
KNOCK KNOCK CHILDREN'S MUSEUM
BATON ROUGE, LA

LEARNING FRAMEWORK

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KNOCK KNOCK CHILDREN'S MUSEUM
LEARNING FRAMEWORK

Table of Contents

- PLANNING CONTEXT
- LEARNING BACKDROP
- LEARNING FRAMEWORK
 - LEARNING PURPOSE
 - LEARNING PRINCIPLES
 - LEARNER PROFILE
 - LEARNING FOCUS
 - LEARNING EXPERIENCE GOALS
 - LEARNER IMPACTS
 - SPIRIT & STYLE
- GETTING STARTED
- APPENDIX
 - A. PARTICIPANTS
 - B. LEARNING BACKDROP
 - C. SUPPORTING LEARNING EXPERIENCE GOALS
 - D. EXHIBIT PLANNING PROCESS
 - E. EXHIBIT CONCEPT DESCRIPTION
 - F. DEVELOPMENTAL DOMAIN PLANNING INSTRUMENT
 - G. CHALLENGES OF CHILDREN'S MUSEUMS

H. BIBLIOGRAPHY

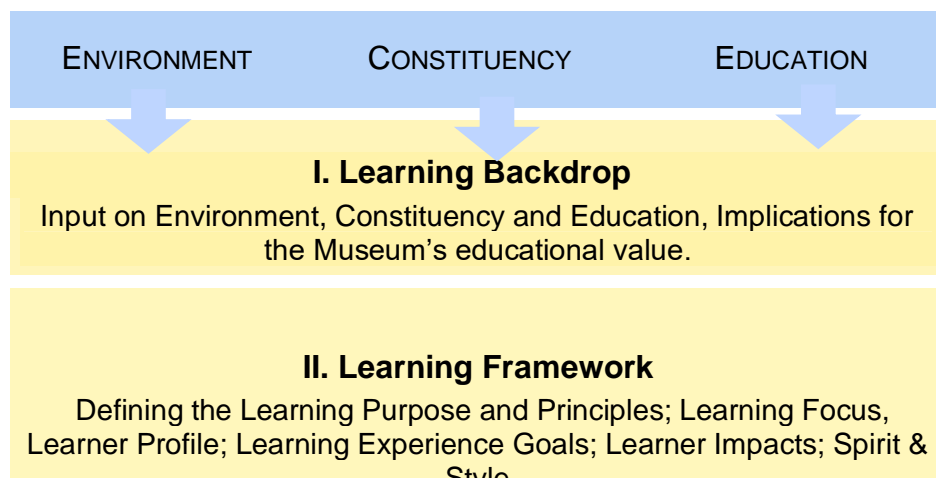
PLANNING CONTEXT

In bringing a children’s museum to the Baton Rouge area, leadership at Knock Knock Children’s Museum made a significant and bold decision. They chose to lead museum planning with a Learning Framework. The Framework’s purpose and supporting process would be to:

Develop a shared understanding of Knock Knock Children’s Museum’s primary educational interests that will enable it to:

- Communicate its educational potential to stakeholders;
- Accommodate the learning needs of specific audience segments;
- Establish a common foundation for exhibits and programs;
- Create a compelling visitor experience;
- Develop expertise to pursue educational opportunities; and
- Deliver educational value to the community.

Development of the Learning Framework was facilitated by museum planning consultant, Jeanne W. Vergeront (Minneapolis, MN) in February and March 2006. The three-part process began with development of a LEARNING BACKDROP that highlighted relevant external conditions affecting Knock Knock’s educational planning. With the Backdrop as context for how Knock Knock could be useful to the community, the LEARNING FRAMEWORK articulated Knock Knock’s Learning Purpose, *to make the connection among play, learning and readiness visible to children, their parents and teachers and the community.* Finally, GETTING STARTED provided directions in launching and applying the Framework.



III. Getting Started

Practical starting points for implementing the Framework

- Guidelines for staying on track and priorities

LEARNING BACKDROP

OVERVIEW

The Learning Backdrop was developed as a tool for creating a Learning Framework for Knock Knock Children's Museum. It emerged from a review of Knock Knock's documents, from readily available information about Baton Rouge and from nine individual and group interviews with representatives from early childhood, arts, foundation, and educational organizations.

The Backdrop is organized into three areas:

- **ENVIRONMENT:** The region in which Knock Knock is located, the community it serves and the opportunities the area provides.
- **CONSTITUENCY:** The children and adults Knock Knock hopes to serve in the context of other organizations also trying to serve them.
- **EDUCATION:** The educational context in which Knock Knock will deliver learning experiences.

These areas are central to determining how Knock Knock can best deliver learning value for the young children of the Baton Rouge area and their families, especially in the context of other services and opportunities provided to this same audience.

The Backdrop highlights relevant external conditions affecting Knock Knock's educational planning. Top-line ideas supported by facts and information sharpen focus on familiar issues rather than offer new or surprising information and direction. A Conclusion synthesizes the information for each area and is followed by a recommended response.

Environment

Conclusion: The unique contribution Knock Knock intends to make relative to other cultural, educational and community organizations must be well defined with broad community value.

Knock Knock can distinguish itself by being:

- Positioned to serve the entire community;
- Fundamentally for, about and by children and families;
- Grounded in an understanding of active learning rather than subject matter; and
- Widely perceived as accessible.

Constituency

Conclusion: Baton Rouge's children are diverse with respect to income, ethnicity and educational experience. To serve them, their families and the community well, Knock Knock must fully engage children from both lower and higher incomes, African American and White families and with both limited and extensive life and learning experiences.

Knock Knock's learning experiences must:

- Be relevant and meaningful to all of the area's young children;
- Accommodate a range of learning styles and approaches;
- Provide multiple points of entry and experiential starting points; and
- Welcome and engage parents.

Education

Conclusion: The area's intense educational needs are both an opportunity and a challenge for Knock Knock: deliver high educational value without creating expectations that are impossible to meet.

