

*Family Guides in Art Museums: An Analysis of Current Development Practices and
Recommendations for Future Standards*

Stephanie Strucaly

Department of Museum Studies

The University of the Arts

February 2019

A thesis submitted to The University of the Arts in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Museum Education, M.A.

© 2019 Stephanie Strucaly

© 2019 Stephanie Strucaly All Rights Reserved

No part of this document may be reproduced in any form without written permission of the author. All photographs and drawings are the property of Stephanie Strucaly unless otherwise noted. Material owned by other copyright holders should not be reproduced under any circumstance. This document is not for publication and was produced in satisfaction of thesis requirements for the Master of Arts in Museum Education in the Department of Museum Studies, The University of the Arts, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania under the Directorship of Ellen Owens.

For more information contact:

Stephanie Strucaly

1 Diamond Road

Clinton, CT 06413

sstrucaly@gmail.com

To the Faculty of the University of the Arts

The members of the committee appointed to examine the thesis of Stephanie Strucaly find it satisfactory and recommend it to be accepted.

Date:

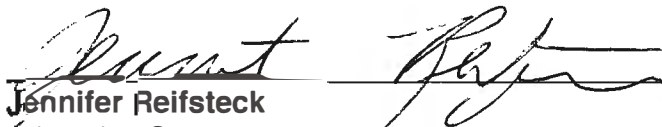


Mary Jane Taylor
Committee Chair

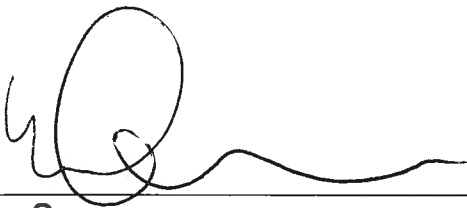
Director of Grants & Research, Williamson College of the Trades



Lynn Berkowitz
Education Program
Historic Rittenhouse Town



Jennifer Reifsteck
Education Specialist, K-12 Learning
Smithsonian Institution, Freer Gallery of Art and the Arthur M. Sackler Gallery



Ellen Owens
Co-Coordinator; Senior Lecturer, Museum Education, The University of the Arts
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Abstract

Families constitute 40% of all museum visitors today. Concurrently, the family group is the most diverse of museum visitors. Comprised of multiple generations, families vary in how they relate to one another. For these reasons, the concern for the family is at the center of many museum endeavors. However, there is a gap in this area of museum work that pertains to family guides. While these specially written materials are proven to be effective in fostering family learning and engagement in the galleries, current academia neglects to examine the specific development process for such a valuable visitor resource. This study serves as an initial exploration of current practices in family guide development, particularly in art museums, which serve a significantly lower percentage of families than science and children's museums. The goal of the study is to distinguish trends in family guide development in order to compile a list of suggestions for best practices in the future. This list can help steer museum staff in their development, improve current family guides, and also be used as a catalyst for further, deeper research on a formalized process for creating these materials. While the focus is on art institutions, this study applies to family learning initiatives throughout all cultural institutions, particularly to museum professionals who are spearheading the development of family guides.

Dedication

In memory of Dr. Helen Shannon. I am so fortunate to have been your student. Your teachings and inspiring stories will stay with me throughout my future museum endeavors.

Acknowledgements

Thank you Ellen Owens, my advisor, for your expert knowledge and guidance that helped steer my ideas in the right direction. I am truly grateful for how generous you were in lending your time to the success of my work.

Thank you Mary Jane Taylor, my committee chair, for showing constant advocacy for my ideas, even when I showed hesitation. Your confidence to find a solution to every problem helped push me through many obstacles during this process. Also, thank you Lynn Berkowitz and Jennifer Reifsteck for your endless enthusiasm in my research, your breadth of experience and insight, and for your time serving on my committee.

Thank you to the museum professionals who took part in my survey as well as Barbara Wong, Elizabeth Yohlin Baill, and Amelia Wiggins who I had the pleasure of speaking with about my research at its early stages. I appreciate your willingness to share your thoughts and experiences with me.

Thank you to Miriam White and Robert Wedge for kindly reading and revising the countless drafts before this one.

Finally, to my parents, friends, and classmates, thank you deeply for providing me with unwavering love, support, and encouragement throughout my years of study. This accomplishment would not have been possible without you.

List of Tables & Figures

List of Tables

<i>Table 1.</i> Breakdown of survey respondents by museum department.	42
<i>Table 2.</i> Breakdown of survey respondents by type of institution.	44
<i>Table 3.</i> Breakdown of categories used to analyze respondents' responses to the survey question "Why is your institution creating a family guide?" as well as examples of their responses within each category.	48
<i>Table 4.</i> Breakdown of categories used to analyze respondents' learning and experiential goals as well as examples of their responses within each category.	51
<i>Table 5.</i> Breakdown of types of resources respondents use to develop their family guides as well as examples of their responses within each category.	57
<i>Table 6.</i> Breakdown of types of evaluation respondents conduct while developing family guides as well as examples of their responses within each category.	60
<i>Table 7.</i> Breakdown of types of titles respondents use for their family guides, including examples of their responses within each category.	62
<i>Table 8.</i> Breakdown of categories used to analyze respondents' responses to the miscellaneous, open-ended question of the survey as well as examples of their responses within each category.	70

List of Figures

<i>Figure 1.</i> Geographical map marking the location of survey respondents' institutions.	43
<i>Figure 2.</i> Breakdown of respondent's reasons for creating a family guide. The bar graph shows that while there were 30 respondents, a majority of their answers fit within multiple codes.	49
<i>Figure 3.</i> Breakdown of institutions' learning and experiential goals for their family guides.	52
<i>Figure 4.</i> Number and percentage of people involved in the development	55

of family guides.

Figure 5. Number and percentage of respondents who use tools or resources to develop their family guides versus those who do not. 56

Figure 6. Number and percentage of respondents who test their guides versus those who do not. 59

Figure 7. Number and percentage of respondents who have family-friendly interpretation throughout their galleries versus those who do not (left pie chart) and the number and percentage of “yes” respondents whose family-friendly interpretation is either temporary or permanent (right pie chart). 64

Figure 8. Number and percentage of respondents whose family guides include various types of activities. 65

Figure 9. Number and percentage of respondents whose family guides foster various opportunities for visitors. 67

Figure 10. Number and percentage of respondents who use various methods for distributing their family guides 69

Figure 11. A cross-tabulation of respondents’ reasons for creating a family guide and the learning and experiential goals of their guides. 74

Figure 12. A cross-tabulation of family guide’s learning and experiential goals and the types of activities they include. 85

List of Appendices

Methodology

Appendix A: List of Organizations and Institutions Contacted
for Survey Distribution.....102

Appendix B: List of the Geographical Locations of
Participating Institutions.....103

Instruments

Appendix C: *Development of Family Guides in Art Museums* Survey.....104

Raw Data

Appendix D: Survey of Professionals Responses.....106

Table of Contents

Abstract.....	iii
Dedication.....	iv
Acknowledgements.....	v
List of Tables & Figures.....	vi
List of Appendices.....	vii
Nomenclature.....	x
Chapter One: Introduction.....	1
Topic.....	1
Research Problem.....	3
Purpose of Study.....	3
Research Objectives.....	4
Significance to the Field.....	4
Chapter Two: Review of Literature.....	6
Introduction.....	6
Family Learning in Museums.....	7
Families in Art Museums.....	15
Developing Family-Centered Interpretation.....	22
Family Guides in Art Museums.....	29
Chapter Three: Methodology.....	37
Rationale.....	37
Setting.....	38
Participants.....	39
Demographics.....	42
Instrument.....	44
Anticipated Results.....	45
Chapter Four: Presentation of the Data.....	47
Research Questions.....	47
Additional Questions.....	61
Chapter Five: Analysis & Conclusions.....	72
Survey Questions.....	72
Additional Findings.....	80
Overview of Conclusions.....	88
Recommended Practices for Developing Family Guides.....	90
Chapter Six: Application to the Field.....	96
Chapter Seven: Implications for Further Research.....	99
Appendices.....	102
Bibliography.....	134

Nomenclature

Art Center/Art Institution/Art Museum: a permanent institution that displays works of art and is open to the public for purposes including education and enjoyment.

Best Practices: as defined by the American Productivity and Quality Center in the American Association of Museums' *Excellence in Practice: Museum Education Principles and Standards*, "Those practices that have been shown to produce superior results; selected by a systematic process; and judged as exemplary, good, or successfully demonstrated. Best practices are then adapted to fit a particular organization."¹

Close-Looking: to look at an artwork or object closely and critically with encouragement to make observations and offer interpretations

Design Thinking: as defined by Dana Mitroff Silvers in "What is Design Thinking?", "a framework comprised of a series of steps and associated methods [...]it helps teams approach problems with the end-user in mind. It involves developing empathy for museum visitors, discovering opportunities, generating user-centered solutions, and building and testing prototypes."²

Development Process: a series of steps taken by museum staff to plan and create a project for the public, which includes exhibitions, programs, and collateral materials.

Engagement: learning through active participation in a museum exhibit or program.

Evaluation: as defined by the U.S. Government Accountability Office in the *Designing Evaluations 2012 Revision*, "a systematic study using research methods to collect and analyze data to assess how well a program is working and why. Evaluations answer specific questions about program performance and may focus on assessing program operations or results."³

Exhibit/Exhibition/Gallery: as defined by Edward P. Alexander and Mary Alexander in *Museums in Motion: An Introduction to the History and Functions of Museums*, "a showing or display of materials for the purpose of communication with an audience."⁴

¹ Committee on Education, EXCELLENCE IN PRACTICE: Museum Education Principles and Standards, PDF, Washington, D.C.: American Association of Museums, 2005.

² Dana Mitroff Silvers, "What is Design Thinking?" *Design Thinking for Museums* (blog), November 17, 2017, accessed January 14, 2019, <https://designthinkingformuseums.net/what-is-design-thinking/>.

³ Nancy Kingsbury, et al., *Designing Evaluations: 2012 Revision*, publication no. GAO-12-208G, U.S. Government Accountability Office (Washington, D.C., 2012).

⁴ Edward P. Alexander and Mary Alexander, *Museums in Motion: An Introduction to the History and Functions of Museums*, 2nd ed. (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2010), 236.

Family: as defined by Lynn Dierking in *Laughing and Learning: What is family learning?*, “two or more people in a multi-generational group that has an ongoing relationship; they may be biologically related but not necessarily.”⁵

Family Guide: as defined by Mary Jane Taylor, et al. in the presentation “*Family Guides: Do they Work?*” at the Visitor Studies Association Annual Meeting in 2006, “a specially written and designed printed material for families, intended to foster learning and enjoyment in the museum.”⁶

Formative Evaluation: as defined by Judy Diamond, Michael Horn, and David H. Uttal in *Practical Evaluation Guide*, “provides information about how well a program or exhibit works, how well it communicates to its intended audiences, and what changes would lead to better outcomes. Formative evaluation generally occurs while a project is under development [...]”⁷

Front-end Evaluation: as defined by Judy Diamond, Michael Horn, and David H. Uttal in *Practical Evaluation Guide*, “provides background information for future program planning. It can reveal visitors’ prior knowledge, experience, and expectations [...] A goal of front-end evaluation is to learn about the audience before a program or exhibit has been designed to better understand how visitors will eventually respond once the project has been developed.”⁸

Interpretation: as defined by Marcella Wells, Barbara Butler, and Judith Koke in *Interpretive Planning for Museums: Integrating Visitor Perspectives in Decision Making*, “The collective set of informational, interpretive, and educational materials, programs, exhibits, media, and facilities that serve to enhance the visitor experience in museums and informal learning settings.”⁹

Learning: as defined by Elizabeth Wood and Barbara Wolf, “a socio-cultural phenomenon where the interactions between group members can stimulate a shift in attitudes, beliefs, or values, as much as it may include cognitive gain.”¹⁰

Learning Bond: as defined by Beverly Sheppard in the 2005 Family Learning Roundtable Forum, “the setting and the unique nature of learning that occurs in the

⁵ Dierking, “Laughing and Learning Together”: What is Family Learning?” Engage Families: A Project of the USS Constitution Museum, accessed October 4, 2018, <https://engagefamilies.org/family-learning-101/what-is-family-learning/>.

⁶ Mary Jane Taylor, Anna Hanusa, and Beth Wilson, “Family Guides: Do they Work?” Presentation, Visitor Studies Association Annual Meeting, 2006.

⁷ Judy Diamond, Michael Horn, and David H. Uttal, *Practical Evaluation Guide*, ed. 3 (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 20016), 4.

⁸ Ibid, 3.

⁹ Marcella D. Wells, Barbara H. Butler, and Judith Koke, *Interpretive Planning for Museums: Integrating Perspectives in Decision Making* (Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast Press, 2013), 157.

¹⁰ Elizabeth Wood and Barbara Wolf, “When Parents Stand Back Is Family Learning Still Possible?” *Museums and Social Issues* 5, no.1 (2010) 41, accessed February 22, 2018.

midst of our intergenerational family experience. It refers to both the power of our influence as parents on children, as well as what our children have to teach us.”¹¹

Lifelong Learning: as defined by Hazel Moffat and Vicky Woollard in *Museum and Gallery Education: A Manual of Good Practice*, “The view that learning is a process which continues throughout life and which encourages all individuals to benefit from both formal and informal education.”¹²

Modeling: A way of learning through behavior demonstrated by the adult.

Program: Activities for the public that are designed with a theme or based on an exhibit, usually carried out by the education department.

