Educators and Caregivers Museum Guide

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Our Mission

Acting on the principle that learning is a joy, the mission of the Children's Museum of Phoenix is to provide hands-on exhibits and educational activities to engage the minds, muscles and imaginations of children and the grown-ups who care about them, while promoting cooperative interaction, fostering cultural understanding, and enhancing parenting techniques.

Our Vision

The Children's Museum of Phoenix's vision is to foster a joy of learning to create an environment for families which captures the interest and enthusiasm of children and their adults and inspires people of all ages to learn, work and play together. Our vision is defined by the following objectives:

- Provide engaging projects, exhibits, and programming for young children and their families.
- Educate parents and caregivers about child development and parenting techniques.
- Build cultural understanding, positive social interaction, and celebrate diversity.
- Act as a gateway to other cultural institutions and community programs.

Educational Philosophy

At the Children's Museum of Phoenix, we believe that every interaction—whether in our exhibits, programs, or at community events—is an opportunity to support holistic child development. Our approach is centered on play-based, hands-on learning and guided facilitation, designed to foster growth across all developmental domains.

Holistic Development and Inclusion
Our philosophy recognizes that children develop across multiple interconnected domains, which must be considered holistically in exhibit and program design. These domains include:

- **Cognitive development**: Thinking, problem-solving, reasoning, and creative expression.
- **Fine motor development**: Precision, hand-eye coordination, and manipulation of small objects and tools.
- **Gross motor development**: Large movement activities, coordination, balance, and physical strength.
- **Language and literacy development**: Speaking, listening, reading, and communication.
- **Sensorial development**: Sensory processing, exploration, and sensory integration.
- **Social-dramatic development**: Role-play, imagination, empathy, and storytelling.
- **Social-emotional development**: Self-concept, relationships, turn-taking, and appreciation of diversity.

These domains are intertwined throughout our programs, providing children opportunities to engage cognitively, socially, physically, and emotionally.

Supporting Neurodiversity
In line with our commitment to inclusivity, we embrace the concept of neurodiversity by intentionally designing exhibits and activities that accommodate a variety of sensory processing needs, learning styles, and behavioral patterns. Our approach includes sensory-friendly displays

that offer ample space, quiet zones for sensory breaks, and adaptive tools such as noise-canceling headphones and fidget toys. We believe that neurodivergent children, just like their peers, can fully engage with our exhibits and learning opportunities, and we ensure that our museum environment is one that fosters all types of learners. This approach is vital for ensuring that all children can explore and grow without feeling overwhelmed, allowing them to thrive both cognitively and emotionally.

Evidence-Based Support for Social and Emotional Learning (SEL)
Research shows that social and emotional learning (SEL) is crucial for healthy child development. Museums naturally serve as spaces where children can engage in shared experiences, practice empathy, and develop resilience. Our museum provides opportunities for children to:

- Engage in collaborative play, which promotes emotional regulation and builds peer relationships.
- Develop social-emotional skills such as negotiation, self-awareness, and empathy.
- Experience reduced anxiety and stress, which supports mental well-being and enhances learning outcomes.
- Practice core values like kindness, responsibility, and respect through play-based learning.

By offering experiences that integrate social-emotional learning with hands-on play, we create an environment where children can not only learn cognitive concepts but also develop emotional and social skills that are vital for lifelong success.

By integrating developmental domains, neurodiversity, and evidence-based practices for SEL, the Children's Museum of Phoenix offers a rich, holistic learning experience that nurtures not only intellectual growth but emotional and social development, preparing children to become well-rounded, compassionate individuals. Through every interaction, we support the growth of self-awareness, confidence, and a lifelong love of learning.

Visit our Calendar for a full listing of our programs and events or email our Education & Programs Team at programs@childmusphx.org

Character Development

At the Children's Museum of Phoenix, we believe that play builds character—and that every interaction is an opportunity to grow. Our Character Development initiative weaves five foundational skills into the daily Museum experience: **Kindness, Curiosity, Bravery, Creativity, and Respect**.

Through hands-on activities, playful prompts, and positive staff modeling, we help children explore what it means to be kind friends, curious learners, brave explorers, creative thinkers, and respectful community members. These character skills are celebrated throughout the Museum in exhibits, programs, and conversations—empowering kids to practice them in meaningful, age-appropriate ways. It's all part of our mission to nurture confident, compassionate, and capable learners through the power of play.

Look for character icons in this guide as you learn more about our exhibits!

While all our exhibits develop our top 5 "Character Skills", those that are most prevalent, supported and fostered in a specific exhibit area will be indicated by their designated icon:

Bravery ... doing something that is really hard for you to do.

Creativity ... using your mind, muscles, and imagination to create anything!

Curiosity ... the excitement you feel to learn more.

Kindness ... being friendly, generous, and safe.

Respect ... treating people, places, and things with care.

Stages of Character Development in Childhood

Sensory -

During this beginning phase of early childhood, children develop their senses, sparking their **curiosity** about the world around them. Their eyesight sharpens as they observe objects, animals, and people, and they begin using fine and gross motor skills to grasp objects, clap hands, turn their head toward sounds, sit up, crawl, bounce, and stand. They communicate through cries, coos, babbles, and vowel sounds, eventually laughing and engaging with others. Their **creativity** grows as they imitate sounds, facial expressions, and emotions, and as they begin speaking simple words.

These early explorations also nurture **bravery**, as children try new movements and experiences, **respect**, as they notice and respond to people and environments around them, and **kindness**, as they begin to share smiles, gestures, and early attempts at cooperative play. Playful moments become powerful learning opportunities—your child might stop and look in awe at the Museum's CD Wall, curious about why the shiny discs "sparkle" in the light or feel inspired to create the tallest tower in Blockmania, practicing **creativity, kindness**, and sharing space alongside other visiting littles. In these moments, sensory growth and character development work hand in hand, laying the foundation for a lifetime of learning.

Exploration -

In addition to their sensory growth, this next phase of early childhood development brings expanding exploration. Continuing to use more and more of their large muscles, children begin to physically discover the world around them. They may reach movement milestones, begin walking, reaching, holding objects, pointing at and learning the names of things they are **curious** about. As they explore, they use more words and develop a growing vocabulary, building confidence that leads to **creative** pretend play.

This stage also nurtures **bravery**, as children attempt new challenges, and **respect and kindness**, as they begin to share, take turns, and include others in their play. For example, your child might be **curious** about the slide in the Museum's *Threes & Younger* exhibit, climbing each step with **bravery** before feeling their way back down the slippery slide. They might gather flowers for their playhouse, using **creativity** and showing **kindness** by offering one to a friend or caregiver. In these moments, exploration becomes a powerful bridge between physical development, language growth, and character building.

Independence -

This next advancing phase of early childhood brings growing independence. Children begin to develop adaptive life skills, such as dressing themselves, using the toilet alone, feeding themselves, asking more pointed questions, refining fine motor skills with drawing, writing, and cutting, and practicing self-control. This increased confidence in their minds and bodies fosters **bravery** in trying new tasks, **curiosity** in asking thoughtful questions, and **creativity** in exploring new ways to solve problems or play. They also deepen their understanding of

emotions, moving into associative play—sharing materials, talking with peers, and showing **respect** and **kindness** in their interactions.

For example, your child might be **curious** about the colorful rice table in *The Market* exhibit, eager to scoop and sift the rice as they pretend to shop in this child-sized grocery store. They might show **creativity** by acting out roles as cashier or stock worker, and **bravery** in trying new tools or play scenarios. Choosing pretend ingredients to "buy" and making food for their family can be an opportunity to practice **kindness** and **respect**—sharing their creations with others and taking turns at the table. In this stage, independence blends with character growth, preparing children for the next steps in their learning journey.

Personality -

As children continue to develop their independence, this next phase of childhood is when their personality begins to shine. They feel more comfortable around others, expressing their likes and dislikes, and forming favorites—foods, colors, songs, entertainment, and games. They understand their feelings and bodies, recognize when they've made a mistake, and continue building **respect** for others through social interactions. School readiness skills grow stronger as they learn to hold pencils properly, recognize letters, develop early literacy, process stimuli, regulate emotions, share with peers, and express wants and needs while forming friendships. This stage celebrates **curiosity** in trying new activities, **creativity** in self-expression, **bravery** in sharing ideas, and **kindness** in working and playing alongside others.

For example, your child might be **curious** about the buckets of bright paint in the *Art Studio* and feel **brave** enough to help a Playologist mix in a new color to create a unique shade. They might use **creativity** to draw shapes that become letters, animals, or imaginary creatures, or show **respect** and **kindness** by sharing materials while building a *Thing-a-ma-jig* from recyclables. In this stage, personality, skill-building, and character development combine, preparing children for success both in school and in their relationships.

Learning -

In this phase of school-age development, children thrive in a world of learning. Their language and vocabulary expand, they form opinions, make comparisons, and build connections as they progress in understanding complex subjects such as writing, math, and reading. They may develop a strong **curiosity** for specific topics—whether dinosaurs, sports, dance, or art—and dive deeply into exploring them. Friendships grow in importance, and children show **respect** and **kindness** as they consider others' perspectives, strengthen social bonds, and begin resolving conflicts without adult help. With growing confidence in their abilities, they display **bravery** in taking on challenges and **creativity** in solving problems or expressing themselves.

For example, your child might be visiting the Museum on a field trip with classmates. Their **curiosity** is sparked as they explore *Pedal Power*, noticing trikes whizzing past and hearing the air rush through the pretend carwash. They recognize street signs on the walls and collaborate with friends, showing **creativity** by moving the brushes in playful ways, pretending to direct traffic, or adding sound effects. In these moments, they practice **respect** and **kindness** as they share ideas and space with peers, and **bravery** as they take on new roles, building skills that connect play with lifelong learning.

Teamwork -

As children progress through their first years of primary learning and approach the preteen stage, they begin to connect more deeply with peers, entering a phase where **teamwork** becomes central to their play and learning. They start to understand their role in group dynamics, applying logic, reason, and critical thinking to shared goals and social structures. Friendships are more important than ever, and they learn to navigate subtle emotions as well as big feelings, sometimes shifting quickly between the two. Group activities strengthen communication, **respect**, **kindness**, patience, and empathy, while also inspiring **bravery** in trying new roles and taking shared risks. They begin to practice future thinking, considering different perspectives and exploring "what if" scenarios in both play and conversation.

