

Rules

The instructor is in charge at all time, participants must follow instructions. No one else should give instructions; this include parents, observers, and other participants.

If at any time we feel a person is adversely affecting the animals, other participants, and/or smooth operation of the program, that person will be asked to leave the program.

If an animal behaves in a way that makes you uncomfortable, inform us.

In compliance with regulations, our programs are controlled.

This means the animals are trained and an experienced instructor directs any and all interaction between the human and animal participants.

Program content can be modified depending on the staff, the animals, and the participants.

We do not do every behavior every program.

Should you have any requests regarding the content of your program, speak to your instructor prior to your interaction.

Participants take turns interacting with the animals, giving them a signal requesting a specific behavior.

We will go over the signal for each behavior at poolside.

Proper signals are mandatory.

Do not give the animals signals or request any behaviors unless instructed to do so.

Public interaction time with the animals is regulated.

If you wish to maximize your time with the animals, listen carefully to directions and if you are swimming, remain in the water once the program starts.

Observers are not allowed contact with the animals, nor are they allowed access to the water, platforms, or boardwalks. Please remain and take photographs from designated areas.

Since observers are at the pool's edge, be especially careful with sunglasses, camera lens caps, children's toys and pacifiers, etc. that could fall into the pool.

For the smooth and safe operation of the program, animal care staff are not permitted to take photographs while conducting the program.

However, if Theater of the Sea photographers are at your program, photos will be available for purchase in the main building.

Do not jump or dive into any pool! This may startle the animals.

To enter and exit the water, walk in from the beach or use the stairs.

Stairs may be slippery so hold onto the railing anytime you enter or exit the pool.

Be careful not to stir up sand on the beaches so as not to affect visibility.

We feed and interact with the animals from an area called a station that is indicated with a food bucket.

Participants must keep five feet away from the animal's station and food buckets at all times.

Do not touch the animals while they are being fed.

If they drop food, leave it.

When touching the animals:

let the animal initiate the contact, do not chase the animal

use only an open handed rub....do not pat, scratch, hold onto, or grab the animal

rub only where shown and not the face

Deep Water Dolphin Swim

We will let you know exactly when to do each behavior, including the dorsal tow.

In accordance with regulation, while swimming with the dolphin, **DO NOT HOLD ONTO THE DORSAL FIN AT ANY TIME EXCEPT UNDER OUR INSTRUCTION.** (demonstrate the proper way to hold onto the dorsal fin for single dorsal tow only).

Sea turtle, Crocodilian, Shark, and Ray Programs

Correct and safe feeding as explained must be used and participants must clean their hands before and after program. Do not throw food because it attracts birds.

Shark and Ray Swim

The program is approximately 30 minutes and divided into two portions. We recommend that you spend half of your time doing each, but you may spend as much time in each portion as you wish (*it has to be an all guest consensus*). It is extremely important that you stay calm even if the animals brush against you with their scratchy skin and tails and/or bump you.

Ray

During part of the interaction, you can sit in shallow water on the beach or stand by the platform and the rays will swim up to be touched and fed. Stingrays' eyes are on top and their mouths are on the bottom. They can't see what they are eating so give them a nice target. *Demonstrate* Make a peace sign, put the fish between your fingers with a majority of the fish sticking out, close your hand into a fist, and keep your hand on the bottom knuckles up. The ray will swim over your hand, you will feel a little suction, and then you can release your grip. The rays do most of the work! During this time, you may also pet the rays using an open handed rub on the top or dorsal side, Do not scratch them. Avoid touching their eyes, tail, and the holes behind their eyes which are like nostrils and called spiracles. During the other part, you can snorkel and dive under with the rays and a variety of other fish.

Shark

During part of the interaction, you will sit on one bench and the sharks are stationed on the other bench. The trainer will bring a shark over for you to touch and hold. During the other part, you can enter the water from this designated area to snorkel and dive under water with the sharks and a variety of other fish; you can touch the sharks but do not grab them!

