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What's New & Cutting Edge for Children & Family Destination Venues & Their Designs

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Consultants, designers & producers of location-based leisure & learning venues

- Children's play & discovery (*edutainment*) centers
- At-home mom play cafés
- Adventure play gardens (playgrounds)
- Agritainment
- Children's discovery farms
- Family entertainment centers
- Family eatertainment facilities
- Recreation/fitness projects
- Child care facilities

19 years experience with 400+ clients worldwide
On-staff education & child development director

Our projects have been featured:



THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.



(I can dream)

& won many industry awards

Our academic articles about the children's play environment design and the importance of nature have been frequently cited

Topics we will cover today:

- Societal changes - learning & time
- Children's edutainment centers & play cafes
- Adventure play gardens
- Agritainment & children's discovery farms
- Demographics of at-home moms
- Children's developmental stages
- Developmentally appropriate play
- Designing for children & moms so it works

What is edutainment?

Events, programs and attractions where the entertainment and fun qualities are the primary draw, with the learning or educational content being a byproduct

Edutainment needs to be
fun or enjoyable
and engaging

First use was in location-based
leisure industry for children's
edutainment centers, usually
marketed to the public as children's
play & discovery centers

Coming at edutainment from two perspectives:

- Informal learning institutions such as zoos, museums, botanical gardens are adding entertainment
- For-profit entertainment venues are adding educational content

Edutainment is not new

- Myths
- Fables
- Parables
- Edutainment television shows
- Zoos
- Children's museums

For-profit edutainment venues:

- Aquariums - Ripley's Believe It or Not and Landry's
- IMAX Theatres
- Children's edutainment centers
- Specialized zoos, such as aviaries and butterfly conservatories
- Edutainment museums - WonderWorks
- Kid City & Wannado
- Disney's Animal Kingdom
- Kennedy Space Center Visitor Complex

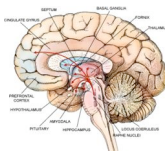
What's driving the
growth of
edutainment?

A major shift in the economies and values of Western, Eastern European and many Asian cultures


Knowledge society

We now predominately work with

our

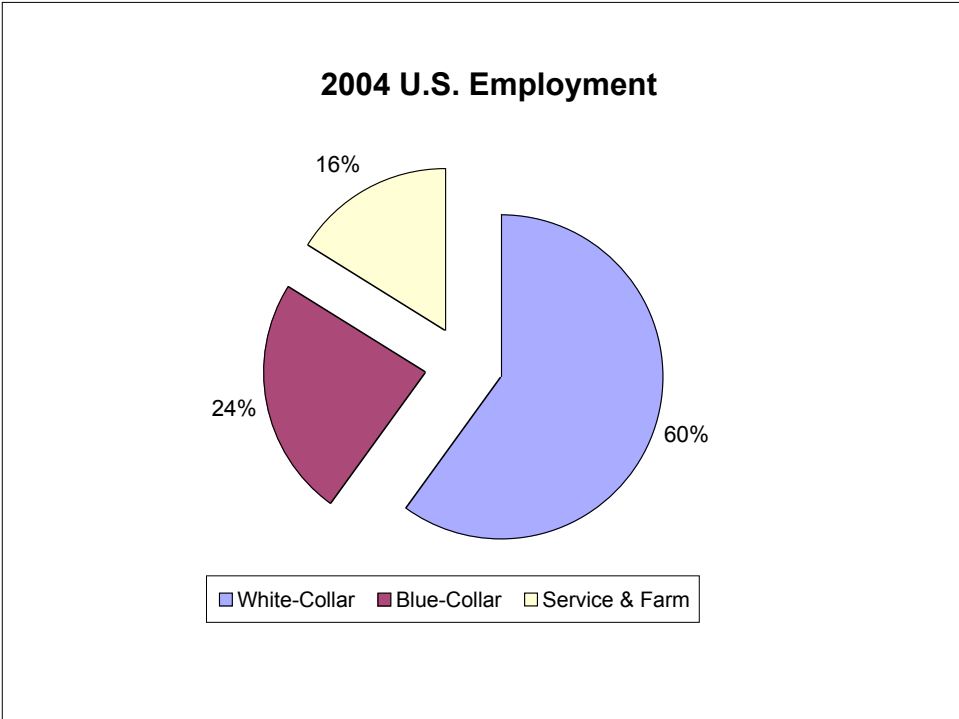
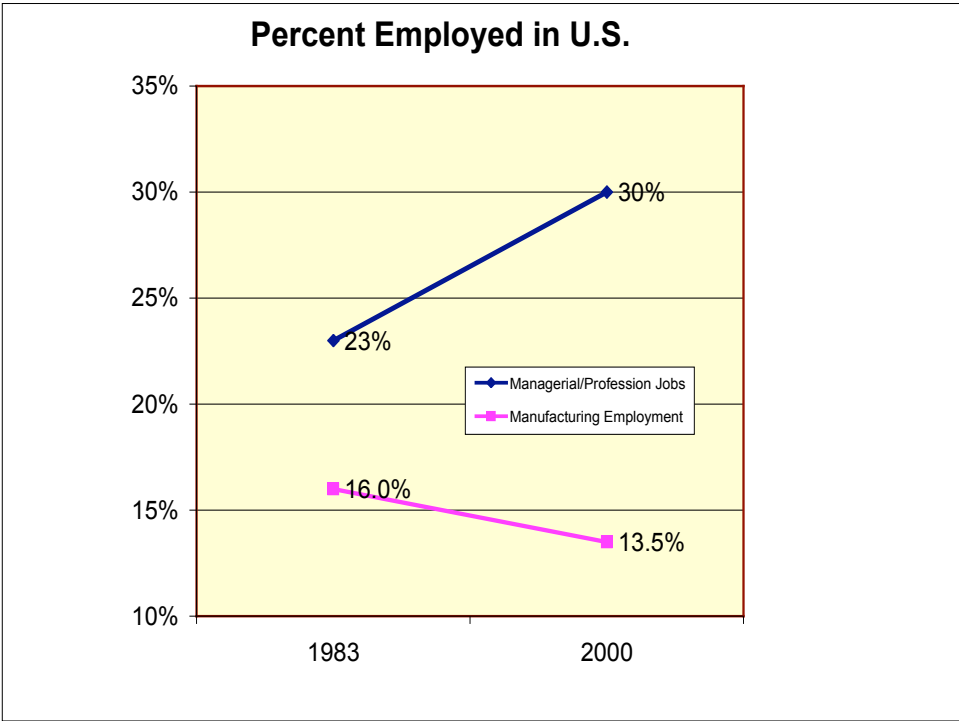


