



Educator Guide

Welcome to Kids Town, a pint-sized community created within the Detroit Science Center just for our youngest visitors! Children ages five and under can discover nine exploration areas in Kids Town filled with content to help support interests as diverse as becoming a veterinarian to dreams of becoming a chef. Cross-reference any of the spaces in Kids Town by using this guide to find questions and activities that will enhance your children's learning experiences and take them beyond common play.



before your visit:

Ask your young child what they want to be when they grow up. Although this may seem a silly question to ask a 3 year old, reinforcing the expression of individual interests helps your child develop a healthy sense of self.

Questions you can ask:

- ✓ Do you know anyone right now who does this job?
- ✓ What are some things you think a person who does this job has to do?
- ✓ What would you wear if you were going to do this job?

CREATE A CAREER COSTUME

Together with your child, create an outfit that one or both of you can wear to Kids Town. You can do this using materials easily found around the house.

Some ideas:

- ✓ To create a firefighter's jacket simply attach strips of black tape around the bottom and sleeve cuffs on a yellow rain slicker.
- ✓ Become a chef by wearing an oversized white collared shirt and a hair net.
- ✓ Wear your favorite sports jersey to become a professional athlete.

during your visit:

You can cross-reference any of the spaces in Kids Town by using the guide below to find questions and activities that will enhance your child's learning experience.

If you prefer a more hands-off approach to discovery, consider using this developmentally appropriate version of the scientific method with your child.*

ASK – What will happen if...
What will happen if I put my face in this jet of water?

GUESS – I think this is what will happen...
I think the water will hit my face and stop.

TRY – Test to see if your guess is what really happens...
I'm going to try putting my face in this jet of water.

ANSWER – This is what happened...
The jet of water was so strong it made a big splash when it hit my face and I got all wet – but, I had fun!

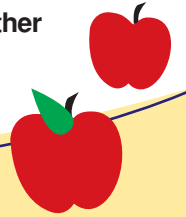


*Adapted from The Giant Encyclopedia of Science Activities for Children 3 to 6. Edited by Kathy Charner.



The Diner is full of wonderful opportunities to help develop children's use of imagination, as well as to stimulate their intellectual development.

- Order something that is not on the menu and watch children use their imagination to create a substitution for the real thing.
- Order something that is on the menu, but ask children to classify a group of "like" items (for example, order a plate of carrots but ask that any other vegetables in the kitchen be also included on the plate).



The Wiggly Worm

Enter into this mini-orchard paradise with infants or toddlers and discover all of the opportunities for motor development.

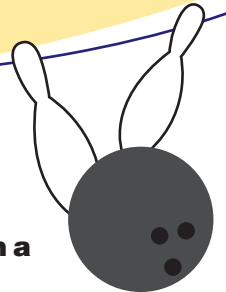
- Encourage an encounter with the soft obstacle landscape elements to develop gross motor skills.
- Show children how to use the balance bar on the big apple mirror to further develop gross motor skills. (Note: the big apple mirror can also help nurture a sense of self as baby flirts with his/her reflection.)
- Fine tune motor skills by picking apples. Place them in the buckets and then put them back on the trees again.



THE FIELD HOUSE

Whether interested in sports or not, discover a safe outlet in a controlled environment that encourages active play.

- Show your future engineer how to manipulate tubes and ramps along the wall, creating unique pathways for the balls.
- Help children cultivate an appreciation for the abilities of others.
- Reinforce the abilities of children by helping to refine coordination (suggested activities include: bowling or balancing on the big Pilates balls).



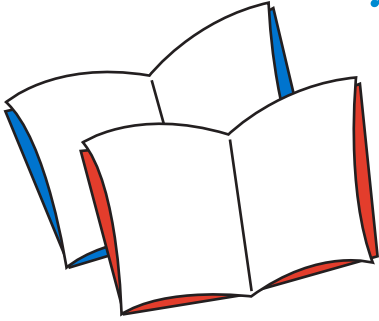
Happy Tails

With the help of a Program Assistant, children can encounter real live animals and learn about some of their environmental and fundamental needs.