For example, your child might be attending Camp at the Museum, spending the day exploring exhibits alongside fellow campers. Their **curiosity** is sparked by the pool noodles dangling from the ceiling in *Noodle Forest*—how far back does the forest go? Working together with peers, they navigate pathways through the noodles, then instinctively transform the space into a cooperative game of hide-and-seek with a **creative** twist: specific-colored noodles are "off-limits," adding strategy and challenge. In moments like these, **respect**, **kindness**, and **bravery** come to life as children communicate, adapt, and support one another, building the teamwork skills that will serve them far beyond playtime.

Safety, Accessibility & Health Concerns

Providing a safe, accessible and healthy environment in which our visitors can play and learn is a top priority for the Children's Museum of Phoenix. The following information is intended to answer questions you might have about specific Museum procedures and priorities and will also provide you with some good general tips.

Accessibility

The Children's Museum of Phoenix is all-inclusive for the children in the greater Phoenix area and we provide barrier-free access for visitors. Our navigation is bilingual and our staff is multilingual as well.
Service animals are welcome in the Museum, and we can provide wheelchairs with advanced notice provided.

You can request this service by calling our main number at 602.253.0501 and pressing 0.
Pal Experiences and the Children's Museum of Phoenix have partnered to create a custom Pal Video and digital, mobile-friendly Pal Guide to support visitors with autism, anxiety, and other learning differences.

The resources are free to the public at PalExperiences.org. You can also click this video, which will give you an idea of what to expect when you visit the Children's Museum of Phoenix's indoor exhibits.

Safety

How does the Museum protect our children?

The Museum's safety policies and procedures were developed in conjunction with the Phoenix Police Department. All Museum staff, floor staff, administrative staff, and volunteers receive background checks. Staff members and volunteers are prohibited from touching a child visitor except:

- In the event of a life threatening injury or preventing a pending accident.
- In order to prevent bodily injury.
- At the request of the child's guardian.

Stranger Danger – Adults Unaccompanied by a Child

You would think that only people with children would visit a Children's Museum. However, that is not always the case. Some of these adults are here for meetings with administrative staff. In this case, a staff member greets them at the front door and escorts them to the meeting location. In other cases, adults request access just to see what a Children's Museum is like. In these cases we always request some form of ID, which we then keep until the visitor has finished their "tour". They are allotted a certain amount of time for their visit and given a colored wristband for easy identification. Should inappropriate behavior be witnessed or suspected, the Museum has Security staff onsite for these instances.

Child Supervision

For the safety of all our guests, children are not allowed to visit the Museum without an adult. Children must be accompanied by their parents or adult caregiver at all times as they travel throughout our exhibit spaces.

Missing Child/Adult

Being a Children's Museum, we are acutely aware that children can sometimes wander off by themselves, or adults can lose sight of their child. The Museum has extensive and effective procedures for locating missing children and/or missing adults.

Evacuation Information

Our evacuation procedures are designed solely with the protection of adults and children in mind. All staff are trained on proper evacuation procedures which includes getting all visitors out of the building in a calm and orderly fashion as well as includes matching up all children with their proper adult.

Safe Play Reminder

By purchasing a ticket, you understand that while exploring the Children's Museum of Phoenix is fun and exciting, you participate at your own risk. The Museum is not liable for any accidents, illnesses, or injuries. Enjoy your visit safely and playfully!

Health Concerns

What is the Museum specifically doing about preventing the spread of viruses?

We take the health of our visitors and staff very seriously and as a result, we've made many changes to ensure safer play. These steps include:

Increasing the frequency of cleaning throughout the day with industry-approved surface disinfectants.

Providing sanitizing spray throughout the exhibits for guests to utilize as they see fit.

Adjusting some of our exhibit elements in order to maintain a thorough cleaning routine.

Asking visitors to stay home when they or their children are sick.

Asking staff to stay home if they are sick.

Encouraging children and families to wash their hands with soap and water frequently.

Be Safe. Be Healthy. Be Playful.

Hand Washing and Hand Sanitizers

Washing your hands the proper way with soap and water is the BEST way to minimize germs! And with sinks available on all three floors of the Museum, we provide ample opportunities to wash in the most natural and productive way! We even provide child-height sinks to make it easy for the little ones to get into the fun of washing their hands. You'll also find sanitizing stations throughout our exhibits. Parents are welcome to use sanitizing spray on both hands and surfaces as they see fit during their visit.

An Overview of the Museum Exhibits:

ART STUDIO: CREATIVE EXPRESSION – 

In this creative workshop, visitors find an ever-changing array of hands-on art activities that help them make connections to the real world as well as to other exhibits in the Museum. Art Studio creativity includes gobs of glue, explosions of color, cutting with scissors to develop small muscles and fine-tune eye-hand coordination, and releasing the imagination in bursts of creativity. Here, art becomes the means to explore the world of art history, the sciences, math, language arts, and social studies. Children learn to work with others by participating in group projects — like painting the 10-foot tall rocket ship! — and they spend time working on individual activities that they can share with you. This is a no-fail environment where we acknowledge the creativity in everyone, no matter what their age.

BLOCKMANIA! WHAT WILL YOU BUILD? – 

Blocks are recognized as one of the most important play materials of childhood. Young children have difficulty thinking abstractly and blocks provide manipulation of concrete objects, as opposed to activity on a flat screen such as a computer. Located on the first floor, next to the wonderfully imaginative Climber, this beautiful space offers blocks of all sizes, shapes and colors, providing the raw materials for an amazing array of creative expressions. Whether engaged in a sprawling group project or intensely focused on building a solitary structure, children test their skills in eye-hand coordination, proportion, balance, symmetry, spatial awareness and patience! No doubt, it's a place of towering possibilities!

BOOK LOFT: RESPITE AND RESOURCE – 

Reading together is one of the most important activities a caregiver can do with a child as it nurtures a love of the written word and builds a foundation for literacy and later success in school. This space is more low-key than most – comfy and cozy to encourage children to snuggle in and read a good book. The loft space also affords a view to upper levels of the Climber and a closer look at the CD wall.

BUILDING BIG – 

Building forts, dens, lean-tos and other shelters seems to be a human instinct that is played out again and again during childhood. The exhibit provides a host of raw materials and found items that might represent columns, beams, walls and roofs – all typical elements of the construction industry. Building Big entices the boundless imaginations of children to creatively engineer their own personal forts or contribute to a larger cooperative building project. Alive with interactive play, the area hums with purposeful activity.

THE CHILDREN'S GARDEN – 

Children will be exposed to hands-on, messy play in the garden where they will feel the dirt in their hands and the trickle of water on their toes while interacting with the garden components. Some of the activities in the garden will be guided by a program facilitator, however, children and their caregivers will also be able to explore the garden independently. As children explore they will learn plant names, and through discussions with facilitators, children will be exposed to rich vocabulary and content language.
Open 9:00am-3:30pm (weather permitting)

THE CLIMBER – 

Towering above the Atrium floor, the Climber offers a bird's eye view of the bustling activity below. Created from standard building materials, found objects, items out of context, and a little inspiration from some wacky imaginations, this climbing adventure is guaranteed to stretch the muscles, provide a feeling of perceived risk, and challenge all to climb to new heights. Climbing this sculpture is like climbing a tree. Therefore, to ensure a safe experience for all:

Children cannot be carried in backpacks, baby slings or in your arms.
Purses, bags, water bottles, etc. cannot be taken up into the Climber.
Shoes are required. High heels are not allowed on the Climber.

DRAMARAMA – 

Places, please! Get ready for your grand entrance in this imaginative space where we provide the costumes, and you bring the creativity and story to the stage!

THE GRAND BALLROOM – 

Balls go up, balls go down, balls go rolling all around – dropping, triggering, spiraling, bumping – flashes of movement and a myriad of sounds fill this action-packed room.

THE MARKET: ROLE PLAY PARADISE – 

Opportunities for role play abound as children bring the market alive with bustling activity. Much like real life, the market experience exercises the child's physical, cognitive and social skills while providing opportunities to engage in group play, measure and weigh peas, and sample a tower of wonderful, food-related aromas.

MOVE IT! – 

Encompassing the entire front yard along 7th Street, Move It! is an enticing outdoor exhibit space for children to do what they do best, learn through play and movement. Innovative in its design and repurposing of materials, the whimsical learning environment invites active exploration, robust imaginative play, physical activity requiring both fine and gross motor skills, and thought-provoking discoveries that lead to meaningful learning.
Open 9:00am-3:30pm (weather permitting).

NOODLE FOREST: NOT YOUR EVERYDAY NOODLES – 

Oodles of noodles suspended from above offer sensory immersion in a unique and engaging environment. A thick forest of textural delight awaits visitors as they navigate this unfamiliar yet stimulating terrain. The Noodle Forest is guaranteed to activate the senses and inspire the giggles.

THE PARK – 

Climb over, under, and through giant tunnels. Pop up and out of port holes as you travel from here to there.

PEDAL POWER – 

Pedal Power is a long, narrow space perfect for riding tricycles – and that is just what young visitors do here. Within the safe confines of the Museum, young visitors can learn to master the art of pedaling, test their sense of balance, and practice cooperative play as they stop and go on imagined roadways.
A tricycle "car wash" presents a unique experience as young drivers find their way through soft brushes, hanging strips and blowing fans. A mirrored tunnel excites children's imaginations as they safely zoom through on an adventure to somewhere.

PIT STOP – 

Pit Stop invites visitors to "race to the finish" on three levels of racetracks. Children launch innovative racecars from the upper deck and cheer as they zoom overhead and down the vertical drop to the finish line. The child's imagination takes over as he or she climbs into the modified racecar, revs the engine and takes off with tires screeching. A real motorcycle provides another means of "transportation" or just a

cool spot to sit and watch the action. Of course, anything can happen and the car might be transformed into a rocket ship or a time machine at any moment!

ROOM FOR THREES AND YOUNGER – 

This gallery is for our youngest visitors and has many components designed to meet the particular developmental needs of infants and toddlers. Crawling under a tree, watching planes from the deck, exploring with the senses, engaging in simple role-play – this area is a visual delight for child and parent alike. It provides a warm and welcoming space for caregivers to spend time enjoying and learning about their little ones in the essential company of other grown-ups. And because there is so much crawling going on in this room, the Museum enforces a strict no-shoes policy so that the little ones can enjoy this room in an environment that is as clean as possible. We've even created a very special shoe wall to keep your shoes in while you play!

If you are visiting the Museum with a child age three or younger but have other children with you that are older, we also encourage you to visit our other exhibits which have infant/toddler areas designed into them so that the whole family can enjoy playing together at the Museum!

