audio tour. At Kresge Art Museum a scavenger hunt is available for children. An audio tour of the permanent collection and some special exhibitions for both adults and children is also available.

3. Let your children look at their own pace and ask questions. Some children have an attention span of an hour, while other’s may be ten minutes. Either will result in a positive experience, but realize that you will not see everything.

4. Ask your child questions about the works of art you see. Some interesting ones to explore include: What is happening in this picture, what makes you think that, or what are some questions you would like to ask the people in this painting?

5. Choose a theme such as shapes, animals, shoes, or faces. Find related elements in works of art throughout the museum.

6. Children of all ages can learn from museums. A first visit can be valuable for children as young as two or three.

7. Make up stories with your children about what is happening in paintings. Ask them to predict what would happen in the next scene.

8. Labels can be interesting to explore. You can discuss how old a work of art is, where the artist is from, as well as have your child come up with a title and then compare it to the title on the label.

9. Explain to your child why touching works of art is not allowed. There are oils on one’s fingers that damage paintings and sculptures.

10. Pay attention to what interests your child and explore those interests further. Also check the museum’s information rack or website for information about upcoming Family Programs or workshops for children.

Additional resources:
Jack in Search of Art, by Arlene P. Boehm (Ages 4 to 8)
Visiting the Art Museum, by Laurene Krasny Brown and Marc Tolon Brown (Ages 4 to 8)
Looking at Pictures: An Introduction to Art for Young People, by Joy Richardson (ages 9 and up)