**Kaleidoscope Connections**

Great Ideas from October 16, 2018

Marbles Kids Museum

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**Opt-In Play**

* **Observe:** Make sure child is open, looking for, or ready to play with you.
* **Participate:** Participate in what the child is doing and tailor it based on child’s age (e.g.: playing side by side vs playing with the child).
* **Talk**: Talk with the child. Add math and science into the fun.
* **Inspire**: Connect with them over what they are interested in and help them explore new ideas and ways of trying something.
* **N’exit**: Find a nice way to exit. Thank them for playing. Make sure you do not leave in a way that makes them feel you left abruptly.

**Design Process**

* Process begins with observing children play.
* Guests are asked for input and many ideas are inspired by customer feedback.
* After ideas are formed, play specialist are gathered and a visual brainstorm is done.

**Design Notes**

* Maximize all spaces, including hallways.
* Focus is not just given to the things children touch, but to the whole environment. This allows children to create a story around what they are doing.
* Loose parts play allows for kids to continue to come to Marbles and have different experiences every time.
* Open ended environments allow families to dictate their play.
* Adjacency matters. Having toys near each other that can be used in multiple areas. E.g.: Hospital area with baby dolls next to the grocery store. Baby dolls end up being used at both the hospital and pushed in the grocery carts.
* Create seating for parents that is both a part of the play and on the edge of the play.
  + We want lots of opportunities to interact with kids but also sit back and watch.
* Focus on low cost, high impact.
* Coroplast has a nice finish and can be printed on. It is good for prototyping. It’s durable and affordable.
* Make exhibits fresh by changing them to reflect the seasons.
* Design them to be inviting and allow for learning opportunities.
* Props are washed 2 to 3 times a week.
* Polar fleece is used to create the soft materials because it is soft, yet durable. The color and material can handle being washed regularly.
* Marbles works with experts to better design spaces for children with sensory differences.
* Use real props when you can.
* Want low tech as possible.
* Denise Hughes is the muralist for Marbles.
* Create exhibits that grow with kids.
* Provide activities that help kids explore their interests and allows parents to replicate at home.
* Provide opportunities for collaboration and older children to teach younger children.
* Kids learn from failure, providing opportunities for learning and improving skills.
* Teach life skills through play.