

## CHECKLIST OF TASKS FOR INTERACTIVE FAMILY GALLERIES

Common experiences and practices were identified across the focus interactive gallery sites. In each case, the following attributes were found common to at least two of the three sites. This Attributes section serves as a checklist of promising practices for use in designing, implementing, and sustaining interactive galleries.

### Getting Started: Commencement

- Seek **high-level internal museum advocates** for an interactive education gallery, e.g., Board Members/Trustees, Director, community museum supporters.
- Seek **opportunities for an interactive gallery** concurrent with **museum new construction or renovation**.

### Defining Family Learning: Research Base

- Select a theoretical research base:** museum education, art education, creative play, concepts/skills-based learning, social interaction, styles of learning, family learning research.
- Determine the **intention you have for including family learning** in the institution.

### Conceptualization and Learning: What's Your Big Idea?

- Know your audience:** identify age ranges for the children in families and whether adults will be independent learners along with families in the interactive space.
- Know your intentions for your audience:** identify how you imagine children and adults will interact together in the space—individually, as small groups, as larger groups.
- Host **charrette and or community/education focus groups**.
- Travel to other family learning galleries:** art museums and other cultural institutions.
- Maximize availability of expertise** at all levels: education experts, early childhood learning experts, experience of museum educators, focus groups, teachers, parents, and children.
- Use **child development research**.
- Seek **expertise in areas of education pedagogy**.
- Vary approaches for **different styles of learning**.
- Consider **intergenerational learning as another dimension of family learning**.

### A Focus on Art: Object-based Approach

- Select an **intentional plan for referencing art:** reference to vs. inclusion of original works of art.
- Select objects or areas of the collections/exhibitions that make a **direct connection with the activities**.
- Involve curatorial staff members** in selecting art references/objects.

## Design and Build: From Outline through Fabrication

### DESIGN

- Consider that **design reflects the times in which it is created**: high tech vs. manipulative.
- Establish a project manager**—if you manage the gallery project, plan for additional staff to assume other duties.
- Select a **designer and fabricator that have a common desire to collaborate, listen, meet budgets and deadlines, and provide post-build customer service.**
  
- Include meeting budget/timelines and post-build customer service (warranty/service) in the contract.**
- Establish a **balance between the social interactions provided by activities** designed: independent, small group, high, moderate, calm.
- Provide **experiences** for a variety of **learning styles.**
- Provide the **manipulative activities visitors seek the most** in balance with high-tech activities; use a higher technology level IF it is the best way to present a big idea.
- Avoid gratuitous interactivity**: e.g., pushing buttons for the sake of movement. Consider designs **with renewal in mind**, especially if you are planning for ongoing change vs. complete renovation.
- If accommodating school groups, **plan for optimum spacing for different sizes of groups.**
- Plan for **accessible storage/clean-up areas within the interactive space.**
- Plan for **ergonomics within the design** for adults as well as children.

### BUILD

- Establish **lines of communication between project manager, designer, and fabricator.**
- Establish **shared, documented expectations between project manager, designer, and fabricator: for quality, aesthetic, and function.**
- Establish **consistent, frequent timelines for check-in** via electronic technology.
- Test all materials** for durability over time and unexpected usages by participants.
- Build to industrial standards** without looking industrial.

## Funding and Budget

### FUNDING

- Seek Board of Trustees' support**—financially, conceptually, and for the integrity of the idea.
- Plan time to seek initial funding** and time to seek secondary funding in the process.
- Work with the Development Department.**

## BUDGET

- Include a **sustainability/renewal budget** from the inception of the project.
- Create an annual line-item budget that **keeps the gallery sufficiently fresh, appealing, and up to date.**
- Ask for a **range of budget options** from designers/fabricators.
- Keep **funding between design and fabrication in balance.**
- Create a budget with a **range of flexibility** for **unexpected expenses and changes.**
- Hold back spending too much too early.**
- Establish a contingency fund.**
- Constantly **monitor invoicing and expenditures.**

## Evaluation

- Include **beta testing/field testing/piloting** stations during original build and renovation.
- Include evaluation components **from the start** of the process.
- Select an **evaluation approach**: visitor studies, formative and summative evaluation components.
- Train interactive gallery staff** in pragmatic but valid/reliable evaluation methods.
- Include **evaluation as a programming process.**

## Sustainability

- Consider the interactive gallery as a **sustainable component of the museum mission.**
- Host museum staff and Board of Trustees meetings** in the interactive space.
- Plan for **specific interactive gallery marketing strategies.**
- Advertise in local parent/family magazines.**
- Gauge the level of visitor needs**: approach visitors in balance with their perceived needs.

## Renewal

- Assess whether an activity/station is past its prime** or fresh to **first-time participants.**
- Sustain a renewal budget.**
- Place renewal efforts on your calendar** as if they were appointments.

## Maintenance

- Provide a **safe interactive gallery** first and foremost—consider current climate/health concerns.
- Plan for a **significant amount of time for cleaning and disinfecting.**
- Budget for and **include technology support for any high-tech** components.
- When providing art materials, **provide safe but professional-grade art materials** that aren't readily available in the school or home environment.
- Deliver on promises: quality, cleanliness, safety.**