Knock Knock will need to manage expectations by:

- Carving out particular areas in which it will focus its educational efforts;
- Linking with specific local educational needs; and
- Grounding its work with research and best practices.

The full Learning Backdrop can be found in Appendix B.

LEARNING FRAMEWORK

OVERVIEW

Knock Knock's Learning Framework is a strong set of foundational ideas consistent with its mission. Linking these ideas with the community's learning needs, the Framework creates a platform to guide planning and evaluation of all educational services and activities including exhibits, programs, interpretation and partnerships. It focuses, sets priorities, creates emphasis and defines key relationships for concentrating organizational energies on exemplary learning experiences.

The elements of a Framework and their definitions follow.

- **LEARNING PURPOSE** defines Knock Knock's broad educational aspirations.
- **LEARNING PRINCIPLES** emerge from the Learning Purpose and address the basic conditions that support learning, particularly in informal learning settings. They are grounded in educational theory and research and best practices.
- **LEARNER PROFILE** summarizes important information about segments within Knock Knock's entire audience, based on significant characteristics (such as age) that must be addressed to make progress towards the Learning Purpose.
- **LEARNING FOCUS** designates where Knock Knock intends to distinguish itself from other organizations in the Baton Rouge area serving the same audience; to produce significant educational value for the community; and to build internal capacity.
- **LEARNING EXPERIENCE GOALS** define what Knock Knock hopes to achieve through its primary educational offerings: exhibits and programs.
- **LEARNER IMPACTS** highlight where Knock Knock hopes to effect change in the lives of its visitors.
- **SPIRIT & STYLE** express the personality of Knock Knock's exhibit and program experiences.

Recent research provides additional evidence of the strong connections between quality of play in preschool years and children's readiness for school instruction.

Bowman, Donovan and Burns (2000)
Eager to Learn: Educating our preschoolers.

LEARNING PURPOSE

Knock Knock Children's Museum's Learning Purpose is to:

Make the connection among play, learning and readiness visible to children, their parents and teachers and the community. Knock, Knock's fun, interactive learning experiences and environments engage children eight years and under and invite them to explore, expand and represent their understanding of their world.

LEARNING PRINCIPLES

The following Principles, based in research and evaluation, are fundamental to Knock Knock achieving its Learning Purpose. Effectively implementing these Principles requires deliberate, consistent and rigorous application in selecting, developing and supporting learning experiences.

- From birth, a healthy child is an active participant in learning: exploring the environment, learning to communicate, and, soon, beginning to construct ideas and theories about how things work in the surrounding world.
- All young children, regardless of their age or background, benefit from exposure to experiences and places outside the home to be ready for school.
- Familiar physical and social contexts support and extend children's play and learning by providing clues, reinforcing relevant connections and allowing them to deepen their engagement.
- Greater learning occurs during play through interaction with adults who encourage or scaffold children's exploration.
- Children's language and creative constructions provide valuable insights into their thinking and learning.

Looking Ahead

Knock Knock's Learning Principles can be translated into criteria for planning and assessing exhibits and programs. Criteria state how a Learning Principle (or Learning Experience Goal) should be provided for in a learning experience. An example of a Learning Experience criteria might be, "Learning Experiences provide clear roles for adults to play." Several criteria might support one Principle, capturing different dimensions of it.

Knock Knock Children's Museum
LEARNING FRAMEWORK
AT - A - GLANCE

LEARNING EXPERIENCE GOALS

- Accommodate children and families from varied backgrounds and with a range of learning styles and preferences.
- Invite children to shape their experiences and represent their thinking.
- Promote family learning to advance children's social-emotional, health-physical and cognitive-language development.
- Engage curiosity, personal interests and connections to home, family and community.
- Encourage children to practice and consolidate skills.
- Support children's literacy development through the playful exploration of language.

LEARNER IMPACTS

- Enhanced Skills
- Expanded Relationships
- Extended Experience
- Insight into learning

LEARNING FOCUS

DISCOVERING MY WORLD

- **DEVELOPING RELATIONSHIPS**
People, Place, Time and Order
- **EXPANDING LANGUAGE**
Literacy and Stories
- **INSPIRING CREATIVITY**
The Arts

AUDIENCE

Children eight years and under, their parents, teachers and other adults

LEARNING PURPOSE

Make the connection among play, learning and readiness visible to children, their parents and teachers, and the community. Fun, interactive learning experiences and environments engage children eight years and under and invite them to explore, expand and represent their understanding of their world.

LEARNER PROFILE

Clearly understanding the audience to be served is the first step toward fully serving it. Knock Knock's child-centered approach views children as active learners and is central to creating learning experiences.

View of the Learner

Children are born to learn. Their motivation to learn is apparent in the remarkable feats of learning they manage to accomplish without apparent effort in the first few years of life: learning to walk, talk, get along with others and take care of themselves. The image of the learner influences how learning experiences are shaped for these early learners as well as older children and adults engaged in learning. Making this explicit, allows examining, understanding and engaging the learner. Knock Knock views its learners as:

Curious, inquisitive, animated and responsive.

While visitors can also be tired, demanding and distracted, qualities can interfere with learning, they can be mitigated through architecture and way-finding; amenities such as seating and food service; exhibit maintenance; and staff training and customer service.

Learner Profile

A Learner Profile is a tool for describing and planning for the audience as learners. The Profile starts with describing the audience as a whole and then defining it as smaller groups, or segments, in a way meaningful to their learning. By defining smaller groups so the most important characteristics are readily apparent, similarities within and differences between groups are easy to recognize and accommodate.

Segments flow from several definitions and ideas.

- Learner, as a term, refers to those an organization already serves and to those it would like to serve in the future. These learners are also served as guests and customers.
- The audience as a whole is children birth through eight years, their parents, teachers and other adults.
- The segments are best defined by characteristics of the learner that affect other important considerations such as exploration or interactions with adults.
- Ages, stages and grades do not neatly line-up but are used for convenience. Overlapping age ranges are a proxy for stages.
- Each age group typically may engage in the experiences of younger age groups but will tend to engage more in the new opportunities of their age.

