

Follow the Child's Lead!

Open-ended Approaches in
STEAM Programs

Who We Are



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What Is Boston Children's Museum?



- Informal learning
 - Children are encouraged to follow their passion and interests
- Serving children 0-10
- Adults are important Museum audience!



What Is Boston Children's Museum?



BCM's View of Learning, Exploration, and Play

Play is freely chosen, personally directed, intrinsically motivated, and enjoyable.

Exploration is a method of engaging with and understanding the physical, social, cultural, and emotional world through inquiry and examination of materials, objects, and phenomena.

Learning is an active, multi-sensory process that is directed by the learner.



How We See Development and Learning

STEAM Skills and Habits of Mind



Notice what children do. How do they learn and develop?

- Try different tools or methods
- Watch others. Then try what they observed
- Repeat and focus on the same task
- Make discoveries (maybe unexpectedly)
- Invite others to engage

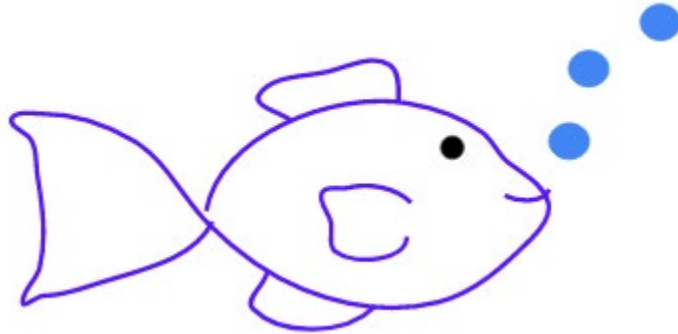
Try It!: Preparation

- Gather a few things from around you, such as paper, paper clips, binder clips, pen, post it notes, scissors, straw, spoon, figurine, etc.
 - Or a paper and writing implement to draw



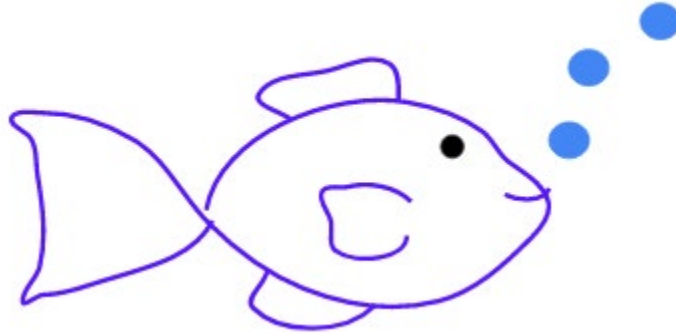
Try It!

Make a playground for a fish



Notice What You Did:

- When you heard the prompt “make a playground for a fish” - what did you think about first?
- As you were designing, what did you do or change?



Try It!

Examples from a visitor and staff:



Try It!

Examples from staff:



STEAM Sprouts - Cups!



- Open-ended activity with cups
 - Grown-ups: Notice what the child is trying to do - playing with cups isn't not always about making a pyramid!
 - Different ways to explore cups - Nesting, rolling, tapping, throwing, or squishing

Design a Space Tool Activity

You are on a new planet!
Design a tool to pick up a rock
from this new planet and drop it
into the lab to be safely studied.





Put Together the Skeleton



- Put human bones on a table see what kids do with them!
 - Don't mention to put together a human skeleton
 - See opportunity in what a child does to talk about how a body works, instead of starting with telling children what to do.

Questions?

Thank you!