TEXTURE CAFÉ – 

In the lively, child-sized Café, customers of all ages order up food for the imagination. First, choose your role: Maitre d', chef, or maybe 'regular' customer. Then, use an amazing array of fabrics and materials to create the meal of your dreams. Whether choosing green velvet for a spinach salad or scraps of silk for spaghetti, children actively engage all of their senses, garnished with creativity, to delight their customers. Tables and booths, counters and stools, and a full-service kitchen with ovens, stoves, storage and utensils provide the framework for culinary escapades. Enjoy and bon appétit!

WHOOSH! – 

Whoosh! captures the imagination and beckons children to experience the intrigue of sound, movement, color, and the power of air. This wonderful contraption is a freestanding jumble of connected tubes where children feed scarves in a rainbow of colors into the transparent, air-powered structure. The colorful scarves shoot up through the pipes at high speeds, to heights of 20 feet or more, and are released in a burst of energy from high above. In contrast, they gently float down slowly to land on or be caught by children.

For further details, visit us on the web at www.childrensmuseumofphoenix.org

Art Studio

Educational Value

Rationale

Direct participation in art sparks children's imaginations and provides another outlet for them to communicate their feelings.

> *"The arts provide multiple ways to experience, understand, and express the world and our relationship to it. They are one of the fundamental repositories of human wisdom. They educate the imagination and develop originality. They represent significant ways for students to discern, express, communicate, figure out, and understand the human universe."* Dr. Charles Fowler

Experiences with art foster creativity and imagination, bolster problem-solving and critical-thinking skills, and cultivate originality, discipline, cooperation, and self-esteem.

> *"The facts are that art education makes a tremendous impact on the development growth of every child and has proven to level the "learning field" across socio-economic boundaries."*- James S. Catterall

As children make art, they enhance social development, mutual appreciation and respect for others. Additionally, there is strong research that supports the link between rich art experiences and academic achievement.

Goals and Objectives

Invite Creative Expression and Visual Communication

- Provide space to settle comfortably and work individually or together.
- Provide tabletop projects that allow creativity and requires no instruction or preparation.
- Provide specific opportunities to create visual stories.

Demonstrate an Appreciation of Art and Creative Experimentation and Build Knowledge of What 'Art' Is

- Offer projects that are vertical and freestanding, and are implemented in three dimensions.
- Provide tools and materials that are open-ended and can be used in different ways.
- Provide recycled project materials that are acquired in partnerships with local industry.
- Include books about artists and art making from different places and times, including but not limited to those being explored in the Studio.
- Provide non-traditional art supplies, i.e. art materials from nature.

Literature:

Circle and Squares Everywhere by Max Grover
Hands – Growing Up to Be an Artist by Lois Ehlert
Harold and the Purple Crayon by Crockett Johnson
Imagine by Bart Vivian
I Spy – An Alphabet in Art by Lucy Micklethwait
Mouse Paint by Ellen Stoll Walsh

Classroom Activity

Art Studio: Baby Rattlesnakes	DURATION: 15-30 Minutes	GRADE LEVEL: Pre-K – 5th Grades
DESCRIPTION	Children will enjoy learning about and creating their own baby rattlesnake!	
OBJECTIVES	1. The children will recognize an Indian legend, Baby Rattlesnake. 2. The children will identify facts about snakes and/or desert safety. 3. The children will construct a baby rattlesnake out of paper.	
MATERIALS	• 6" X 6" brown construction paper • Scissors • Oil pastels, crayons, or markers • Gem stickers or glitter (optional) • Information about desert safety and snakes • Baby Rattlesnake by Viborita de Cascabel	
DIRECTIONS 	1) The children will read or have read to them the Indian legend, Baby Rattlesnake. 2) The children will review information about snakes and desert safety. 3) The children will choose a piece of construction paper and cut off each of the corners so that it looks like a stop sign 4) Using a marker, the children will start from one corner and draw a spiral shape. 5) The children will then cut on the spiral shape ending in the center which becomes the head of the snake. 6) They will decorate the snake with oil pastels, crayons, or markers. Gem stickers or glitter may be added.	
ADAPTATIONS	The spiral may need to be drawn by an adult for children who are having difficulty completing this task on their own.	
EXTENSIONS	Extend the concept of patterns after children have made patterns on the snake. Explore other types of patterns and where they occur (clothing, nature, etc.). This lesson provides opportunities to further explore the topics of snakes and desert safety more in depth. Expand learning about snakes by exploring other types of snakes and their habitats. Since desert safety is so important in Arizona, continue the discussion to include the importance of sunscreen, drinking water, and other potentially dangerous desert animals.	

Blockmania!

Educational Value

Rationale

In every country, children at play sit, squat or kneel on the floor, deeply engaged in manipulating a bunch of small items before them: blocks. Building with blocks is a universal play activity that aids in cultivating three-dimensional connectivity in the brain.

Blocks are recognized as one of the most important play materials of childhood. Young children have difficulty thinking abstractly and blocks provide manipulation of concrete objects, as opposed to activity on a flat screen, such as a computer. This beautiful space offers blocks of all sizes, shapes and colors, providing the raw materials for an amazing array of creative expression. Whether engaged in a sprawling group project or intensely focused on building a solitary structure, children test their skills in eye-hand coordination, proportion, balance, symmetry, spatial awareness and patience! No doubt, it's a place of towering possibilities.

Goals and Objectives

Develop STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) skills

- Early engineering skills are developed as children face challenges in symmetry, balance, equality, weight, shape, spatial relationships, measurement, and physical properties.
- Trial and error, cause and effect, and problem solving skills are tested and retested through block play.
- Blocks are the precursor of all buildings and the foundation of architecture. For the older child, block play introduces them to the history of architecture and the role of an architect, as well as other career fields: engineering, robotics, construction, etc.

Spark creativity, imagination, and innovation

- Engage creativity, imagining and constructing with blocks to make whatever children imagine.
- Skills in creativity, imagination, and innovation are essential to the 21st century workforce, and this exhibit provides plenty of opportunity to develop these skills.
- What better place for block play than next to the wonderfully-imaginative Climber. This unique structure will inspire endless possibilities in the nearby BlockMania! exhibit.

Opportunities to cultivate social-emotional skills

- Mentally constructing whole worlds while learning to cooperate, share, plan, and negotiate.
- Cooperation and collaboration are developed as children communicate and exchange ideas while engaging in block play.
- Children experience a sense of competence and confidence as structures are completed.

Literature:

When I Build with Blocks by Miki Alling
If I Built A House by Chris Van Dusen
Block City by Robert Louis Stevenson
How A House is Built by Gail Gibbons
Building A House by Byron Barton
Shapes in Buildings by Rebecca Rissman
How to Build an A by Sara Midda
Amazing Buildings by Kate Hayden
Dreaming Up: A Celebration of Building by Christy Hale

Classroom Activity

BlockMania!: Blocks In A Box	DURATION: 15-30 Minutes	GRADE LEVEL: PreK – 5th Grade
DESCRIPTION	During this activity where students will try to fit an assortment of blocks into a box, they will develop problem solving and communication skills while working together with peers.	
OBJECTIVES	1. The children will use problem solving and trial and error to find the best way to fit the blocks into a box. 2. The children will communicate with peers their ideas or possible solutions, while also listening to peer input. 3. The children will enhance geometry skills, including space and area, while working to figure out how they may fit together in the box.	
MATERIALS	• Assortment of wooden blocks • Box or container	
DIRECTIONS 	1) Divide the children into small groups of 3-5 students per group. 2) Each group will receive a box and an assortment of wooden blocks. 3) The goal is for each group to cover the inside bottom of their box with the blocks in a single layer, covering the most space. 4) Have each group estimate how many blocks they may use during this activity. 5) At the conclusion of the activity, have the groups share how many blocks they actually used. You may also discuss the following: - How could you fit more blocks? - Which block was the hardest to work with? The easiest? - Were your predictions correct?	
	For younger children, it would be most appropriate to use an assortment of unit blocks in square and rectangular shapes.	
EXTENSIONS	For older children, you may like to have them calculate area prior to completing the activity. Use a variety of shapes of blocks for an added challenge!	

Book Loft

Educational Value

Rationale

In the busy life of a children's museum, sometimes it's necessary for visitors to seek out a quiet spot for a change of pace; a place to sit down with one another and retreat, regroup, rejuvenate, and just observe the goings-on around them. Children in busy families relish opportunities to snuggle into a caregiver's lap or curl up into comfy seating with a book. Reading with children is one of the best ways for caregivers to nurture early literacy skills and a love of books and learning in general.

Children and adults need to spend time together: Playing, chatting, working, and just enjoying each other's company. A lifelong relationship between a child and a grown-up develops through countless shared moments. Here, grown-ups will be able to take the time to settle down and talk with their children, watch them learn, and listen to all the wonderful ideas they have.

> *"There are perhaps no days of our childhood we lived so fully as those we spent with a favorite book."*- Marcel Proust

Goals and Objectives

Literacy: Offer Various Ways for Children to Become Familiar with Written Symbols, Book Typography, Book Parts and Reading Skills

- Provide a variety of books and other materials with wholesome topics and from different cultures, including those written in other languages.
- Museum staff will offer daily storytimes for children and their families, which also serves as a model for reading.

Relaxation: Offer a space for respite within the larger, active museum environment.

- Offer a different perspective on other parts of the Museum, especially the Climber.
- Provide a variety of seating opportunities for enjoying a piece of literature.

Communication: Provide a forum for open communication about everyday topics of interest in the child-rearing world.

- Offer means for visitors to add to cumulative dialogues about topics of interest.
- Provide comfortable multi-level social seating for adults and children in the space, so the layout is casual and encourages people to get acquainted with each other and chat.
-

Literature:

Arthur and the Race to Read by Marc Brown
But Excuse Me That is My Book by Lauren Child
The Day Eddie Met the Author by Louise Borden
Dog Loves Books by Louise Yates
How a Book is Made by Aliki
Miss Brooks Loves Books (And I Don't) by Barbara Bottner
The Old Woman Who Loved to Read by John Winch

Classroom Activity

Book Loft: Creative Corner Bookmarks	DURATION: 15-30 Minutes	GRADE LEVEL: 1st – 5th Grade
DESCRIPTION	This activity allows students the opportunity to develop skills in recognizing environmental print as well as the letters of the alphabet.	
OBJECTIVES	1. The children will follow a sequence of directions to create their own bookmark. 2. The children will use materials provided to create a design that reflects personal taste or based on personal experiences. 3. The children will increase reading time and focus by using their bookmark to mark their place in their book.	
MATERIALS	• Construction or cardstock paper, varied colors • Pattern (**Found on Last Page of this Guide**) • Paper scraps • Scissors • Glue sticks • A book to read and place the bookmark!	
DIRECTIONS 	1) Have copies of the pattern already on colored paper, and have the children cut it out. As an alternative, children may cut out the pattern and trace it onto the paper of their choice. **If you choose this method, you may wish to make some heavy duty patterns using cardstock or posterboard.** 2) After the students have a cutout of the pattern in their desired paper color, have them fold over the triangle flaps and glue them to each other. They should not glue the triangle shapes to the square shaped section of the bookmark, leaving a pocket open for the book's pages. 3) Using scrap paper, students may add details by cutting and gluing pieces to their bookmark to create a character or animal.	
ADAPTATIONS	For younger children, or to make it a slightly easier project, use the corner of an envelope to create a similar bookmark! Just cut off the corner of the envelope to make a triangle shape, have the children decorate it, and then you have a simpler version of this bookmark!	
EXTENSIONS	Have students design other ways to make bookmarks using scraps of paper in the classroom. Tell students that a bookmark is used to mark your place in your book, but should also serve as a reminder to save a time and place for reading in your daily routine!	