instead of our



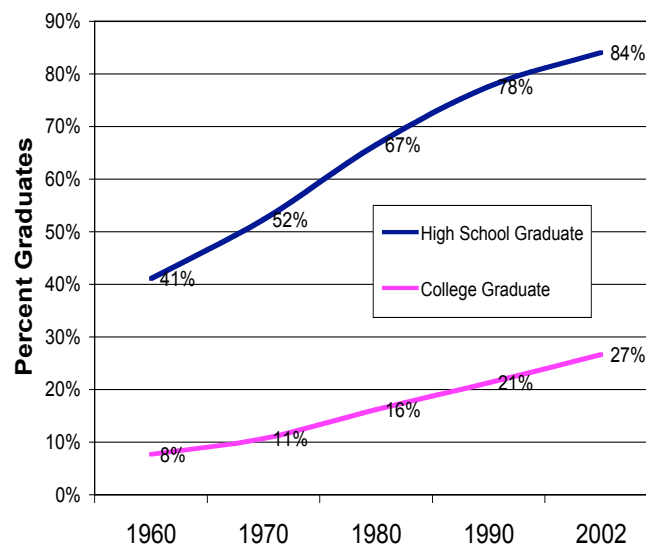
our

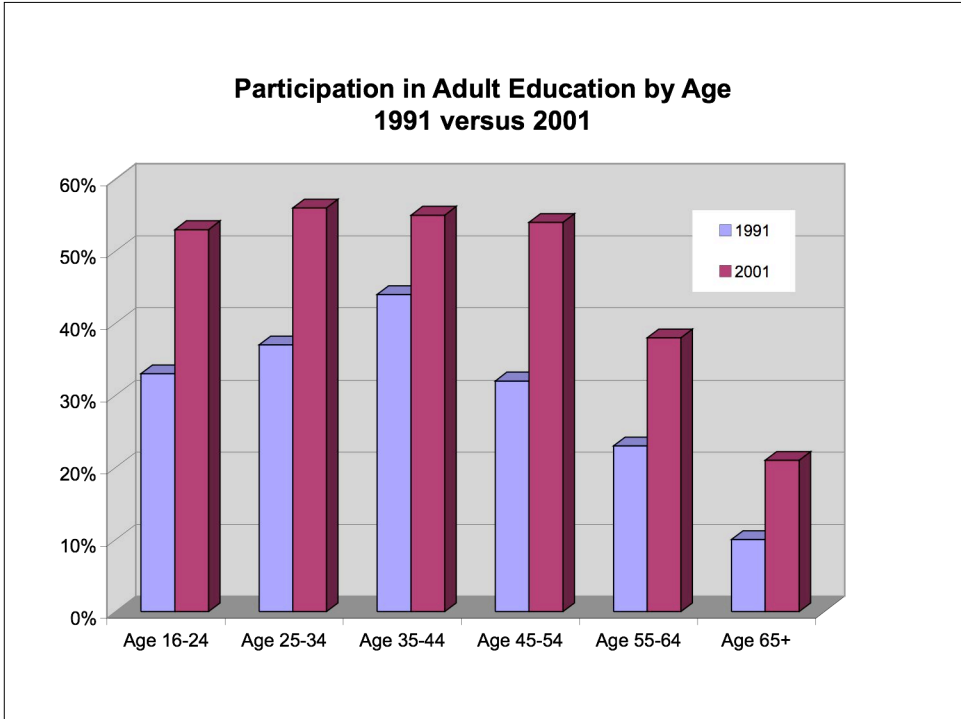
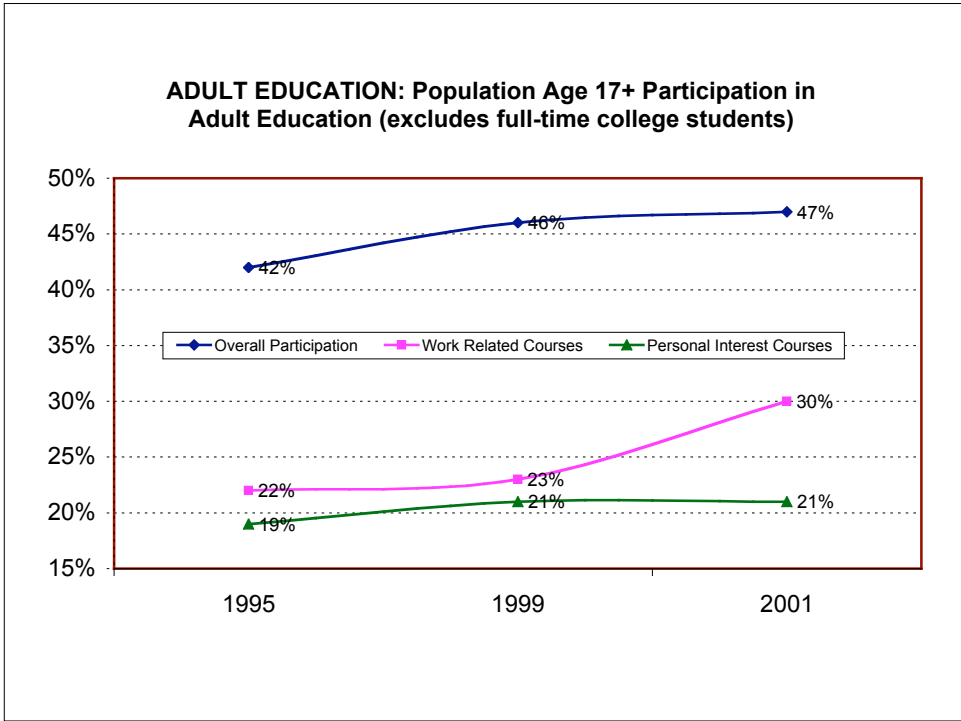




We now value lifelong learning

Educational Attainment - Population 25 Years & Over





*In manufacturing society, leisure
was reward the for hard work*

- **Work** = Self-improvement
- **Leisure** = Relaxation, no practical
purpose

*Today, we have a new attitude
about leisure*

- Opportunity to improve themselves
and our children
- Opportunity to do worthwhile things

Gen-X and Gen-Y parents have a different attitude about their children's leisure than Baby Boomer parents:

Boomer parents tended to separate their children's playtime and learning time

Gen-X and Gen-Y parents want their children to learn as they play (now 2/3s+ of all preschool parents)

Today we experience time completely different than past generations



November 2002						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					01	02
03	04	05	06	07	08	09
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30