The Learner Profile reflects learner groups in Knock Knock's targeted age range. It:

- Defines the age groups most useful for planning learning experiences;

- Highlights characteristics related to play (exploration of possibilities of things and events), learning (dispositions to learn) and readiness (concepts and skills) that are relevant to a museum setting;
- Summarizes Experience Modes that affect planning for exhibits and programs; and
- Characterizes an adult role that will support the Experience Mode.

LEARNER PROFILE

GROUPS	DEVELOPMENTAL CHARACTERISTICS	EXPERIENCE MODE	ADULT ROLE
<p>0 -18 Months (Infants – Toddlers)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Play: Large and small motor exploration, orienting to the caregiver and sensory stimulation of the near material environment. • Learning: Participate in simple games such as “peek-a-boo;” simple cause-and-effect through associations between sounds and activity or object; look for objects out of sight; able to recognize feelings in others. • Readiness: Curious; purposeful and persistent in accomplishing a task; interested in interacting with others. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safe sensory exploration of the environment within range of caregiver. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extend baby’s exploration and support with responsive language and gestures.
<p>18 - 30 Months (Toddlers – Preschoolers)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Play: Individual play, investigating novel objects; discover properties; relations among objects. • Learning: Use 4-5 word sentences; group, order and match objects; use body to master the environment; identify symbols; name familiar objects from pictures; imitates others. • Readiness: Curious; fine motor skill development; scribbles; grammatical language.; enjoy stories. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Active manipulation of varied objects to discover properties and uses. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respond to play activities and expand with conversational dialogue.
<p>30 Months - 4 Years (Preschoolers-Pre-K/ Kindergarten)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Play: Multiple roles and symbolic use of objects and props. • Learning: Use symbol systems; practice emotional control; knows routines; follow rules; names and classifies things and people. • Readiness: Enthusiasm towards 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Imaginative play to explore familiar places, roles and relationships. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support child’s exploration and elaborate on their language.

	learning; names colors, understand there are concepts about print; know pictures and words have meaning; show interest in rhyming words; attempt to cut with scissors;		
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GROUPS	DEVELOPMENTAL CHARACTERISTICS	EXPERIENCE MODE	ADULT ROLE
4 - 6 Years (Pre-K – First Grade)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Play: Practice and consolidate skills: naming, classifying, problem solving. • Learning: Understand sequence of events; beginning to recognize the interconnection between things; form simple cause-effect hypotheses. • Readiness: Enthusiasm towards learning; ask questions for information; tell simple stories; read using pictures; show preference for right/left hand; connect letters with sounds; make letter-sound matches; make line drawings; understand time and geographic concepts; sequence objects large-to-small. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direct engagement with objects and the environment to explore how things work. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborate with and guide child's activity and extending with productive questions.
6 - 8 Years (Kindergarten – 2 nd Grade)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Play: Achieve an objective using logic and rules with puzzles, riddles and codes: board, playground and word games. • Learning: Take another perspective; understand spatial concepts and relationships; make predictions based on experience; understand different type of questions; differentiate between fact and fantasy. • Readiness: Enthusiasm towards learning; use descriptive language; use letter-sound associations, word parts and context to identify new; begin to write letters and some words; use reading and writing for various purposes; can do research; can read a clock; accept rules and procedures. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experimenting with the physical and expressive properties of materials. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Actively engage in child's experimentation fostering problem solving.

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Looking Ahead

The Learner Profile can be expanded in several ways. First, research can provide greater detail for *play*, *learning* and *readiness* characteristics. Second, in exhibit planning, the Profile is tailored to a topic, such as water. It probes the *play*, *learning* and *readiness* connections children make and how they can be made visible for learner groups.

Literacy is talk and play.

Lucy Calkins
Teachers College, Columbia

LEARNING FOCUS

Knock Knock's **Learning Focus** designates where it intends to distinguish itself from other organizations in the Baton Rouge area serving the same audience; where it can produce significant educational value for the community; and where it will build internal capacity. A **Learning Focus** helps in capturing opportunities, inspiring and shaping topics delivered in exhibits and programs and in creating continuity throughout the Museum. Knock Knock's **Learning Focus**:

- Emerges from the Learning Backdrop Conclusions;
- Readily engages with play, learning and readiness;
- Is relevant to children from low-income homes who are lacking basic experiences as well as children from higher income homes with more experiences but who can also benefit from basic experiences;
- Provides both flexibility and limits in selecting and developing exhibits and programs;
- Connects with school subjects while reflecting the interdisciplinary world of the child;
- Covers critical developmental domains: social-emotional, cognitive and physical; and
- Places the child in an active role in his or her learning.

Focus Areas

Knock Knock's learning experiences will emerge from three Focus Areas.

- Developing Relationships: People, Place, Time and Order
- Expanding Language: Literacy and Stories
- Inspiring Creativity: The Arts and Problem Solving

The three Focus Areas ground learning experiences in an active process of learning: doing, shaping and reshaping, changing, building, talking and investigating. Strong individually, they interact to create fresh combinations that readily engage children and adults in the back-and-forth of play and learning. Responsive to the interests and capabilities of a three-year old or a seven year old, these open-ended Areas encourage decision-making, suggest possibilities and invite children to venture beyond the familiar. In their expressive qualities, children find ways to explore, test, represent their thoughts and make visible their understanding as they discover their world.

Developing Relationships: People, Place, Time and Order. Connecting with people, locating objects in space, ordering events in time and grouping objects are basic ways children make meaning of everyday experiences, increase their competence and expand their understanding of their world.