Prototype: as defined by Judy Diamond, Jessica L. Luke, and David H. Uttal in *Practical Evaluation Guide*, “a working version of an interactive exhibit, label, or other component, and it should closely resemble the final product, although it may be more roughly constructed.”¹³

Prototyping: as defined by Polly McKenna-Cress and Janet A. Kamien’s in *Creating Exhibitions: Collaboration in the Planning, Development, and Design of Innovative Experiences*, “the process of testing out ideas with others, particularly end users.”¹⁴

Summative Evaluation: as defined by Judy Diamond, Jessica Luke, and David H. Uttal in *Practical Evaluation Guide*, “tells about the impact of a project after it is completed. It is conducted after the exhibit has been opened to the public or after a program has been presented[...]the results of a summative evaluation will be used to improve future activities through an understanding of existing programs.”¹⁵

Testing: an evaluation method that involves subjects from the intended audience group to try out a prototype in order for museum staff to measure its effectiveness and identify areas for improvement before distributing it to the public.

¹¹ Beverly Sheppard, “The Learning Bond” (presentation, Family Learning Roundtable Forum, June 14, 2005), accessed October 3, 2018. http://engagefamilies.org/wp-content/uploads/dlm_uploads/2018/05/The-Learning-Bond-Transcript.pdf.

¹² Hazel Moffat and Vicky Woollard, *Museum and Gallery Education: A Manual of Good Practice*, (Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press, 1999), 177.

¹³ Judy Diamond, Jessica L. Luke, and David H. Uttal, *Practical Evaluation Guide*, ed. 2 (Lanham, MD: AltaMira Press, 2009), 4.

¹⁴ Polly McKenna-Cress and Janet A. Kamien, *Creating Exhibitions: Collaboration in the Planning, Development, and Design of Innovative Experiences*, (Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, Inc, 2013), 244.

¹⁵ Judy Diamond, Jessica L. Luke, and David H. Uttal, *Practical Evaluation Guide*, ed. 2 (Lanham, MD: AltaMira Press, 2009), 4.

Chapter One: Introduction

With the increase in family learning research in the 20th century, the museum field has witnessed the emergence of family guides in the last two decades. Family guides are “specially written and designed printed material for families, intended to foster learning and enjoyment in the museum,” as defined by museum specialists Mary Jane Taylor, Anna Hanusa, and Beth Wilson.¹⁶ While the institutions consistently intend family guides to support family learning and engagement the guides range widely in content, design, and format. Family guides come in the form of booklets, pamphlets, and digital apps, and are implemented throughout various types of museums and collections. They contain activities, questions, or talking points for families. This content helps to direct families’ museum visits, keep the interest of children, and encourage adults and children to interact with one another.

Yet, these seemingly straightforward materials serve a complex audience. As the largest audience group in museums, families are an important yet challenging group of visitors to support. Lynn Dierking defines families as “two or more people in a multi-generational group that has an ongoing relationship; they may be biologically related but not necessarily.”¹⁷ Not only do families vary in size and ages, but fundamental studies in family learning also concluded that families are multifaceted “communities of learners,” as described by John Falk and Dierking.¹⁸ A family’s socio-cultural dynamic varies according to family members’ needs, expectations, and learning styles. Families are

¹⁶ Mary Jane Taylor, et al., “Family Guides.”

¹⁷ Dierking, “Laughing and Learning Together.”

¹⁸ John H. Falk and Lynn D. Dierking, *Learning from Museums* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2018), 68.

hard to pinpoint or label; therefore, museum staff are challenged to adapt to these visitors to make museums more conducive to family learning. Hence, family guides mediate between families' needs and the institution.

Art museums, in particular, utilize family guides to better support families' needs. These more-traditional, "no touch" policy institutions are innately tricky for families to engage with; therefore, there is even more of an urgency for art museums to strategize methods for engaging families.

While family guides are often small, hand-held materials, they hold great weight in families' museum experiences. Recent studies devoted to family guides reveal that parents feel ill-equipped without explicit support from the museum. They are hungry for more interpretive information, such as a family guide.¹⁹ Furthermore, studies measuring the effectiveness of family guides across different types of institutions demonstrate that families using guides have more conversations and spend more time in the galleries.

Despite the guides' proven effectiveness and value in enhancing family experiences, the body of literature overlooks how museums should best create these supportive materials. Consequently, institutions develop guides by their own systems. For other types of interpretation, such as exhibitions, the field endorses specific practices for their development. Genoways and Ireland argue in *Museum Administration 2.0* that since 1992, museum leaders have driven the reinvention of program and exhibit

¹⁹ Karen Knutson and Kevin Crowley, "Connecting with Art: How Families Talk About Art in a Museum Setting," *Instructional Explanations in the Disciplines*, 2009, accessed October 23, 2018, 191.

development to remain relevant and engaging to diverse audiences.²⁰ This new thinking generated a large body of literature that provided guiding principles and policies for museum professionals to consult in their development. As an interpretive material distributed to the largest and most diverse audience group, it is especially critical that sound, methodical decisions are made about the content, design, and distribution of family guides as well. Therefore, this paper argues for art museums to place more focus on the specific processes employed to develop family guides.

Research Problem

As some art museums implement family guides to support the diverse needs of visiting families, they find that there is minimal writing about how to develop them, especially compared to other types of museum interpretation. The literature review of this thesis will show that while family guide research proves that these materials increase families' learning in museums and discusses qualities that constitute an effective guide, there is an absence of formal study for how to best create them.

Purpose of Study

Since there is very little research on the development of family guides, the purpose of this thesis is to compose a list of recommended practices for developing guides that can benefit the field and the teaching of future generations of museum educators. This study focuses on family guide development in art museums since their

²⁰ Hugh H. Genoways, Lynne M. Ireland, and Cinnamon Catlin-Legutko, *Museum Administration 2.0*, (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2017) 310.

adult-centered design and lack of family-friendly interpretation can greatly highlight the significance of family guides.

Research Objectives

The primary objective of this thesis is to gain an understanding of art museums' current practices for developing family guides by surveying professionals. By comparing survey participants' responses to the standards for creating family-centered exhibitions and programs, outlined in the literature review, the researcher will compile a list of recommended practices for developing family guides. The results of this comparison will reveal which stages in the development process need to be improved, as well as highlight the stages that prove to be constructive. These recommendations can help improve museums' current family guides, direct the launch of new ones, and inform future studies of this kind.

Significance to the Field

Because this study focuses on art institutions, the research will primarily benefit professionals who work in those settings. Unlike their science and history counterparts, art museums struggle to bring in steady numbers of family visitors; therefore, this study to uncover development practices for more effective family guides is especially beneficial for art professionals who want to appeal to family audiences. On the other hand, as the literature review of this thesis notes, a wide variety of cultural institutions distribute family guides to visitors. Hence, the findings and discussion related to family

learning and family guide development are widely applicable across the museum field. More specifically, the researcher expects that among museum professionals, education staff will find particular relevancy in this study, since research shows this department is most responsible for visitor advocacy.

Absent of research in family guide development, it is clear that institutions are distributing materials to the public that lack standards. This creates disparity among family guides and obscures visitors' expectations of these materials. The researcher hopes that this study's recommendations will eventually lead to a more unified and formalized way of developing family guides in art museums so that these interpretive materials can reach maximum effectiveness. Just like any other form of interpretation that museums develop for the public, family guides should be created with guidelines. This will help ensure that what is being presented to visitors is up to standard, or in other words, reflects a balance between academic integrity, visitor interests, and institutional mission.

Chapter Two: Review of Literature

Introduction

This literature review summarizes museums' increasing efforts to learn about and better serve the families in the last 50 years. First, the review discusses the importance of family audiences within museums and how museums have been focusing attention on better understanding and serving this audience group over the past few decades. Although families have long made up a significant portion of museum visitors, there was little or no research on this audience group before 1970.²¹ A vast amount of knowledge on family visitation was collected and published in the late 20th century by institutions other than art museums. Therefore, the majority of this segment draws upon visitor studies done in science centers, history museums, and children's museums.

Second, the review addresses the lack of family visitor studies within art museums. This segment explores several reasons for this gap in literature, including the emergence of competitive grants in the field of science, opposing views between art museum staff, and the inherently adult-like nature of art museums. Regardless, family learning research in art museums over the last two-plus decades proves the capacity and necessity for family learning in these types of institutions.

Third, the review covers current theories and practices in designing interpretation for families, specifically exhibitions and programs. This segment of the review uses research from various types of institutions to detail desired outcomes of family exhibitions and programs in the field. Additionally, this segment explores how good

²¹ Kristen Ellenbogen, Jessica J. Luke, and Lynn D. Dierking, "Family Learning Research in Museums: An Emerging Disciplinary Matrix? *Science Education* 88, no. S1 (2004), accessed October 23, 2018, 49.

practices for creating exhibitions can inform the development of other types of interpretation, like family guides, that are not as widely studied.

Lastly, the review examines family guides, including families' needs and expectations for the collateral material, the purpose of the guides, and evidence of their effectiveness. This examination shows that little attention has been given to the current development practices for creating family guides, despite the proven demand for them from parents. This segment concludes by analyzing the very limited literature on the specific development processes.

In summary, this review of literature will develop a more comprehensive understanding of the current state of family audiences in art museums and the role family guides play to engage those audiences during their visits. This understanding shines light on the importance of the researcher's study, which explores the link between family guide development and how effectively printed guides support the family museum experience.

Family Learning in Museums

In the 20th century, a crucial shift in museums occurred after World War II. In his book *Making Museum Matter*, Stephen Weil recounts these changes: "In place of an establishment-like institution focused primarily inward on the growth, care, and study of its collection, emerging instead is a more entrepreneurial institution that[...]will have shifted its focus outward to concentrate on providing primarily educational services to

the public[...]"²² Weil carries on to say that this change was provoked by the decline in financial support for museums-- especially from government sources-- caused by the rapid growth of new museums in the 1960s and 1970s.²³ Consequently, museums sought alternative sources of substantial funding, particularly admissions income and corporate support. To reap this potential benefit, museums had to adapt accordingly by attracting a wide range of ticket-buying visitors and, just as equally, proving to corporate funders their ability to do so.²⁴ Under these circumstances, museums' attentiveness to the public's needs and wants was vital for their sustainability. Hence, museums no longer focused exclusively on the collection and preservation of objects, but more attention to the visitor experience.

This visitor focus was placed at the forefront of many museums' missions and manifested through educational initiatives.²⁵ The 1984 American Alliance of Museums (AAM) publication of *Museums for a New Century* was one of the earliest declarations of this new initiative, stating education to be the museum's main purpose.²⁶ Also in the 1980s--despite families long comprising a sizable part of museum audiences-- research began to establish the importance of family learning. Although it was not the first published family learning research, it better described and documented the physical and social dynamics of family learning. The study of family learning gained more momentum in the 1990s and early 2000s.²⁷ Over this span of 30 to 40 years, most of

²² Stephen Weil, *Making Museums Matter*, (Smithsonian Institution Press: Washington, DC: 2002), 28-29.

²³ Ibid, 31.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ John H. Falk and Lynn D. Dierking, *The Museum Experience Revisited* (Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast Press, 2013), 13.

²⁶ Ibid, 32.

²⁷ Ellenbogen, et al., "Family Learning Research in Museums," 49.

the core family learning studies were conducted in science, history, and children's institutions. In the 2003 article "Family Learning Research in Museums: An Emerging Disciplinary Matrix?", Kristen Ellenbogen, Jessica Luke, and Lynn Dierking reflect on the research in family learning. In their summary of research, the case studies derive from such institutions as the Science Museum of Minnesota [1978], the Exploratorium [1986], the National Museum of American History [1987], the California Science Center [1999], The Children's Museum of Indianapolis [2002], and The Franklin Institute [2003]. Examining family groups continues to be a dominant focus in museum visitor studies today. With family groups making up more than half of all museum visitors since 2000,²⁸ and even higher percentages of science and children's museum visitors,²⁹ the last two decades have advanced family learning knowledge through new theoretical perspectives, methodologies, and approaches to family culture, as summarized by Ellenbogen, et al.³⁰

These studies also revealed that families are complex and differ from group to group, which is why this audience segment is difficult for museums to pinpoint. This thesis uses Dierking's definition of family as "two or more people in a multi-generational group that has an ongoing relationship; they may be biologically related but not necessarily," as defined by Dierking.³¹ Family learning can involve people of all ages; as Claudia Haas notes in "Families and Children Challenging Museums," "children very

²⁸ Falk and Dierking, *Learning from Museums*, 91.

²⁹ Minda Borun, "Why Family Learning in Museums?" *Exhibitionist* 27, no. 1 (January 1, 2008), accessed November 16, 2018, 6.

³⁰ Ellenbogen, et al., "Family Learning Research in Museums," 49.

³¹ Dierking, "Laughing and Learning Together."

rarely come to museums by themselves—they come either with a family member or with their school class.”³² Therefore, adults nearly always accompany children to the museum. Graham Black, in his book *The Engaging Museum: Developing Museums for Visitor Involvement*, maintains that “as a family audience, the needs of each member—not just the children—should be addressed.”³³ Beverly Sheppard agrees with Black, stating in her presentation at the 2005 Family Learning Roundtable Forum that “in this discussion we must be equally aware of what children can and will teach their parents when both are engaged together in a learning process[...]. Families are our first and our most important teachers.”³⁴ This interchange between children and adults is classified by Sheppard as the “learning bond.”

Given this, researchers recognize families as one of the most challenging visitor groups because they are comprised of individuals belonging to different generations who have diverse personal needs, learning experiences, personal histories, and knowledge levels.³⁵ Using Abraham Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs as a model for museum visitors, families’ needs can range from basic, such as physiological and safety needs; to more psychological, such as love and esteem; to self-fulfillment needs.³⁶ Sheppard claims that the uniting of such diverse individuals produces even more variables that affect the group’s learning, such as emotion, family history, bias, specific

³² Claudia Haas, “Families and Children Challenging Museums,” *The Manual of Museum Learning*, Lanham: Altamira Press, 2007, 49.