We have the perception of less available leisure time

- Actually same amount as in the past - 30 hours per week
- Today more leisure options, so we want to squeeze in more choices
- Leisure comes in smaller, discrete time increments - needs to be highly scheduled

We now value the more productive use of leisure time for ourselves and our children

The perceived value of a visit in terms of the use of time is often far more important than just the \$ cost

Time-value equation for families includes:

- family socialization (*social engagement*)
- children's fun
- educational content
- memories

We see edutainment as a multi-task leisure experience

Having ***fun*** and ***learning*** at the same time has twice the value as spending our valuable time on only one alone

Children's Edutainment Centers

Also known as:

- Children's Play & Discovery Centers
- Children's Discovery Play Centerssm
- Children's Discovery Farmssm
- Children's Discovery Play Farmssm

4 main types of children's edutainment centers:

- Play & discovery center (edutainment)
- At-home mom's play café
- Mega-centers – Wannado, Kids City
- Children's discovery farm (agritainment)

For children (0-8 yrs), *play* is a unique form of edutainment since it is both:

- a. 100% educational
- b. 100% entertainment



Children are biologically wired to play

- Play is nature's way of programming children with a pleasurable activity that teaches them about the world around them and how to become a part of society
- Play to children is unlike play to adults

Play is children's primary
mode and most effective
way of learning

By calling it edutainment
rather than play:

- Parents perceive it as *nourishing* for their children
- It is *fun* - parents love to make their children *happy*
- For the children, it is just a *blast of fun!*

Characteristics of children's edutainment centers

- For children infant to 8± years old
- Locations in or near residential areas rather than in or tourist locations
- Market areas generally are community-based and reach around 15- to 20-minutes' drivetime
- Children are accompanied by their parents, grandparents or guardians

Characteristics cont.

- Meets the needs of both parents and children
- Large variety of play (edutainment) events that offers graduated challenges and appeals to the nine multiple intelligences
- 6,000 SF (1500 M²) to 25,000 SF (2,300 M²)
- Indoor & outdoor play events
- Quality food in pleasant café setting
- No downtimes

Characteristics cont.

- Generates high repeat visits from their market's residents
- Length-of-stay averages 2 to 4 hours
- Per-capita expenditures per visit are in the \$8 - \$15 range
- Significant percentage of income comes from food and beverage, birthday parties, other celebrations, school field trips, enrichment workshops and day camps

(stay) At-home mom's play café (a variation)

- Focuses on weekday at-home market
- Reduced selection of play events for children 2-5
- 6,000 - 10,000 square feet (+ outdoors)
- Birthday parties only on weekends & holidays
- Requires higher white-collar family population

At-home moms with preschool children can be high repeat customers



(stay) At-home moms

- 30% of all married-couples with children < 15 years
- 40% of all married-couples with children < 6 years
- 60% have incomes \$40,000+
- High repeat visits

At-Home Mothers with Children under 6	
Stay-at-Home	40.2%
Work Flex-Time	18.2%
Work Part Time	<u>17.9%</u>
Total At-Home Market %	76.3%

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A children's play & discovery center being
developed by the
Lake County Parks & Recreation Department
Lake County, Indiana

- 23,000 square foot building
- 200-seat café
- 1-acre outdoor adventure play garden
- Opening June 2008
- Being developed as a revenue generating business



Examples of children's edutainment centers

- *Bamboola* - San Jose, California
- *LouLou Al Dugong's* - Dubai UAE
- *Davis' Farmland* - Sterling, Massachusetts
- *Wol-Ha* - Cancun, Mexico
- *Totter's Otterville* - Covington, Kentucky
- *Brown's Berry Patch* - Waterport, New York
- *Paradise Park* - Kansas City, Missouri
- *BellaBoo's* - Gary, Indiana