Relationships with people provide the social connections critical to young children's learning. Children explore different roles and a range of feelings through relationships with family, friends, neighbors and members of the community. In games, they practice and develop social skills such as making choices, taking turns and working with others. As they meet, get to know and play with others, children learn about and connect with cultures, their own and others.

For children place and space relationships are as basic as in-and-out, as familiar as neighborhood trips and as amazing as a view of Earth from outer space. When children find hidden objects, put puzzles together, pack a suitcase, fill a cup with water or play with miniatures they learn about shapes, negotiate space and explore scale relationships. As children build a house with blocks or map the neighborhood, familiar places reveal new relationships.

Understanding the sequence of events, numbers and seasons is necessary to children following a story, doing simple chores, understanding numbers and appreciating natural cycles. Children learn about time through the daily tasks of getting dressed, the delight of moving to music, the ritual of games or the effort of practicing patience. Their sense of time expands from before-and-after, to next week, to hours on a clock, to next year.

From their earliest exploration of objects, children constantly develop and revise ways to organize the world. In matching objects, sorting blocks, finding opposites and making patterns, children discover order. As they grow, children's simple categories expand. Categories based on actions give way to those based on concepts or values and ordering systems accommodate multiple attributes of color, shape and size.

Expanding Language: Literacy and Stories. Expanding Language capitalizes on what children know about language, reading and writing before they can actually read or write. Watching adults write, making realistic squiggles, connecting dots and tracing shapes in the sand develop the underlying skills for writing, just as "I Spy" games, rhyming words and recognizing shapes build a foundation for reading.

Most children readily learn to talk, listen to others, tell stories, write and read on their own. Their play, in settings that are rich in textures, colors, shapes, objects and sounds invites language. They name objects and describe the feel of things. Varied props stimulate imaginative play, suggesting themes that require new words and expressive tones. Mystery objects provoke questions and possible answers. In the talk and play of building and blowing bubbles, children repeat and rhyme words; try new expressions; and put relational concepts to work.

Stories include familiar stories and family stories, the stories played out through imaginative play and through practice with everyday narratives of eating, shopping or walking the dog. They stimulate language and help children describe events, share their experience and organize their thinking. Listening to stories and practice with stories broadens a child's sense of the world.

Inspiring Creativity: The Arts and Problem Solving. The pleasure of making things happen - drawing a shape, wielding a brush, mixing colors, squeezing clay - characterizes children's early forays into creative expression. Direct engagement in sensory exploration of diverse materials and media encourages children to discover novel solutions to problems; suggests new connections between known thoughts; and allows them to represent their understanding.

Creativity is the connection between thinking and making, or doing. Experiences that inspire creativity allow children to explore an existing tree or castle as well as create their own; to experiment with materials; and to use color and movement to express feelings. Children's experiences with creativity, in an environment rich in beauty, lay a foundation for the Arts. Through the visual and performing arts, children encounter over-arching ideas and rich forms of cultural expression.

Children give shape to their thoughts through play. Forming clay or wire, they explore how materials bend, stretch and break. Arranging gates in a water table, they use what they know about water to test their hunches about how it moves faster. Building, shaping and making allows children to see what they have done, revisit their creation and play with inspiration.

Looking Ahead

Using the Focus Areas, develop a set of promising exhibit topics. Investigate these topics: find out about popular exhibits on these topics at other museums; float topics with supporters to gauge interest; and explore children's and adults' interests in these topics.

Play... provides children with opportunities for developing mastery and competence in cognitive, social and physical skills.

J. Isenberg & N. Quisenberry (1988)
Position Paper. Play: A necessity for
all

LEARNING EXPERIENCE GOALS

Learning Experience Goals describe significant aspects of Knock Knock’s learning experiences needed to accomplish its Learning Purpose. Knock Knock’s learning experiences will:

- Accommodate children and families from varied backgrounds and with a range of learning styles and preferences.
- Invite children to shape their experience and represent their thinking.
- Promote family learning to advance children’s social-emotional, health-physical and cognitive-language development.
- Engage curiosity, personal interests and connections to home, family and community.
- Encourage children to practice and consolidate skills.
- Support children’s literacy development through the playful exploration of language.

Looking Ahead

Develop Objectives for how exhibits, programs, partnerships, outreach and teacher training, five areas in which Knock Knock will be active, will help achieve the broader Learning Experience Goals. For instance, an Outreach Objective for the first goal might be: Seek input from community partners in planning and delivering exhibits and programs.

LEARNER IMPACTS

Experiences affect the learner in small and large ways, immediately and over time. Among many possible outcomes of experiences at the children’s museum, Knock Knock will focus on four Learner Impacts. These can be viewed as a hierarchy from lesser to greater change. Expressed in various ways, the most likely indicators are listed below. The three Indicators for each Impact are organized in a general progression from younger to older children.

IMPACT	INDICATOR
Enhanced skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use new words or images. • Sequence events and tell stories. • Make predictions based on observation.

Expanded relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make connections between current experience and previous experience. • Form simple cause-and-effect hypotheses. • Take another perspective.
Extended experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use an object in a new way. • Talk about and remember an experience. • Understand time in relationship to self.
Insight into learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interest in new objects and materials. • Develop an awareness of personal interests. • See that trying can get results.

Looking Ahead

Learner Impacts focus Knock Knock’s learning experiences to deliver learning value. While Impacts stay constant, Indicators can be added. Indicators may be developed for adults or be made more specific to how age groups typically represent their grasp of a topic, concept or skill. In planning an exhibit, specific tasks or behaviors likely to elicit an Indicator can be selected. For instance an Indicator for Enhanced Skills might be “Make and interpret ‘writing’ marks.” Small motor experiences might include scribbling and writing in a restaurant exhibit with varied instruments for marking and writing.

SPIRIT & STYLE

Spirit & Style expresses the personality of Knock Knock’s exhibit and program experiences. Spirit & Style convey the feeling quality that will surround children and adults as they play, talk, make choices, and remember their visit.