- Help kids answer the question, "What's inside?" by studying the x-rays on the light box and pointing out different parts of animal anatomy (who has a tail, who doesn't, who has no legs, etc).
- Teach children how to nurture the animals we keep as pets by showing them how to use some of the play grooming tools on stuffed animals.



Dexter Ferry Library



Enjoy the quiet space of our library to read some of our many books.

- Encourage children to use technology in a cooperative manner. Our two seated benches foster an opportunity for kids to work together and share information.
- Name the computer equipment (i.e. monitor, mouse, keyboard, etc) and discuss the functions of each.
- Utilize the library's Parent Resource Center while kids work on the computer or play with puzzles.

CENTER STAGE

Experience the thrill of watching children's self-esteem soar as they participate in music, dance and dramatic play.

- Sing along and clap to the beat of the music and encourage children to do the same.
- Dance to the music's tempo (fast, slow or anywhere in between). Dancing not only teaches creative expression, but also improves gross motor skills and encourages constructive physical activity.
- "Buy" a ticket at the ticket window. Your child can work the register and practice counting out the change with you.

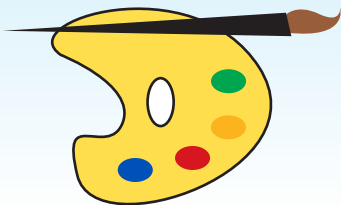


STATION 5020

Your child will light up at the opportunity to dress in a fireperson's uniform and ride on a pint-sized engine. Use this enthusiasm to open the opportunity for a discussion about the importance of safety (with vehicles, at home, at school, outside). Ask questions like:

- Where will you meet me if there is ever a fire at home?
- Whom can you ask for help if there is an emergency at school?
- What is my name and phone number in case I am lost and you need to find me?

Little Picasso's



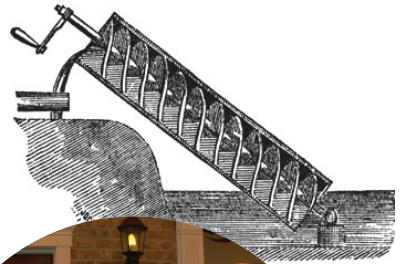
Our make'n'take art studio allows children the chance to express their own feelings through self directed projects using the materials provided. Use vocabulary with your child to help them find the means to describe their creation.

- What shapes have you used in your picture?
- What kind of lines did you draw (i.e. straight, wavy, squiggly, etc)?
- What new colors did you create by mixing two other colors provided?
- What shapes or colors did other children use in their pictures that are similar to yours (look at the pictures on the wall)?

Town Commons

It could be simply stated that children love the sensory experience of playing with water. However, the water table in our town commons goes way beyond such a simple statement!

- Watch your child experiment with currents and gravity as they build and dam different channels through the water. Discuss the cause and effect of placement as they create different paths for the water (i.e. the water moves slowly, the water doesn't move at all or the water flows freely).
- Introduce your child to a famous invention of engineer, Archimedes of Syracuse. Show them how to use this to move water from one (lower) bowl to another (higher) bowl. Point out the use of a simple machine in this invention – it's a screw!
- Show your child our water vortex and watch them have fun dumping the balls "down the drain". Explain the motion of a vortex to your child by comparing it to that of a toilet as it flushes or to that of a tornado.



after your visit

What area did kids respond to most enthusiastically? If you can't remember, ask to see what pops into their mind. Encourage children's interest by following up with simple activities at home.

Some ideas include:

- ✓ Allow your little chef to mix pudding in a sealed plastic bag or cut soft fruit using a plastic knife.
- ✓ Give your little Picasso a paint brush and a small cup of water. They can "paint" anything from the house to the driveway to paper towels.
- ✓ Create a stage for your little performer by placing a sheet on the floor and designating it "stage". Give your child a wire whisk to use as a microphone.
- ✓ Allow your little librarian to organize some of your books according to size.
- ✓ Give your little veterinarian ace bandages to wrap up their "injured" stuffed animals.

Remember – behind every "messy moment" there is an opportunity to turn your child's curiosity into a "teachable moment."

Come back to Kids Town and visit us often!