Do-It-Yourself Face Painting



Water tables



Block play



Infant-Toddler



Soft-contained-play



Reading room



Art studio





Pretend
dress-Up



Pretend supermarket



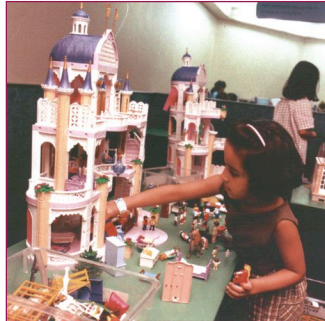
Pretend house



Pretend restaurant



Miniature play



Train Table



Children's cooking



Performance area





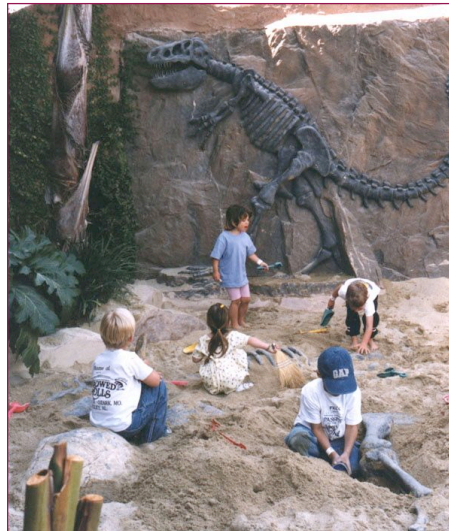
Café



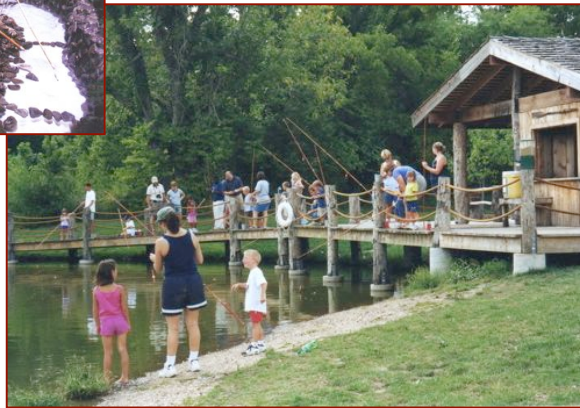
Adventure
play gardensm



Dinosaur dig



Fishing



Agritainment

- Fall Festivals and Halloween
- Children's Discovery Farm

Fall Festivals & Halloween



Families *(adults with children <13)*

Things the entire family can do together





Children's discovery farm



Sterling, Massachusetts





Water Playground



Making it work for parents (moms)

- Security (abductions)
- Clean & sanitary
- Safe from injury & disease
- Fun & enriching for child
- Restrooms
- Shade
- Visibility & monitoring
- Zoning for young children
- Meets socialization needs
- Seating & comfort
- Food & beverage

Making it
work for
children



Child Development

Understanding it is key to successfully
designing for children



Ages of play (children's developmental stages)

- | | |
|----------------------------|------------------------|
| • Infants | up to 10± months old |
| • Older Infants & Toddlers | 10± - 23± months |
| • Two-year-olds | 24± - 35± months |
| • Preschoolers | 3± years - 5/6 years |
| • Grade Schoolers | 6/7 years - 8/9 years |
| • Tweens | 9/10 years - 12± years |

Children read environments differently than adults

Adults see the environment as the background for events. They experience it vicariously; they enjoy its form, shapes, and aesthetics. They understand its socially acceptable use.

Children & the environment

Children look for the environment's affordances - opportunities the environment "*affords*" them to do things - how they can interact with it.

Children interpret the environment in terms of its possible interactive function rather than its form.

Children are biological programmed to explore and interact with the environment as a part of their development.



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How a child sees a rock

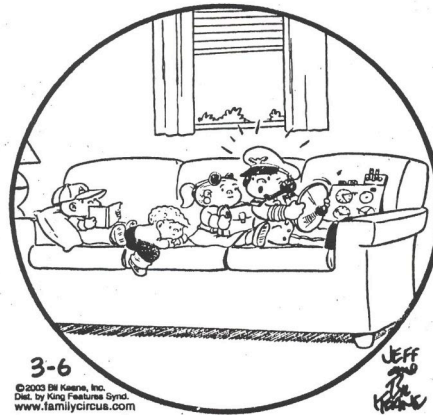


Small rock *affords* grasping
& throwing



Large rock *affords*
stepping on, looking
under or climbing on

Uses for a couch



“Just a minute, Mommy! We’re on final
approach!”

Also good for bouncing on, sprawling out on, climbing on,
jumping over and hiding behind

What does a long hall *afford* a child?



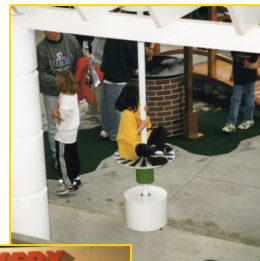
Child not misbehaving

Doing exactly what her brain is biologically wired to do, based upon the environment's affordances and her developmental age.