Building Big

Educational Value

Rationale

Shelter is a universal need, offering not only physical protection but also a sense of security, control, and independence. Fort building is a timeless childhood experience that spans cultures and generations, allowing children to transform natural and found materials into creative structures, much like engineers at work.

At the Children's Museum of Phoenix, fort building encourages cognitive growth as children explore concepts such as balance, tension, gravity, and spatial awareness. Using open-ended, repurposed materials, children engage in hands-on problem-solving, experiment with trial and error, and develop critical thinking skills. Whether working alone or with others, they enhance their ability to collaborate and negotiate, continually reshaping their creations throughout the day.

Beyond cognitive development, fort building also nurtures social and emotional growth. By constructing their own worlds, children build a sense of competency and confidence. This process fosters resilience and creativity, equipping them with the skills and self-assurance to shape not only their immediate environment but the larger world in the future.

> *"The youth gets together his materials to build a bridge to the moon, or, perchance, a palace or temple on the earth"* - Henry David Thoreau

Goals and Objectives

Constructive and Imaginative Play

- Offer materials and tools that are easy to configure, connect, and change as needed to support play scenarios.
- Prompt exploration of the use of space in creating a closed-off area for privacy.

Sensory and Motor

- Provide opportunities for the development of fine motor muscles through the movements to operate mechanisms to suspend fabrics.
- Give children the opportunity to create an area that is their own private, closed-off space.

Inspiration and Cultural Awareness: Different Kinds of Shelters

- Offer frameworks in a variety of shapes.
- Provide a range of enclosure materials with varying texture, shape, or imagery.

Literature:

A Kid's Guide to Building Forts by Tom Birdseye
Bailey Goes Camping by Kevin Henkes
Block City by Robert Louis Stevenson
Building Big by David Macaulay
Camp Out! The Ultimate Kids' Guide by Lynn Brunelle

Classroom Activity

Building Big: Cardboard Box Forts	DURATION: 25-30 Minutes	GRADE LEVEL: Pre-K- 5th Grade
DESCRIPTION	A cardboard box is no longer just a box! To your students, it could be a castle, a tent, a house, or a fort of course!	
OBJECTIVES	1. Children will develop a unique, interesting, and creative three-dimensional sculpture out of recycled materials 2. Children will develop geometry and engineering skills as they design and plan their structure. 3. Through trial and error, children will discover what works and what doesn't as they are constructing their structure.	
MATERIALS	• Cardboard Boxes of various sizes (ask someone who just moved or a large warehouse business) • Scissors or other tool for cutting • Markers (or paint) to decorate • Other various craft materials for decorative features: feathers, foam shapes, etc.	
DIRECTIONS 	1) Children will develop a plan for the type of structure they wish to build (students may draw out a plan as well). 2) Children will gather boxes and other materials to make their structure and will complete their structure as planned. (NOTE: Adults will likely need to assist with cutting the cardboard. Students may draw lines for the parts that they want cut to assist with this step.) 3) Children may add other features using craft materials.	
ADAPTATIONS	Work on developing teambuilding skills by having students work together in teams to create a structure from the box(es). This will encourage students to work on communication, listening, trial and error, and planning.	
EXTENSIONS	Incorporate other recycling materials, such as bottles, caps, food boxes, etc. to add other features to their structure. Add the element of writing to this project by having students write a story about who lives in the structure, what kind of environment the structure is in, and what different features of the structure are used for.	

The Children's Garden

Educational Value

Rationale

A sensory-rich outdoor space where children connect directly with nature through hands-on, messy play. Digging in soil, feeling the cool splash of water, and exploring vibrant plants spark curiosity and foster a sense of wonder. By engaging multiple senses, children develop creativity, problem-solving skills, and a deeper appreciation for the natural world.

The garden blends guided learning with independent exploration. Facilitators may lead activities that introduce plant names, encourage scientific observation, and model rich vocabulary, while children and caregivers are also free to explore at their own pace. This balance allows for meaningful, personalized learning that builds both knowledge and confidence.

Beyond science concepts, the garden nurtures social-emotional and physical development. Caring for plants and sharing tools promotes respect and empathy, while open-ended challenges inspire bravery and resilience. Through play, discovery, and collaboration, the Children's Garden becomes a living classroom where nature inspires lifelong learning.

Goals and Objectives

Curiosity & Discovery

- Children engage their senses to explore soil, water, plants, and garden elements, identifying names, noticing details, and developing a lasting interest in the natural world.

Knowledge & Language Development

- Through guided and self-directed activities, children learn plant names, use descriptive vocabulary for textures and colors, and build foundational science concepts.

Social-Emotional Growth

- Children practice cooperation, empathy, and respect by sharing tools, caring for plants, and interacting positively with peers and caregivers.

Physical & Personal Growth

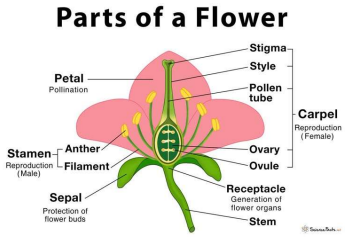
- Fine and gross motor skills are strengthened through digging, planting, and water play, while open-ended challenges encourage bravery, resilience, and confidence in new experiences.

Literature

Up in the Garden and Down in the Dirt by Kate Messner
The Tiny Seed by Eric Carle
Lola Plants a Garden by Anna McQuinn
Planting a Rainbow by Lois Ehlert
Because of an Acorn by Lola M. Schaefer & Adam Schaefer
We Are the Gardeners by Joanna Gaines and Kids
In the Garden by Emma Giuliani
From Seed to Plant by Gail Gibbons

Classroom Activity

The Children's Garden: Flower Botany	DURATION: 30-60 Minutes	GRADE LEVEL: PreK-5th Grade

DESCRIPTION	This activity allows students the opportunity to learn about the parts of plants & flowers! They will become botanists dissect and create a flower diagram, using a real flower.
OBJECTIVES	1. Children will explore and learn about all the parts of a flower. 2. Children will create their own 3D diagram of a flower while learning about the importance of pollinators and flowers in our ecosystem.
MATERIALS	• Colored pencils and paper • Live flowers – preferribly lilies, but any flower will work • Tape • Reference photo of a flower and it's parts (flower diagram) • Magnifying glasses & tweezers (optional)
DIRECTIONS 	1. Show photos of flowers to children – Talk about plant lifecycle - planting seeds in the ground; water, sun & oxygen to grow. 2. Show kids the flower diagram. Then show them real-life "3D" diagram of a dissected flower (make a teacher copy). 3. Hand them the top of a flower (no stem). Ask them to examine the flower with magnifying glass, what color is it, what do they see? Etc. 4. Next, give them paper and tape to create their own 3D diagram to take home! Carefully use tweezers to pull apart parts of the flower head to tape on paper, making the diagram. 5. Discuss benefits of flowers, the ecosystems, oxygen, insects, birds, bees, etc.
ADAPTATIONS	If a child doesn't want to pull apart the flower, have them use the magnifying glass to look for those parts and point them out. If real flowers aren't available, the children can draw the parts from reference photos.
EXTENSIONS	Continue learning about flowers by discussing their use for medicine and perfume, to look at and admire, etc. And traditionally, we now share flowers with the ones we love.

The Climber

Educational Value

Rationale

Prior to opening, over two hundred people were invited to a community Imagining Session for the Museum. Tree-climbing and tree-house experiences were mentioned over and over again as the most memorable childhood experiences.

The Climber invites you to the top of the world where a microcosm of climbing experiences suspended in the space above the atrium exhibits offers a unique bird's eye view of the bustling activity below. Children climb and balance, hang on for dear life, and find the best perch from which to observe.

Goals and Objectives

Motor and Sensory

- Provide opportunities for climbing and clambering, balancing, maneuvering around others and within multi-dimensional terrain.
- Immerse children in a sensory-rich environment with various textures, sights, and sounds.

Imaginative Play, Immersion and Risk

- Provide an experience that is perceived as risky and challenging, an opportunity for children to test themselves and succeed by climbing out, up, through, and engaging in some mid-air activity.
- Offer opportunities to choose and maneuver among multiple routes.

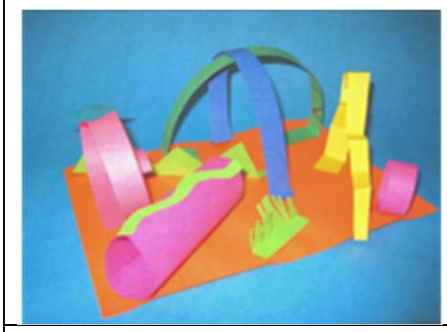
Community, Camaraderie, and Bonding

- Present visitors with a central element of the atrium space that connects the upper and lower levels and encourages visitor interaction across both the vertical and horizontal dimensions.
- Supply clear sightlines from the Climber down to the lower floor and across to the atrium, and scale the Climber so that there are clear sightlines through it between the mezzanine edges to the lower level. The idea is to see kids in it from above and below, and for kids to be able to see clearly out from it.