³³ Graham Black, *The Engaging Museum: Developing Museums for Visitor Involvement* (London: Routledge, 2010), 68.

³⁴ Beverly Sheppard, “The Learning Bond.”

³⁵ Haas, “Families and Children Challenging Museums,” 75.

³⁶ Jackie Littleton, “Getting Down to Basic,” *The Docent Educator* 13, no. 1 (2003): 2019, accessed February 16, 2019, <http://www.museum-ed.org/getting-down-to-basics/>.

expertise, innate skills, genetics, and world views.³⁷ Because of their variance and complexity, Dierking fittingly identifies the family group as an example of a community of learners. Analogous to Merriam-Webster Dictionary's definition of community, "a unified body of individuals [...] with common interests living in a particular area,"³⁸ families also have common interests, particularly when they decide to visit a museum. Family learning researchers Marianna Adams, Jessica Luke, and Jeanine Ancelet describe these interests further, stating "each family arrives at the museum with a unique set of goals, motivations, and expectations for their museum visit on any given day. This is known as the 'family agenda'."³⁹ In other words, the family agenda determines every aspect of a family's visit to the museum: what they do, how they act, and what they gain at the end of it. This idea challenges museums to not just provide resources for family learning but to also recognize families as experts of their own way of learning. By accommodating the family agenda, museums can create an environment that is more conducive to family learning.

How can museums anticipate each family's agenda? Falk and Dierking found that from the start of family learning studies "interviews with parents in museums consistently demonstrate that their decision to visit is strongly influenced by their perception that these settings are 'good places to take children to learn[...]' In other words, many families perceive museums as good settings in which to learn together."⁴⁰

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Merriam-Webster Dictionary, "community," accessed October 19, 2018, https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/community?utm_campaign=sd&utm_medium=serp&utm_source=jsonld.

³⁹ Marianna Adams, Jessica Luke, and Jeanine Ancelet, *What We Do and Do Not Know about Family Learning in Art Museum Interactive Spaces*, PDF, www.familiesinartmuseums.org, 2010, accessed October 18, 2018, 4.

⁴⁰ Falk and Dierking, *Learning from Museums*, 93.

Whether it is explicitly stated or not, families visit museums to learn and have fun together.

Even so, researchers have found that different families learn differently. Dierking emphasizes that family learning “is self-directed, voluntary and guided by the families’ needs and interests.”⁴¹ For example, some families stay together throughout their museum visit and others split up; some parents are highly interactive with their children and other parents are less so. According to Dierking, there is a range of family learning styles, from collaborative learning to independent learning; yet, no matter where families are on the spectrum, there is always some form of teaching and learning occurring. Dierking found that the degree of conversation fluctuated the most across the spectrum; collaborative-learning families conversed with each other to a high degree whereas independent-learning families conversed to a lesser degree. Nonetheless, all families along the continuum of learning styles consistently demonstrated learning through modeling, which is a way of learning through behavior demonstrated by the adult.⁴²

Dierking’s research forms a baseline for studying the wide variety of family learning styles. However, family learning behaviors become more complex when considering other factors, like different parent or adult interactions with children due to “varying family systems and socio-cultural norms,” as noted by Wood and Wolf in “When Parents Stand Back is Family Learning Still Possible?”⁴³ Through a four-year study at The Children’s Museum of Indianapolis, Wood and Wolf observed and

⁴¹ Dierking, “Laughing and Learning Together: What is Family Learning?”

⁴² Falk and Dierking, *Learning from Museums*, 94-95.

⁴³ Elizabeth Wood and Barbara Wolf, “When Parents Stand Back is Family Learning Still Possible?” *Museums & Social Issues* 5, no. 1 (2010), 41.

evaluated preferences for parent-child involvement and discovered that family members' actions, especially those of the adults', are contingent on the setting and exhibit. Since this study was conducted at a children's museum, Wood and Wolf asserted that "parents are likely to use different interaction styles across arts, science, and humanities-oriented exhibits."⁴⁴ For instance, by observing family visitors at a hands-on science museum, C. Brown identified eight categories of parental behavior:

1. Caretaker- parents who kept surveillance, but allowed children to explore freely
2. Supporter- parents who provide support without interference
3. Helper- parents who help out only as much as required so that children can take over as much as possible
4. Initiator- parents who initiate the activity and then pass it over to the children
5. Assistant- parents who act as an extra pair of hands for children who take the lead
6. Partner- parents who act as equal partners with children throughout an activity
7. Leader- parents who lead activities throughout, only allowing minor contributions from the children
8. Demonstrator- parents who carry out the entire activity by themselves while children watch⁴⁵

While Brown's categories illustrate the innate diversity in parenting styles observed within a science institution, his findings hint that there may be more variations of parenting within other types of institutions.

Despite differing approaches amongst parents, museum researchers have proven that children stay longer at exhibits and learn more when a parent is actively

⁴⁴ Ibid, 41.

⁴⁵ C. Brown, "Making the Most of Family Visits: Some Observations of Parents with Children in a Museum Science Centre" in *Museum Management and Curatorship*, no. 14(1), 1995, accessed November 16, 2018, 65-71.

involved.⁴⁶ By the same token, Brown discovered that little parent involvement limited the learning potential for both child and parent.⁴⁷ Therefore, the role of the parent is important in family museum experiences. So, how can museums best support family learning if families' preferred learning styles are difficult to pinpoint and may not always lead to potential learning? As Sheppard succinctly claims: "different parents and different families come with different expectations of what they want out of the experience and I believe it is our job to really understand that spectrum and then support that range."⁴⁸ In her 2005 Family Learning Roundtable presentation, Sheppard shared the following characteristics that she feels museums need to be conscious of when building family learning opportunities:

- Empowerment for both parents and child
- Instruction for both parent and child
- Opportunities for creative and purposeful play
- Suggestions for positive learning behaviors
- A degree of necessary collaboration
- Opportunities to reflect or celebrate—reward their work together
- Something you can take home
- Transferable—a skill that can be repeated
- Direct links to other resources⁴⁹

While this list is not the definitive answer to creating family learning opportunities, Sheppard's list of characteristics provides the groundwork for museums to reevaluate and redesign their approaches to family learning. Her approach acknowledges intergenerational family members and is inclusive of various family learning styles.

⁴⁶ Laurel Puchner, Robyn Rapoport, and Suzanne Gaskins, "Learning in Children's Museums: Is It Really Happening?" *Curator: The Museum Journal* 44, no. 3 (July 2001), accessed November 16, 2018, 255.

⁴⁷ Brown, "Making the Most of Family Visits," 65-71.

⁴⁸ "Designing for the Family Agenda," YouTube video, 4:38, posted by USS Constitution Museum, May 6, 2016, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BOzQrZhpF4>.

⁴⁹ Sheppard, "The Learning Bond."

In summary, research on families in museums over the last several decades has substantiated that families are made up of diverse individuals who collectively have varying agendas for their visit. Although research suggests that most families go to museums to learn together, family learning does not always transpire in the same way. Museum professionals must be aware of and adapt to these differences.

Families in Art Museums

As previously illustrated, most of the seminal research on family learning was conducted in science museums, zoos, aquariums, children's museums, and history museums. Art institutions do not appear much— or at all— in 20th century family learning literature, with no clear-cut explanations for their absence. In “Methods for Studying Family Visitors In Art Museums: A Cross-Disciplinary Review of Current Research,” Sterry and Beaumont discuss reasons for this. The authors contend that art museums have difficulty collecting meaningful data from family visitors by reason of “the intrinsic difficulty of the subject dealing with feelings, impressions, and personal perceptions, and methodological dilemmas in finding research techniques suitable for both adults and children.”⁵⁰ In other words, researchers from Sterry and Beaumont's review claim it is challenging to measure families' learning based on their thoughts of artworks and moreover, researchers have not found a suitable way to examine multigenerational participants of a group in an art museum setting. However, the researcher finds that this

⁵⁰ Pat Sterry and Ela Beaumont, “Methods for Studying Family Visitors in Art Museums: A Cross-disciplinary Review of Current Research,” *Museum Management and Curatorship* 21, no. 3 (2006), accessed November 17, 2018, 255-256.

theory can be disproven by the continuing advancements in museum evaluations since the professionalization of visitor studies in the second half of the 1990s, as well as an increase in art museum-led visitor studies during recent years.

A second theory for the lack of art museums in the core family learning research of the late 1990s can be found in George E. Hein's 1998 book, *Learning in the Museum*, and more specifically in Hein's summary of the emergence of program evaluation in museums. His summary begins with the passage of the Elementary and Secondary Education ACT (ESEA) in 1965, a law enacted to commence for establishing equal educational access for all. With this legislation, federally-funded programs were required to conduct evaluation of their activities. This set in motion a community of scientists and evaluators who exchanged works and methods, which ultimately evolved into a recognized museum profession.⁵¹ Hein mentions a government agency, the National Science Foundation (NSF), that was particularly insistent that grant applicants include a thorough evaluation plan, beginning in the 1980s. This is the same point in time that the museum field experienced considerable growth in institutions without collections, like science centers and children's museums.⁵² Thus, the increase in outcome-based funding requirements combined with the intensifying competition amongst these new institutions may have caused the outpouring of family learning studies in science and children's museum, rather than in art museums.

While the field's body of literature only offers theories for why art museums were omitted from much of the early family learning research, the historical narrative of

⁵¹ George E. Hein, *Learning in the Museum* (London: Routledge, 1998), 55.

⁵² Falk and Dierking, *The Museum Experience Revisited*, 13.

American art museums suggests these institutions are inherently different from the more recent science and children's museums, these differences ultimately influence their capacity for family learning and engagement. For example, Falk and Dierking remark that art museum galleries and exhibitions are not hands-on like other institution. An enforced "no touch" policy can make engagement even more difficult for groups with families and creates a greater need for a family activity than at other museums.⁵³ Knutson and Crowley agree with Dierking, stating "art museums have traditionally been challenging museum environments for families, as they have often been designed by default to support adults who want to contemplate beautiful objects in a quiet environment."⁵⁴

Art museums have long been perceived as elitist. Weil cites Michael Conforti's essay in *A Grand Design: The Art of the Victoria and Albert Museum* in claiming that between 1905 and 1910, large art institutions rejected their educational foundations and concentrated on acquiring and displaying rare and beautiful objects. As summarized by Weil, a consequence of this change was "the establishment of a symbiotic relationship between this country's social elite and its major art museums."⁵⁵ By the 1930s, encyclopedic art museums, like the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston, removed their architectural casts in pursuit of collecting and displaying one-of-a-kind objects. Weil contends that "by excluding all others from the

⁵³ Falk and Dierking, *Learning from Museums*, 242.

⁵⁴ Knutson and Crowley, "Connecting with Art," 191.

⁵⁵ Weil, *Making Museums Matter*, 160.

possibility of ownership, uniqueness could confer a measure of status;”⁵⁶ hence, elitism pervaded art museums.

This perception of art museums still lingers today. Sociologist and researcher, Vera L. Zolberg, declares the standard in the museum realm is that “science, natural history, and history museums are much more oriented to the general public than to professional scientists and historians” because they spend less time focusing on collecting “genuine” specimens; whereas art museums, Zolberg maintains, “appeal to artists, art historians, collectors, and well-educated public because they display ‘authentic’ works.”⁵⁷ While Zolberg’s rule may overgeneralize and not hold as much truth to in the 21st century museum landscape, she raises another point of difference between art museums and other institutions: their focal point. In the 1900s, a small minority of museum professionals disputed the ongoing change from collection-centered to visitor-centered that began at the time. Even with museum education as an established discipline within the museum field, Hein reports that “interviews with U.S. art museum directors in the late 1980s found museum education to be regarded with some disdain, a position that is still held in some quarters.”⁵⁸ Although these views do not represent all art museum professionals, Zolberg claims that these “less-than-welcoming attitudes[...]underlie the reluctance of many art museums to support major educational efforts.”⁵⁹ According to Zolberg, it may be for this reason that some art museums have

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Vera L. Zolberg, “‘An Elite Experience for Everyone’”: Art Museums, the Public, and Cultural Literacy” in *Museum Culture: Histories, Discourses, Spectacles*, eds. Daniel J. Sherman and Irit Rogoff (London: Routledge, 1994), 52.

⁵⁸ Hein, *Learning in the Museum*, 344.

⁵⁹ Zolberg, “An Elite Experience for Everyone,” 51.

little to no educational programs, whereas others have consistent, long-lasting, and well-developed programs for the public.⁶⁰

Nevertheless, there are art museums that have a long history of fostering visitor experiences in their galleries, even if they were not the model for original family learning research. As stated by Hein, many U.S. museums were “educational from their outset” and art museums were among these early public institutions.⁶¹ In fact, it was in the 1870s that large encyclopedic art museums opened to the public and offered educational programs like lecture series, classes for artists, and field trips and traveling exhibits with local public schools. The Metropolitan Museum of Art and the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston were among the first to do so, predating the Brooklyn Children’s Museum in 1899 as well as prominent science museums to come.⁶² The original educational efforts by early 19th century museums were contended to be faulty by 20th century museum educators, particularly because of restrictive admissions, a haphazard arrangement of objects, and inadequate guidance for visitors.⁶³ These contentions by museum educators are reasonable, given that the full conception and recognition of museum education did not develop until the second half of the 20th century. However, these early programs’ intentions should not be discounted, and many continued into the 20th and 21st centuries. A national study conducted between 1973 and 1976 showed that art museums across the country implemented a wide assortment of educational

⁶⁰ Ibid, 52.

⁶¹ George E. Hein, “Museum Education,” in *A Companion to Museum Studies*, ed. by Sharon Macdonald (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2006) 341.

⁶² Alexander and Alexander, *Museums in Motion*, 36-41.

