

Amplifying Our Impact Through Play-Based Learning



*To view handouts and other materials
related to this session, see this Google Folder:*



Play-Based Learning Intro Activity:

On your table there are items that can be used for play-based learning. Consider the items and chat with your tablemates about ways you think children might use these items to play.

- *How could different age groups use these items?*
- *How could they be used to support different topics (science, art, etc)?*
- *How would these items appeal to different learning styles?*



Today's Panel:

Xanthi Gray: *Director of Education, The Children's Museum of New Hampshire*

Meredith Brustlin: *Content Specialist, The Children's Museum of New Hampshire*

Karen DuBois-Garofalo: *Coordinator, Early Childhood Education Coaching Initiative,
The University of New Hampshire*

Nathan Manley: *Assistant Superintendent, Neosho School District*

Mindy Porter: *Director of Education, Scott Family Amazeum*

Children's Museums Have Expertise to Support Play-based Learning in Schools

A planned play environment, enriched with objects that provide experiential learning opportunities, infused with curricular content

Adults enhancing children's exploration and learning through collaboration with children asking open-ended questions suggesting ways to explore and extend



Continuum of Play-based Learning



The diagram consists of three overlapping circles arranged horizontally. The leftmost circle is light blue and contains the text 'Child-Directed Free Play'. The middle circle is light green and contains the text 'Educator-Guided Play'. The rightmost circle is light blue and contains the text 'Educator-Created Play'. The circles overlap in the center, with the green circle overlapping both the blue circles.

Child-
Directed
Free Play

Educator-
Guided Play

Educator-
Created
Play

Defining Guided Play



- Self-chosen, enjoyable and process oriented
- Child-directed and educator facilitated
- Educators take an active role
- Maintains the joy of free play while allowing children to connect authentically
- Children co-construct their learning with their teachers and peers



The science of *how* children learn

Kimberly Nesbitt

How Children Learn

Children learn best when they can be **active and engaged** in learning that is **meaningful, socially interactive, iterative, and joyful**

Active	Children are actively involved and have agency in the learning process.
Engaged	Children are engaged and focused on learning goals.
Meaningful	Children connect their own experiences and interests to learning goals, making learning relevant.
Socially Interactive	Children collaborate and work together involved to meet learning goals.
Iterative	Children involved in learning that evolves to grow and extend understanding.
Joyful	Children's' learning is joyful and heightens their interest and motivation.

Hirsh-Pasek et al., 2015, 2020; Pyle & Danniels, 2016; Skene et al., 2022 ; Weisberg et al., 2013, 2016; Whitebread, 2019; Yannier et al., 2021; Zosh et al., 2018, 2022

Play-based learning is aligned with:

Inquiry-based learning

Project-based learning

Experiential learning

Learning by doing



The key is student agency to meet learning goals and objectives.

Children's Museum of NH & University of NH Collaboration



The Children's Museum of New Hampshire
Dover, NH



The University of New Hampshire
Durham, NH

Timeline of CMNH & UNH Partnership

2018: Play-based learning (PBL) is mandated for NH Kindergarten Classrooms

1/2019: UNH begins *Project ACME* (Advancing Children's Museum Engagement) study at CMNH

4/2019: UNH receives \$3.8 million grant for early childhood education/PBL

9/2019: UNH reaches out to CMNH to brainstorm collaboration ideas. Decide to co-host teacher workshops for NH kindergarten educators, attendees express a need for support with the transition to PBL

11/2019: Museum applies for first IMLS grant, with support from UNH, to advance PBL resources for kindergarten teachers who have a mandated PBL curriculum

2020: CMNH creates online resources to support caregivers at home with PBL with their children, also resources for educators like virtual teacher workshops and open houses with UNH

11/2021: CMNH applies for a second IMLS grant, this time focusing on addressing the State's childcare crisis by providing PBL support to educators in early childhood settings, again with support from UNH

4/2023: CMNH & UNH present together at ACM

Play Based Learning for All: CMNH & UNH Collaboration

The Beginning: Inspiration, Grant Writing, Waiting, Sharing, Planning, Ordering & Organizing!

This site has been chosen as a partner in a grant-funded project to advance Play-Based Learning with:

**CHILDREN'S
MUSEUM**
of NEW HAMPSHIRE



We will be receiving a **Play-Based Learning** activity kit filled with high quality manipulatives and ideas to share with children and caregivers!

We look forward to working with **The Children's Museum of New Hampshire** and promoting the power of play!

Play-Based Learning Kits developed and provided, free of charge, by The Children's Museum of New Hampshire, thanks, in part, to funding provided by the Institute of Museum and Library Services and by the NH Preschool Development Grant, sponsored by the Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families (Award# 90TP0060)



Play Based Learning for All: CMNH & UNH Collaboration

The Kit: What's in it? How is it used? How do we keep partners engaged?