Fulfilling her developmental task - to explore and interact with the environment

When a child behaves in an environment in a way adults see as improper, most often it is the adults' fault for not designing the environment appropriately for the child

Adults' challenge is to design the environment to obtain the desired behavior -- to plan the *affordances* by design





Children's Boredom

- Mismatch between what children have ability to do and what they are expected or want to do
- If challenged beyond their ability, become anxious and claim boredom as a defense
- If not challenged enough, they're bored
- In both cases, bored child will find ways to be challenged by climbing, running or other activities that match their ability

What makes it work for children

- Variety - 9 multiple intelligences
- Developmentally appropriate
- Anthropometrics & ergonomics
- Scale of space
- Zoning
- Visibility
- Acoustics

Howard Gardner's 9 Multiple Intelligences

- **Linguistic**
Skill with language
- **Logical-Mathematical**
Skill in reasoning, mathematics or scientific investigation
- **Spatial**
Ability to create & think in images
- **Musical**
Sensitivity to sound, melody & rhythm
- **Bodily-Kinesthetic**
Skill in movement & coordination
- **Naturalist**
Ability to read & understand the natural environment
- **Interpersonal**
Ability to understand and work effectively with other people
- **Intrapersonal**
Deep self awareness
- **Existential**
Capturing and pondering the fundamental questions
Of existence

Developmentally appropriate play:

age, developmentally &
culturally appropriate

Characteristics of developmentally appropriate play

- Highly pleasurable
- Process-oriented, non-goal directed
- Child-initiated and self-initiated
- Activity of the mind, the imagination
- Free of imposed tasks or adult-imposed rules
- Hands-on, participatory
- Open-ended

One of the unique qualities of developmentally appropriate play is that it has high repeat appeal

Children create their own play scripts

The scripts constantly change, so the play is different every time

Children want to explore, manipulate and transform the environment, to have control over it

Loose parts that children can manipulate, move and construct with are much more engaging than static equipment



Children's imaginations

Environment needs to:

- promote and support imaginative pretend play with props and loose parts
- be open-ended so children can use their imaginations to develop their own play scripts

Children are biologically wired for pretend play

Pretend play is nature's way of programming children with a pleasurable activity that teaches them about the world around them and how to become a part of society

One of the unique qualities of pretend play is that it has high repeat appeal

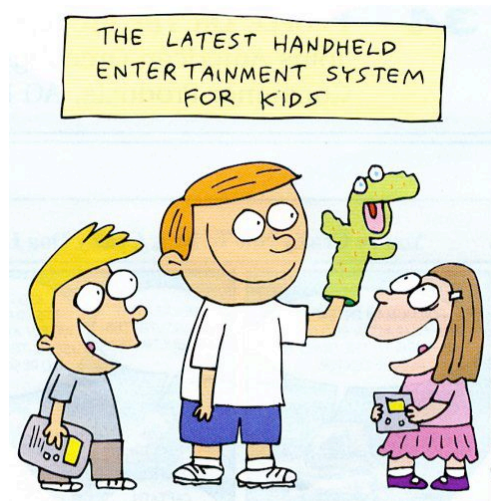
Children create their own play scripts

The scripts constantly change, so the play is different every time



Open-ended with loose parts and continually changing play scripts





Children are more interested in the process of using the environment and loose parts than achieving an end result



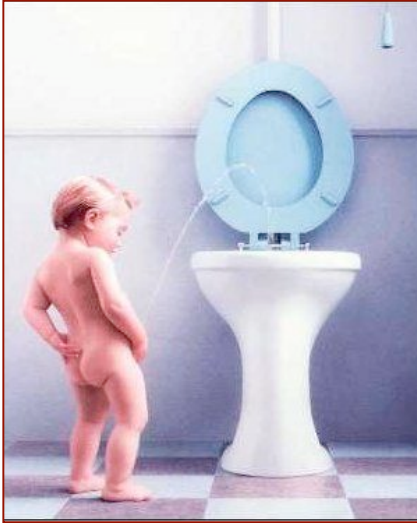
The high repeat appeal of children's edutainment makes it a powerful attraction

Warning

The following slide may be offensive to some viewers.
Audience discretion advised.