⁶³ Hein, “Museum Education,” 341.

programs, especially targeted for children and school groups. More recently, a 2003 national survey of 135 art museums, revealed that 80% of them offered educational programs.⁶⁴

Many art museums that do not currently serve family audiences are interested in beginning to do so. In the last two decades, art museums sensed an urgency to serve families. Not only do they wish to clear their reputation for being adults-only spaces and to attract grant funders, but they want to form long-lasting relationships with families to produce generations of museum-goers. Studies by leisure researcher John Kelly demonstrate how a family's leisure history, or what they choose to do during their free time, has proven to impact a child's likelihood of visiting museums in adulthood. For instance, the more often a child visits museums with his or her family, the more likely he or she will visit museums as an adult.⁶⁵

Art museums' interest in family audiences is reinforced by recent studies that prove there is great potential for these art spaces to support families' needs. In a study done by Knutson and Crowley, parent participants rated "learning about art" as being "very important."⁶⁶ In addition, the researchers observed some families in the study engaging with works of art through conversation.⁶⁷ Falk and Dierking believe that conversation, an element of sociocultural experiences, is a primary activity of knowledge construction across and within generations.⁶⁸ Therefore, it is true to say that

⁶⁴ Ibid, 42.

⁶⁵ Falk and Dierking, *The Museum Experience Revisited*, 54.

⁶⁶ Knutson and Crowley, "Connecting with Art," 204.

⁶⁷ Knutson and Crowley, "Connecting with Art," 204.

⁶⁸ Falk and Dierking, *Learning from Museums*, 47.

Knutson and Crowley's family participants were actively learning when they talked together. These findings reveal art museums are a favorable setting for family learning to occur, despite some opposing views mentioned earlier in this chapter.

What can art museums do to reach this potential? In the study, Knutson and Crowley found that families did not have a problem talking about art, but instead "they didn't have the knowledge or tools to make their talk richer with respect to the disciplines of art and art history[...]"⁶⁹ Based on this outcome, it is important for art museums to determine how to support family learning, whether it be through more interpretive materials or adding staff in the galleries. If the implementation of these changes meet the needs of families, such as providing them with knowledge and tools for discussion, it is likely visitors will feel more comfortable during their visit. Based on Adams et al.'s examination of literature on family learning in art museums, research shows that "families value museum experiences that allow them to feel relaxed and comfortable[...]" These parents say that one of the main benefits of participating in family-oriented events and activities is that their children develop a sense of ownership and belonging at the art museum."⁷⁰ However, the authors argue, family programs and interactive spaces that draw and engage families in the art museum do not make up for the exhibitions and galleries that do not.⁷¹ It is the museum's responsibility to better serve the needs of family learners in all the galleries, so that as families become more

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Ibid, 14.

comfortable and as children gain a sense of belonging, the art museum will have truly transformed into a family-inclusive institution.

In summary, some art museums were not a part of major family learning studies in the late 20th and early 21st century and some seem to still be grappling with their civic and educational role. Yet, in the last two decades, recent research pertaining to families in the art museum revealed that families have interest in engaging with these types of museums and there is great potential for art museums to foster families' unique learning. To reach their potential in family learning, art museums need to closely examine the audience and contemplate how they can best approach families' needs, such as offering more interpretive material and tools for exploring galleries.

Developing Family-Centered Interpretation

Although this study is focused on the development of family guides, the literature gathered in this segment of the review pertains to the development of family programs and exhibitions. As defined by Marcella Wells, Barbara Butler, and Judith Koke in *Interpretive Planning for Museums: Integrating Visitor Perspectives in Decision Making*, interpretation is “the collective set of informational, interpretive, and educational materials, programs, exhibits, media, and facilities that serve to enhance the visitor experience in museums and informal learning settings.”⁷² Based on this definition, interpretation is a catchall phrase for anything the museum creates to communicate information to visitors. Since there is very little research on developmental practices

⁷² Wells, et al., *Interpretive Planning for Museums: Integrating Perspectives in Decision Making*, 157.

relating to family guides, which are a form of museum interpretation, the researcher deems it appropriate to use literature on family programs and exhibitions as a basis for her expected results.

Family-centered programs and exhibitions are specifically designed and created to present ideas and collections in a way that provide enriching learning opportunities that all family members can experience together. These programs and exhibitions aim to foster learning and engagement amongst family groups. According to the USS Constitution Museum, programs and exhibitions meet these aims when:

- All ages are actively participating in the experience.
- Everyone feels there is something for him or her.
- Intergenerational conversations are taking place.
- Adults and children are learning together.
- It is an enjoyable, collaborative, social experience.⁷³

Falk and Dierking attest to these points, adding that opportunities supported by programs and exhibitions allow families to become more effective communities of learners. The family learning and engagement in programs and exhibitions provided by the USS Constitution Museum exemplifies opportunities that, Falk and Dierking say, contribute to a highly personal experience which makes the learning especially meaningful.⁷⁴ Moreover, the USS Constitution Museum's points are in line with parents' desired outcomes for these experiences as well. Kelly, et al. notes that parents often say these family-centered experiences "provide them with valuable opportunities to spend quality time with their children, develop shared memories, and strengthen family

⁷³ USS Constitution Museum, *Engage Families: A Guide to Family Engagement in Exhibits and Programs*, PDF, Boston, MA: USS Constitution Museum, 2018, 2.

⁷⁴ Falk and Dierking, *Learning from Museums*, 98.

relationships.”⁷⁵ All in all, museums must keep these ideal outcomes in mind when developing programs and exhibitions for families.

The next logical question becomes: how does a museum achieve these outcomes in their family programming and exhibitions? The answer lies in the specific steps museums choose to take in developing these visitor experiences. These procedures vary between institutions, but several practices resurface more often than others throughout museum literature, especially with regard to families, and have been proven effective in research.

To start, Falk and Dierking argue that including the targeted audience in the design process is one of the truest ways of fulfilling the educational needs of the public.⁷⁶ In the traditional sense, when a museum begins the design process for a program or an exhibition, they are considering the perspectives of the visitor. For family-centered projects in art museums, this may “create tensions between professional expectations and parenting styles and family systems,” as stated by Wood and Wolf.⁷⁷ In other words, museum staff may not always consider what is best for family groups when they are also thinking about organizational intention and scholarly content. Wood and Wolf’s acknowledgement is important because it stresses the need for a balance between museum staff’s concerns and audience input when creating family-centered projects. Falk and Dierking argue strongly for this practice, stating, “in today’s society the public doesn’t just want experiences created for them by someone else, no matter

⁷⁵ Kelly, et al., 10.

⁷⁶ Falk and Dierking, *The Museum Experience Revisited*, 306.

⁷⁷ Wood and Wolf, “When Parents Stand Back Is Family Learning Still Possible?” 48.

how well executed. Increasingly people want to participate directly in the creation of their own educational experiences.”⁷⁸ This form of developmental collaboration switches traditional roles by making the public the expert, or allowing the museum to take advantage of the audience’s ideas, knowledge, and personal testimony to create an experience for them. In the last two decades, many institutions have sought to collaborate with targeted audiences. For instance, the article *Experts, Evaluators, and Explorers: Collaborating with Kids*, by Anne Grimes Rand and Robert Kiihne, describes the important process of collaborating with children when creating exhibitions for them. The authors declare that “kids are experts at being kids. Like a content expert hired to provide background for an exhibition, kids can help guide decision-making so that projects appeal to them and anticipate their skills and needs.”⁷⁹ Rand and Kiihne insist that the targeted audience of the project, children in their case, can become valuable resources and partners in the development phases of a project. By including the audience, the museum is sure to create something that actually interests them.

Museum professionals emphasize in their literature the importance of cross-departmental collaboration in developing family-centered interpretation.⁸⁰ In her article discussing institutional reform in favor of serving children and family audiences, Haas claims that education departments are often left to fight for these visitors’ needs within the museum. She states, “in order to change the museum from a research and discovery place for the very knowledgeable to an open learning environment addressing

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ Anne Grimes Rand and Robert Kiihne, “Experts, Evaluators, and Explorers: Collaborating with Kids,” *Connecting Kids to History with Museum Exhibitions*, 75, Walnut Creek: Left Coast Press, 2010, 75.

⁸⁰ Genoways, et al. *Museum Administration 2.0*, 319.

wider audiences, a process of change that involves the whole institution is necessary.”⁸¹

Haas’s claim relates back to the traditional views of art museums, with curators at the top of the departmental hierarchy which indicated their authoritative voice over subject matter and collections. However, under the developmental collaboration model described by Rand and Kihne, this hierarchy diminishes and instead, departments must work collectively with the audience group in mind to best serve their needs. As a starting point, exhibition design expert Polly McKenna-Cress and museum consultant Janet Kamien propose five main “advocacies” that need to be represented on all project teams:

1. Advocacy for the Institution
2. Advocacy for the Subject Matter
3. Advocacy for the Visitor Experience
4. Advocacy for the Design (physical and sensory)
5. Advocacy for the Project and Team⁸²

In their book, *Creating Exhibitions: Collaboration in the Planning, Development, and Design of Innovative Experiences*, McKenna-Kress and Kamien note specific positions in the museum that are often responsible for representing a specific advocacy throughout the project; for instance, in support of Haas’s point earlier, an interpretive planner or educator is frequently accountable for advocating for the visitor experience.⁸³ While this is true, the authors stress that among all five areas, “the advocacy for the visitor experience must be a role that all team members truly believe in. Although the exhibition developer, educator, and evaluator have particular responsibilities to this

⁸¹ Haas, “Families and Children Challenging Museums,” 50.

⁸² McKenna-Cress and Kamien, *Creating Exhibitions*, 22.

⁸³ Ibid, 26.

advocacy, those in the other four advocacy positions are also working for the end users.”⁸⁴ As these authors have demonstrated, a project’s outcome will be more successful and engaging to the intended audience if every museum staff member works with the audience in mind.

In addition to consulting the targeted audience and collaborating with museum staff across departments, experts in the field urge institutions to refer to outside sources. In their article, featured in the book *Connecting Kids to History with Museum Exhibitions*, Rand and Kiihne advise that “team members need to conduct research on developmental stages and learning styles associated with their targeted audience to help create age-appropriate elements.”⁸⁵ For instance, the book’s editors D. Lynn McRainey and John Russick describe their experience working on an exhibition team for the Chicago History Museum’s children’s gallery, *Sensing Chicago*, that opened in 2006. The exhibition team reached out to children’s museum colleagues as well as other professionals who focused on children, like “youth psychologists, education specialists, youth marketers, toy developers, designers, and classroom teachers”⁸⁶ to gain expert knowledge and current research on the audience group. Similar measures were taken by the Denver Art Museum as described by Maria Garcia, Coordinator of Family Programs. In the museum’s four-year initiative to make the museum more family-friendly, Garcia says, “we had to go outside our field to find out what kids want[...]. We went to children’s museum conferences where they are thinking about

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ Rand and Kiihne, “Experts, Evaluators, and Explorers: Collaborating with Kids,” 77.

⁸⁶ D. Lynn McRainey and John Russick, preface to *Connecting Kids to History with Museum Exhibitions* (Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast Press, 2010), 15-16.

families all of the time.”⁸⁷ The Chicago History Museum and the Denver Art Museum demonstrate the use of external colleagues and experts as development consultants to strengthen the relevance and accuracy of their family programs and exhibitions.

Audience research is one way to ensure that a museum is developing ideas and content that accurately reflect the knowledge and skill levels of the intended visitors. Evaluation is also an indispensable step in all museum work that directly affects the public. Evaluation is the key to measuring the success of a program or exhibition and can be done in various ways at various stages of a project. When conducting evaluations, museums should view their targeted audience as a group of research participants. Hence, art museums should be surveying families throughout the development of family programs and exhibitions. Rand and Kiihne provide several suggestions for the types of evaluation and testing that can be done: “soliciting feedback from kids, surveys, focus groups, cardboard prototype testing, tracking and timing observations, behavioral coding observations, exit interviews[...]”⁸⁸ to name a few. Prototyping is included in Rand and Kiihne’s suggestions because it is a tool that allows for initial design and content ideas to take shape and be tested with users before moving farther along in the process.

No matter the project, the USS Constitution Museum recommends that institutions start testing and evaluating early and frequently throughout the entirety of a project: “Test and evaluate[...]Make families a partner in the exhibit and program

⁸⁷ *Families and Art Museums, Part 1*, report, Denver Art Museum, 2003, accessed February 16, 2019, https://denverartmuseum.org/sites/all/themes/damthree/files/family_programs1.pdf, 6.

⁸⁸ Rand and Kiihne, “Experts, Evaluators, and Explorers: Collaborating with Kids,” 77.

development process by including them every step of the way[...]Get early feedback[...]Ask families for their feedback on the final product.”⁸⁹ Rand and Kiihne stress that measuring the public’s response to a project through testing and evaluation demonstrates an institution’s commitment to its role as collaborator rather than as the authoritative voice.⁹⁰

The developmental practices used for the creation of family exhibitions and programming provide an important framework for designing other interpretive materials, including family guides.

Family Guides in Art Museums

As discussed earlier in this literature, many parents show interest in learning about art with their children. However, they do not feel they have enough prior knowledge of art and art history to facilitate deeper conversations with their children in the galleries. A tool that has been distributed by art museums is the family guide. Family guides are produced in various formats and media types and are intended for different purposes depending on the institutional needs. As mentioned in the introduction of this thesis, for the purpose of this study, a family guide is defined as “a specially written and designed printed material for families, intended to foster learning and enjoyment in the museum.”⁹¹

⁸⁹ USS Constitution Museum, *Engage Families: A Guide to Family Engagement in Exhibits and Programs*, 12.

⁹⁰ Rand and Kiihne, “Experts, Evaluators, and Explorers: Collaborating with Kids,” 84.

