Creativity in Play!

Elizabeth Rood, Ed.D.
Center for Childhood Creativity at the Bay Area Discovery Museum

Alyssa Tongue
Children’s Museum of Tacoma

Tomoko Kuta
The New Children’s Museum
Let’s Play!

1. Find a partner
2. Challenge yourself to count 1-2-3 alternating speakers with each number
3. Add challenge, instead of saying “1” snap your fingers.
4. When you mess up say “ta-da!” And start over.

http://improvencyclopedia.org/games/Clap_Snap_Stamp.html
• What’s the point?
• Yes, please, let’s!
• But. I’m not done yet.
• What if we pretend… ?

Adapted from Dr. Stuart Brown (2009)
Play Promotes “Plasticity”

Per Dr. Marian Diamond:

• Rats’ early experiences changed brains structurally!

• Enriched environments (toys + social interaction) led to more grey matter.
**FOOD CHART**

**GROUP 1**

**BODY BUILDING FOODS**
- MILK
- CHEESE
- EGGS
- MEAT
- FISH

*Build the body and prevent the tissues wearing out.*

*Many vegetable foods such as peas and beans, bread and potatoes, help in body-building; but they are not such good body-builders as these five.*

**GROUP 2**

**ENERGY FOODS**
- POTATOES
- BREAD
- FLOUR
- OATMEAL
- RICE
- SAGO
- SUGAR
- DRIED FRUIT
- HONEY
- CHEESE
- BUTTER
- MARGARINE
- DRIPPING
- SUET
- LARD
- BACON
- HAM

*Provide fuel for the body.*

**GROUP 3**

**PROTECTIVE FOODS**
- MILK
- BUTTER
- MARGARINE
- CHEESE
- EGGS
- HERRINGS (fresh, canned or salt)
- SALMON (fresh or canned)
- LIVER

*Give protection from illness.*

**GROUP 4**

**PROTECTIVE FOODS**
- POTATOES
- CARROTS
- FRUIT (fresh or canned, but not dried)
- GREEN VEGETABLES (fresh or canned, but not dried)
- SALADS
- TOMATOES
- WHOLEMEAL BREAD - BROWN BREAD

*Protective foods are needed for proper nourishment. They build the teeth and bones and help the body to resist infection.*

**EAT SOMETHING FROM EACH GROUP EVERY DAY**
A Balanced Diet of Play

Free → Self-Regulation
Imaginary → Creativity
Exploratory → Reasoning
Reciprocal → Collaboration
Guided → Knowledge
Free Play
Through play that is open and self-directed, children practice self-regulation.
Executive functions

Executive functions (EFs) are a set of cognitive skills that serve as the command and control center of our brain. EFs help us to plan, achieve goals, control impulses, and focus attention.

**Self-control**

Self-control enables us to ignore distractions and resist impulsive actions.

*Example:* Resisting the urge to touch your toes unless you hear “Simon says…”

**Executive Functions**

**Cognitive flexibility**

Cognitive flexibility helps us to see things from different perspectives and find new solutions to problems.

*Example:* Answering a math problem using multiple strategies

**Working memory**

Working memory allows us to hold and manipulate information in our mind to complete a task.

*Example:* Repeating a phone number until you can write it down
OUR MISSION: to ignite and advance creative thinking for all children

Imaginary Play
Imagination and cognitive flexibility

Robust imaginary play in childhood predicts creativity in adulthood.
Play as hypothesis testing

When children **mess about** with things, they are exploring cause and effect and learning about the natural and made world around them.
Reciprocal Play
Reciprocal Play

Playing together helps us learn “prosocial” skills.

Strong prosocial skills predict positive academic and life outcomes.
Toward creative collaboration

Developing “prosocial skills” is the foundation.

Ultimate goal is to co-create!
Guided Play
Child-directed

- Child-initiated
  - Free play
- Adult-initiated
  - Guided Play

Adult-directed

- Child-initiated
  - Co-opted
- Adult-initiated
  - Direct Instruction

Adapted from Kathy Hirsh Pasek’s “Becoming Brilliant”
Guided play and creativity

Guided play can take the form of:
• Set up of the experience, materials, and tools
• Questions
• “Scaffolds” or tips

Guided play helps children learn “how to” without telling them how to!
A Balanced Diet of Play

Free \rightarrow Self-Regulation

Imaginary \rightarrow Creativity

Exploratory \rightarrow Reasoning

Reciprocal \rightarrow Collaboration

Guided \rightarrow Knowledge

Imaginary Guided Exploratory Reciprocal Creativity Reasoning Collaboration Knowledge
Alyssa Tongue
Learning Experiences Director
AlyssaT@PlayTacoma.org
Goals for Collaboration

- Increase cross-promotion
- Improve family access
- Build museum pipeline
- Strengthen collaborative partnership
Family Explorer Pack

Still Life

FIND the painting *An Abundance of Fruit* by artist John F. Francis in the exhibition *Two Centuries of American Still-Life Painting: The Frank and Michelle Hevdek Collection*.

