



Association
of Children's
Museums

2008 Children's Museums Metrics Reports[©]

Volume 5: Exhibits, Programs & Publications

Data in the *2008 Children's Museum Metrics Reports* (Volumes 1-6) are based on the best available information provided by ACM Members in Fall 2007.

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Introduction

Association of Children's Museums (ACM) maintains a comprehensive database of statistical information on its member museums. This ACM data can be valuable for marketing, fundraising and general museum planning. All data is compiled through ACM membership surveys. Members can access the data using three resources.

- Museum Online Directory
- Query Report Service
- *2008 Children's Museums Metrics Reports*

ACM commissioned the *2008 Children's Museums Metrics Reports* to provide aggregated data suitable for institutional benchmarking, organizational planning and reporting and trend analysis. Based primarily on survey data reported in Fall 2007 by 232 ACM member museums, the complete 100+ report collection includes charts and graphs and comprehensive data in the following volumes.

- Volume 1: Museum Profile
- Volume 2: Building & Facilities
- Volume 3: Finances & Government Relations
- Volume 4: Attendance & Memberships
- Volume 5: Exhibits, Programs & Publications
- Volume 6: Staff

A note of caution: these reports reflect a diverse field. While one institution's strategic priorities might align to produce different measurable outcomes than a peer museum, it is not an indication that one museum is more "successful" than another. What is essential is to have strategic priorities in place and measure the outcomes.

All data were tabulated by AWP Research (Herndon, Virginia), an independent research firm. ACM relies on its members to complete the survey questions in full to attain the most complete and accurate data; although every effort is made to guarantee accuracy, ACM is not responsible for errors in data content.

The *2008 Children's Museums Metrics Reports* are available as online publications only. ACM members can download report sections as PDFs for free from the Members Only section of the ACM Web site. PDF reports are available to nonmembers for \$150 per report section.

About ACM

Founded in 1962, ACM is an international, nonprofit membership organization that builds the capacity of children's museums to serve as town squares for children and families where play inspires creativity and lifelong learning. On behalf of its members, ACM provides training and technical assistance; collects data; establishes professional standards; promotes children's museums; and manages three leadership initiatives Good to Grow!, Diversity in Action and Playing for Keeps.

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Overview

Project Background

One of the most important activities of the Association of Children's Museums (ACM) is to provide its members with information and statistics regarding all facets of children's museums. An important tool in this process is the annual *ACM Membership Directory Survey*. In the past, the survey results were provided to ACM members in directory format. The 2008 survey results have been expanded and are provided as the *2008 Children's Museums Metrics Reports*.

Survey Sample

The survey sample is based upon the 232 member institutions that responded to the *2008 ACM Membership Directory Survey*. The overall participation rate is excellent — virtually all of the ACM membership are represented in the survey sample. However, completion rates (e.g., the number of questions completed by each respondent) is not as robust. Many respondents only partially completed the survey, which placed some constraints on the type and depth of analysis possible.

Prior to implementing the analysis, the raw data were reviewed by ACM staff for anomalous responses. When found, the data were corrected after consulting with the institution in question. In cases where updated data were not available, the response was removed from the sample to avoid substantially skewing the survey results.

While this review/revision process solved the issue of strongly anomalous responses, there were many cases where the responses did not “add up.” This is most commonly seen in the financial portion of the survey, where the values provided for expense and income subcategories often do not sum to their associated line items. This is not an uncommon situation, especially in complex surveys such as this. Affected responses were adjusted or removed on a case-by-case basis during the analysis process to ensure the results were not significantly swayed by “outliers” (i.e., responses that are markedly larger or smaller than the values present in the overall sample). Additionally, the analytical techniques were selected so as to compensate for situations where the data were not in perfect agreement.

Analytical Techniques

Overall survey results are valuable illustrations of overarching trends and issues. Given the diversity of children's museums, examining the data based solely on overall results limits the scope and value of the research to these generalized trends. To fully explore the findings and metrics, it is necessary to segment the data to explore specific segments independently.

There are many potential ways to segment statistical data such as this — institution size, location, attendance, budget, programmatic activities and several others are all viable segmentation approaches, each with specific benefits. However, selecting a segmentation plan requires pragmatism as well, since there needs to be a sufficient quantity of data in every category upon which to base reliable statistics.

Following extensive discussion and review among the ACM staff and leadership, it was determined that the single most significant and valuable segmentation approach should be based upon the museum’s financial scope — their operating budget. This criterion is the most often requested segmentation point when members request information from ACM, and is an excellent “marker” that drives virtually every facet of a museum’s operation. The specific budget categories used in this report mirror ACM museum membership categories, and are as summarized below.