Literature

Climb the Family Tree, Jesse Bear! by Nancy Carlstrom
The Daddy Mountain by Jules Feiffer
Every Time I Climb a Tree by David McCord
Henry Climbs a Mountain by D.B. Johnson
Humpty Dumpty Climbs Again by Dave Horowitz
Troo's Big Climb by Cheryl Crouch
You Wouldn't Want to Climb Mommy Everest by Ian Graham

Classroom Activity

Climber: Construction Paper Playgrounds	DURATION: 15-25 Minutes	GRADE LEVEL: Pre-K – 5th Grade
DESCRIPTION	Based on inspiration from the Museum's Climber, students will design and create their own construction paper playgrounds with unique features.	
OBJECTIVES	1. Children will use fine motor skills to cut, fold, and manipulate paper to create 3-dimensional playground features. 2. Children will recognize the use of recycled paper in a 3-dimensional picture. 3. Children will plan and implement their planned design to create a paper playground.	
MATERIALS	• Construction paper 6"x9" • Construction paper scraps • Glue • Scissors	
DIRECTIONS 	1. The children will choose a sheet of 6" X 9" construction paper for a base. 2. Using pieces of recycled paper, they will cut out various strips or shapes and form them into 3-dimensional shapes (cones, spirals, cylinders, etc.). 3. They will glue the 3-dimensional shapes onto the base to create a climber or playground.	
ADAPTATIONS	Incorporate other items, including recyclables, to add other features to your playground!	
EXTENSIONS	Have students, especially those in older grades, create an article or advertisement about their unique playground! Encourage them to include details about the features of the playground, where it is located, and what visitors may do at the playground!	

DramaRama

Educational Value

Rationale

A vibrant, imaginative play space designed to nurture creativity, self-expression, and collaboration. Featuring a stage, a wide array of costumes and props, and a puppet theater, this space invites children to step into new roles, create their own stories, and bring characters to life. By engaging in dramatic play, children strengthen their imaginations while developing communication skills and confidence.

This environment supports both guided experiences and open-ended exploration. Caregivers can introduce prompts, themes, or cooperative games to spark ideas, while children are also encouraged to explore independently with peers or caregivers. The flexibility of costumes, props, and puppets allows children to adapt the space to their own narratives—whether retelling familiar tales or inventing entirely new worlds.

The educational value of dramatic play extends far beyond performance. On stage or behind the puppet theater, children practice language and literacy skills by building dialogue, sequencing events, and experimenting with expressive vocabulary. They also strengthen social-emotional abilities as they negotiate roles, listen to others' ideas, and express emotions in a safe, playful way. Through performance, children build bravery and resilience, learning to take creative risks and adapt when stories or roles change. By blending imagination, storytelling, and cooperative play, *DramaRama* fosters the confidence and communication skills that serve children in all areas of life.

Goals and Objectives

Creativity & Self-Expression

- Children use costumes, props, and puppets to create original stories or reimagine familiar ones, exploring ideas, emotions, and perspectives through dramatic play.

Language & Literacy Development

- By building dialogue, sequencing events, and narrating action, children expand vocabulary, strengthen storytelling skills, and develop clear communication.

Social-Emotional Growth

- Collaborative performances and role-play encourage cooperation, empathy, and respect for different ideas, while helping children practice listening and turn-taking.

Bravery & Confidence

- Performing on stage or behind the puppet theater inspires children to take creative risks, adapt to changing storylines, and build resilience in a supportive, playful environment.

Literature

Olivia Acts Out by Ian Falconer
A Stage Full of Shakespeare Stories by Angela McAllister
The Day the Crayons Came Home by Drew Daywalt
You Can't Take an Elephant on the Bus by Patricia Cleveland-Peck
Lilly's Big Day by Kevin Henkes
Interrupting Chicken by David Ezra Stein
Giraffes Can't Dance by Giles Andreae
The Storytelling Princess by Rafe Martin

Classroom Activity

DramaRama: Paper Bag Puppets	DURATION: 15-25 Minutes	GRADE LEVEL: Pre-K – 5th Grade
DESCRIPTION	Be inspired by DramaRama and create your own character with a paper bag puppet!	
OBJECTIVES	1. Children will use fine motor skills to cut, glue, color and manipulate paper to create a puppet out of a paper bag. 2. Children will develop a puppet character, working on their narrative skills, sequencing and storytelling. 3. Children will use their puppet to express creativity and develop social-emotional skills through storytelling.	
MATERIALS	• Construction paper scraps – all different colors • Glue • Scissors • Markers • Paper bags • Googly eyes (optional)	
DIRECTIONS 	1. The children will each get a paper bag – make sure it's laid flat. 2. Children will gather materials to decorate and create a character paperbag puppet. 3. Using scissors and glue, children will create a face on the bottom rectangle of the paperbag and a body on the longer/taller portion of the paperbag. 4. Children will then come up with a name for their puppet character and use their hands to move the "mouth" of the puppet to introduce their character to the rest of the group.	
ADAPTATIONS	Try creating specific characters from your favorite books!	
EXTENSIONS	Have students perform a puppet show from behind a chair or over a table. Professional puppeteers typically are not seen during a puppet show. Make it a true performance by making tickets and printed programs describing the performance!	

The Grand Ballroom

Educational Value

Rationale

Balls, balls and more balls – rolling, dropping, triggering, and bumping – flashes of movement and a myriad of sounds fill this action packed room. As children release balls from high in the loft, they can track their progress as they roll around the room setting off sights and sounds to squeals of delight.

Freestanding track runs on a smaller scale engage children on a more intimate level. The youngest visitors develop their tracking skills while rolling balls, cars, and "centipedes" down simple tracks.

A wall of metal and a selection of magnetic track pieces allow for constructing your own ball run – designing, testing, adjusting and launching the balls down the path you've devised. And what about the resonating sounds of the kitchen inspired pan run – simple yet enticing, isn't it?

The physics/science of chain reactions comes to life on a grand scale as ramps encircle the room. Smaller ball runs and exhibits exploring cause and effect combine to make this room a favorite with ball players, young and old.

Goals and Objectives

Critical Thinking Skills

- Offer opportunities for decision-making and strategizing as they construct their own cause and effect scenario.
- Introduce risk-taking when stakes are low, such as climbing the ladder to the top of the ball run.
- Engage curiosity, experimentation, cause and effect

Sensory Stimulation & Motor Skills

- Develop fine & gross motor movements as they construct their own and utilize existing ball runs within the exhibit
- Provide sensory-rich exploration of cause and effect ball runs such as when the ball hits the bell, it rings!

Literature

A Ball for Daisy by Chris Raschka
Ball! by Ros Asquith
Balls by Michael J. Rosen
Beach Ball by Peter Sis
Bear and Ball by C. Wright
Hit the Ball Duck by Jez Alborough
Klipper's Lost Ball by Mick Inkpen
Little Pig's Bouncy Ball by Alan Baron
Round Like a Ball by Lisa Campbell Ernst
Sam's Ball by Barbro Lindgren
Shapes That Roll by Karen Nagel
The Story of Red Rubber Ball by Constance Kling Levy

Classroom Activity

Grand Ballroom: Make Your Own Marble Maze	DURATION: 15-25 Minutes	GRADE LEVEL: Pre-K – 5th Grade
DESCRIPTION	Children will create their own labyrinth using recycled materials.	
OBJECTIVES	1. Children will develop eye-hand coordination as they manipulate the box to make the ball move. 2. Children will explore trial and error to successfully manipulate the ball the way they intend. 3. Children will develop visual tracking skills while watching the ball move.	
MATERIALS	• Shoebox lid • Construction paper scraps • Straws, cotton swabs, bottle lids, etc. • Glue • Scissors • Markers or crayons • Marble (or a gumball works well too!)	
DIRECTIONS 	1) Children will glue on straws, cotton swabs, lids, and paper scraps to create a maze for their marble in the shoebox lid. 2) Children will then use markers or crayons to decorate their maze. They may add Start and Finish areas to their maze. 3) Children will then place the marble on the maze and tilt the box lid back and forth to manipulate it through the obstacles.	
ADAPTATIONS	Obviously younger children will make a simpler maze, while older students may make a more complicated maze. If you have magnetic balls and magnet wands in your classroom, this is another fun way to use the maze. This is a great way for children who have difficulty coordinating their movements to make the marble move the way they want it to.	
EXTENSIONS	Make a marble maze on a larger scale by using cardboard tubes to connect to each other. Challenge students to see how high they can make their marble maze. Another great marble maze tool is a pool noodle cut in half lengthwise. The groove that is in the center makes a perfect track for the marble!	

The Market

Educational Value

Rationale

Direct participation in role-play experiences empowers children by sparking their imaginations and providing outlets for them to experiment and communicate with other people.

Not only can the Market give children opportunities for role-play and social interaction, but the sorting, grouping, weighing, counting, and numeracy that happens here provides a strong foundation for early math learning. The Market is a print-rich early literacy environment, and a rich variety of 'products' reflect the cultural diversity of Phoenix. In addition, concepts like good nutrition and consumer judgment can be introduced in simple, understandable formats.

> *"Around the age of six or seven, children develop a great need to learn by doing, to make their mark on a community outside the home. If the setting is right, these needs lead children directly to basic skills and habits of learning."* A Pattern Language

Goals and Objectives

Support Visitors' Imaginations, Capacity for Constructive Play, and Self-Initiative

- Provide objects and materials that suggest the sort of behaviors that might occur in a market.
- Establish an open-ended sequence that lets visitors drive all aspects of the market from shopping to check-out to restocking.
- Use tactile and multisensory details to convey the sense of a market—smell station with the real smell of spices, chrome bars to contain carts, tactile exploration of rice to scoop and measure.

Involve and Empower Children and Families to Participate in the Community Environment

- Supply comfortable spaces for caregivers to observe and chat from close proximity.
- Bolster children's social confidence by allowing for a wide variety of roles.
- Offer activities that require more than one participant or that integrate 'helping'.

Promote Cultural Awareness and Explore Cultural Diversity

- Offer market products with food types and labels from a variety of cultures in a variety of languages.

Encourage Basic Skill Development in Literacy and Math

- Include images, text, and numeric information on labels for development of literacy and numerical skills.
- Provide products with different shapes, sizes, weights, and tactile qualities.
- Supply finite quantities of products and offer ways to match or count products.

Literature:

At the Supermarket by Anne Rockwell
The Curious Garden by Peter Brown
Our Corner Grocery Store by Joanne Schwartz
Put It On the List by Kristen Darbyshire
Maisy Goes Shopping by Lucy Cousins
Shopping with Dad by Matt Harvey

Classroom Activity

Market: Classroom Store	DURATION: 30-45 Minutes	GRADE LEVEL: Pre-K – 3rd Grade
DESCRIPTION	Make a pretend grocery store in your classroom for many fantastic learning opportunities across all academic areas!	
OBJECTIVES	1. Children will explore economic concepts such as job roles, spending, and comparison shopping. 2. Children will use basic math concepts, such as counting, sorting, addition, subtraction, and money. 3. Children will develop literacy skills, including reading, speaking, listening, and writing.	
MATERIALS	• Various empty, clean food containers (ask parents!) • Grocery ads and coupons • Baskets, bags, or carts for shopping • Toy cash register • Paper and pencils for lists and receipts • Pretend money	
DIRECTIONS 	1) Collect empty, clean food containers from parents to display on a classroom shelf. 2) Place the cash register on a small table and provide bags or carts for shoppers. 3) Encourage students to assign various roles for the store: shopper, cashier, stocker, and any other roles you may think of. 4) Allow students the opportunity to explore and play in this area on their own. 5) Encourage students to make shopping lists and to write receipts in their play.	
ADAPTATIONS	For younger students, you may wish to pre-make shopping lists by cutting out pictures from ads of items you have in your classroom store and writing the word next to it. Laminate the lists for durability and allow students to shop for the items in the classroom store!	
EXTENSIONS	Let the learning continue by opening other shops in your classroom, such as a flower shop (use fake flowers and/or flowers that you make as an art project), book store, ice cream shop, etc. These classroom shops are easy to align to classroom activities or themes that you are doing. The possibilities are endless!	