- **Engaging:** Inviting and friendly to all children and adults, first time and every time.
- **Playful:** Cheerful, lively; fresh and imaginative with a whimsical twist.
- **Dynamic:** Vibrant, dramatic, exciting and memorable.
- **Authentic:** Reliable and solid. Evidence-based practice in a place that *walks the talk*.

Looking Ahead

Deepen Knock Knock’s understanding of its Spirit & Style. Develop a list of examples of words, activities and experiences that have (and don’t have) these qualities. Knock-Knock jokes, for instance, may bring **Playful** to life, while jokes that

are above children's heads do not. Consider Spirit & Style in naming exhibits and programs; using rhymes in exhibit text; creating an unusual view of something familiar like an underwater or peephole view; or giving children their own small door to enter the Museum.

GETTING STARTED

The Learning Framework is a tool, or toolkit, for delivering educational value to Baton Rouge and to Knock Knock's audience. As the Looking Ahead sections for each part of the Framework indicate, the Framework may be further developed as well as applied. Three Guidelines serve as a guide in working with the Framework.

GUIDELINES

- **Revisit the Learning Purpose** to clarify what a particular part means or to expand on a part of the Framework.
- **Base decisions in the Learning Framework.** Use the Framework as a lens to select exhibits and programs; to shape projects and initiatives.
- **Let go** of what's not in the Framework.

NEXT STEPS

The following activities help launch the Framework. While there is no fixed order for these activities, they are generally sequenced from earlier to later, building on one another. They rely heavily on learning continuously about and from the Learning Framework and with the children, parents, community members and supporters Knock Knock engages around bringing a children's museum to Baton Rouge.

I. Deepen understanding of the Learning Framework in preparation for sharing it and communicating Knock Knock's plans.

- A. Continue to develop the Framework: identify Indicators for Impacts, etc.
- B. Collect examples of "readiness skills" identified by local school districts to draw connections with play and learning.
- C. Develop multiple versions of the Framework for board members, for instance, a basic version (the Framework-at-a-Glance") and a more-in-depth version that includes back-up information.
- D. Include the Framework in orienting new board members to Knock Knock and conduct at least a brief review of the Framework annually for the entire board.
- E. Collect and interpret pictures of exhibits at other children's museums as concrete examples of **making the connection between play, learning and readiness visible**. Use these in speaking with supporters, orienting designers, etc.

II. Share the Learning Framework to build awareness of Knock Knock and of the learning value it will bring to the Baton Rouge area.

- A. Share the Learning Framework with individuals and groups who participated in the interviews.
- B. Introduce the Framework to key groups such as the Chamber of Commerce, Success By Six, LA 4, Children's Coalition, etc.
- C. Revise the Case for Knock Knock. Consider incorporating Conclusions and Responses from the Learning Backdrop; key parts of the Learning Framework (i.e. the Learning Purpose); and developmental information from *The Performance of Pre-kindergarten Children on Representational Tasks Across Levels of Displacement* (E. F. Smith) into the Opportunity, Challenge and Response sections.
- D. Supplement an overview of the Framework with a presentation on children's play to share with interested groups.

III. Bring the Learning Framework to life through activities and experiences.

- A. Appoint an Education committee to oversee development of learning experiences.
 - 1. Orient the committee to the Framework, the Exhibit Planning Process in Appendix D and the Exhibit Concept Description in Appendix E. The Exhibit Planning Process and Exhibit Concept

Description will give members an idea of the type of information and thinking required to develop an exhibit.

B. Select, develop and present activities at fairs and festivals that uphold and demonstrate the Framework. Presenting these activities also tests ideas for developing and assessing exhibit and program activities.

1. Simplify the Exhibit Concept Description (Appendix E) to create a form for planning activities for fairs and outreach.
2. Develop handouts to inform parents about “What’s Going on?”
3. Solicit ideas for exhibits and activities from children and adults who participate in activities at fairs. Ask them questions about what they know and what to know about topics.
4. Document children and adults’ engagement in activities. Photograph what they do and make; and record what they say about it. Use this evidence to shape new activities and interpret the play-learn-readiness connection to supporters.

C. Develop criteria for selecting exhibit topics, such as:

- Support and express the Learning Focus;
- Successful at other children's museums;
- Local connection;
- Not locally found, or substantially different from what's offered at children's museum's nearby;
- Tested with children and parents.

D. Identify 6-8 promising exhibit topics that meet the above (or equivalent) criteria.

1. Use the simplified Exhibit Concept Description to describe them, as well as the Developmental Domain Planning Instrument (Appendix G).
2. Select one or two of the exhibit concepts and interpret how they ***make the connection between play, learning and readiness visible.***
3. Contract for drawings of the exhibits to share with funders, interpreting with specific examples of the play-learning readiness connection.

APPENDIX

APPENDIX A PARTICIPANTS

INTERVIEWEES

Lydia M. Acosta, Director Parish Library	City of East Baton Rouge
Amber Aguillard	Louisiana Technical College
Cindy DiCarlo, Assistant Professor Family, Child and Consumer Science	Louisiana State University
Carol S. Gikas, President Museum and Executive Director	Louisiana Art and Science
Cheri Goie, Extension Associate Family, Child and Consumer Science	Louisiana State University
Sam Losavio, Assistant Director	Louisiana Art and Science Museum
Charlotte Placide, Superintendent	East Baton Rouge Parish Schools
John Spain, Executive Vice President Foundation	Baton Rouge Area
Ivy Starns, LA 4 Program Coordinator	Louisiana Department of Education

KNOCK KNOCK BOARD MEMBERS

Staci Duhe	Rebecca Nelson
Clarice Gordon	Brenda Perry
Teresa Kleinhans	Emily Smith
Margaret Lisi	Kelli Stevens, President

APPENDIX B

LEARNING BACKDROP

ENVIRONMENT: The region in which Knock Knock is located, the community it serves and the opportunities the area provides.

