



Did Dinosaurs Poop? A Traveling Exhibition (1400-1800 sq. ft.)

Children become food, fossils, and paleontologists in **Did Dinosaurs Poop?**, an exciting new exhibition available February 2013. Designed for an audience of families with children ages 4 to 10, this exhibition presents a fun, colorful approach to learning about fossils and dino diets long ago. Visitors take a digestion journey, traveling as dinosaur “food” from tooth to tush, and discover how poop can become a fossil. They also take on the role of paleontologist to uncover fossils at a “dig site,” examine them, and figure out where - and when! - they came from.

Through bright graphics, hands-on interactives, touchable fossil casts, and purposeful play, visitors:

- see how stones, bones, and teeth tell us about dino diet
- understand the process of fossilization
- begin to reconstruct past ecological webs
- become scientists themselves, discovering how to learn from the amazing fossil record!

The exhibition components include:

A.1. A.2 Entrance & Long, Long Ago

When families enter *Did Dinosaurs Poop?*, they are greeted by a large mural depicting the friendly exhibition logo and introductory text. They also see a case holding fossilized poop, or coprolites. A large panel gives a brief introduction to the history of life on Earth.

A.3 Weaving the Food Web

Families will explore the connections between modern animals, like predator-prey relationships and various food webs.

A.4 Chain of Food

At this hands-on interactive, children and their families will discover three prehistoric food webs. By following the path between different carnivores, the animals they ate, and the plants those creatures ate, visitors will begin to see the big picture.

B.1 From Tooth to Tush

This large mural illustrates how dinosaurs' digestive systems differ between theropods, sauropods, and ornithischians. Visitors will see the step-by-step process of how each part of the digestive system aids in processing food and getting energy!

B.2 Down in the Mouth

This area explains in more detail how animals, like dinosaurs, use their mouth to begin the digestion process. Visitors will begin to understand how animal teeth and mouths evolve, and why different animals have different teeth.

B.3 Tooth Tales

At this activity, children will study and touch a variety of fossil teeth to determine whose teeth they might have been and what each animal ate. They'll then slide up small graphics to reveal the answers and see more fun facts.

B.4 Digestion Connection

Here, families will learn more about the stomach and intestinal parts of various dinosaurs' digestive systems. They'll also understand how scientists combine information from fossils and from dinosaurs' living descendants.

B.5 Rock & Roll

Using sauropod stomachs as an example, children will turn a large, clear cylinder full of stones. They'll see how all this movement helps break down food like plants and leaves. They will be surprised to discover that four-legged dinosaurs ate stones for just that reason!

B.6 Digestive Journey

Here, children will experience the process of digestion in a sauropod, or four-legged dinosaur on a slide! They will put on a simple "leaf" costume to identify them as a source of food, and then they will climb into the dinosaur's "mouth," through its internal organs, and then slide down its tail – fully experiencing dino digestion! Signage along the way will prompt parents to describe what is happening to their little leaf at each stage of digestion.

C.1 Buried Treasure

Finally, our question is answered – yes, dinosaurs pooped! This large mural describes how they did, and how we know.

C.2 Feces to Fossil

How exactly does poop fossilize? Even though hard remains, like bones or teeth, are more common, families will discover how soft parts, like poop, are preserved.

C.3 The Scoop on Poop

Coprolites are found in a range of shapes and sizes. At this touch table, visitors will compare different fossilized feces and see how different animals leave different poop behind.

C.4 You're the Paleontologist!

So how do we know all this? Here, visitors will learn the role of the paleontologist – how they work and what they do!

C.5 Dig In

What kinds of tools and what process do paleontologists use in the field? At this interactive, kids will find out and try them out for themselves. They will put on goggles, grab their brushes, and uncover fossil casts in this rubber dirt-filled dig site.

C.6 Back in the Lab

Paleontology is more than digging in the ground! Visitors will see what happens to a fossil after it is removed from the earth, and how it is cleaned for study.

C.7 Piecing the Puzzle

At this large lab table, visitors – wearing a lab coat, of course – will use a range of tools to learn more about life on Earth from a sampling of coprolites. These include calipers, a magnifying glass, and an x-ray.