Move-It

Educational Value

Rationale

There is a crucial need for children to engage in more physical activity, and *Move It!* helps to address that need. A dramatic reduction in levels of physical activity and an escalating disconnect between children and nature are contributing to the growing epidemic of obesity in our nation's children. It is vital to our children's health and well-being that they engage in appropriate physical activity, develop a healthy appetite for outdoor play and cultivate a hands-on respect for nature.

The design elements of *Move It!* not only complement the interactivity of the Museum interior by advancing the use of minds and muscles, they also align with important health and wellness initiatives promoted by the Association of Children's Museums (ACM) including *Good to Grow* and First Lady Michelle Obama's *Let's Move!* Offering family friendly strategies to combat the growing epidemic of childhood obesity, *Good to Grow* supports eating healthy foods, increasing physical activity, reducing screen time and connecting with nature through outdoor play. Through endorsement of the national initiative *Let's Move!,* ACM encourages children's museums to support healthy lifestyles for children and families through exhibits and programs that invite children to play and encourage them to be physically active.

Goals and Objectives

Provide a space where children may engage in physical activity

- Visitors engage in movement such as climbing, crawling, clambering, rolling, running, balancing, negotiating around others, through space, and within multi-dimensional terrain.
- Children can test themselves with experiences that are challenging and involve developmentally appropriate risk.
- Families have the opportunity to move and learn together in a unique environment.

Inspire exploration of a natural environment

- Children can test themselves with experiences that are challenging and involve developmentally appropriate risk.
- Provide a space where children may explore the outdoors in a safe place.

Literature

Guess Who's In the Desert? by Charline Profiri
My Dad is the Best Playground by Luciana Navarro Powell
My Dream Playground by Kate Becker
Outside Your Window by Nicola Davies
Playground Day by Jennifer Merz
Shadows & Reflections by Tana Hoban
The Sun is My Favorite Star by Frank Asch
Desert Digits by Barbara Gowan

Classroom Activity

Move It!: Following Directions Fit 'n' Fun!	DURATION: 15-30 Minutes	GRADE LEVEL: Pre-K – 5th Grades
DESCRIPTION	Get active and focus on listening skills in this fun outdoor game!	
OBJECTIVES	1. Students will develop listening skills as they hear and execute given directions. 2. Students will improve communication skills as they give verbal directions to their peers. 3. Students will develop motor skills as they physically execute the given task.	
MATERIALS	• Outdoor playground or play space	
DIRECTIONS 	1) Model for the class how to give a sequence of directions for students to follow (i.e. "run around the tree, go up the ladder, and down the slide"). 2) Select a student to take the lead in giving the directions. 3) Encourage students to add more details to the directions to make it more challenging (i.e. "go to the biggest tree, touch the bark, and come back").	
ADAPTATIONS	For students who have more difficulty listening to verbal directions, provide picture cues or cards to assist them in understanding the verbal directions. Play the classic following directions game of "Simon Says", which requires even more acute listening! Students give directions after the phrase "Simon Says" and then on another direction attempt, without the phrase "Simon Says." Those who still follow the direction, without the Simon Says preceding it are to sit out for the remainder of the game.	
EXTENSIONS	Work on understanding of classroom content by drawing and/or writing letters, shapes, numbers, words, etc. on the concrete with chalk and then giving directions based on the images (i.e. "stand on the number 14, then jump over the number 20").	

Noodle Forest

Educational Value

Rationale

Children love to burrow to explore, to hide, or just to see what it's like. You find them giggling in the racks at the clothing store, deep in the swimming pool, half-buried in sand at the beach, submerged in those ball pools, hiding in the coat closet. It's the *Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe* story…

Interaction with unpredictable situations and unfamiliar environments develops spatial, cognitive and strategic skills that children apply to the world around them. Sensory integration is a normal, neurological, and developmental process which begins in the womb and continues throughout one's life. Sensory processing occurs when the brain receives sensory input from the environment and interprets the information for use in achieving goal directed actions.

> *"Deeper, richer, multisensory learning experiences will clearly lead to greater retention of content and, more importantly, the skills to learn in new environments."*- David J. Staley, Ph.D, Director, The Harvey Goldberg Program for Excellence in Teaching

Regular opportunities for unstructured imaginative play help children develop the skill of self talk, the ability to carry on conversations in their minds which are linked to problem solving and perseverance. Imaginative play can help a child work through difficult emotions, practice social roles, and develop empathy, impulse control and a spirit of cooperation.

Goals and Objectives

Provide a Space for Sensory Stimulation, Experimentation and Gross Physical Movement

- Create an unusual setting for exploring with the senses.
- Magnify movements and encourage interaction between visitors through the movements of the material
- Provide access for adults and children with special needs
- Encourage an awareness of one's body in space and one's relationship to the people and objects around them.

Provide an Open-Ended Play Environment that Fosters Activity

- Expand visitors ideas of what a landscape, environment, and play space might be
- Offer an environment that fosters understanding and practice of directional language
- Provide an environment that encourages fantasy play

Literature

Be A Friend to Trees by Patricia Lauber
The Great Kapok Tree by Lynn Cherry
In the Tall, Tall Grass by Denise Fleming
The Lorax by Dr. Seuss
Rumble in the Jungle by Giles Andreae
"Slowly, Slowly, Slowly" Said the Sloth by Eric Carle
The Umbrella by Jan Brett
Walking Through the Jungle by Debbie Harter
We're Going on a Bear Hunt by Michael Rosen
Where the Wild Things Are by Maurice Sendak

Classroom Activity

Noodle Forest: Non-standard Units of Measure	DURATION: 15-30 Minutes	GRADE LEVEL: Pre-K – 2nd Grade
DESCRIPTION	How many noodles long is the classroom? How many paperclips long is a pencil? These questions and many more can be answered using a variety of non-standard measurement tools!	
OBJECTIVES	1. Children will develop estimation skills when estimating the sizes of objects using various non-standard measuring tools. 2. Children will use non-standard measurement tools for measuring. 3. Children will compare various measurements using the same, as well as different, non-standard measuring tools.	
MATERIALS	• Ruler, yardstick, and/or measuring tape • Pool noodle, paper clips, buttons, Unifix cubes, other non-standard measuring tools • Items to measure	
DIRECTIONS 	1) Ask students what tools they may use to measure something. Show the ruler, yardstick, and/or measuring tape. Measure a few classroom items using the standard measuring tools. 2) To model the nonstandard measurement activity, have students place a writing utensil (pencil or crayon) on their desk. Then ask students to place paper clips along the object (see photo to the left) to measure how many paperclips long it is. Compare using different sized paperclips, or try using buttons. 3) Show the students the pool noodle, Unifix cubes, blocks, and other non-standard tools to use for measuring. Have students measure various classroom items using the nonstandard measuring tool. How many blocks long is their desk? How many pool noodles long is the board? 4) Ask students to compare and contrast their measurements. You may wish to create a chart of some sort for students to document their measurements.	
ADAPTATIONS	For very young children, consider making a measuring stick. To do this, simply glue paper clips or buttons to a popsicle stick. Children may then use this tool to measure how many paper clips or buttons long an item is.	
EXTENSIONS	Read How Big is a Foot? by Rolf Myller and discuss the reason why the measurements were different. Have the students trace their own foot onto a piece of construction paper and cut it out. They may then use this foot to measure various items around the classroom and to compare the measurements with other students.	

The Park

Educational Value

Rationale

An active play space designed to bring the joy of outdoor exploration indoors. Featuring large crawl-through tunnels, whimsical portholes for peeking and popping out, and a soft turf floor that mimics grass, this space invites children to move, explore, and imagine—regardless of the weather outside. By creating a safe, climate-controlled "outdoor" environment, The Park offers year-round opportunities for active play and discovery.

This environment supports gross motor development by encouraging crawling, climbing, stretching, and balancing. Children strengthen coordination, spatial awareness, and core muscles as they navigate tunnels, pop in and out of portholes, and move across different levels and textures. The open-ended nature of the space also sparks imaginative play—tunnels can become caves, secret passages, or rocket ships—blending physical movement with creative storytelling.

Social-emotional learning naturally emerges in The Park as children share the space, take turns, and negotiate games with peers. The freedom to explore at their own pace fosters bravery and resilience, as children experiment with new movements or tackle tunnels that may feel challenging at first. With its combination of movement, imagination, and cooperative play, The Park provides a fun, safe, and stimulating space where children can connect, grow, and thrive—rain or shine.

Goals and Objectives

Physical Development & Coordination

- Children build gross motor skills, balance, and spatial awareness by crawling through tunnels, popping in and out of portholes, and navigating varied levels and pathways.

Imagination & Creative Play

- Open-ended structures inspire storytelling and pretend scenarios, turning tunnels into caves, secret passages, rocket ships, or anything children can imagine.

Social-Emotional Growth

- Shared play encourages cooperation, turn-taking, and empathy as children navigate the space together and create collaborative games.

Bravery & Resilience

- Exploring new pathways and physical challenges fosters confidence, adaptability, and a willingness to try new movements or explore unfamiliar spaces.