- Baton Rouge is a community increasingly diverging in income and ethnicity.
 - Out-migration began in the 1970's with retail businesses following suburban residential development emptying the City and leaving significant pockets of poverty.
 - The City's median family income of \$47,480 with 25% of families living below the poverty line, suggests a divide of *haves* and *have-nots*.
 - 50% of city residents are African American; 45.7 % are White; 2.62 % are Asian and 1.72% are Hispanic-Latino.
 - Black population in the EBR Parish grew from 57% to 63% between 1990-2000.
 - Compared to other cities of its size, Baton Rouge is "unwired."

- The Baton Rouge area has changed dramatically over a short period of time due to Hurricane Katrina.
 - The increase in jobs and population is equivalent to five-to-ten years of typical growth.
 - While some businesses have been negatively impacted by links to I, others have expanded and still others have brought new business to the area.
 - Traffic, congested before the arrival of evacuees, is now even more so.
 - Among the many questions affecting planning is how much population change is permanent.

- Extensive planning and redevelopment efforts to invigorate the City are coming to fruition.
 - Efforts to transform the downtown began in 1997 with Plan Baton Rouge. Studying and implementing smart growth strategies and development of a River Front Master Plan have followed.
 - Growth west of downtown is expected to include a YMCA and new library.
 - HUD funds have been awarded for new housing in Old South Baton Rouge.
 - Initial planning for expanded downtown parking, an issue especially for families with young children, is underway.

- Along with growth and new opportunities, Hurricane Katrina has significantly

affected local and state resources.

- Between the hurricane's direct economic impact and investing in rebuilding, State resources have experienced a double blow.
 - LASM lost \$275,000 in state funding in a recent round of cuts.
 - Local social services, already strained, are under even greater pressure.
 - A few foundation and individual funders are pivotal for the success of major projects.
- Given the dynamic state of Baton Rouge, a new cultural-educational venue that delivers on community value, expands current offerings, draws new audiences or creates new synergies is attractive but not assured.
 - Enduring social issues of poverty, race and class are considered a priority.
 - The Shaw Center for the Arts and the Louisiana State Museum joining LASM downtown could generate increased interest, traffic and amenities.
 - Questions exist as to whether Baton Rouge is enough of a museum-going community to support another museum.
 - With 50 % of LASM's 200,000 annual visitors students in groups (compared to 20-30 % for most museums), it seems that schools look for museum offerings but local families may not.
 - The current funding climate and the struggle of museums under the best of circumstances raise questions about the sustainability of existing as well as new museums.

Conclusion

The unique contribution Knock Knock intends to make relative to other cultural, educational and community organizations must be well defined with broad community value.

Knock Knock can distinguish itself by being:

- Positioned to serve the entire community;
- Fundamentally for, about and by children and families;
- Grounded in an understanding of active learning rather than subject matter; and
- Widely perceived as accessible.

CONSTITUENCY: The children and adults Knock Knock hopes to serve in the context of other organizations also trying to serve them.

- The outlook for the Baton Rouge area indicates some population dynamics favorable to a children's museum.
 - Growth in EBR Parish has been somewhat faster than in the rest of the State. This greater growth rate is expected to continue over the next decade.
 - 25 % of MSA residents have bachelor's or advanced degrees (compared to 19% for the State) a relevant factor since museum-going is positively associated with higher levels of education.
 - The average age of Parish residents, 30 years, is young compared to the State.

- Large segments of the population, including children, face major life challenges.
 - 77% of EBRPSS students live below the poverty line. 71% are considered at risk, an increase from 51% in the 1998-99. In the State, the change was 4%.
 - 38.5% of African American children under 18 in EBR Parish live in poverty, while 5.6 % of White children do.
 - Serving high need, under-served children requires removing cost and transportation barriers and increasing comfort in visiting museums. For example, FEMA trailer park residents are not using libraries.

- Opportunities exist for better serving younger children in the Baton Rouge area.
 - Where opportunities are available, they are generally not dedicated specifically to younger children or their families.
 - LASM's Discovery Depot and Science Station serve 3 to 6 year olds, but generally LASM's offerings are not viewed as child-friendly.
 - The Zoo offers programs such as "Boo at the Zoo" and the Shaw Center presents performances for children.
 - BREC provides arts and sports activities for children across the city.
 - The EBR public library serves young children with story times.

Conclusion

Baton Rouge's children are diverse with respect to income, ethnicity and educational experience. To serve them, their families and the community well, Knock Knock must fully engage children from both lower and higher incomes, African American and White families and with both limited and extensive life and learning experiences.

Knock Knock's learning experiences will need to:

- Be relevant and meaningful to all of the area's young children;

- Accommodate a range of learning styles and approaches;
- Provide multiple points of entry and experiential starting points; and
- Welcome and engage parents.

EDUCATION: The educational context in which Knock Knock will deliver learning experiences.

- Baton Rouge struggles to provide high quality education that prepares students to make a contribution to the economy.
 - A decades-long decline in support for public education related to a long-standing (but recently settled) desegregation case siphoned education funds.
 - While out-migration may be slowing; and high school achievement increased dramatically in '03-'04 and elementary school achievement improved greatly in '04-'05, the EBR schools are 52nd among 66 school districts in performance.
 - More recently, an influx of high-need students from I placed an additional burden on EBRSS.
 - Growth of private schools over the past three decades has been significant; currently 31 % of students are in non-public schools.
 - The Baton Rouge Area Chamber of Commerce ranks education as a key limitation in economic development efforts.

- Unmet educational needs are extensive, begin early and extend across groups.
 - Educators express concern that low-income children arrive at school with little experience outside their home.
 - Young children, in general, appear to be missing hands-on learning experiences due, in part, to the demands of standards and high stakes testing.
 - Social and emotional skills, not just cognitive skills, are under-developed for too many children.
 - The limited experience of low-income children often means limited social skills.
 - Among evacuees, the social-emotional development of more children is an issue.
 - Due to already limited capacity, the learning needs of many preschool children who relocated to Baton Rouge after Katrina are not being met.

