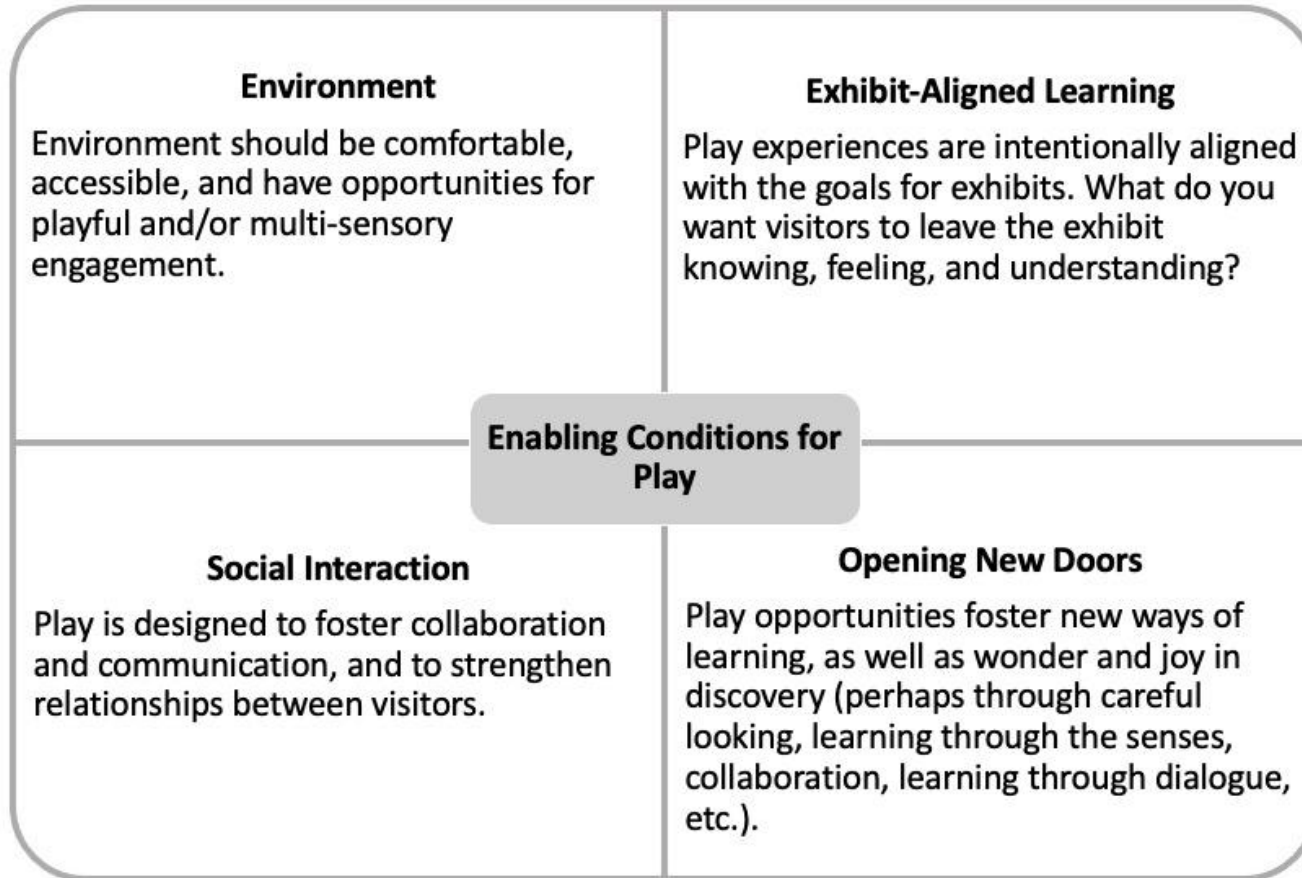


Conditions Shaping High-Quality Playful Learning



Learn more at museumquestions.com/play/

Rebecca Shulman, Museum Questions Consulting - rebeccashulman@museumquestions.com | www.museumquestions.com | 917-771-1374

Kristin Scarola, Consultant for Early Childhood and Family Learning - kscarola@gmail.com | www.kristinscarola.com | 917-502-1623

Sarah Jencks, Every Museum a Civic Museum - sarah@civictimuseums.org | www.civictimuseums.org | 202-841-5513



Conditions Shaping High-Quality Playful Learning

WHAT TO LOOK FOR IN THE GALLERY:

Must-Haves

- ☐ Clarity around rules and expectations for use of the space.
- ☐ Space is physically comfortable (seating, sound, etc.)
- ☐ Multilingual materials.
- ☐ Opportunities for sensory engagement.
- ☐ Opportunities for playful engagement.
- ☐ Cueing for adults on how to create a playful experience.
- ☐ Child facing tools and images at eye level and of an appropriate size for children.
- ☐ Context and information shared in a way children can access, as needed for intentional play
- ☐ Flexibility to engage independently or in different groups (size, age, etc)
- ☐ Play activities or prompts are intentionally designed to achieve learning goals
- ☐ Entry points for visitors of different ages

Might-Haves

- ☐ **Collaboration:** By working together, visitors accomplish a task or address a question
- ☐ **Facilitation:** Adults or older children asked to facilitate activity for younger child(ren)
- ☐ **Narrative:** Play engages visitors in listening to, participating in, or telling a story through visual, oral, or other media, that deepens accurate understanding of the museum exhibit
- ☐ **Exploration:** Visitors are invited to make choices about what to explore or how to respond to it.
- ☐ **Dramatic Role Play / Simulation:** Through taking on a role or a perspective (which may be supported by prompts, props, dress up, etc) children make connections by stepping into a place, character, or situation
- ☐ **Object Play:** Using objects directly related to content, children learn through handling, imagining, and exploring materials.
- ☐ **Inquiry:** Playful prompts or open questions are used to provoke conversation.

What To Look For When Observing Visitors:

- ☐ Conversations related to content / learning goals
- ☐ Interactions: Adult to child; Adult to adult; Child to child; Across visitor groups
- ☐ Stickiness (TIME): Child “sticks with” activity to explore the activity with purpose appropriate to their age.
- ☐ Engaging (FOCUS): The child’s full attention is on the task
- ☐ Mastery (ITERATION)
- ☐ Meaning-making (A-HA)