Mud, Fire, and Tools!
Pop-Up Adventure
Playgrounds and Museums
What are your fondest memories play as a child?
Common characteristics of play days past:

• Independence from Adults
• Development of Kid Culture
• Manipulation of the Environment
• Connection with Nature
• Engagement with Risk!
MOTHER: Vicky aged eight in 1979 was allowed to walk to the swimming pool alone half a mile away.

SON: Ed, now eight is only allowed to walk on his own to the end of his street (300 yards).

GRANDFATHER: Jack aged eight in 1950. Able to walk about one mile on his own to the woods.

GREAT-GRANDFATHER: George aged eight in 1919. Allowed to walk six miles to go fishing.
Adventure Playgrounds: History and Context

- Adventure Playgrounds are not a new concept.
- Child led and often looks “risky”; in actuality significantly less risk involved than in most commonly played sports.
- Children are members of community too, though often relegated to specific places.

Image from Adventure Play London 1954
Notting Hill Adventure Playground. Copyright Donne Buck
What is a Playworker?
Contemporary Adventure Playgrounds
Temporary and Pop Up Adventure Playgrounds
Mud Day!
Fort Day!
Build and Destroy!
Pop-Up Adventure Playgrounds at Portland Children’s Museum
Starting Temporary Adventure Play Spaces in a Museum

• Understanding your museum: What are the allowances and restrictions of your space?
• Interdepartmental allies: Who are they and how can they help?
• Culture Shifting: What do we believe children are capable of? What prevents them from achieving their goals?
Monthly Programs and Off-Site Events

• Pop-Up style events are great ways to connect community populations.
• Multiple facilitators are always best.
• Risk assessments are a must.
Challenges and Victories in Adventure Play at the Museum

- Adult perception, restriction, and ‘adulteration’ of play.
- “I don’t think we’re allowed to do this....”
- Messy? Dangerous? Wasteful?
- Confidence! Collaboration! Creativity! Problem Solving! Skill building! Joy!
Documentation and Staff Training

• Words: What do you see, hear, and otherwise observe? What does that make you think of?
• Photos: Capture a story. More is more!
Glorious Stuff!
Most Loved Items

- Tape (masking is best)
- Cardboard
- String, yarn, twine
- Tubes
- Sticks
- Fabric (large pieces)
- Stickers
- Pinecones
- Buckets
Museum Art Studios and Maker’s Spaces in Support of Adventure Playgrounds
Maker Space

Maker Faire

Pop-up Playground
Defining our terms

• **MakerSpace**
  A space where people make things

• **Museum Art Studio**
  A space where people make things

• **Popup Adventure Playground**
  A space where people make things
Are we ready for this?

Making space in MakerSpace so maker kids have space to make...
Identifying a Workspace

Temporary

- Accessibility
- Traffic Flow
- Contain-ability

Dedicated

- Tools & Facilities
- Material through-flow
- History
The Zen of Intentional Disorder
How do we define a “mess”?

…and just how much “mess” can we live with?
Making in other Spaces
Supporting creative programing in the museum and community
Programing Across the Museum

Identify Team Strengths
- Staff expertise
- Material sourcing wizardry
- Logistical support
- Safe fabrication zones
- Cleanup!
- Exhibit quirks
- Partnerships
- Cross fertilization
Safer tool practices
Micha learns to use a wood saw

• Environmental choices
• Reading body language
• Focus on skill acquisition
• Fun & Empowering
• Connecting the dots
• Can you picture the interaction with an adult?
Questions?
Resources for Continued Exploration

Presenters:
Jess Graff- Residency Manager
Portland Children’s Museum, Independent Contractor

Mike Yager- Studio Specialist
Portland Children's Museum

Katie Shook- Artist, Playworker

Leon Smith- Designer, Playworker

Websites and resources:
• Pop Up Adventure Play Website
• Pop Up Adventure Play Facebook
• Adventure Playground History
• Portland Free Play

Children’s Museums Engaging Playwork:
• Portland Children's Museum
• The New Children's Museum

Articles:
• Where the Wild Things Play
• Inside a European Adventure Playground