Museum budget — operating income		
	Percentage of sample	n=
Less than \$250,000	18.1%	42
\$250,000 to \$499,999	15.9%	37
\$500,000 to \$999,999	12.9%	30
\$1 to \$2.9 million	21.6%	50
\$3 to \$4.9 million	6.9%	16
\$5 million and greater	8.2%	19
No response	16.4%	38

As you can see, the number of responses in the \$3 to \$4.9 million and the \$5 million and greater categories is fairly small (16 and 19 respectively). However, given the significant operational differences between museums of these sizes, it was determined that it would be more valuable to analyze them separately rather than group them into a “\$3 million or greater” category. The 38 institutions that did not specify their operating income were excluded from all analyses based on this segmentation approach.

In addition to museum budget size, attendance is also a key criterion to help put the data in perspective, and make it possible to benchmark results against a specific “peer group” of institutions. Several segmentation approaches were explored, with the following method receiving the greatest level of support among ACM key stakeholders:

Museum on-site attendance

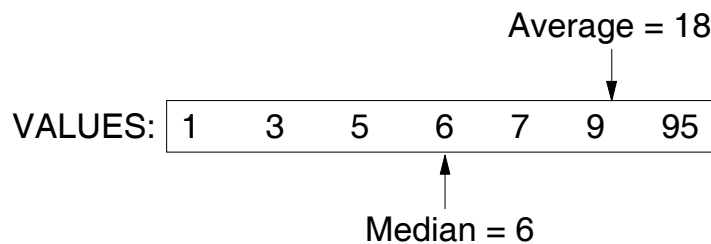
	Percentage of sample	n=
Less than 25,000	21.1%	49
25,000–49,999	17.7%	41
50,000–124,999	20.7%	48
125,000–249,999	15.9%	37
250,000 and greater	11.6%	27
No response	12.9%	30

The attendance-based segmentation is not used as extensively as the museum budget size segmentation, but is provided in many areas of the report when appropriate.

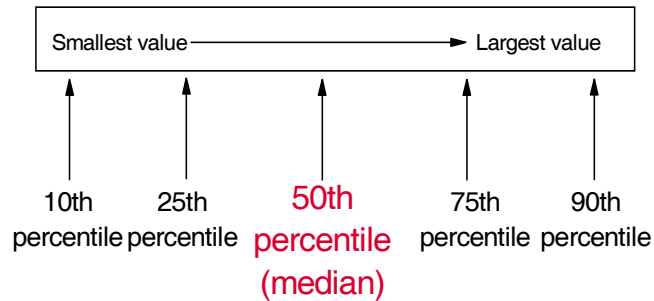
In addition to museum budget size and attendance, two other variables were used to segment the data — museum age (based upon a museum’s opening date), and museum location (using the categories of urban, suburban and rural). These two approaches are used in only a few tables in the report to illustrate specific issues/findings.

Statistical Definitions

The **average** (also called the mean) and the **median** are two summary statistics used throughout this report to describe the data collected. Though closely related, each describes a different facet of the data. The average is computed by taking the sum of all responses divided by the number of responses. The median is computed by ordering all responses, then taking the response which falls at the midpoint. As illustrated in the diagram below, the average is influenced by very large or very small numbers; the median is not. This typically makes the median a more representative indicator of the data when there are relatively small sample sizes or significant outliers.



Percentiles are a variation on the median, and are especially helpful interpretation aids. As illustrated previously, the median splits the data into two equal parts. Percentiles go one step further, splitting the data into additional parts. It is common to use either three segments (25th, 50th and 75th) or five (10th, 25th, 50th, 75th and 90th), but any number of divisions can be made.



To ensure individual data elements cannot be related to a specific respondent, a full suite of percentiles (10th, 25th, 50th, 75th and 90th) is provided only when there are at least 10 responses in the subsample. A smaller set of percentiles (25th, 50th and 75th) is provided when there are six to nine respondents in the subsample. The median is the only statistic provided when there are three to five respondents. No data are provided when there are fewer than three respondents.

Percentiles help in data interpretation by providing a snapshot overview of the full sample. For example, the following values are seen when exploring the adult admission price:

- ▶ 10th percentile = \$3.00
- ▶ 25th percentile = \$4.62
- ▶ 50th percentile (also known as the median) = \$6.00
- ▶ 75th percentile = \$7.50
- ▶ 90th percentile = \$9.00

This means that while the “typical” museum in the sample charges \$6 for an adult admission, there is a wide distribution of responses — one in ten museums charge \$3 or less, and one in ten charge \$9 or more.