⁹¹ Taylor, et al., “Family Guides: Do they Work?”

According to literature on family learning in art museums, there is a need for family guides, because the galleries are not family-friendly. Adams, et al. recount studies from the field that show many families choose to attend only family-based events and programs because they feel their children would be either uninterested or not behave well while exploring the permanent galleries.⁹² Black agrees that children are not addressed in the galleries, adding another point, “[...]it is not enough just to build an area that is specifically targeted at young children; it is as important to ensure that there are things for younger children to enjoy doing on their own and with their parents throughout the museum.”⁹³ A family guide can alleviate the sense that children and families are not welcome in the galleries. By distributing interpretive materials to families, the Denver Art Museum attests that, “this deliberate physical commitment to families sends a clear message that the museum wants them to relax, have fun, and explore art in a kid-friendly way.”⁹⁴

Families indicate a need for these types of materials, too. Referring back to Knutson and Crowley’s study, parents rated learning about art with their children as “very important” but when asked to rate their art knowledge, they said it was just below average” and that “they did not know enough to answer all their kids’ questions.”⁹⁵ These results reveal that without the support of the museum, parents do not feel equipped enough to help their children and family learn during their visit. When asked

⁹² Adams, et al., *What We Do and Do Not Know about Family Learning in Art Museum Interactive Spaces*, 6.

⁹³ Black, *The Engaging Museum*, 68.

⁹⁴ *Families and Art Museums, Part 1*, 42.

⁹⁵ Knutson and Crowley, “Connecting with Art,” 196.

what the museum could do to better support this experience, parents requested more interpretive information with specifics about the artwork, how it was created, and the artist who created it.⁹⁶ Falk and Dierking's research on communities of learners endorses Knutson and Crowley's findings, suggesting that parents are likely to use available materials, such as family activity kits, to assist them in facilitating their family's learning.⁹⁷ As research shows, families express a need and a desire for family guides in art museums to feel comfortable in the galleries and to enhance their learning experience.

In a study by Harriet R. Tenenbaum, et al. at Kingston University, researchers examined ways of engaging parents and children in two related exhibits at a cultural history museum. Similar to art museums, these institutions were chosen for the study because the researchers felt they exemplified the "traditional, adult-oriented format" of exhibits and they wanted to explore ways to make the exhibits "less daunting to families."⁹⁸ On their visits, 30 families were assigned to use activity backpacks, 13 were assigned to use activity booklets, and 15 were not assigned any materials. The results indicated that families spent more time at exhibits when assigned to the backpack and booklets than families that were not. Also, in these conditions, parents asked children more questions related to the exhibits and children used more historical talk, especially when using the booklet.⁹⁹ Tenenbaum, et al.'s findings suggest that materials designed

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ Falk and Dierking, *The Museum Experience Revisited*, 95.

⁹⁸ Harriet R. Tenenbaum, Jess Prior, Catherine L. Dowling, and Ruth E. Frost, "Supporting Parent-Child Conversations in a History Museum," *British Journal of Educational Psychology* 80, no. 2 (2010): 241, accessed February 22, 2018, 248.

⁹⁹ Ibid.

for family use in the galleries can increase the time families spend in galleries as well as the amount of family learning conversation. Nevertheless, the study's authors maintain that more research is required in the field to better understand these types of interpretive materials, such as which specific activities are best to include for enjoyment and conversation as well as how much guidance is necessary for different types of exhibits.¹⁰⁰

As Tenenbaum, et al. suggest, there is little research on family guides. Unlike the plethora of work written on the development of museum programs and exhibitions, there is very little written on how museums can best develop family guides. The sources that do exist mostly consist of informal anecdotes or checklists shared amongst institutions that can be referenced in family guide development. One of the most notable sources is a handout from a 2006 National Art Education Association presentation by Vas Prabhu and Kris Bergquist. The handout includes an assemblage of notes from 11 museum education colleagues from around the country that offer advice and information on creating family guides in art museums as well as various resources to refer to. Several trends emerge throughout the professionals' lists, such as including families in the process, working collaboratively with other staff, and evaluating and testing guides with families.¹⁰¹ While it is not explicitly stated in the handout, some of these trends in family guide development correspond to development practices for programs and exhibitions. Although this collection of practices from the field is beneficial as a reference, it is

¹⁰⁰ Ibid, 250.

¹⁰¹ Vas Prabhu and Kris Bergquist, "Developing Effective Family Guides," Museum-Ed, accessed February 17, 2019, <http://museum-ed.org/developing-effective-family-guides/>.

difficult to gauge how effectively these practices lend themselves to the overall success of the institutions' family guides. Some educators touched briefly on the guides' evaluation results, while others simply noted their personal views on the guides' success.

In a 2006 session at the Visitor Studies Association annual meeting, Mary Jane Taylor, et al. reviewed and discussed their case study findings pertaining to family guides. They evaluated different family guides from the Winterthur Museum and Country Estate, the National Air and Space Museum, and the National Museum of the American Indian, and tested their success in supporting family learning. The study's conclusions demonstrate the need for established best practices for family guide development in the field. After testing each of the family guides, the researchers generated a checklist of steps they advised museums to take to improve the outcomes of their family guides. The list includes evaluation, particularly formative evaluation; talking to the curators and content specialists and emphasizing the structure of activity and vocabulary used in the guides,¹⁰² which can be determined with the input from families. Mary Jane Taylor, et al.'s study shows how development processes can impact the effectiveness of a museum's family guides in supporting family learning.

A recent case study written by Lucy Larson, Director of Education at the Palo Alto Art Center, acts as a model for the type of attention that should be placed on these development processes. Larson's journal article "Engaging Families in the Galleries Using Design Thinking" talks through the Art Center's year-long project for developing

¹⁰² Mary Jane Taylor, et al., "Family Guides."

an art cart with 24 activity cards intended for families to use in the exhibition spaces.

Like many other art museums, this project originated because the Art Center found that their family audiences were rarely visiting the gallery spaces. Staff felt that a gallery kit would serve to entice families to explore those parts of the institution and to enhance the family experience.¹⁰³

The Art Center used the Design Thinking approach to develop the Art Cart. According to design thinking strategist and facilitator, Dana Mitroff Silvers, design thinking, also referred to as human-centered design “is a framework comprised of a series of steps and associated methods [...]”¹⁰⁴ used to approach problems or create innovations. A common approach to design thinking entails five steps: “empathize [with museum visitors], define [a problem or a goal], ideate, prototype, test,”¹⁰⁵ all of which are done collaboratively with users—or in the case of the Art Center, family visitors. Design Thinking is a methodology that aligns with the visitor-centered missions of 21st century museums, as it places users and their needs in the forefront of the design process which can help to enhance museum interpretation and programming for the public. Several of the museum practices cited in the Development of Family-Centered Interpretation section of this literature review are included in the Design Thinking concept; however, Design Thinking organizes these practices into a formal, systematic framework.

¹⁰³ Lucy Larson, “Engaging Families in the Galleries Using Design Thinking,” *Journal of Museum Education* 42, no. 4 (2017), accessed October 27, 2018, 376-377.

¹⁰⁴ Silvers, “What is Design Thinking?”.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

In accordance with the Design Thinking process, the Art Center staff invited families to provide input through surveys with 66 participants “to truly understand users and their needs.”¹⁰⁶ The project team for the Art Cart included a mixture of staff, including the Art Center director, educators, educational contractors, and evaluators. The team also talked with colleagues in the field and referred to other museum’s family guides and kits to research best practices and current practices. From this, the Art Center gathered materials from 30 art and science museums nationally and internationally, including the Denver Art Museum.¹⁰⁷ Using the information and materials gathered, the Art Cart team constructed prototypes that were then tested with families who provided feedback. This iterative design process was repeated until a final version was made. The prototyping and visitor testing kept the Art Center’s focus on the audience, ensured that each new version of the Art Cards on the Art Cart improved on the last, and ensured that the final product would be something families would actually use and enjoy. The Art Center is conducting evaluations for the Art Cart on an ongoing basis using surveys, observations, and interviews. Although the results have not been published to communicate how successful their efforts were, their systematic and family-centered approach should be regarded as a reputable model for developing family guides in art institutions.

Although research proves the efficacy of family guides in museums, little research exists on how to best create them. Yet, this information proves to be critical and relevant to museums, especially art museums, today. Surveys with families reveal

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid, 378.

that parents *want* interpretive materials to help them facilitate their families' learning in the galleries. Likewise, observations from recent studies confirm that families who used interpretive materials on their visits spent more time in the galleries and had more conversations with one another. This evidence suggests family guides hold great value in the family's museum experience and therefore, museum staff should devote careful attention to their development.

In conclusion, this analysis of literature illustrates that the museum field has not given enough attention to family learning in art museums, resulting in insufficient material available for researching and examining interpretive materials in art museums. The field has a widespread understanding that the family structure and agenda are dynamically complex, and that families need interpretive support in the galleries of art museums. Therefore, the researcher argues that there is substantial evidence for a need to focus on the development processes employed by art museums in creating family guides. Furthermore, the standards for developing family-centered programs and exhibitions, along with the current studies conducted on family guides, inform the specific procedures that are crucial to the overall effectiveness of the guides in supporting family learning.

Chapter Three: Methodology

Rationale

This qualitative study addresses the development process of family guides in the art museum by investigating the current procedures employed by various art institutions. In order to thoroughly explore these current practices, the study is framed around these specific questions:

- Why is the institution creating a family guide?
- What are the learning or experiential goals of the family guides for visitors?
- Who in or outside the museum is involved in developing family guides?
- Are the people involved in the process using any tools or resources to develop the family guides? If so, which ones?
- Are the family guides being tested and if so, how and by whom?

Here, the research questions are listed in a way for the researcher to explore the family guide development process, starting with the big and more substantial points and narrowing down into the smaller details within the process. Although, the order of the questions differ on the survey distributed to participants. Analysis of the responses to these questions are meant to reveal a comprehensive overview of current family guide development practices in the field, observing any trends or anomalies that occur across institutions.

With these findings, the second facet of the project aims to answer: Can any standards for developing family guides be pulled from this analysis of current practices in the field? If so, what are they? To address this final question, the researcher will not

only examine the survey data but also refer to the body of literature on family-centered exhibition and program development, featured in the literature review section of this thesis. Therefore, this study will conclude with a list of recommended practices for developing family guides in art museums, created by evaluating the dataset to determine which development practices are most consistent with best practices used for developing other larger family-centered interpretation, like programming and exhibitions.

Setting

The survey was developed online using Google Forms¹⁰⁸, a web-based software that allows users to create online surveys and quizzes and to manage the collection of data. The software was suitable for this project because it permits the survey to be linked, emailed, or shared for dissemination. Additionally, the software permits survey participants to attach documents into the survey to provide more information relating to the evaluation. The software conveniently inputs the survey data into a Google spreadsheet as well. Distribution of the survey began on September 20, 2018 and was intended to close on October 5, 2018. Due to the low number of responses received at that point, the survey remained open until a minimum sample size of at least 30 participants was reached. The survey closed on November 12, 2018. The sample size at the close of the survey was 33 participants; however, one survey ultimately had to be discarded because the participant's institution, including its exhibition subject matter and objects on display, did not fall under the realm of art and could not be used for this

¹⁰⁸ "Google Forms- Create and Analyze Surveys, for Free," Google Search, accessed October 2, 2018, <https://www.google.com/forms/about/>.

study. In addition, two surveys were completed by participants belonging to the same art institution; therefore, their responses were comprised into one survey, reducing the final sample size to 31.

Participants

For this evaluation, art museum professionals were targeted for survey participation since they are the only audience group qualified and experienced to answer the questions pertaining to the research goals. To reach this audience group for evaluations, the survey was distributed electronically to various museums and museum organizations in several ways: the survey link was posted on a museum open forum, sent to two electronic mailing lists, emailed to contacts of museum professional organizations, and emailed to museum departments as well as directly to staff members.

More specifically, the survey link was posted on the American Alliance of Museums' Museum Junction Open Forum¹⁰⁹—a widely used online community center where museum professionals share expertise and answer questions related to the field;¹¹⁰ as well as Museum-L¹¹¹ and Talk@Museum-Ed¹¹²—two museum education electronic mailing lists that serve the same function as the open forum but operate

¹⁰⁹ "Museum Junction-Open Forum," American Alliance of Museum, accessed October 2, 2018, <http://community.aam-us.org/communities/community-home?CommunityKey=d34b2dfb-4151-4629-a59a-553d0ae428d9>.

¹¹⁰ "Museum Junction-Open Forum," <http://community.aam-us.org/communities/community-home?CommunityKey=d34b2dfb-4151-4629-a59a-553d0ae428d9>.

¹¹¹ [Home.ease.isoft.com](http://home.ease.isoft.com), accessed October 2, 2018, <http://home.ease.isoft.com/archives/museum-l.html>.

¹¹² Talk at Museum-Ed, accessed November 12, 2018, <http://www.museum-ed.org/cgi-bin/dada/mail.cgi/list/talk/>.

through email chains. The forum and mailing lists were chosen as primary methods for survey dissemination because of their instantaneous and far-reaching networks. Along with the survey link, specific criteria for desired participants were included in the postings:

I am a second-year Museum Education graduate student at the University of the Arts in Philadelphia, PA. I am currently working on my thesis that focuses on the development of family guides in art museums.

I need participants in my research survey. Please participate if your institution meets the following criteria:

- A nonprofit institution that is open to the public and exhibits works of art;
- Currently distributes a family guide, which may otherwise be referred to as children's guide or gallery guide, to visitors. The definition of a family guide for this thesis is printed material that offers collateral interpretation and activities for an institution's works of art and that is intended to foster learning and enjoyment for children and family visitors.

[survey link]

This survey should take no more than 5-8 minutes. I need results by [date].

