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**Dear Chaperone,**

Thank you for volunteering to accompany your group to the Alaska SeaLife Center! Your participation will enhance everyone's tour through our facility. Not only are you demonstrating a commitment to marine research, rehabilitation, and education, but you are also about to embark on a wondrous exploration of Alaska's marine ecosystem - without even leaving the shore!

Without focus and guidance from group leaders, students tend to rush through exhibits, sometimes missing all the best parts. Try these techniques for helping each member of your group to get the most from your visit:

- 1. Follow the rules.** Common sense will ensure a safe and happy visit for your group, other visitors, and the animals. Any group not following the rules will be asked to leave the premises.
  - First, please stay with your group at all times. Each chaperone will be asked to be in charge of a specific group of kids. It helps if adults are interacting with the kids instead of with other adults.
  - Do not allow any running or horseplay. This is both a safety issue, and a way to slow down students and encourage observation.
  - Food, drink and gum are not allowed in the galleries.
  - Photographs may be taken everywhere, including flash photos. Encourage students to take a step back from the exhibits for proper focusing, and stand at an angle to the window to avoid glare.
  - Assist us at the touch tank. We love our animals, and want them to remain healthy. Please make sure the members of your group are using a gentle, two-finger touch to learn more about the touch tank creatures.
  - **FINALLY, PLEASE DO NOT ALLOW ANYONE TO THROW OR DROP ANYTHING INTO THE EXHIBITS BECAUSE IT COULD ENDANGER THE LIVES OF THE ANIMALS.**
- 2. Guide their discovery.** Encourage your students to become temporary researchers. Each exhibit represents a different Alaskan marine habitat. Students can describe or draw the habitat animals and list adaptations, looking to the graphics for further information. You don't have to be an expert. The animals are identified through labeled pictures, and volunteers or staff will also be able to provide information.

As you tour the SeaLife Center, have the students list some observations and questions that they can investigate later during their visit or research when they get home, just as scientists do. They will remember the answer better if they discover it on their own, and this encourages them to extend their learning experience after leaving the Alaska SeaLife Center. Teachers can help students choose "good questions" (with a clear focus), and select the best ones for a follow-up letter or e-mail to the Alaska SeaLife Center.
- 3. Lead the group by example.** Try to demonstrate your curiosity to the kids. Your enthusiasm will rub off!

Thanks in advance for all your help. We look forward to seeing you!