Literature:

The Secret Path by Nick Butterworth
You Are a Lion! And Other Fun Yoga Poses by Taeeun Yoo
Rosie's Walk by Pat Hutchins
Play This Book by Jessica Young
We're Going on a Bear Hunt by Michael Rosen
From Head to Toe by Eric Carle
Going Places by Peter H. Reynolds and Paul A. Reynolds
Journey by Aaron Becker

Classroom Activity

The Park: Red Light, Green Light	DURATION: 30-45 Minutes	GRADE LEVEL: Pre-K – 2nd Grade

DESCRIPTION	Move your bodies, stop and start, follow directions and have fun in this active game of "Red Light, Green Light"!
OBJECTIVES	1. Children will use their gross motor skills to stop and start their bodies from moving from one side of the room to the other based on directions called. 2. Children will learn to listen and follow directions.
MATERIALS	• Open space to play the game, enough for the group to collectively move from one side to the other. • No other materials required, however, if you have a "Stop & Go" sign to represent the "red light" and "green light" feel free to use it or something similar!
DIRECTIONS 	1) Children are asked to move from one side of the room to the other whenever the facilitator yells, "Green light!". But, when the facilitator yells, "Red Light!" - the children must stop where they are. 2) If a child is not fully still/frozen when the facilitator yells "Red Light" they are "out" and must move to the side until the next round. 3) The first student to make it to the other side, following all the directions, wins that round.
ADAPTATIONS	Add in "yellow light" to direct students to move slowly, teaching them about traffic lights. To make it more difficult, don't allow any running.
EXTENSIONS	Try adding other colors with new associated actions to take this a set further – "orange light" could be spin around, "blue light" could be stomp your feet. By introducing more colors you can discuss primary vs. Secondary colors, and you can also introduce the concept of coding in technology and a "command", in this case the color, demands a specific "action".

Pedal Power

Educational Value

Rationale

Pedal Power is a long, narrow space perfect for riding tricycles – and that is just what young visitors can do here. Many young children, especially in the inner city, never have the opportunity to ride a tricycle. Within the safe confines of the Museum, young visitors can learn to master the art of pedaling, test their sense of balance, and practice cooperative play as they *stop* and *go* on imagined roadways.

A tricycle "car wash" presents a unique experience as young drivers find their way through soft brushes, hanging strips and blowing fans. A mirrored tunnel excites children's imaginations as they safely zoom through on an adventure to somewhere.

Learning to ride a bicycle is a developmental milestone usually preceded in young childhood by adventures on tricycles and scooters. With urban sprawl and the ever-increasing number of vehicles on our nation's roadways, there is little safe area where young children can learn to ride, especially in the inner city. Pedal Power offers children a safe place where they can experiment with balance, gross motor skills, and spatial awareness while at the same time nurturing that growing sense of independence.

A Brief History of the Tricycle

The first tricycle was built in 1680 for a German paraplegic named Stephan Farffler (Oct. 24, 1689), who lived near Nuremburg. He was a watchmaker and the tricycle had gears and hand cranks. In Asia and Africa, tricycles are used primarily for commercial transportation.

Goals and Objectives

Provide a Space Where Children Can Develop Motor Skills

- Offer children the opportunity to develop large muscle motor skills while riding the trikes.
- When riding on the trikes in this confined area, children are forced to develop motor planning skills to plan which way to go.
- Develop wiring in the brain from the alternating movements that are involved with riding a trike, which plays a key role as children begin to read and write.

To Encourage Patience and Turn-Taking

- Provide opportunities for children to develop skills in patience and turn-taking.
- Give children opportunities to better understand and cooperate with their peers.

Literature:

A Bicycle for Rosaura by Daniel Barbot
Bear on a Bike by Stella Blackstone
The Bear's Bicycle by Emilie Warren McLeod
The Bike Lesson by Stan Berenstein
Duck on a Bike by David Shannon
Froggy Rides a Bike by Jonathan London
His Finest Hour by David Neuhaus
Sally Jean, the Bicycle Queen by Cari Best

Classroom Activity

Pedal Power: Environmental Print	DURATION: 15-30 Minutes	GRADE LEVEL: Pre-K – 3rd Grade
DESCRIPTION	This activity allows students the opportunity to develop skills in recognizing environmental print as well as the letters of the alphabet.	
OBJECTIVES	1. Children will recognize various types of environmental print, including products, places, and street signs. 2. Children will recognize letters of the alphabet. 3. Children will match logos to the appropriate letter of the alphabet.	
MATERIALS	• Various magazines, newspapers, and grocery ads • Scissors • Glue • Markers/crayons • Paper to make a book (enough for each letter of the alphabet) or pre-made books for each student	
DIRECTIONS  	1) If books are not pre-made, have students use paper to make a book by folding pages in half and stapling them together to make 26 pages. 2) Have students write each letter of the alphabet in their book, one letter per page. 3) After writing the letters, have students look through the newspapers, magazines, and ads to find logos, signs or labels of things that start with each letter of the alphabet (for example: Goldfish crackers for "G" or Target for "T") and cut them out. 4) Have the students glue each of the items they cut out to the appropriate page of their book.	
ADAPTATIONS	As an alternative, you may desire to make a class book or display together. Each child will be able to contribute by finding environmental print and placing it with the correct letter.	
EXTENSIONS	Continue exploring environmental print through a variety of other fun activites: • Bingo: Create Bingo boards using environmental print and then draw cards to have students mark the logo you call out. • Puzzles: Food boxes make great puzzles and work on literacy and spatial skills. Simply cut a panel from a food box (cereal, cookies, crackers, etc.) and cut it into shaped pieces to make a puzzle! • Scavenger Hunt: Make a checklist of environmental print that students may see on a walk around the school (exit, restroom signs, etc.). Take students on a walk to mark the ones that they see!	

Pit Stop

Educational Value

Rationale

The Pit Stop is a space for pretending. Direct participation in 'pretend' role-play empowers children by sparking their imaginations and providing outlets for them to experiment and communicate with other people.

"Time for play is valuable because play is the child's most valuable medium…it is the mode that allows them to practice their skills: Taking initiative and solving problems within the constraints of a task, focusing attention for long periods of time, negotiating social relationships, inventing and imposing patterns and order, and manipulating materials and ideas in creative ways. These are skills that cannot be taught directly, but they are learned by children at play." - Reynolds and Jones

Highlighting the basic principles of objects in motion as studied by Newton and Galileo, Pit Stop is a blur of action as visitors race cars of differing sizes and weights down ramps to the finish line. Experimenting with the laws of physics, the exhibit encourages children to explore concepts related to objects in motion such as momentum, speed, distance, acceleration, gravity and friction. Whether racing identical cars or two different kinds of cars, visitors predict which car will go faster, which attributes affect speed, which cars make the most noise, etc. Visitors experiment with cars crashing through a wall and launch cars off a ramp to sail through the air, predicting which car will go farthest and which incline works best. Engaging the scientific method and honing critical thinking skills, Pit Stop is a STEM playground – fun, fast and very physical!

Goals and Objectives

Support Visitors' Imaginations, Capacity for Constructive Play, and Self-Initiative

- Provide objects and materials that suggest the sort of behaviors that might occur in a futuristic and enlightened auto garage or fix-it shop
- Establish an open-ended sequence that lets visitors drive all aspects of the pit stop, from car maintenance to running the car wash to inventing gadgets to pimping tricycles for off-road/off-planet journeys
- Use tactile and multisensory details to convey the sense of a shop—the smell of metal filings, satisfying metallic clanking sounds, uniforms to support play roles, and real vehicles, toolboxes, and worktables

Inspire: Expand Visitors' Perception of What the Future Could Be

- Offer constructive, experimental tabletop projects based on *new* applications of simple scientific principles.
- Provide tools and tactile materials that can be used and combined in different ways for open-ended constructive projects like wire, fasteners, scrap materials, screws, soft wood, etc.
- Provide recycled project materials in partnerships with local industry.
- Provide materials and forms that can be applied to vehicles to expand their range or capacity

Literature:

Brrmm! Let's Go! by Julie Kingdon
Cars and Trucks and Things That Go by Richard Scarry
Cars Galore by Peter Stein
Cool Cars by Tony Mitton and Ant Parker
If I Built a Car by Chris Van Dusen

Classroom Activity

Pit Stop: Exploring Ramps and Wheels	DURATION: 15-30 Minutes	GRADE LEVEL: Pre-K – 4th Grade

DESCRIPTION	Explore the traits of bridges and ramps through experimentation in this hands-on activity!
OBJECTIVES	1. The children will use prior knowledge to design a bridge or ramp. 2. The children will use materials provided to build their bridge or ramp. 3. The children will make a hypothesis for how a toy vehicle will move on their bridge/ramp and if it will hold up. 4. The children will test their hypothesis and form a conclusion for their experiment.
MATERIALS	• Blocks, cardboard, or other building materials • Vehicles, toy cars • Optional: paper and pencil for drawing design and/or writing hypothesis
DIRECTIONS 	1) As a class, in small groups, or individually, have students make a plan for how they are going to build their ramp or bridge. 2) After they have formed a plan, they should use the materials provided to build their bridge or ramp. 3) The students should make a prediction for how the toy vehicle will move on the bridge or ramp and how their structure will hold up. 4) The students may use the various vehicles and toy cars to test their ramps and bridges, forming a conclusion and refining their structure if needed.
ADAPTATIONS	For younger students, the teacher may want to build the ramp and have the students test various items (toy car, crayon, puzzle piece, glue stick, etc) to see how they move on the ramp. A similar experiment may be done where the teacher builds a bridge and students place various items on it to test the weight.
EXTENSIONS	Provide other types of vehicles, even with varying types or shapes of wheels, to test how they move down the ramps or across the bridge.

Room for Threes and Younger

Educational Value

Rationale

A thoughtfully designed space that supports the unique developmental needs of our youngest visitors. This warm, welcoming environment offers infants, babies, and toddlers opportunities to explore safely, build foundational skills, and connect with caregivers in an engaging and age-appropriate setting. From crawling under a whimsical tree to watching planes from the deck, every element invites curiosity, sensory engagement, and joyful discovery.

This space prioritizes sensory exploration and gross motor development—essential building blocks in early childhood. Crawling, pulling up, reaching, and grasping help strengthen muscles, coordination, and spatial awareness. Features like textured surfaces, role-play corners, and observation areas invite young children to see, touch, hear, and move, building their understanding of the world through firsthand experience.

The *Threes and Younger* gallery is also a place for caregiver connection. Parents and guardians are encouraged to observe, play, and interact alongside their little ones, fostering bonding while also learning about their child's emerging abilities. The space is intentionally designed to support a sense of community among families, creating opportunities for grown-ups to share experiences and insights. A strict no-shoes policy keeps the environment clean and safe for floor-level exploration, ensuring that our youngest visitors can move freely and confidently. In this nurturing space, the earliest stages of learning, play, and social interaction can flourish.

Goals and Objectives

Sensory & Motor Development

- Infants and toddlers strengthen muscles, coordination, and spatial awareness through crawling, pulling up, reaching, grasping, and exploring textures, sounds, and sights.

Early Cognitive & Social Skills

- Simple role-play, cause-and-effect activities, and observation experiences encourage curiosity, problem-solving, and early peer interaction.

Caregiver-Child Bonding

- Shared playtime supports attachment, communication, and mutual discovery, while encouraging caregivers to observe and respond to their child's emerging abilities.

