



Homeschool lesson pack · Dinotopia, Madison TN

Bring your lesson with you

You're the teacher here — we're the field trip. These are activities other Tennessee families have built around a visit, grouped by grade and tagged with the Tennessee academic standard so you can put the day straight in your records. Every one of them runs on a pencil, a phone camera and about ten minutes of setup.

How to use this

Pick one activity, not five. A single question carried through the visit does more than a worksheet nobody finishes.

Give it to them in the car. Kids who know what they're looking for walk in already looking.

Let the play be the play. Ten to twenty minutes of structure is plenty. The rest of the visit is climbing, and that counts too.

Write down what happened. A photo of your child's sketch and the standard code below is enough for most record-keeping.

PreK – Kindergarten

Looking closely and sorting things into groups. Ten to fifteen minutes of structure is plenty at this age — the rest is play.

Activity	Tennessee standard	What you do
Dino sort	K.LS1.2 — sort living and non-living things by observable attributes	Sort the dinosaurs you see by size, by number of legs, by spiky or smooth. Ask what rule they used.
Plant eater or meat eater?	K.LS1.1 — how plants and animals get what they need	Look at teeth and mouths. Guess what each one ate, then check.
Big, bigger, biggest	Counting and measurement	Line up the dinosaurs shortest to tallest. Count how many of your steps it takes to walk one dinosaur's length.

Grades 1 – 2

Body parts and what they're for. Bring a magnifying glass and a pencil.

Activity	Tennessee standard	What you do
Built to survive	1.LS1.1 — how external parts help animals survive	Pick three dinosaurs. For each, name one body part and the job it did: claws, frill, tail, teeth.
Magnifier hunt	1.ETS2.1 — use appropriate tools to make observations	Find three different textures in the park. Sketch one.
Track record	Patterns and measurement	Measure your child's stride, then compare it to a dinosaur's footprint length. Who takes more steps to cross the floor?

Grades 3 – 5

This is the band where a play park does the most academic work. Fossils, classification and extinction all sit right here in the Tennessee standards.

Activity	Tennessee standard	What you do
Is this a dinosaur?	3.LS1.1 — internal and external structures that support survival	Sort what you see into dinosaur, flying reptile, or marine reptile. Make them defend the call.
What a fossil tells us	4.LS4.1 — what a fossil is and how it tells us about the past	List three things a single bone can tell you, and three things it can't.
Prehistoric food web	4.LS2.3 — producers, consumers and decomposers in a food web	Build a food web on paper using only the animals you saw today. Where does the energy start?
Extinct and still here	5.LS4.1 — compare fossil organisms to living ones; most are now extinct	Match each dinosaur to a living animal with a similar adaptation. Bird feet, crocodile jaws, turtle shells.
Layers of time	5.ESS1.7 — fossil position as evidence of rock strata order	Stack colored paper as rock layers at home, then place each dinosaur in the right layer by period.

Grades 6 – 8

Older kids can run the visit themselves. Give them the assignment in the car and collect it that evening.

Activity	Tennessee standard	What you do
Scale model math	Ratio and proportion	Measure a dinosaur here, look up the real animal's length, calculate the scale factor. Was the model accurate?
Paleo-artist critique	Evidence and inference	Compare what's on the wall here to current scientific reconstructions. Write a paragraph on what's changed and why.
Field notebook	Scientific writing	A structured log: sketch, measure, hypothesize, question. One entry per zone.

Cross-curricular extensions

Four ways to carry the day into the rest of the week, without another trip.

Writing	A field trip report, a first-person diary entry from a dinosaur's day, or a persuasive paragraph on which dinosaur would win a fight and why.
Math	Budget the day's tickets, socks and snacks before you leave the house. Time each zone. Graph everyone's favorite dinosaur.
Art	Sketch one dinosaur from three angles. Build its habitat as a diorama at home from what you observed.
Geography and time	Map where each dinosaur's fossils were actually found. Build a timeline from the Triassic to today, with your child's birthday at the end of it.

Planning the visit

Weekday mornings are the quietest hours we have. Homeschool rates run 10:00 AM – 3:00 PM, September through May. Just tell us at the counter — there's no paperwork to fill out and nothing to prove.

Where	2291 Gallatin Pike N, Madison, TN 37115 — free parking, right off Gallatin Pike in the Rivergate area
Hours	Open every day 10AM – 7PM. The homeschool window is 10:00 AM – 3:00 PM on weekdays
Ages	Built for ages 1–10. The toddler zone, ages 1 to 4, is walled off from the main structure
Socks	Non-slip socks are required for everyone who plays, adults included. \$3.95 a pair at the door and they're yours to keep. Socks from another park aren't accepted

Waivers	Every child needs a signed waiver. One adult can sign for their own children — group organizers can't sign for other people's kids, so send the link around before you come
Food	The Pterodactyl Cafe is open during park hours
Groups	Bringing 10 or more kids? Request a date at www.playdinotopia.com/homeschool or call (615) 920-3850 and ask for a group visit

About the standards

Codes are from the Tennessee Academic Standards for Science. We're a play park, not a school — these are ideas you run yourself, not a program we staff. Check the current standards for your child's grade before you file the day.

Full standards: tn.gov/education

Pick a Tuesday

Buy a day pass online or at the door. Bringing a group, send us a date and we'll take it from there.

www.playdinotopia.com · (615) 920-3850

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