Anthropometrics is very important

Children are much smaller than adults

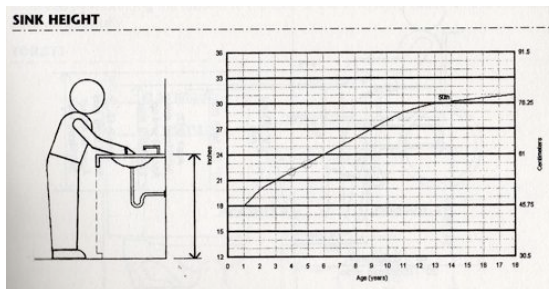


Universal
design
urinal

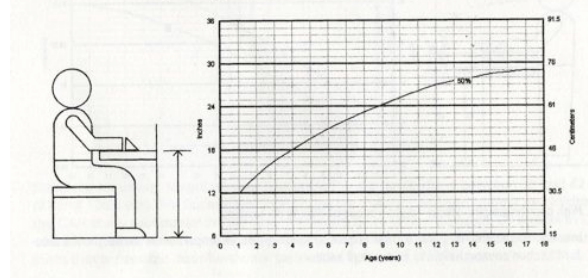


Anthropometric issues

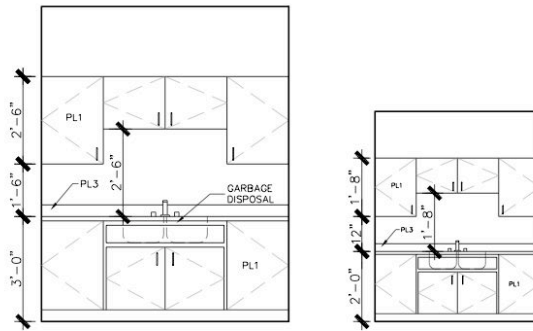
- height
- reach
- eye level
- seating
- step height
- restrooms



Seated Worktop Height



Adult versus child scale



4.5-year-olds' view



Inches make a difference



Child-scaled environments

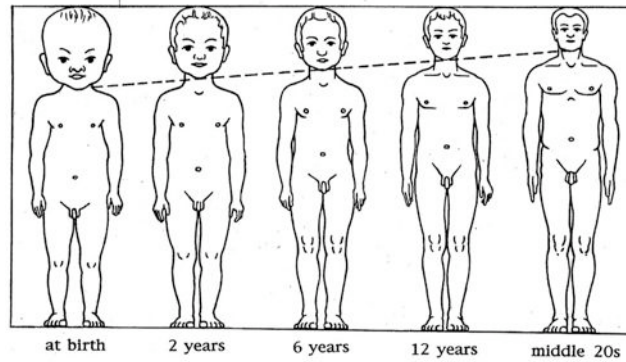
- Higher the quality and complexity of play
- More focused play
- Lengthens duration of play (delays boredom)



Different activity areas need to be well defined with child-identifiable boundaries



Safety



The challenge:

The duality of design for
both mom's and children

Children love animals

Young children feel a natural kinship with and are drawn to animals, especially baby animals

Children instinctively interact with animals

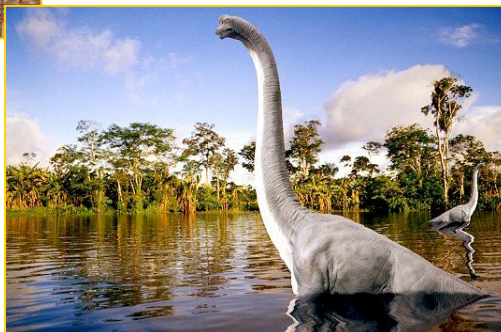
Children > 6 years – 80% of their dreams are about animals

90% of characters in preschool children's books are animals

Dominant appeal is to children 2 to 7 years-old



Children love things
smaller than themselves
& larger than themselves



Mascot



Educational School Field Trips

- Comply with state education standards/frameworks
- Pre-trip teacher guide
- Orientation area
- Facilitator guide
- Post-trip teacher guide

Other types of business

- Birthday parties
- Pre-school field trips
- Early grade school field trips
- Homeschoolers
- Play groups
- After school (latchkey)
- Summer & holiday day camps
- Enrichment workshops
- Other groups



Parental education



Play facilitation training

1. Basic child growth and development: how children differ with age and have unique needs
2. Facilitating play
3. Responding & interacting appropriately with each age group
4. Understanding what determines children's behavior
5. Handling behavior problems with children
6. Responding to children as individuals
7. Group facilitation with children
8. Interactions with parents

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