Safe & Welcoming Environment

- A clean, shoe-free space designed for floor-level exploration fosters confidence, comfort, and freedom of movement for the youngest visitors.

Literature

Baby Faces by Margaret Miller
Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See? by Bill Martin Jr. & Eric Carle
Dear Zoo by Rod Campbell
Global Babies by The Global Fund for Children
Baby Touch and Feel: Animals by DK
Goodnight, Gorilla by Peggy Rathmann
Peekaboo Morning by Rachel Isadora
Whose Toes are Those? by Jabari Asim

Classroom Activity

Room for Threes and Younger: Water Play!	DURATION: 30-45 Minutes	GRADE LEVEL: 6 Months-PreK
DESCRIPTION	Use shallow containers of water, along with various materials and toys to introduce water play to your child! ***Be Sure to Monitor Children Around Water At All Times***	
OBJECTIVES	Children will explore sensory play, developing motor skills, sensory awareness, eye-tracking and an understanding of cause and effect.	
MATERIALS	• Various size containers filled with shallow water • Bath toys, measuring cups, bowls, spoons, whisks, etc.	
DIRECTIONS 	Lay down towels for your "splash zone" then fill up various sized containers with a little bit of water. Introduce different "toys" and "tools" to your child, one at a time, engaging it with the water. Let your child explore the water, splashing and manipulatives in the water.	
ADAPTATIONS	Incorporate this activity into your bathtime routine, try different "containers" or dishes, such as a sheet pan. Use a plastic gallon-sized bag, filled with water for "dry" water play.	
EXTENSIONS	Let the learning continue by introducing soap, bubbles or food coloring into your water play for more discovery!	

Texture Café

Educational Value

Rationale

Like a grocery store, a café is a familiar environment for many children. This environment allows children to imitate the behaviors and roles they observe in the real world, at a scale they can affect.

Direct participation in role-play experiences empowers children by sparking their imaginations and providing outlets for them to experiment and communicate with other people.

Not only can the cafe give children opportunities for role-play and social interaction, but the sorting, mixing, and 'cooking' of different textures and fabrics provide sensory stimulation. As children take on different roles in the cafe, they develop fine motor skills by working with the materials and cognitive skills by remembering orders and combining different colors and textures to simulate certain foods.

Goals and Objectives

Support Visitors' Imaginations, Capacity for Constructive Play, and Self-Initiative

- Provide objects and materials that suggest the sort of behaviors that might occur in a restaurant or sidewalk cafe.
- Establish an open-ended sequence that lets visitors drive all aspects of the café from taking orders to preparing food to paying for a meal.
- Use tactile and multisensory details to convey the sense of a café—tables and booths with windows nearby.

Involve and Empower Children and Families to Participate in the Community Environment

- Offer comfortable spaces for caregivers to observe and chat.
- Bolster children's social confidence by allowing for a wide variety of roles that contribute to the functioning of the café.

Encourage Basic Fine Motor Skill Development and Working Creatively with Tactile Materials

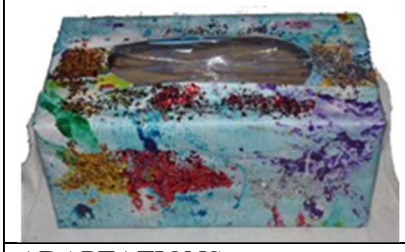
- Provide materials that evoke different kinds of foods and can be put together to create complete fabric 'meals': strips, strands, balls, flakes, patties, and leaves that can be rolled, mixed, stacked, fried or baked.
- Supply tools, equipment, and kitchen utensils that can be used and manipulated in many ways.

Literature

A Little Bit of Soul Food by Amy Wilson Sanger
A Pizza the Size of the Sun by Jack Prelutsky
The Book of Sushi by Amy Wilson Sanger
Eating by Gwenyth Swain
Eating the Alphabet by Lois Ehlert
Good Enough to Eat: A Kid's Guide to Food and Nutrition by Lizzy Rockwell
Grandma's Saturday Soup by Sally Fraser and Derek Brazell
How Do Dinosaurs Eat Their Food? by Jane Yolen
If You Give a Moose a Muffin by Laura Numeroff
If You Give a Pig a Pancake by Laura Numeroff
Is It Rough? Is It Smooth? Is It Shiny? by Tana Hoban
L M N O Peas by Keith Baker

Classroom Activity

Texture Café: Feely Box	DURATION: 15-30 Minutes	GRADE LEVEL: Pre-K – 1st Grade

DESCRIPTION	Explore your sense of touch as you make your own feely box to feel items that you cannot see!
OBJECTIVES	1. Children will use their sense of touch to experience various objects. 2. Children will use rich, descriptive language to describe the item in the box.
MATERIALS	• Empty tissue box or shoebox with lid • Various materials to touch (toys, household or classroom items, etc.) • Paint and/or markers
DIRECTIONS 	1) If you are using a shoebox, cut a hole in one end for hands to reach into to feel the various items. 2) Using the paint and/or markers, decorate the box as desired. 3) Place an item in the box for students to feel. Encourage them to describe how it feels and if they can name the object.
ADAPTATIONS	For very young children, or children with special needs, it may be more appropriate to create a book of textures or place various textures on each side of a small box for them to explore their sense of touch.
EXTENSIONS	Turn this activity into a matching game by having photos of items that you place in the box. Lay out a select few photos and see if your students can match what they are feeling to a photo of the object! Various types of feely boxes, including activities, are on the market today. Feel free to explore these products as well for even more ideas!

Rationale

Interaction with unpredictable situations and environments develops spatial, cognitive, and strategic skills that children apply to the world around them.

> *"There is no such thing as a failed experiment, only experiments with unexpected outcomes"* - R. Buckminster Fuller

Gross motor skills, spatial skills, and balance are developed best through whole-body motion and dynamic interaction with tactile materials.

Goals and Objectives

Develop Gross Motor Skills and Spatial Awareness

- Offer an open space to interact with the falling materials.
- Utilize the full height, width and length of the exhibit space for interaction with the materials.

Boost Sensory and Tactile Capacity

- Allow children to experience the museum with altered visual perceptions through fabrics.
- Provide a satisfying way for children to make the material compact and put it into the blower.
- Present visual and auditory indications when materials are released.

Stimulate Curiosity and Scientific Experimentation

- Use transparent mechanics to facilitate a simple cause-and-effect process.
- Encourage curiosity by exposing the workings of the mechanism and emphasizing the contrast between the materials behavior in the pipe and released from the pipe.

Promote Critical Thinking and Improvisational Skills

- Provide ways to decipher the random cause-and-effect patterns by visually connecting the input/output ends of the tunnels.
- Vary the amount of time it takes for different materials to fall (by height, weight, tunnel length, or release.)

Literature

Air is All Around You by Franklyn M. Branley
Air: Outside, Inside, and All Around by Darlene Stille
Feel the Wind by Arthur Dorros
Fishing in the Air by Sharon Creech
Hot Air: The (Mostly) True Story of the First Hot-Air Balloon Ride by Marjorie Priceman
I Face the Wind by Vicki Cobb
Like a Windy Day by Frank Asch
Millicent and the Wind by Robert N. Munsch
The Usborne Big Book of Experiments by Alastair Smith
Where Do Balloons Go? by Jamie Lee Curtis
The Wind Blew by Pat Hutchins

Classroom Activity

Whoosh!: Parachute Experiments	DURATION: 15-30 Minutes	GRADE LEVEL: 1st – 4th Grade
DESCRIPTION	This activity allows students the opportunity to develop skills in recognizing environmental print as well as the letters of the alphabet.	
OBJECTIVES	1. Children will explore the effect of gravity and weight on the speed of parachutes. 2. Children will graph and analyze results from parachute drop.	
MATERIALS	• Colored tissue paper, cut into a square • String • Tape • Paper clips	
DIRECTIONS 	1. Have each child cut their tissue paper into 12” x 12” squares and cut string into four, 6” pieces, and tape one to each of the four corners of the tissue paper 2. Tie the four strings together making sure that the tape side is on the outside of the parachute 3. Now they will need to hook their paperclip at the knot of the four strings (have some students hook multiple paper clips on their parachute so you can watch as they fall at different speeds) 4. Stand on chairs or tables and drop parachutes, paying attention to the speed that each parachute reaches the ground. For this reason, you may want to have a specific color tissue paper correlating to a designated amount of paper clips, i.e. green tissue parachutes have one paperclip and blue tissue parachutes have two – watch as all of the blue parachutes fall first! 5. Have student record the results in a graph. Do they make it to the ground at the same time? Which ones landed first? Why? What happens if they have more paperclips?	
ADAPTATIONS	Allow students to construct their own parachutes or choose objects other than paper clips to hang. Experiment with different sizes of parachutes and different weights hung from the string. What is the relationship between the overall mass of the parachute and how quickly it falls?	
EXTENSIONS	Continue learning about air by exploring other flying objects by making paper airplanes, windsocks or kites! Look online for directions for these sorts of activities.	

Resources

General

DonorsChoose – www.donorschoose.org - teachers can request donations toward specific programming or experiences for their class

Treasures 4 Teachers – www.treasures4teachers.org –school supplies for Arizona educators provided to members free of cost

Read On Arizona – www.readonarizona.org – provides information on literacy, including links to many literacy rich websites

Science Foundation of Arizona – www.sfaz.org – provides information, activities, and research in the areas of STEM

Public Transportation to Museum

Valley Metro

- Bus Routes:
  - Route 3 on Van Burent – stops at Van Buren & 7th Street
  - Route 7 on 7th Street – stops at Van Buren & 7th Street
  - Route 1 on Washington Street – stops at Washington & 7th Street and Jefferson & 7th Street
- Light Rail Routes:
  - Eastbound: stops at Jefferson & 3rd Street
  - Westbound: stops at Washington & 3rd Street
- Fares: Field trips are FREE
  - Tempe youth are FREE with valid Tempe Youth Pass
  - All day local pass $4.00
  - All day local pass purchased on bus $6.00
  - All day reduced pass $2.00 (youth, senior, persons with disabilities)
  - All day reduced pass purchased on bus $3.00

Elementary school groups may be eligible for FREE field trip passes:
www.valleymetro.org/transit_education/field_trips

For more information call Valley Metro Customer Service at 602.253.5000 or visit www.valleymetro.org

DASH
A convenient and FREE way to get around downtown Phoenix!
Pick-up/Drop-off locations near Museum:
Van Buren & 5th Street

For more information call 602.253.5001

Pattern for Book Loft Classroom Activity: Creative Corner Bookmarks