If you are willing to share your family guide or results of family guide evaluations conducted by your institution, you may attach them in the survey. If you prefer to send them by email, please send them to [email address].

Because this self-selected sampling method generated very low responses after one week, a backup plan was used in order to ensure that a large enough sample would be collected for the study. A purposive sampling method was done by sending direct emails, with the same message and survey link attached, to museum professional organizations, museum departments, and museum staff. When contacting the museum professional organizations, an additional request to forward the email to organization members was included.

The specific museum professional organizations that were contacted include both local and regional groups in the Philadelphia area, such as the Philadelphia

Museum Education Roundtable and the Mid-Atlantic Association of Museums. In addition, other regional groups from across the United States, including the New England Museum Association, as well as national groups, such as the Association of Art Museum Curators, were contacted for survey distribution. For a complete list of museum organizations that were contacted throughout the survey distribution of this study, see Appendix A. Similar to the open forums and the electronic mailing lists, these organizations were chosen to circulate the survey because they are well-connected to art museum professionals and because the survey can be quickly and easily distributed through the groups' members email lists or social media accounts. Furthermore, the researcher contacted specific art museums throughout the country that fit the evaluation criteria, either by departmental emails or museum staff emails. For the complete list of museums that were contacted directly to participate in this study's survey, see Appendix A. Although it was more time consuming to do so, contacting specific museums was a direct and supplementary way to generate an adequate sample and was necessary due to the slow influx of survey responses.

Along with their name, survey respondents were asked to provide their job title. The researcher grouped these position responses into the following categories: Education and Public Programming, Visitor Services, and Executive Staff. As shown in Table 1, the overwhelming majority of survey respondents worked in the Education or Public Programming Department of their institution.

Table 1. Breakdown of survey respondents by museum department.

Museum Department	Number of Survey Respondents (n=31)
Education and Public Programming	29
Visitor Services	1
Executive Staff	1

Demographics

Reaching out to organizations in a variety of geographic locations across the country ensured a greater and more diverse set of data. Rather than evaluating local or regional museums only, evaluating art museums from around the country offers a more diverse, representative, and impartial way to study family guide development. The researcher tracked the geographic locations of participating museums by requiring survey respondents to include the name of the institution in which they are employed. In Figure 1, a map marks the location of each survey participants' institution surveyed. Note that several institutions from the surveys were located in the same cities. A more detailed overview of participant demographics is provided in Appendix B.

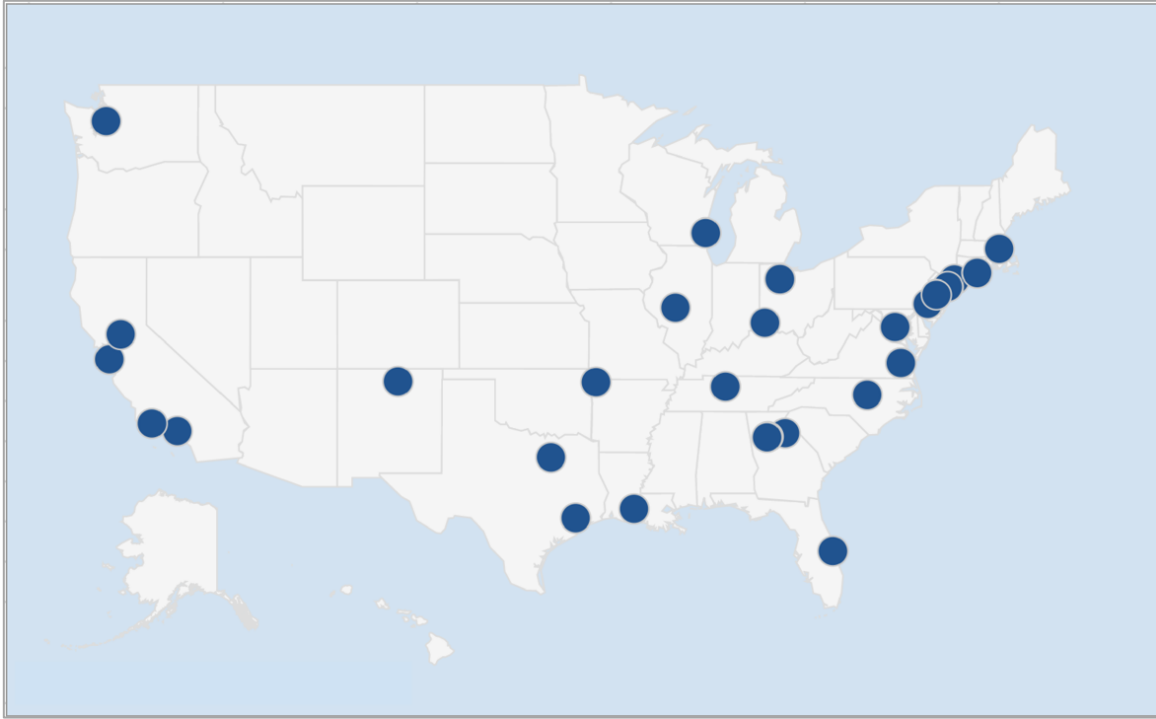


Figure 1. Geographical map marking the location of survey respondents' institutions.

Moreover, the national reach of this study invited participants from a range of art institutions, including art museums, university art museums, and art centers with galleries.¹¹³ These different types of art institutions show a range in annual visitation and budget which are other factors that can influence their development practices for family guides. The “Other” category shown in Table 2 is comprised of one institution that is partially an art museum and partially a natural history museum and also two institutions that are not regarded as art museums at all. Even though these two institutions, the Rosenbach and the Illinois State Museum, do not have primary focuses

¹¹³ See Table 2.

in art, they fit the study because they either frequently host art exhibitions or have separate galleries devoted to displaying art objects.

Table 2. Breakdown of survey respondents by type of institution.

Type of Art Institution	Number of Survey Respondents (n=31)
Art Museum	21
University Art Museum	5
Other	3
Art Center	2

Instrument

The online survey, *Development of Family Guides in Art Museums*¹¹⁴ included 11 questions, both open-ended and multiple-choice. The survey probed questions on the specifics of art museums' development processes for creating family guides. A survey was the most appropriate evaluation instrument for this study because it could be quickly distributed over the web; questions could be formatted in various ways, and data collection was easy.

As previously mentioned, the survey initially asked respondents to state the name of the institution in which they were employed, as well as their name and title.

¹¹⁴ See Appendix C.

Open-ended questions of the survey allowed professionals to elaborate on their answers and provide in-depth, qualitative data, while the multiple-choice questions gathered information that could be more easily coded and analyzed. In addition, the survey permitted respondents to attach supplementary documents, like family guides and evaluation or testing results, to support their survey responses. An open-ended question at the end of the survey allowed for respondents to offer any other commentary on their family guide development processes that were not addressed in the survey.

Anticipated Results

Due to the lack of formal developmental standards for family guides, the researcher anticipates that the majority of respondents will not follow specific, formal practices for developing their family guides which will create disparities among the survey responses. However, without any standards to rely on, the researcher expects that some respondents may carry out steps that mirror developmental practices used for the creation of other types of visitor interpretation, like exhibitions and programs, since there is more research on these types of interpretation in the field. Some of these practices may include but are not limited to: cross-departmental collaboration; family audience contribution; consultation from informal learning literature and field research; and evaluation and testing of guides. According to literature, many of these practices are foundational in all 21st century museum undertakings.¹¹⁵

¹¹⁵ Genoways, et al. *Museum Administration 2.0*, 319.

Based on the trends revealed in the data and the extent in which respondents' current practices correspond to development standards for other family-centered interpretation, the researcher will devise a list of recommended practices for developing family guides in art museums. The data from this study would therefore form the groundwork for how to best create family gallery guides in art museums.

Chapter Four: Presentation of the Data

The qualitative and quantitative survey data was analyzed by sorting all questions' responses into reoccurring themes. These categories subsequently became codes. The codes allowed for easy grouping of responses to understand the data collected. The data presented in this chapter is organized first, by the study's main research questions, and second, any additional questions listed on the survey. Survey questions that obtained demographic information have already been presented in Chapter Three. All of the 31 respondents answered all of the questions except for some two-part questions that only pertained to respondents who answered "yes" in the first part. Four of the eleven survey items were multiple choice questions that asked respondents to "check all that apply"; hence, those questions generated more responses than the number of actual respondents and are identified in the presentation of data below.

Research Questions

Why is the institution creating a family guide?

This open-ended survey question allowed for the most qualitative understanding and most accurate data on respondents' reasons for creating family guides. The researcher felt this question was not only important to better comprehend the purpose of family guides in art institutions today but also to connect the guides' purposes with answers to succeeding survey questions.

Only 30 responses were considered for this question because one respondent's answer was unreadable. As shown by Table 3, the researcher categorized the responses into four themes: 1) Engagement with the Collection, 2) Family-friendly, 3) Social Interaction, and 4) Other. Most of the 30 responses fit into multiple categories, which is why the theme's percentages altogether exceed 100%.¹¹⁶

Table 3. Breakdown of categories used to analyze respondents' responses to the survey question "Why is your institution creating a family guide?" as well as examples of their responses within each category.

Code	Example
Engagement with the collection	"To help children engage with the collection while on a tour..."
Family-friendly	"As a contemporary art museum, we wanted to give families tools for engaging with non-traditional art forms."
Social Interaction	"To help adults and children discover and discuss artwork together."
Other	"[...]and as a keepsake of the experience."

¹¹⁶ See Figure 2.

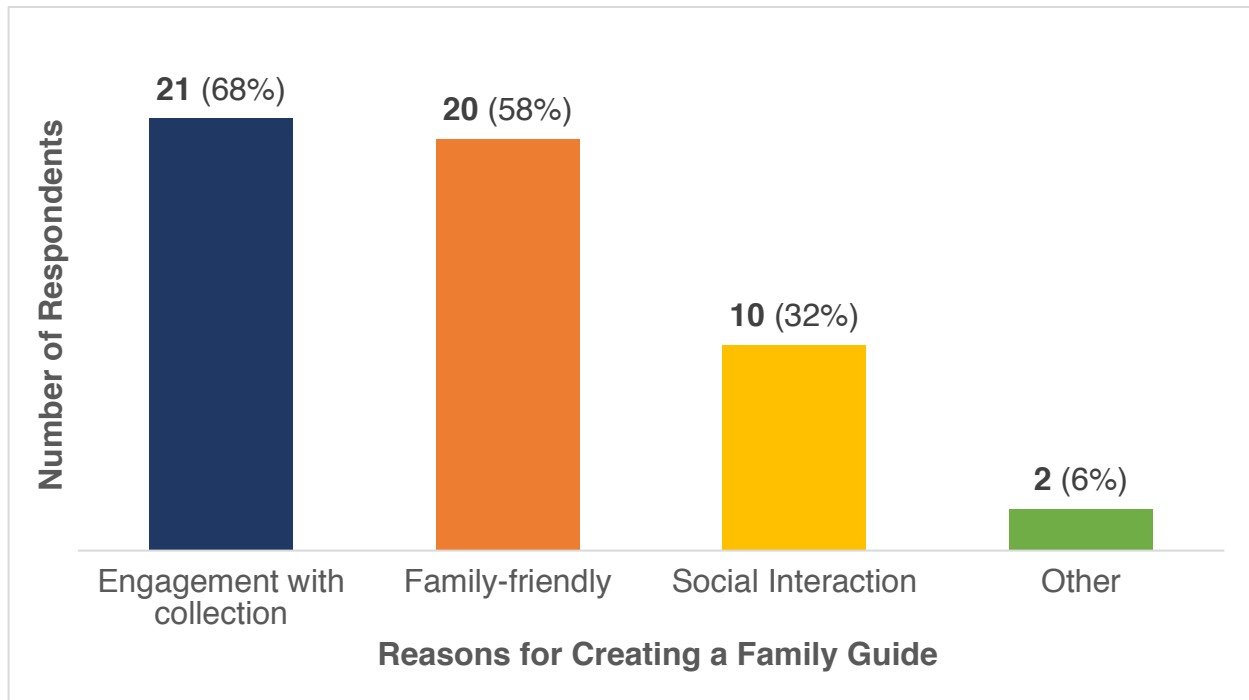


Figure 2. Breakdown of respondent's reasons for creating a family guide. The bar graph shows that while there were 30 responses, a majority of the answers fit within multiple categories. (n= 53)

The two most common reasons for creating guides fell into the categories “Engagement with the Collection” (70%) and “Family-friendly” (67%). The code “Engagement with the Collection” encompasses responses that stressed the idea of increasing children and adults’ engagement with the museum and its collection in some way. Engagement included looking closely at the artwork or evaluating the artwork; however, the majority of responses were vague in their description, using words such as “engage,” “interact,” and “have fun.” For example, Respondent 16 states their family

guide is intended, “to engage families and children” while Respondent 4 shares, “I wanted a way for families to interact with the museum’s art gallery.”

The “Family-friendly” code signifies responses that emphasize assisting families, whether it is making artwork more relatable to families, helping families explore the museum, or creating a resource that is always available for them to use. Several responses in this category specifically mentioned guiding parents and adults in how to talk to their children about art; for instance, Respondent 9 claimed, “Multiple caregivers had expressed that they needed more tools to help them facilitate an experience in front of a work of art with their children.”

Thirty-three percent of respondents said they created family guides to promote “Social interaction.” While some of the responses in this category overlapped with responses pertaining to family discussion in the “Family-friendly” category, the researcher felt there were two prominent themes surrounding the topic of family discussion that were revealed in the data. Therefore, the responses in this category relate to museums understanding the importance of family discussion around artwork, and less to the museum informing parents on how to discuss artwork with their children, as in the “Family-friendly” category. Responses in “Social Interaction” underscore interaction between family members, specifically across generations. For instance, Respondent 23 reveals their guide is meant “to help adults and children discover and discuss artwork together” and Respondent 30 states that theirs attempts, “to help families connect to the museum, art on view, and each other.”

