Your family’s guide to explore NYC for **FREE** with your Cool Culture Pass.
We are excited to welcome you to a new year of exploration with Cool Culture. While 2020 challenged us immensely, we pushed forward finding joy, bonding with family and tapping into the creativity of our culture. This new year gives us a fresh start to safely explore cultural institutions with new eyes and intentions. These spaces present opportunities to enhance learning, creativity, family bonding and also offer a warm place to have socially distant playdates. I am excited to have your family join the expansive Cool Culture Family.

Founded in 1999, Cool Culture is a non-profit organization with a mission to amplify the voices of families and strengthen the power of historically marginalized communities through engagement with art and culture, both within cultural institutions and beyond. We have partnered with your child’s school to give your family FREE admission to over 90 NYC cultural institutions (60 are currently open), which include museums, historic societies, gardens and zoos. That number continues to grow as they continue to reopen.

As your child’s first teacher and advocate, we hope you find this guide useful in adding to the joy, community, and culture that are already part of your family traditions!

Candice Anderson
Executive Director
Cool Culture

WELCOME TO COOL CULTURE!

HOW TO USE YOUR COOL CULTURE FAMILY PASS

You + 4 = FREE
Up to 5 people, including you, will be granted free admission with a Cool Culture Family Pass to approximately 90 museums, zoos, gardens and historic sites.

More than 5 people total? Be prepared to pay additional admission fees.

It's Personalized
At least one adult in the family, present at the time of the visit, must have the last name printed on the card.

Show Your ID
You may be asked to present personal identification. Museum admissions will ask only to verify that the Pass is yours. You can use the list of cultural partners included in this Guide to determine which museums require ID.

Extras Are Extra
The Family Pass covers general admission. You may need to pay extra fees for special exhibits and activities. Please call the museum if you’re unsure.

It’s For Families
Family Passes should not be used for school trips or large group trips. Up to 3 families, each with a Family Pass, can visit a museum together as a small group.

Pack your bag with:

SANITIZER & SUPPLIES.
Make sure you carry hand sanitizer and an extra mask to ensure the safest experience. Bring note pads and pencils so that you can draw and write what you see in the museum.

AN "ART" TELESCOPE.
Fun tools from your home, like a magnifying glass or a decorated toilet paper roll will keep young children’s hands busy and engage them in close looking.

A CAMERA.
Find out if photography is allowed in the museum. If so, take pictures of your child(ren) with the art (e.g., imitating a statue) and exhibits. Discuss your pictures after the trip to reinforce memories.

SNACKS.
You may want to pack a snack and eat it right before the visit, as many museums do not permit outside food. You also want to limit the times that you take your mask off while outdoors.

Haven't received your Cool Culture Pass?
Please reach out to staff at your child’s school to register.
**MEET THE NEAL FAMILY**

Can you tell me about an experience you've had visiting a museum since the start of the pandemic?

I decided to visit the Queens Zoo with my family. I used the Queens Zoo’s app to schedule a time slot to visit. Unfortunately, there was nowhere to submit my Cool Culture Pass to receive free admission. So I had to pay the full amount. When I arrived at the Zoo I explained the situation and I was refunded within 5 business days. I would recommend that if you can't use your Cool Culture Pass during the ticketing process that you call the museum and explain that you would like to have the institution accept your card as payment when you enter your destination. Other than this obstacle that we experience with trying to use our Cool Culture Pass, we had a blast! It wasn’t as crowded as it might have been prior to the pandemic, so we had more space and opportunity to see everything. 

"Cool Culture has been working earnestly with our partners to eliminate these obstacles in the future."

Do you feel comfortable returning to museums since your experience at the Queens Zoo?

I would definitely do it again. I like the way museums accept our Cool Culture Pass without judging us. No question asked. The whole experience makes me feel “free, free, free”... I like anything free!

What has your relationship with Cool Culture been like overall?

I am a part of the Curators Family program. It is fun making art with other families online. During this time of having to be separated from everybody, we look forward to the online events. I love everything about Cool Culture.

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**FAMILY Spotlight**

Curation is not simply what happens in museum spaces. There are many ways to bring the experience of interacting with art into our homes. Ashanti Walker and her family have transformed their home into an art archive that documents their family bonding time. Every wall throughout the Walker’s home is filled with her family’s art, photos, and memories. Cool Cultures’ Assistant Director of Family Programs, Tammy Mahone was able to take a virtual tour of the Walker family home and asked Ashanti a few questions about her curation process. Here is a snippet of the conversation.

**Tammy: What inspired you to create a gallery space in your home?**

_Ashanti:_ I realized that as a family we enjoyed making music and art together. It wasn’t enough to contain these memories within a photo album. We valued these experiences and wanted a way to place these memories in plain sight. We began by displaying the art we created together as a family. It began with the first works of art my children created in preschool. When I look at my walls I am reminded of how much my children have grown since then. We are always adding artwork to the walls. The most recent work was created by my husband. As you walk through our home, you are taken through meaningful moments that our family have shared together.

**Tammy: How has your home gallery impacted your family and everyone else who is invited into your home?**

_Ashanti:_ Everyone admires the artwork. It usually starts a conversation and I really enjoy that. _My walls create a sense of pride for my children_. When they have their friends over, my children direct them to the art that they have created and share the artmaking process with their friends. Their friends become interested in the artwork and we usually end up creating more art together during their playdates.

**Tammy: How do you decide what goes on the walls?**

_Ashanti:_ I am constantly rearranging the art on the walls. Sometimes I move pieces to certain rooms according to the season or just to change things up a bit. My children also get involved in the curation. They will let me know which artwork that they want to be displayed in our home and which pieces they want to share with other family members. I like that they value their work being displayed in our home and use their power of choice.
COOL CULTURE PARTNERS THAT ACCEPT THE FAMILY PASS

Use this map to find the nearest subway station to your favorite Cool Culture partners. Please use the listing on the next two pages for corresponding numbers.

DURING YOUR MUSEUM VISIT

Explore the many ways your family can have fun and learn in a museum.

Follow Your Child’s Lead
Explore the areas that interest your child(ren) most and ask them:
• What do you see?
• What do you wonder about what you see?

Strike a Pose
Have everyone in the family pose like something they see. Ask your child:
• What is the character or animal doing or feeling?
• What sounds might they be making?

Imagine & Create
With your child, use your imagination to create stories about the objects or artwork you see. Ask your child:
• What’s happening there? What will happen next?
• Play out the scenes together!

AFTER YOUR MUSEUM VISIT

Family Memories:
On your way home, while sharing a meal or at bedtime, take a moment to tell and retell the story of your visit. You can show photos of the day and ask questions like: “Can you name a few things that we saw in the museum?” and “What was your favorite part of our visit?”

Connect with Cool Culture Online:
Join the Cool Culture family online! Follow Cool Culture’s Facebook and Instagram pages to find out about family focused cultural activities happening throughout the city, and to post photos of your adventures and share trip tips.

facebook.com/coolculture  @coolculture

We’re Here to Help:
We’d love to hear about your experience using the Cool Culture Family Pass. To share feedback or any questions with us, please email family@coolculture.org or call (718)230-4186. You can also connect with staff at your child’s school. We’re here to help and look forward to learning from you!
COOL CULTURE IS SUPPORTED BY:

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Cool Culture’s mission is to amplify the voices of families and strengthen the power of historically marginalized communities through engagement with art and culture, both within cultural institutions and beyond.

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