La Nube STEAM Discovery Center
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La Nube STEAM Discovery Center

It’s not often you see a four-story building shaped like a cloud. But when you do, you know there’s something special waiting inside. Such is the case with El Paso’s La Nube STEAM Discovery Center, which not only puts the “sky” in skyline, but will put your jaw on the floor with its state-of-the-art, interactive exhibits designed for all ages. What’s more, the entire center is bilingual in English and Spanish—close to a must-have for being so near to the border.

Whereas most museums have strict rules about touching things, La Nube encourages poking, prodding, and all forms of experimentation. It’s about activating the latent scientist, engineer, artist, and mathematician in all of us, and helping kids discover the rewarding and exciting nature of education that often gets lost in the classroom.

Nine Unique Zones, One Ticket

Your general admission ticket covers every zone in the building—so no fumbling through bundles, debating add-ons, or figuring out how to get the best deal based on how much time you have. Each zone is designed around a particular age group and exploring how we can shape—or just better understand—the world around us.

Take the Our Sky zone, for example, which is centered entirely around meteorology and the cultural stories derived from the starry night sky. In this zone, kids can use a mobile research station to make weather readings, read about constellations via a giant illuminated wall, and even record their very own weather forecast in front of a green screen.

Another of the most popular zones is Flow, a hands-on water gallery that reminds kids and adults alike just how versatile water can be. Splashing your way through an obstacle course, marveling at the intricacies of hydrology in the pump room, and venturing onto the terrace for some outdoor bubble-making action are just some of the experiences Flow has in store. P.S. You might want to bring a towel for this one.

For the youngest—and perhaps most curious minds—the Desert Bloom zone draws upon the nearby Chihuahuan Desert as inspiration. It’s specifically designed for toddlers up to three, so no need to worry about your kid venturing too high or getting themselves into a precarious spot. This play area is replete with special building blocks you won’t find in the average toy aisle, sensory cocoons that play music and stories, and plenty of desert-theme areas to climb and run.

Climb All Four Stories in One Structure

Stairs and elevators are all about getting to the destination as quickly as possible. But La Nube knows that the journey is the most nutrient-rich part of the trip. That’s why kids can travel all four floors via the

Anything’s Possible Climber, a 50-foot play structure that combines the study of geometry with good ol’ fashioned motor skills.

Kids climb and crawl through wildly colorful cylinders, dodecahedrons, spheres, and more. It’s like shrinking down to microscopic size and traveling between atoms. At the top of the structure, kids will find a wheelchair challenge course. Should there be any doubt by now, the Anything’s Possible Climber is one of the tallest indoor playgrounds in Texas.

An Emphasis on Accessibility

The wheelchair challenge course at the top of the Anything’s Possible Climber isn’t an outlier. All of La Nube is designed for maximum accessibility, as every single kid deserves a chance to discover their full potential.

Sensory kit backpacks and noise-canceling headphones are free to check out on the first floor, and relaxed sensory corners are throughout the building for anyone who needs a quiet moment. Visitors with visual impairments have access to topographical maps, two nursing rooms are on the third floor, family restrooms are on every floor, and the entire building is nut-free. Service dogs are also welcome anywhere in the building.

Pricing also reflects the accessibility focus, as families with SNAP or WIC EBT cards pay a discounted $5 a piece for up to six people.

How to Find La Nube

A four-story, 70,000-square-foot building shaped like a cloud shouldn’t be hard to find, and La Nube isn’t! Just as it encourages all the young visitors to do, La Nube’s creativity and distinctiveness stand out amongst the crowd. Its cloud design—and name—grew out of the idea that the sky has no borders, and neither should the human experience.

La Nube sits—or floats, perhaps—at 201 W. Main Drive, directly across from the Chihuahuas ballpark.

When it comes time to indulge in a little brain food, La Nube has its very own restaurant called Little Stars Café. They serve up kiddo favorites like grilled cheese sandwiches, chicken quesadillas, and pizza bagels. And don’t forget to swing by the gift shop on your way out! Souvenir or it didn’t happen.