MAKING THE CASE FOR PLAY

Kerri Fox, The New Children’s Museum
Tanya Durand, Children’s Museum of Tacoma
Audrey Dean, Kids ‘N’ Stuff Children’s Museum
Emily Bruce, Marbles Kids Museum (moderator)
Kerri Fox
VP Marketing + Communications
The New Children’s Museum
San Diego
Celebrating **10 years** as The New Children’s Museum and **35 years** in San Diego!
Mission shift

Contemporary art museum for children

Children’s museum that uses contemporary art as a lens
Audience

The way we work with contemporary artists

Engagement + Play
WHY: Theory of Change

Artistic engagement → New Perspectives and Learning → 21st Century Skills

Changes to exhibitions approach

- “Text kitchen” - prototyping
- Didactics – what is it? What do I do?
- Did you know? – skill development
- Partial exhibitions vs. museum-wide
- Embracing our name – in a different way
Curator ➔ Exhibitions Manager
Museum Guides ➔ Playworkers
Museum Facilitators ➔ Teaching Artists
**ART MAKING**

**PLAYWORK**
Children choose their own self-motivated play, with adult Playworkers intervening when needed.

**CHILD-DIRECTED PLAY**
Children test out questions and problem solve, developing independent thinking and self-worth.

**OPEN-ENDED PLAY**
Children experiment, take risks and make discoveries, nurturing creative thinking and self-expression.

**GROUP/OTHER SOCIAL PLAY**
Children work together and grow socially and emotionally, learning to express themselves and collaborate.

**OPEN PLAY**

**LOOSE PARTS THEORY**
Children manipulate simple materials in multiple ways, stimulating confidence and creativity.

**AUTHENTIC EXPERIENCES**
Children are exposed to and engage with art, fostering real learning and real life experiences.

**VISUAL LITERACY SKILLS**
Children interpret visual clues and art, honing their ability to observe and “read” the world around them.
COMMUNICATION
Brand/Positioning

Inserts
shaping the next generation of leaders

At The New Children's Museum, we believe play and art-making promote the skills that our future leaders need: creativity, confidence, problem-solving, interpersonal skills, critical thinking, collaboration, resiliency and optimism.

inspiring children through art and creativity

Our mission: The New Children's Museum is a new model of children's museum whose mission is to stimulate imagination, creativity and critical thinking in children and families through immersive and engaging experiences with contemporary art.

Our vision: To address a critical need in our society and become a leader in engaging children through contemporary art in order to develop the skills needed for the 21st century.

We believe all children should have access to the creative process and arts, of the highest quality. We provide free and discounted admission through ongoing viable programs like Check Out NCM! Library memberships, Blue Star Museums; and Kids Free October. We also provide group visits for many children and families from diverse communities throughout San Diego County through our Most Creativity Program, Title I Access program, and others in Creativity and more.
Art plays a critical role in a child's development.
Early childhood engagement with art results in lifelong involvement and appreciation for the arts. We help children develop critical skills to achieve success in the 21st century.

Play allows children to engage and interact.
Play helps develop imagination, dexterity as well as physical, cognitive, and emotional strength. Play is important to healthy brain development, and it is through play that children engage and interact in the world around them.

We empower children to think, play and create.
We commission and collaborate with contemporary artists to create one-of-a-kind room-sized art installations. We are one of the few children's museums in the country doing this.
Attendance Growth
Our first 10 years


231,577

+90%
Revenue Growth
Our first 10 years

+156%
Key questions

• Is your mission statement aligned with your business model?

• Can you answer key questions about your daily practice:
  • Why art?
  • Why play?
  • Why creativity?
Key questions

- Do your staff positions and titles truly reflect what they are doing?
- Is your signage targeted at the right audience?
- Is there an opportunity to clarify what you are doing, why and how to engage?
- Does your website talk about WHY you do what you do, not just WHAT you do?
Key questions

• Are you prepared to justify WHY you matter and are making a difference?
• What would happen to your city or community if you were not there?
• What role are you serving?
Making the Case for Play

Children’s Museum Of Tacoma (WA)

Tanya Durand, Executive Director
The Power of Play: Learning What Comes Naturally
David Elkind, Ph.D.

Einstein Never Used Flash Cards
Kathy Hirsh-Pasek, Ph.D., and Roberta Michnick Golinkoff, Ph.D., with Diane Eyer, Ph.D.

Mind in the Making: The Seven Essential Life Skills Every Child Needs
Ellen galinsky
What’s our role in the family?
Image of the Child:
We believe children are compassionate, capable, inquisitive, creative, valuable and contributing.
Vision: Communities embrace the Power of Play and value the contributions of children.

Mission: We Honor Children and Champion Play
Collective Impact Partnership
Formal Education
Licensed Childcare
SYMPOSIUM ON OUR YOUNGEST CITIZENS

APRIL 12 2018

8 a.m. - Noon
Community Mind Shifts
Community Action Shifts
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A Small Museum's

CASE FOR PLAY

Audrey Dean

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, KIDS ‘N’ STUFF CHILDREN’S MUSEUM
The Story of KIDS ‘N’ STUFF
The concept of play should be accessible to all constituents.
“How will the exhibit be used?”

I HAVE NO IDEA.
We find NO NEED TO JUSTIFY the value of play if we simply RELAY THE STORIES WE OBSERVE on the floor.
MAKING THE CASE FOR PLAY

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