Lastly, 6% of respondents had reasons for creating family guides labeled as “Other”. These reasons were “as a keepsake of the experience” and “to create a choose-your-own-adventure guide of the museum[...]

What are the learning or experiential goals of the family guides for visitors?

This question was intended to uncover what the survey respondents wanted their family visitors to gain from using their family guides. While there are some commonalities in the responses to this question and survey Question #4, the open-ended format allowed a wider range of responses.

The researcher discerned five themes among the data from this question, which are shown in Table 4: 1) Engagement with the Collection, 2) Skill building, 3) Learning, 4) Build Visitor Comfort in the Museum, and 5) Other. During the data analysis, many of the 31 responses fit within multiple categories, so the percentage of responses exceeds 100%.

Table 4. Breakdown of categories used to analyze respondents’ learning and experiential goals as well as examples of respondents’ responses within each category.

Code	Example
Engagement with the collection	"[...] feel more engaged with the works of art."
Skill building	"To encourage the development of observation skills, communication, critical thinking skills[...]"
Learning	"To learn about the art/artists on view[...]"
Build visitor comfort in the museum	"[...] let our visitors know that families are welcome in the space[...]"
Other	"Foster cultural and community awareness"

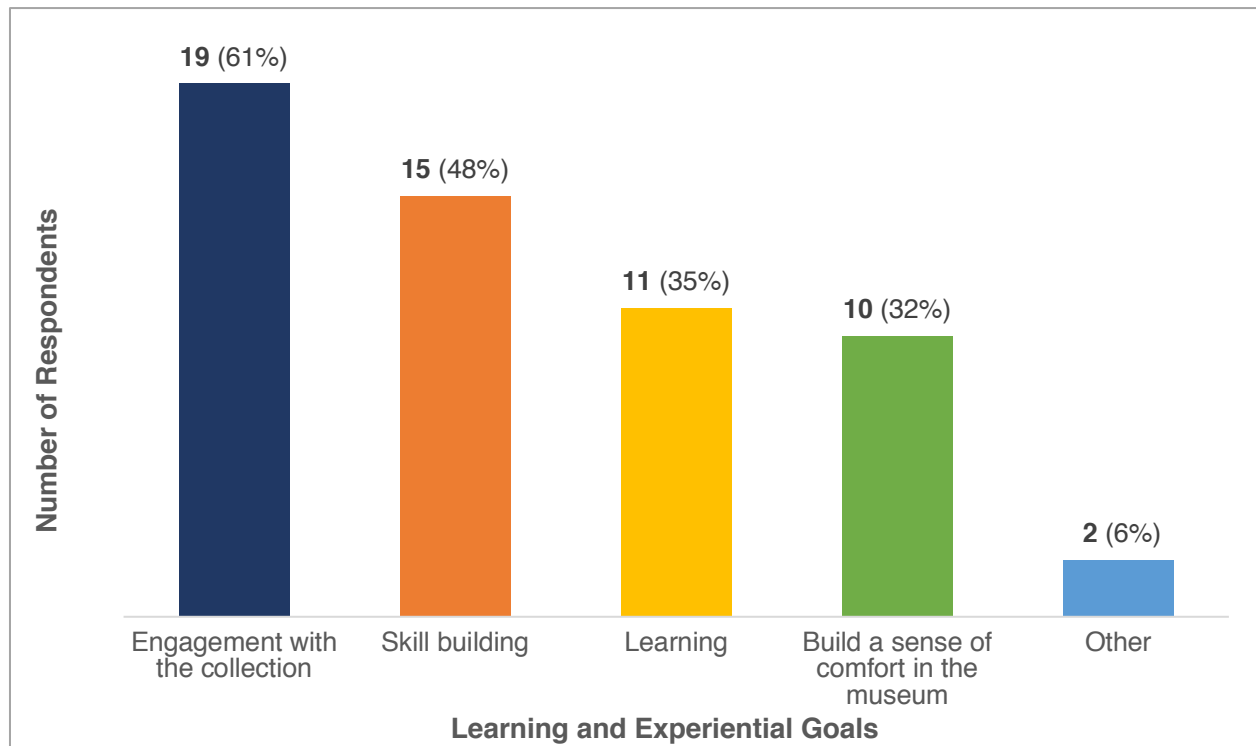


Figure 3. Breakdown of respondents' learning and experiential goals for their family guides. The bar graph shows that while there were 31 responses, a majority of the answers fit within multiple categories. (n= 57)

With 61%, “Engagement with the Collection” received the highest number of responses from respondents. Just as it was used for responses in survey Question #2, this code comprised responses that underline family engagement with the museum or its collection as the guides’ learning and experiential goal. More specifically, the responses in this category referred to having visitors look more closely at artwork, to have fun in the galleries, and to interact with the artwork. Respondent 20 stressed that they wanted their visitors to use the guide in order “to spend more time looking at the art! We want our visitors to take time to deeply appreciate the art.” Respondent 2

mentioned that their guide's intention was to "make exploring the galleries fun for children." Likewise, Respondent 20 explains that their guide is meant to offer "an interactive or activity-based option in the galleries" for visitors. Unlike in survey Question #2, the category "Engagement with Collection" includes social interaction between family members as a form of engagement rather than its own category since there was not a substantial number of these responses to form its own category. Even so, a few respondents described their family guide goals as types of social interaction, including Respondent 8, who said their guide's goals were "To help families discuss the objects and make them relevant to the child's life."

Forty-eight percent of responses fell into the "Skill Building" category. These respondents showed interest in family guide users building skills such as critical thinking, communication, and most commonly close looking.

Thirty-five percent of responses make up the code "Learning," which includes those who wish for family guide users to learn content, whether it be about an artwork or an artist. Respondent 1 shares that they would like "[the] young guests [to] leave the museum having learned something about an exhibit or group of objects."

Lastly from this question, 32% of respondents' learning and experiential goals fell under the code "Build Visitor Comfort in the Museum." In other words, the goal of these guides is to make visitors feel more comfortable in the museum, such as giving parents more confidence in talking about artwork with their children and helping families navigate through the museum easily. Respondent 9, for example, stated that their museum aims "to help families feel empowered with new strategies," which is similar to

Respondent 11's response, "[to] help caregivers feel confident in their ability to lead their children in an art museum experience." This category also includes responses that discuss wayfinding, such as Respondent 14, whose goal for their guide was to make the museum's amenities clear for visitors.

Who in or outside the museum is involved in developing family guides?

This survey question determined who contributes to creating family guides. As the literature review points out, museum experts strongly suggest that multiple departments work collectively to produce family-centered interpretation, rather than leaving it to one person or department. This multiple-choice question asked respondents to check all answers that apply to them, which resulted in responses totaling up to more than 100%. Since museum operations can vary by institution, seven answers were offered for respondents to choose from, along with the option to write their own responses. Among the pre-fixed answers was "you", which referred to the respondent as a possible choice for this question. To best present this data, the researcher dispersed the "you" responses into the categories that corresponded with survey respondents' job titles provided in Question #3 of the survey.¹¹⁷ For example, if a respondent selected "you" and their job title was director of education, then their response was counted toward "Education Staff". Since a majority of the additional written responses from respondents related to education, public programming, and interpretation departments, these three groups were placed under the same category of

¹¹⁷ See Table 1.

“Education Staff.” The researcher found this appropriate since these types of positions are commonly considered under the larger umbrella of education initiatives in museums.

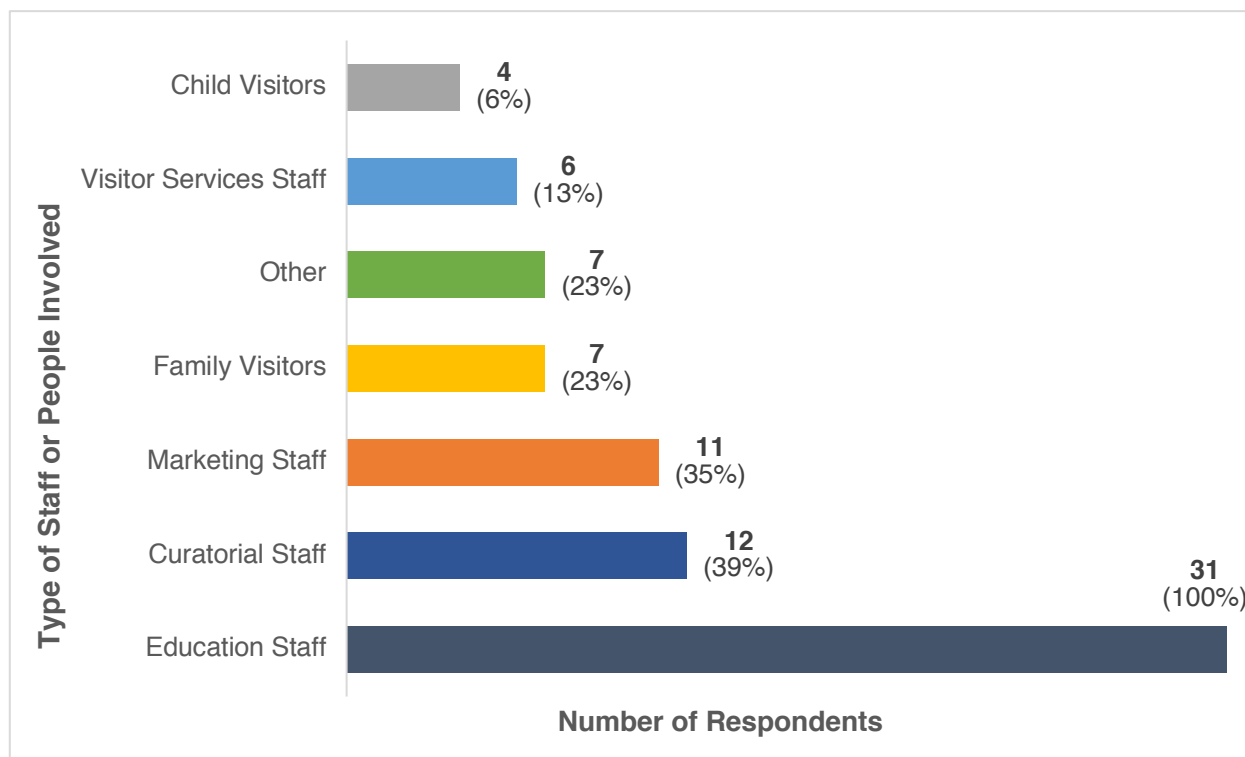


Figure 4. Number and percentage of people involved in the development of family guides. As shown by the bar graph, the 31 respondents were invited to “check all that apply” and responses total more than 100%. (n= 78)

As shown in Figure 4, 100% of respondents revealed that education staff are involved in the development of their institution’s family guide. Next, curatorial staff (39%) and marketing staff (35%) generated the second highest number of responses. Seven respondents (23%) said they involve family visitors in the development, six (13%) involve visitor services staff, and only four (6%) involve child visitors, those that may actually use the guide. The “Other” category for this question is composed of seven

various responses including graphic designer (two respondents), volunteers and interns (two respondents), collection staff (one respondent), exhibition staff (one respondent), and executive staff (one respondent), totaling 23% of all respondents.

Are the people involved in the process using any tools or resources to develop the family guides? If so, which ones?

This question probed how many museums use resources, inside or outside of their institution, as they develop their family guides. Further research on audiences and content information, for example, can enhance the accuracy of a family guide and increase the success in family learning and engagement. This two-part question composed of a “yes” or “no” choice followed by a space for an open-ended response. As shown in Figure 5, 61% of respondents use tools or resources to develop their family guides, while 39% do not.

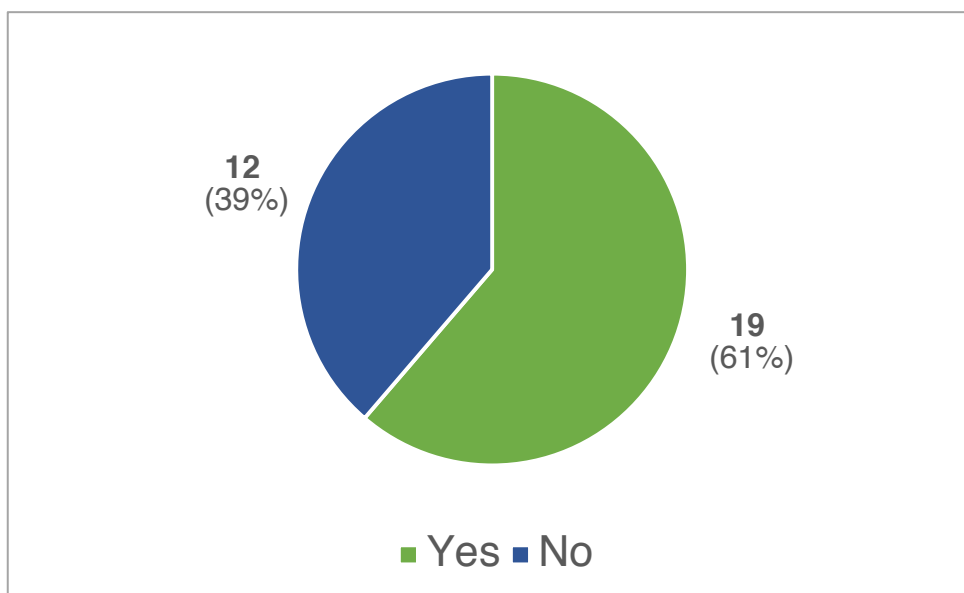


Figure 5. Number and percentage of respondents who use tools or resources to develop their family guides versus those who do not. (n=31)

After analyzing the open-ended, follow-up comments of the respondents, the researcher uncovered three common themes pertaining to the types of tools and resources used, as shown in Table 5: External Literature and Professional Input, Family Guides from Other Museums, and Internal Research and Resources. Many of the nineteen “yes” responses fit within multiple categories.

