

Running Behind

Early Learning Museum PopUps – Birth to 5



DESCRIPTION

Pat, our mascot, is running late for work! Pat has to get back to the museum as fast as possible. Cars, trains, catapults...whatever gets Pat back. Pat might even want to stay home or build a new museum...

Student Learning Goals

- IELG: Children demonstrate the ability to use knowledge, previous experiences, and trial and error to make sense of and impact their world.
- IELDS: Develop beginning skills in the use of science and engineering practices, such as observing, asking questions, solving problems, and drawing conclusions.

Intended Outcome

Running Behind is designed to engage children in problem-solving, critical thinking, spatial awareness, and cooperative play. Children will play with speed, trial and error, and the scientific process while, most importantly, having fun!

Materials

Table Top

- Mega Bloks
- Tinkertoys
- Mini pyramid blocks
- Some Pats

- Felt board
- Books:
 - "Freight Train "
 - "The Girl with Big, Big Questions"

Floor

- Imagination Playground
- Bubble tube
- Dominos
- Road builder
- All foam blocks
- Ball run

Facilitation

There are no specific activities associated with any of the PopUp materials. DCM's model of play encourages free exploration, without predetermined boundaries or schemas. The "theme" of the PopUp is a loose suggestion of play ideas to get kids started. It is NOT required that the kids build a building, do anything specific with the Pats, etc., but if a child is having trouble getting started in their play, those are good suggestions to offer. The overall goal for this PopUp is to express wonder and curiosity, but the bigger goal is to have FUN!

Ways to Play–Infants <2

- Explore cause and effect by setting up simple dominos and encouraging children to knock them over
- Have children crawl, jump, etc., through the tunnel. Try to get through the tunnel as fast as possible, using the stopwatch to keep time. Also try putting Pats in the tunnel and having children collect them along the way.
- Create tall and wide structures with the foam blocks or Mega Bloks. Try to balance a Pat on top of the structure, or create a little home for Pat.
- Retell stories or create your own stories using the felt board. Ask invocative questions, like “What will happen next?” or “How does Pat feel right now?”

Ways to Play–Toddlers 2-3

- After setting up a road, Use TinkerToys to create buildings and other interesting structures in the “neighborhood,”
- Set up ramps and tracks for balls to roll down. Create a building at the end for the balls to go into. Change the height and slope of the ramps and talk about the differences you notice.
- Create a big structure using the Imagination Playground, asking questions along the way, like “What is your plan, “How do you want to build this together,” or, “What are you thinking next?”

Ways to Play–Big Kids 3+

- All of the above +
- Create a ball run using the ramps and tunnels, time how long it takes for the ball to get to the end. Change different variables (height of ramps, using different materials, different balls, etc.) and take another time measurement. Talk about how the changes you made might have affected the time it took for the ball to reach the goal.
- Test the stability of different structures you can build with the Imagination Playground and the Foam cinder blocks, bricks and wooden beams. Try to create the most stable building!
- Use measuring tape to take dimensions of your buildings. Record them on paper!

Ways to Play–Caregivers

- Encourage parents/caregivers to join in the play by inviting them to sit nearby, facing their child. Hand them objects while you play—most people will naturally join in when invited.
- Involve parents by being timekeepers or measurement takers. Adults can help write down times and record observations.
- When playing and experimenting with 'cause and effect,' frustrations can run high for children. Offer parents books or quiet toys as a way to co-regulate for when big feelings occur. Model positive interactions by telling the child that it is okay to be frustrated and you will be there for them when they are ready.

Tips and Tricks

- Model positive interactions by using specific praise. Ex. “I see you thinking and planning!” or “I see you wondering!” Praise the effort!
- Utilize caregiver help for cleaning up/resetting by modeling how to put pieces back where they came from. Ask the child for help too!
- Be forgiving when you see a caregiver who might seem “disengaged.” This is a sign that you have created a safe environment for their child to play in, and they can relax for a few minutes. However, DO make sure that each child has a grownup they are with.