- Recent efforts recognize that improving education for everyone and starting early in life are the key to changing the community.
 - Recently Louisiana has begun to increase resources to early childhood.
 - LA Four, started in 2000, has increased funding, introduced tested curricula, increased ratios and upgraded teacher certification.
 - Groups such as Agenda for Children are actively working on behalf of children and families.

- Interest in improving outcomes for children extends to educating parents about children's learning and appropriate development and behavior.
- Teachers as a group also have unmet educational and professional development needs.
 - EBR schools are in the lower half of parishes for the proportion of certified teachers and for "highly qualified" teachers.
 - EBPR recognizes a need for professional development in math, science and reading.
 - LASM's teacher training is limited to preparing teachers for a LASM visit.

Conclusion

The area's intense educational needs are both an opportunity and a challenge for Knock Knock to negotiate: deliver high educational value without creating expectations that are impossible to meet.

Knock Knock will need to manage expectations by:

- Carving out particular areas in which it will focus its educational efforts;
- Linking with specific local educational needs; and
- Grounding its work with research and best practices.

APPENDIX C

SUPPORTING LEARNING EXPERIENCE GOALS

- Accommodate children and families from varied backgrounds and with a range of learning styles and preferences.
 - lots to do
 - make choices
 - open-ended materials and experiences
 - objects from many sources, materials, cultures
 - flexibility
 - start anywhere
 - work together
- Invite children to shape their experience and represent their thinking.
 - write, draw, sculpt, paint
 - build
 - move things
 - try one thing several ways
 - vary steps
 - share what they did
 - leave it for documentation
- Promote family learning to advance children's social-emotional, health-physical; and cognitive-language development.
 - staff and volunteers ask questions
 - mirrors to reflect child's face
 - seating so parents can observe children
 - adult sized costumes
 - activities for big/little hands
- Engage personal interests and connections to home, family and community.
 - use children's suggestions
 - incorporate landmarks from the community
 - post pictures and quotes from visitors
- Encourage children to practice and consolidate skills.
 - multiples of things
 - opportunities for repetition
 - things to sort, count
 - varying levels of challenge: i.e. more than one way to go up/down two steps
- Support children's literacy development through the playful exploration of language.
 - expressive materials
 - intriguing objects to describe
 - books to look at/read
 - simple text/questions

APPENDIX D

EXHIBIT PLANNING PROCESS

- I. Exhibit Framing
- II. Concept Plan
- III. Preliminary Interpretive Plan and Design
- IV. Final/Working Plan

I. Exhibit Framing identifies and gives shape to an exhibit idea or concept that promises to be strong in development, design, fabrication, operation and market appeal. Exhibit Framing includes:

- Description: A brief description of the exhibit that identifies the topic and an approach and provides a few key ideas.
- Evidence of testing with stakeholders: Questions asked and responses from different segments of the audience; consideration of other stakeholders; comparisons to or other topics tested.
- Potential for success: Analysis from three museum perspectives: marketing, education and fundraising.
- Framework fit: A solid and honest fit within the Framework.

II. The Concept Plan clearly communicates the exhibits goals and objectives, how they are appropriate for the identified audience; it provides preliminary ideas about the exhibit format. The Concept Plan is reviewed internally by staff and externally by advisors and review comments are incorporated into the Plan before work is begun on the next phase. The Concept Plan includes.

- Working title: A placeholder name that captures an essential part of the exhibit.
- Assumptions: Givens such as topic, square feet, theme, budget size, location, opening date, etc.
- Audience profile: The targeted audience for the exhibit, specific visitor segments and what is known about them that is relevant to the exhibit.
- Rationale: Why the exhibit is important for children and families, for this community, including results of front-end evaluation.
- Exhibit purpose: The primary intention of the exhibit and what it will accomplish.

- Goals and objectives: What the exhibit will try to accomplish for the visitor and through what general ways it will be accomplished.
- Messages: Main take-home ideas about the experience.
- Story line or approach: The primary means for engaging the audience through a story, “a day in the life of,” “what if?” etc.
- Possible exhibit elements: Tentative exhibit architecture or WOW element or components that appear to support goals and objectives that help illustrate what the exhibit will be like.
- Conceptual floor plan: A bubble diagram showing areas, relative size and relationships.
- Fundraising potential: The names or categories of possible funders or sponsors who might be interested in the exhibit.
- Marketing analysis: Marketability of the exhibit; special audiences the exhibit might be marketed to, such as teachers, grandparents, certain neighborhoods, possible promotional opportunities.
- Potential partners and collaborators: Groups or relationships that would bring expertise or visibility to the project.
- Potential advisors: The names and special contributions of local or national advisors who might serve as advisors.
- Conceptual budget: A first crack at what the exhibit might cost, how the money might be allocated among different categories (materials/labor, planning/design/fabrication/installation/program development, etc) based on square foot cost estimates for different kinds of exhibit or comparable exhibits.
- Plan for visitor input: formative evaluation (front-end evaluation has been completed)
- Project timeline: Show areas in which work needs to be done, phases of planning; sequence of activities; length and duration of phases; and review points.

III. The Preliminary Interpretive Plan and Design details the visitor experience (activities, amount to do, etc.) supported by: interactive components, exhibit structures, props and objects, text and video, etc. Content research is complete. The Plan is reviewed internally by staff and externally by advisors; review comments are incorporated into the Plan before work is begun on the next phase. All the materials from the previous phases are included and updated and the following are added.

- Results of front-end and formative evaluation: Summarize the significant results that relate to the exhibit’s goals and objectives.
- Complete component list: Describe all components according to goals, objectives, messages, skills, and activity. Show heights and dimensions of components.

Include schematics of visitor activity and a feasibility analysis of components for safety, construction, and building conditions, maintenance.