This approach is used extensively throughout the report, and provides a quantitative quick overview of the data scope. More importantly, it allows you to quickly benchmark your institution against the overall sample and, in many cases, against your peer group based on operating income and/or admission.

V. Exhibits, Programs & Publications

Volume 5 explores programmatic offerings and related factors across the survey sample. Exhibit 5.1 summarizes the overall scope of programs/activities offered, and shows that a majority of institutions offer classes and demonstrations, field trips, school outreach, curriculum materials, and workshops/institutes for teachers. The data are further explored by museum budget size, age, and attendance in Exhibit 5.2.

Exhibit 5.3 focuses on the presence of a permanent early childhood exhibit, and the age groups targeted by this exhibit. As with overall programs/activities, the data are further segmented by museum budget size, age and attendance to highlight variations.

Exhibits 5.4 to 5.6 explore ancillary programmatic issues, such as the museum's involvement with a charter school, whether a formal research or evaluation initiative is presently underway, and newsletter/annual report publication activities.

Educational Programs/Activities Offered

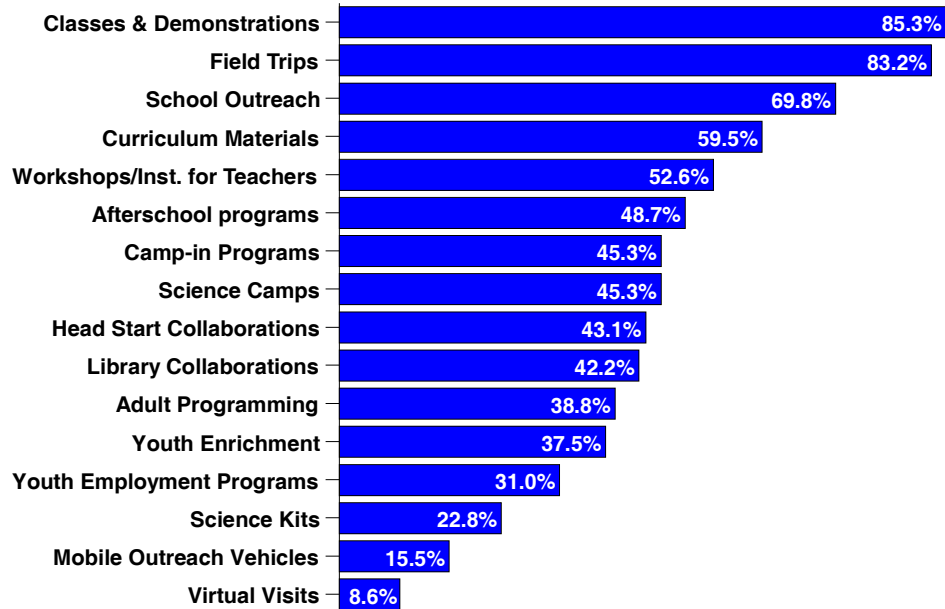


Exhibit 5.1

2008 Children's Museums Metrics Reports®

**Exhibit 5.2: Educational Programs/Activities Offered by
Museum Budget, Age and Attendance**

<i>Data are the percentage indicating the presence of each program/activity.</i>		After-school programs	Camp-in programs	Classes and demos	Curriculum materials
		Overall	48.7%	45.3%	85.3%
Budget (operating income)	< \$250,000	47.6%	35.7%	78.6%	45.2%
	\$250,000–\$499,999	37.8%	35.1%	81.1%	51.4%
	\$500,000–\$999,999	63.3%	53.3%	90.0%	56.7%
	\$1–\$2.9 million	56.0%	58.0%	90.0%	72.0%
	\$3–\$4.9 million	68.8%	68.8%	87.5%	75.0%
	\$5 million+	42.1%	57.9%	94.7%	78.9%
Museum age (date of opening)	Before 1990	54.7%	53.5%	91.9%	72.1%
	1990–1999	42.0%	43.2%	82.8%	56.8%
	2000–2008	48.3%	39.7%	79.3%	46.6%
Attendance (on-site)	< 25,000	42.9%	32.7%	81.6%	53.1%
	25,000–49,999	51.2%	43.9%	80.5%	51.2%
	50,000–124,999	58.3%	50.0%	93.8%	56.3%
	125,000–249,999	64.9%	67.6%	83.8%	81.1%
	250,000+	40.7%	59.3%	96.3%	70.4%

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2008 Children's Museums Metrics Reports[®]