Ages 0-24 months



Ages 2-3 years



Ages 4-5 years

PBL Kit Feedback from Program Partners

"It's been really exciting to see the group find so many ways to explore and play with all the different items! We have children birth to 5 and it's a low barrier, drop-in playgroup so we never know who will be attending. These materials are PERFECT as they provide learning opportunities, for every age group, in so many different ways!" *-Family Resource Center, Keene, NH*

"The play-based materials we've added into our weekly programs have given our library storytimes a major overhaul, and have helped to bring more families into the library than we saw pre-pandemic." *-Librarian, Laconia, NH*

"We, the children and the staff have loved the materials sent to our school- opening doors for a whole new way to play!!!" *-Early Childhood Teacher, Lyme, NH*

"Our community has really enjoyed the infusion of quality play based learning materials. The new materials have offered a jumping off point to discuss the importance of play based learning with families." *-Early Childhood Teacher, Sanbornton, NH*

Play Based Learning for All: CMNH & UNH Collaboration

The Middle: Communicating, Educating, Learning & Planning



Activity Guide: January

Items in green are included in your PBL kit from CMNH

Ages 0-24 months:

- Explore cause & effect with **balls**:
 - Make a simple cardboard ramp for the balls. Try to design it so it is low on the floor and accessible for babies.
 - Roll the balls down the ramp, watch them roll away, try again, roll the balls up the ramp, crawl/toddle/run after the runaway balls, etc!
 - For older children, glue on strips of construction paper on the ramp in colors that correspond to the colors of the balls. This will be an invitation for them to match the ball color to the color on the ramp before sending them down, if they want!
- Hide and seek with **blocks & toys**:
 - Set out the set of **stacking blocks**. Hide a few of the **bath buddy animals** under the blocks. Show babies how to pick up the blocks and peek under to see if there is an animal there. Encourage them to look on their own.
 - Alternatively, set the blocks out upside down so they are each a small container. Place bath buddies in a few of the blocks and place **scarves** on top as a "cover", show babies how to remove the scarves and check inside for animals!

Play Based Learning for All: CMNH & UNH Collaboration

The End (& or The Future?): Feedback, Reporting, & Pondering, What's Next?



Play Based Learning for All: CMNH & UNH Collaboration

The Collaboration:

Successes:

- Collaborating/supporting each other's work = less work for each of us
- Connections with different people/organizations in the community
- Bringing information/experience from different backgrounds
- Working on similar projects, learning from what the other may have done differently
- Finding & using the same language to keep consistency with partners

Challenges:

- Different organization's busy schedules—a challenge to think and plan ahead
- Finding creative ways to work around various funding sources
- Various interpretations of what is PBL—planning programming around different knowledge levels
- Receiving feedback

Play Based Learning for All: CMNH & UNH Collaboration

TELL ME ABOUT ...

WHAT ABOUT "X"
DO YOU LIKE?





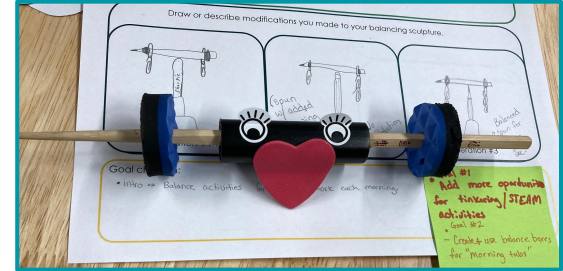
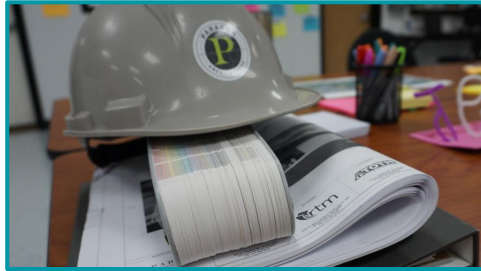
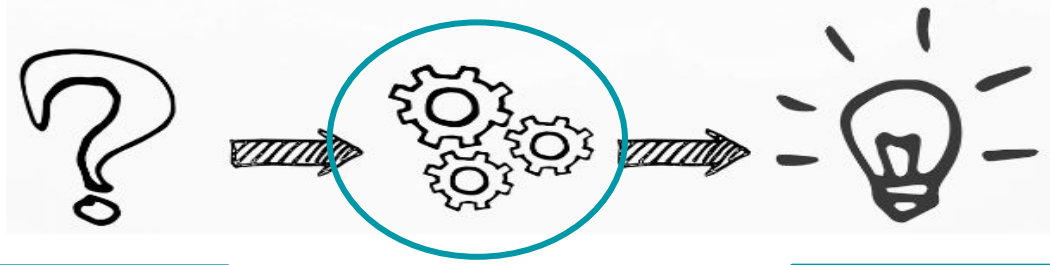
N NEOSHO
SCHOOL DISTRICT



Scott Family
AMAZEUM



Create authentic learning experiences
that develop collaborative, curious,
passionate learners who are equipped
for future careers and life.