**LOOK**
Look at all the different kinds of fruit in this still-life painting. What different kinds of fruit do you see?

**EXPLORE**
Explore the plush fruit basket set in the Explorer Pack. Arrange the fruit to create your own still-life composition. Which fruit will you choose to put inside the basket? Why?

**CREATE**
Create a drawing of your still-life composition. Choose a sheet of paper with a fancy frame. Use colored pencils to fill it up with fruit.

**READ**
Read *Fruit* by Sara Anderson. Which fruits are your favorite to eat?

**MORE TO EXPLORE**
Look around this gallery. What other fruit-filled still lifes can you find? How are they similar to this painting? How are they different?

*TAM*

---

How will you create a self-portrait that illustrates what is most important about you?
Expectations for children’s museums are shifting
OUR MISSION:

The New Children’s Museum is a new model of museum that seeks to inspire innovation, creativity and critical thinking in children and families through inventive and engaging experiences with contemporary art.
The New Children’s Museum

Background

- A non-profit serving children and families
- Located in downtown San Diego
- Housed in a sustainable, green building
- Welcomes over 260,000 visitors per year
- Presents relevant, current issues for visitors to explore
- Commissions artists for installations and programs
2017 TOTAL ATTENDANCE

269,951

OPENED LA JOLLA
1983
OPENED IN NEW BUILDING
2008
50,000 square feet
35,000 square feet of exhibition space

26% VISITORS
FREE / DISCOUNTED ACCESS

15,455
SCHOOL VISITORS

196
SCHOOLS SERVED

18,412
MILITARY SERVED

7,083
MEMBER HOUSEHOLDS

2017 OPERATING BUDGET

$4.3 MILLION

67
STAFF MEMBERS

199
VOLUNTEERS

SOURCES OF FUNDS

INDIVIDUALS $898K
21%

GOVERNMENT $285K
6%

CORPORATE $533K
12%

FOUNDATION $278K
6%

OTHER EARNED $428K
10%

PROGRAMS & EXHIBITIONS $3,085K
71%

SPECIAL EVENTS $203K
5%

FUNDRAISING $552K
13%

MANAGEMENT & GENERAL $497K
11%

ADMISSIONS $903K
21%

FACILITY RENTALS $418K
10%

MEMBERSHIP $599K
14%

USSES OF FUNDS
We believe play and art making promote creativity, confidence, problem solving, interpersonal skills, critical thinking, resiliency, collaboration and optimism.
Why art?
Our Practices (how we do it)

Artistic engagement → New Perspectives and Learning → Critical Skills

The Museum offers:

• Engaging artistic and open-ended play experiences
• Direct contact/engagement with works of art
• Opportunities for hands-on artmaking
• Chance to learn directly from artists
• Insight into and practice with the creative process
• Participation in something innovative
• Inspiration through original art

Engagement and exposure to the arts leads to personal success including:

• Stimulated imagination
• Practice thinking “outside the box”
• Exposure to new ideas and new approaches
• Increased understanding and appreciation of the value of art
• Rewarding positive risk taking

Ultimately, the Museum strives to develop skills important for the 21st century:

• Creativity
• Confidence
• Problem solving
• Interpersonal skills
• Critical thinking
• Collaboration
• Resiliency
• Optimism
Learning Framework
and
what our work looks like
Open-Ended Play

Brian Dick, *No Rules... Except*, 2018
Executive Functions

Jason Torchinsky, Food Truckin’, 2013
Loose Parts
Authentic Experiences

Wes Sam-Bruce, The Wonder Sound, 2016
Wes Sam-Bruce, *The Wonder Sound*, 2016
Creative Hands-on Instruction
Shinique Smith, *Secret Garden*, 2011
Creativity & Lifelong Learning in the Arts