**Exhibit 5.2: Educational Programs/Activities Offered by
Museum Budget, Age and Attendance**

<i>Data are the percentage indicating the presence of each program/activity</i>		Virtual visits	Field trips	Adult programming	School outreach
	Overall	8.6%	83.2%	38.8%	69.8%
Budget (operating income)	< \$250,000	4.8%	90.5%	26.2%	64.3%
	\$250,000–\$499,999	10.8%	91.9%	32.4%	67.6%
	\$500,000–\$999,999	3.3%	93.3%	50.0%	83.3%
	\$1–\$2.9 million	4.0%	80.0%	40.0%	74.0%
	\$3–\$4.9 million	25.0%	68.8%	43.8%	81.3%
	\$5 million+	21.1%	84.2%	63.2%	78.9%
Museum age (date of opening)	Before 1990	5.8%	84.9%	48.8%	77.9%
	1990–1999	11.1%	81.5%	28.4%	67.9%
	2000–2008	8.6%	84.5%	36.2%	63.8%
Attendance (on-site)	< 25,000	6.1%	83.7%	26.5%	59.2%
	25,000–49,999	14.6%	92.7%	41.5%	82.9%
	50,000–124,999	2.1%	87.5%	33.3%	68.8%
	125,000–249,999	2.7%	75.7%	51.4%	78.4%
	250,000+	25.9%	85.2%	55.6%	74.1%

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Exhibit 5.2: Educational Programs/Activities Offered by Museum Budget, Age and Attendance

<i>Data are the percentage indicating the presence of each program/activity</i>		Library collaborations	Head Start collaborations	Science Kits	Science Camps
Overall		42.2%	43.1%	22.8%	45.3%
Budget (operating income)	< \$250,000	40.5%	50.0%	19.0%	40.5%
	\$250,000–\$499,999	37.8%	45.9%	24.3%	45.9%
	\$500,000–\$999,999	46.7%	43.3%	16.7%	66.7%
	\$1–\$2.9 million	46.0%	40.0%	28.0%	58.0%
	\$3–\$4.9 million	50.0%	56.3%	12.5%	43.8%
	\$5 million+	63.2%	63.2%	57.9%	36.8%
Museum age (date of opening)	Before 1990	46.5%	52.3%	30.2%	46.5%
	1990–1999	42.0%	33.3%	21.0%	43.2%
	2000–2008	41.4%	44.8%	17.2%	46.6%
Attendance (on-site)	< 25,000	36.7%	49.0%	18.4%	42.9%
	25,000–49,999	36.6%	34.1%	26.8%	41.5%
	50,000–124,999	39.6%	41.7%	16.7%	58.3%
	125,000–249,999	54.1%	45.9%	29.7%	51.4%
	250,000+	55.6%	63.0%	37.0%	40.7%

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2008 Children's Museums Metrics Reports[®]

**Exhibit 5.2: Educational Programs/Activities Offered by
Museum Budget, Age and Attendance**

<i>Data are the percentage indicating the presence of each program/activity</i>		Youth employment programs	Youth enrichment	Workshops/institutes for teachers	Mobile outreach vehicles
		Overall	31.0%	37.5%	52.6%
Budget (operating income)	< \$250,000	16.7%	31.0%	28.6%	16.7%
	\$250,000–\$499,999	32.4%	37.8%	40.5%	10.8%
	\$500,000–\$999,999	33.3%	33.3%	50.0%	3.3%
	\$1–\$2.9 million	38.0%	48.0%	72.0%	18.0%
	\$3–\$4.9 million	37.5%	50.0%	75.0%	25.0%
	\$5 million+	36.8%	47.4%	94.7%	31.6%
Museum age (date of opening)	Before 1990	41.9%	46.5%	67.4%	45.7%
	1990–1999	28.4%	32.1%	26.7%	12.3%
	2000–2008	20.7%	32.8%	2.3%	3.7%
Attendance (on-site)	< 25,000	20.4%	32.7%	32.7%	12.2%
	25,000–49,999	29.3%	41.5%	43.9%	14.6%
	50,000–124,999	43.8%	33.3%	54.2%	12.5%
	125,000–249,999	40.5%	54.1%	75.7%	16.2%
	250,000+	33.3%	40.7%	88.9%	29.6%

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Exhibit 5.3: Permanent Early Childhood Exhibit by Museum Budget, Age and Attendance