Design Services

Professional Development

Timeline of Neosho School District & Amazeum Partnership

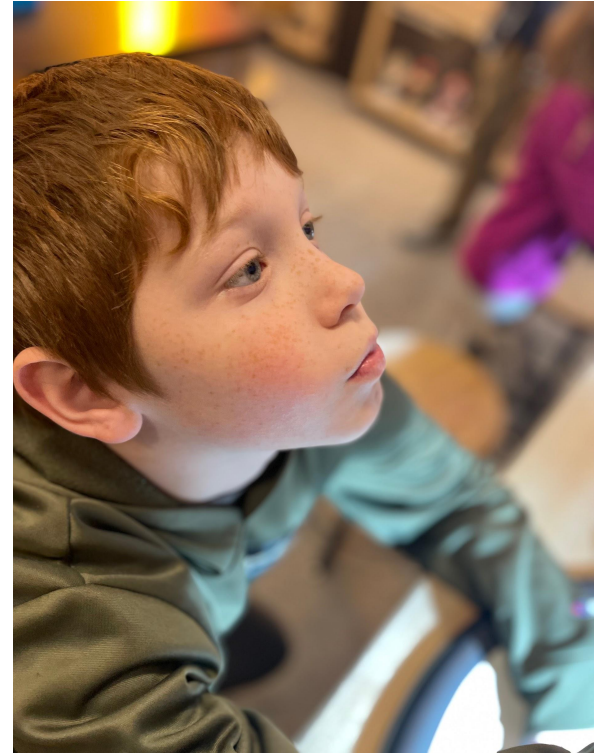
2018-19: NSD sets vision for authentic learning for all and creating STEAM focused school

Nov 2019: NSD initiates partnership with Amazeum

April 2020: Begin design services partnership for STEAM school

2020-21: KinderCat program started at NSD; Amazeum begins providing professional development for NSD

2022-23: Amazeum continues deep professional development with NSD; University of Arkansas invites NSD to participate in play-based learning research project





KINDERCAT ACADEMY

AN ACCELERATED EXPLORATION
KINDERGARTEN FOR YOUNGSTERS

- Early access for students, must be kindergarten age eligible.
- Small class size, capped at 15
- Acceleration program, not remedial
- Teachers use kindergarten standards. Exposure over Mastery.
- Opportunity to promote hands on learning through STEAM and structured play.
- Access to motor development 4 days a week.
- Focus on authentically assessing students while actively learning.
- Social-Emotional development



NSD & Amazeum Collaboration





- Staff retention of 100% for three years
- End of year levels: Reading
 - 52% at mid or end of year mastery level
 - 100% entering K on grade level
- End of year levels: Math
 - 15% at mid or end of year mastery level
 - 100% entering K on grade level



KinderCat Parent Feedback

- Greyson has not only grown academically, but we have seen a change in his concentration level and emotions.
- I've watched my daughter grow in so many ways being in KinderCat.
- I've noticed her maturity level and how she deals with things has gotten better.
- My child has grown emotionally and socially SO much this year.
- Lydia has grown leaps and bounds academically and emotionally. Her confidence has grown tremendously and there is no doubt she is now ready for Kindergarten.
- My daughter was 5 and not able to write her name when she started this program. She can now read the word exoskeleton.

NSD & Amazeum Collaboration:

Successes:

- Networking and connections with other play based learning organizations - additional support structure and reduces isolation
- Expanded impact through partnering - geographical location, numbers, etc.
- Develops a desire in other teachers to have exposure to authentic learning
- Added instructional time by changing to embedded assessment structure occurring during play based learning
- Increased well-being of staff

Challenges:

- Teachers reverted back or getting frustrated in the change
- Change frequency of meetings
- Repeatedly giving permission
- Admin attending PD with KCat to support and encourage
- Convincing others that play based learning is valuable - 2 types of people

What's Next?



UNIVERSITY OF
ARKANSAS



Panel Discussion

Q & A

Resources





Thank
You!

Resources



Please Complete a Session Evaluation!

Xanthi Gray

The Children's Museum of New Hampshire

Xanthi@childrens-museum.org

Meredith Brustlin

The Children's Museum of New Hampshire

Meredith@childrens-museum.org

Karen DuBois-Garofalo

The University of New Hampshire

karen.dubois-garofalo@unh.edu

Nathan Manley

Neosho School District

manleynathan@neoshosd.org

Mindy Porter

Scott Family Amazeum

mporter@amazeum.org