- Floor plan: Show the location of areas and components with rough dimensions, entry/exit, and traffic flow.
- Preliminary Sketches: A set of 3-5 quick sketches communicates the exhibit's scale, style and visitors engaging in a sampling of activities. An entry sketch helps set the tone.
- Interpretive techniques: List and give examples of techniques such as video, text voice and style and reasons for inclusion.
- Summary of results of prototyping exhibit components: Summarize prototyping activities with visitors. Highlight how results have changed the experience.
- Preliminary budget: Show cost estimates for labor and materials estimates; allocate for remediation and contingency.
- Timeline: Show steps, sequence and duration for key steps.

IV. The Final/Working Plan shows in detail how the exhibit will provide a strong visitor experience, how it will be fabricated and how it will be completed for the amount budgeted. The Plan is reviewed internally by staff and externally by advisors and review comments are incorporated into the Plan before production is initiated. All the materials from the previous phases are included and updated and the following are added.

- Working designs for all components: Include dimensions, materials, surfaces, product numbers, etc. for all components.
- Floor plan and elevations: Different views show location and dimensions of all components; clearance for pathways and wheelchairs.
- Sample text: Provide text for each type of signage (information, operation, extension) with style guidelines. Identify whether text is English only or dual text. Identify photos and source.
- Artifact and prop list: List props, costumes, photos, artifacts (with security requirements), sources and quantity.
- Evaluation plan: Layout goals, questions and methods for final evaluation and how the results will be used.
- Program plan: Identify topics, formats and contents of programs. Provide samples of what programs will be developed.

- Marketing plan: Provide objectives and audiences and strategies for marketing, PR, advertising, promotions and special events. Include title, logo and credits.
- Final budget: Show detail for labor, materials, outsourcing, allocation for remediation and contingency.

APPENDIX E EXHIBIT CONCEPT DESCRIPTION

Exhibit concepts are explored following a consistent format. They cover the significant elements of an exhibit at the Concept stage of the exhibit planning process.

- A Snapshot conveys the kind of experience and the activities visitors might find in the exhibit in order to give a feel for the experience.
- The Rationale summarizes how the exhibit will connect play, learning and readiness.
- The Core Experience highlights the central learning activity that best characterizes what the exhibit offers.
- Learner Groups identify the age groups the exhibit is targeted to and how each group will experience the exhibit.
- Experience Goals establish what the exhibit seeks to accomplish for children and adults. During planning, these will be supported by more specific objectives.
- Learner Impacts and Indicators establish what specific Indicators the experience is likely to display.
- Learning Links connect experiences Learning Focus with discipline-based concepts and skills that exhibit activities will support.
- Spirit & Style identifies specific ways in which the experience will convey the feel of Knock Knock's Spirit & Style.

- Areas and Preliminary Activities propose promising ways in which an exhibit can meet its goals and adhere to the criteria through organizing space into possible activity areas and supporting activities.

EXHIBIT CONCEPT DESCRIPTION

Snapshot

Rationale

Core Experience

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Learner Groups

- 0-18 month olds will:
- 18 – 30 month olds will:
- 30 month olds – 4 year olds will:
- 4 – 6 year olds will:
- 6 – 8 year olds will:
- Adults will:

Experiential Goals

The experience will:

- engage children in ...
- help children to...
- encourage children to....
- help adults to....

Learner Impacts and Indicators

- Enhanced skills
- Expanded relationships
- Extended experience
- Insight into learning

Learning Links

- Developing Relationships: People, Place, Time and Order
- Expanding Language: Literacy and Stories
- Inspiring Creativity: The Arts and problem Solving

Spirit & Style

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Areas and Preliminary Activities

Area

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Area

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APPENDIX F DEVELOPMENTAL DOMAIN PLANNING INSTRUMENT

DEVELOPMENTAL DOMAINS		EXHIBIT IDEA:	
		Domain-related, play-based, learning activities in the exhibit	Related Louisiana Standards for: Birth through 3-Years, 4-Year-Olds, or K through 4 th Grade
SOCIAL & EMOTIONAL			
LANGUAGE & LITERACY			
COGNITIVE	SCIENCE		
	SOCIAL STUDIES		
	MATH		
CREATIVE EXPRESSION			
HEALTH & PHYSICAL			

Louisiana Standards for Programs Serving Four-Year-Olds (www.doe.state.la.us/lde/uploads/5381.doc). *Louisiana's Early Learning Guidelines and Program Standards: Birth through Three.* (www.dss.state.la.us/Documents/OFS/LA_EarlyLearningGuide.pdf) Can also relate to *Grade K-4 Louisiana Content Standards* (www.doe.state.la.us/lde/saa/1222.html). However, these standards

are organized by content area rather than domain, as are the Birth-Three and Four-Year-Old Standards. The K-4 standards could be inserted in the chart.

APPENDIX G

CHALLENGES OF CHILDREN'S MUSEUMS

LOOK OUT, NOT IN.

- Look at what your community needs that you can provide to be relevant and useful.
- Think of your visitor. Ask, listen and respond to your visitor.
- Resist limiting your thinking of how you do things. Think about **WHY** and for **WHOM** you do them.

THINK BIG, NOT GRAND.

- Don't confuse big with physical size or quality, especially when you are comparing yourself to other, older children's museums.
- Make whatever you have excellent.
- Keep your eye on a compelling vision, though you may start small.

RESIST BEING REDUCED TO FUN AND CUTE FOR CHILDREN.

- Communicate the critical importance of children's needs for play and time to be children.
- Insist on being taken seriously.
- Keep alert to how children are marginalized.

ASK FOR WHAT YOU NEED, NOT WHAT YOU CAN GET BY WITH.

- Think long-term.
- Ask for indirect as well as direct costs.
- Support your requests with solid information.

SAY, "No!"

- Refuse to be everything for everyone.
- Resist being a mile wide and an inch deep.
- Have high standards for what is in your plan.
- Let go of what is not in your plan.

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