	Have a permanent early childhood exhibit	Age group targeted								
		0-2	0-3	0-4	0-5	0-6	2-4	Other	No response	
Overall	81.5%	6.9%	22.8%	20.1%	12.7%	3.2%	6.3%	25.9%	2.1%	
Budget (operating income)	< \$250,000	76.2%	6.3%	25.0%	9.4%	3.1%	3.1%	6.3%	43.8%	3.1%
	\$250,000–\$499,999	81.1%	10.0%	23.3%	20.0%	13.3%	0.0%	16.7%	16.7%	0.0%
	\$500,000–\$999,999	93.3%	17.9%	21.4%	17.9%	28.6%	0.0%	0.0%	14.3%	0.0%
	\$1–\$2.9 million	86.0%	2.3%	25.6%	37.2%	11.6%	4.7%	2.3%	16.3%	0.0%
	\$3–\$4.9 million	93.8%	0.0%	20.0%	26.7%	13.3%	6.7%	13.3%	20.0%	0.0%
	\$5 million+	100.0%	5.3%	15.8%	15.8%	15.8%	10.5%	0.0%	36.8%	0.0%
Museum age (date of opening)	Before 1990	83.7%	2.8%	23.6%	18.1%	15.3%	2.8%	9.7%	26.4%	1.4%
	1990–1999	80.2%	4.6%	26.2%	26.2%	10.8%	4.6%	4.6%	23.1%	0.0%
	2000–2008	82.8%	14.6%	18.8%	14.6%	10.4%	2.1%	4.2%	31.3%	4.2%
Attendance (on-site)	< 25,000	73.5%	8.3%	25.0%	8.3%	8.3%	0.0%	5.6%	38.9%	5.6%
	25,000–49,999	78.0%	12.5%	15.6%	12.5%	9.4%	3.1%	18.8%	28.1%	0.0%
	50,000–124,999	87.5%	7.1%	19.0%	26.2%	21.4%	2.4%	4.8%	16.7%	2.4%
	125,000–249,999	89.2%	3.0%	33.3%	36.4%	15.2%	3.0%	3.0%	6.1%	0.0%
	250,000+	92.6%	4.0%	16.0%	20.0%	12.0%	8.0%	0.0%	40.0%	0.0%

Exhibit 5.4: Museum Involvement with a Charter School

		School is run by the museum	Museum is part of a consortium administering a school	Not at present, but in the planning stages	No
Overall		1.7%	1.3%	3.4%	93.5%
Budget (operating income)	< \$250,000	0.0%	0.0%	4.8%	95.2%
	\$250,000–\$499,999	0.0%	0.0%	2.7%	97.3%
	\$500,000–\$999,999	0.0%	0.0%	3.3%	96.7%
	\$1–\$2.9 million	0.0%	4.0%	4.0%	92.0%
	\$3–\$4.9 million	12.5%	0.0%	6.3%	81.3%
	\$5 million+	5.3%	5.3%	5.3%	84.2%
	Museum age (date of opening)	Before 1990	1.2%	3.5%	3.5%
	1990–1999	0.0%	0.0%	3.7%	96.3%
	2000–2008	3.4%	0.0%	3.4%	93.1%

Exhibit 5.5: Formal Research/Evaluation Initiative

		A formal research or evaluation initiative is underway
Overall		19.0%
Budget (operating income)	< \$250,000	16.7%
	\$250,000–\$499,999	8.1%
	\$500,000–\$999,999	20.0%
	\$1–\$2.9 million	20.0%
	\$3–\$4.9 million	31.3%
	\$5 million+	52.6%
	Museum age (date of opening)	Before 1990
	1990–1999	13.6%
	2000–2008	12.1%

Exhibit 5.6: Publication Activities

		Newsletter publication frequency						Publish annual report?
		Weekly	Monthly	Bimonthly	Quarterly	Other frequency	No response	
Overall		2.6%	12.9%	11.6%	51.7%	8.2%	12.9%	48.3%
< \$250,000		2.4%	16.7%	2.4%	57.1%	7.1%	14.3%	33.3%
\$250,000–\$499,999		2.7%	8.1%	13.5%	51.4%	8.1%	16.2%	40.5%
Budget (operating income)	\$500,000–\$999,999	3.3%	13.3%	16.7%	46.7%	10.0%	10.0%	53.3%
	\$1–\$2.9 million	2.0%	8.0%	12.0%	64.0%	10.0%	4.0%	58.0%
	\$3–\$4.9 million	6.3%	18.8%	12.5%	43.8%	12.5%	6.3%	75.0%
	\$5 million+	0.0%	36.8%	21.1%	36.8%	5.3%	0.0%	84.2%
Museum age (date of opening)	Before 1990	2.3%	10.5%	14.0%	52.3%	10.5%	10.5%	60.5%
	1990–1999	2.5%	12.3%	13.6%	50.6%	8.6%	12.3%	45.7%
	2000–2008	3.4%	17.2%	6.9%	51.7%	5.2%	15.5%	37.9%