Table 5. Breakdown of types of resources respondents use to develop their family guides as well as examples of respondents’ comments within each category.

Code	Example	Number of Responses (n= 22)
External Literature and Professional Input	"Research from other institutions"	9
Family Guides from Other Museums	"We gathered examples of other family guides from museums around the country[...]"	8
Internal Research and Resources	"curatorial research"	5

The nine respondents that make up the “External Literature and Professional Input” category are grouped together because they claimed to use published literature or seek input from colleagues and experts outside of their institution. Some responses in this category specifically referenced literature; for instance, Respondent 18 consulted

the book If You Can't See It, Don't Say It by Krist Wetterlund while Respondent 3 employed ideas from How to Talk to Children About Art by Francoise Barbe-Gall. Other responses referenced educational pedagogy such as Respondent 11 who refers to Howard Gardner's Multiple Intelligences, Benjamin Bloom's Taxonomy of Questions, and Lev Semionovich Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development. A third type of outside resource that respondents consult in this category is research directly from the museum field, such as blog posts, resource websites, and research articles. Respondent 30 refers to Museum 2.0 blog; Respondent 10 favors "Engage Families: A Project of the USS Constitution Museum;" while other respondents listed using research from other institutions to develop their family guides.

In the category "Family Guides from Other Museums," eight respondents revealed that they refer to other institutions' family guides as examples. Respondent 23 stands out amongst this trend, stating "I have been creating guides like this for many years, and I have a library of hundreds of family guides I've collected over the years, and my staff and I are constantly reading about what our peers are doing in the field."

Lastly, five responses were considered as "Internal Research and Resources." To develop their family guides, these respondents utilized different resources that are all available within their own institutions. For instance, Respondent 9 revealed that they used information from informal evaluation conducted in the galleries with family guides users, Respondent 14 tapped into their institution's curatorial research, and Respondent 22 refers to research that was led by a former professor and educator of the institution.

Are the family guides being tested and if so, how and by whom?

This question asked how many respondents test their family guides as a part of their development cycle. The term “testing” can constitute different forms of evaluation at different stages of the development process. Because of this, the second part of the question is left open-ended so that respondents can elaborate on those specific processes. As shown in Figure 6, more than half of the respondents (61%) do not test their family guides.

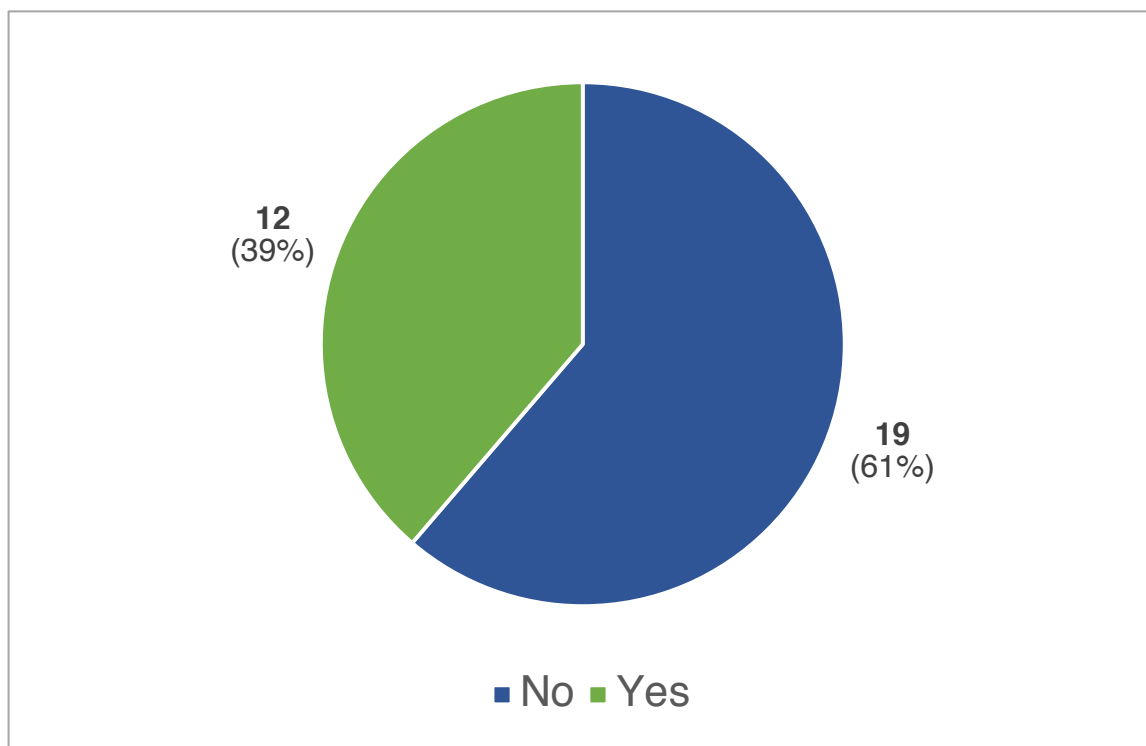


Figure 6. Number and percentage of respondents who test their guides versus those who do not. (n=31)

The open-ended responses among the respondents who test their family guides (39%) were analyzed and coded into categories. One response was discarded because

it did not entail a type of testing or evaluation that fit the question. Some of the 11 remaining responses included more than one type of evaluation and were divided accordingly. Subsequently, the total number of responses that were categorized was 18. Within these responses, the researcher uncovered three categories: 1) Front-end evaluations, 2) Formative evaluations, and 3) Summative evaluations. These categories reflect the evaluation stages used throughout the exhibition or program development process. Even though some of the responses did not specify when the testing or evaluation was conducted in the development process, the researcher referred to Diamond, et al.'s *Practical Evaluation Guide* in order to categorize the evaluation methods and testing within the appropriate stages.

Table 6. Breakdown of types of evaluation respondents conduct while developing family guides as well as examples of respondents' responses within each category.

Type of Evaluation	Example	Number of Responses (n=17)
Front-end	"For our gallery reads, we did a focus group."	3
Formative	"Prototyping"	7
Summative	"Pick-up rate evaluations, in-gallery spot interviews with visitors, in gallery-observations"	7

Three respondents conduct front-end evaluation in the conceptual phases of family guide development. Two of these respondents disclosed that they use findings from previous audience evaluations to inform the next steps in the process, while the

third respondent supervised a focus group discussion. Seven respondents perform formative evaluations, specifically prototyping, with visitors and staff. Many responses in the category also included testing drafts of the guides with visitors and even staff. Seven respondents conduct summative evaluations once the family guide has been distributed to visitors in the museum. Visitor surveys were a popular method amongst these responses, but respondents also included pick-up rate evaluations, in-gallery observations of visitors using the guides, gallery mapping of visitors' use, and examining visitors' completed guides.

Additional Survey Questions

What is/are the titles of your family guides?

The researcher asked respondents to provide the titles of their institutions' family guides as another way to understand the intent of the guides as well as to consider any correlations between the titles and the guides' learning and experiential goals recorded in Question #6 of the survey.

All 31 respondents answered the question; however, many provided multiple titles of family guides that their institutions distribute so each title was categorized accordingly. The researcher found four themes within the dataset, which are shown in Table 7: 1) titles that specify that they are for children or families, 2) titles that allude to the purpose of the guide or type of activities inside, 3) titles that suggest themes like animals or types of art, and 4) Other. Several titles fell into multiple categories.

Table 7. Breakdown of types of titles respondents use for their family guides, including examples of respondents' answers within each category. Of the 31 respondents, some listed multiple guides that they offer, so all were analyzed and coded.

Type of Title	Example	Number of Titles (n=34)
Alludes to its purpose or type of activity	Gallery Guide, ArtSee Gallery Kits, Art Connection Cards, Discovery Guide	15
Specifies family or children	Family Guide, Family Fun Guide, Egyptian Family Guide, Smartkids	12
Suggests a theme	Bonjour, Paris!, Find Your Fears, Animals and Creatures, Journey Around the World	5
Other	"They change each month"	2

Fifteen titles suggest the type of activities that the family guides involve, such as Art Connection Cards, Discovery Guide, and ArtSee Gallery Kits. Twelve titles specifically reference families or children, like Family Guide, Egyptian Family Guide, and Smartkids. Five titles suggest the theme of the guide; for example, Bonjour Paris!, Find Your Fears, and Animals and Creatures. The "Other" category had two responses that deviated from these categories. One is a family guide title with the name of the corresponding institution, and the second is a response that states the titles "change each month."

Does your institution have any family-friendly interpretation, such as labels, throughout its galleries?

The researcher wanted to know whether respondents already have family-friendly interpretation, such as labels, throughout their institutions' galleries. The presence of other interpretive tools can influence the objectives of family guides. This question had two parts; first, asking respondents to answer "yes" or "no" to having family-friendly interpretation in the galleries.

Figure 7 shows that 81% percent of respondents said they do not. Second, the researcher asked the remaining 19% (six respondents) who had family-friendly interpretation whether the interpretation was permanently or temporarily on display. Four of the six respondents said the interpretation was permanent.

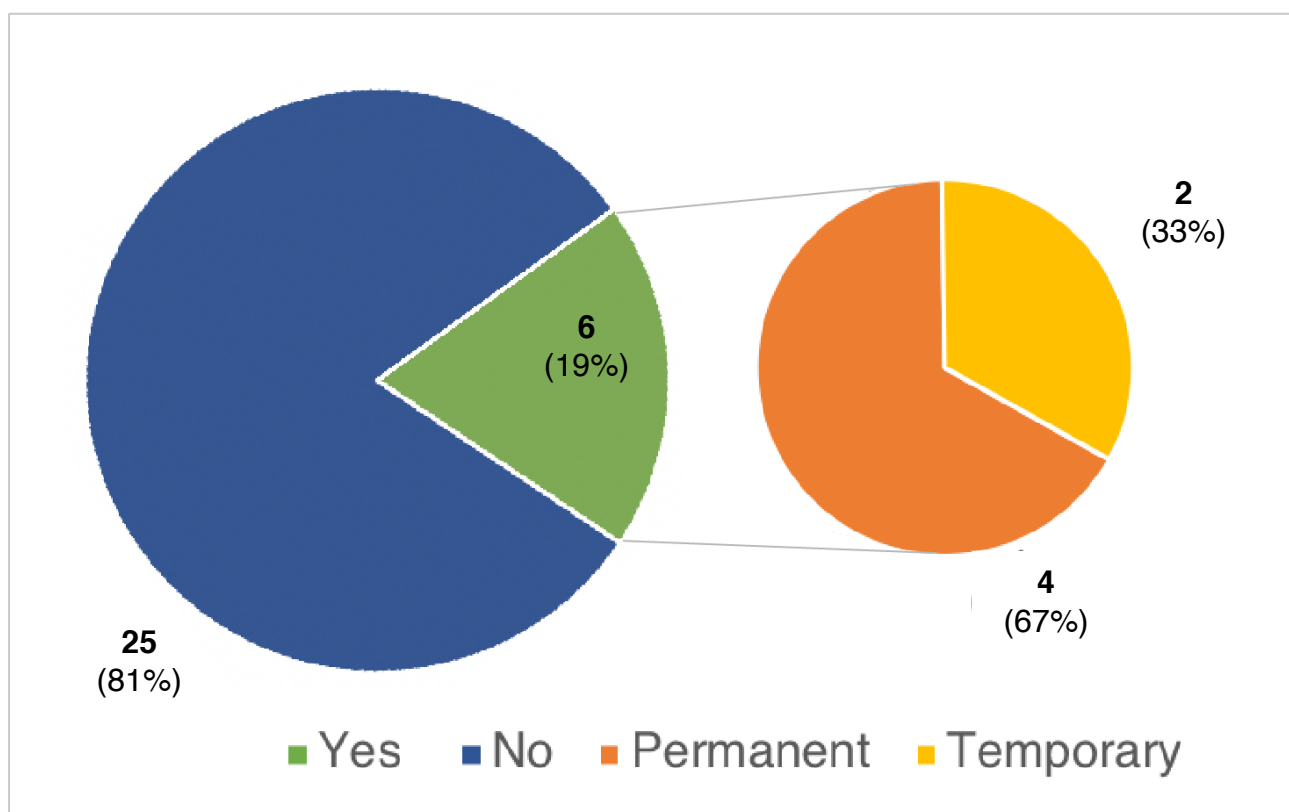


Figure 7. Number and percentage of respondents who have family-friendly interpretation throughout their galleries versus those who do not (left pie chart) and the number and percentage of “yes” respondents whose family-friendly interpretation is either temporary or permanent (right pie chart). (n=31)

Which of these best describe the activities included in your institution’s family guide(s)?

Next, the researcher investigated how the family guides accomplish both their main purposes and their specific learning and experiential goals. To do so, the researcher asked about the kinds of visitor activities family guides offer. This multiple-choice question invited survey respondents to choose all options that applied to them, resulting in a percentage greater than 100%. The researcher provided six options for respondents to choose from, as well as the option to write their own response. The

question options included: 1) close-looking activities, 2) kinesthetic activities, 3) writing-focused activities, 4) drawing activities, 5) storytelling activities, 6) activities that embrace the abilities and insights of different ages, and 7) activities that can be done after leaving the museum. The researcher determined these options by referring to Sheppard's characteristics of family learning opportunities, cited in the literature review, as well as Howard Gardner's Multiple Intelligences theory, which suggests people express thinking and learning differently.¹¹⁸ As shown in Figure 8, five of these activities each generated responses from over 50% of respondents.

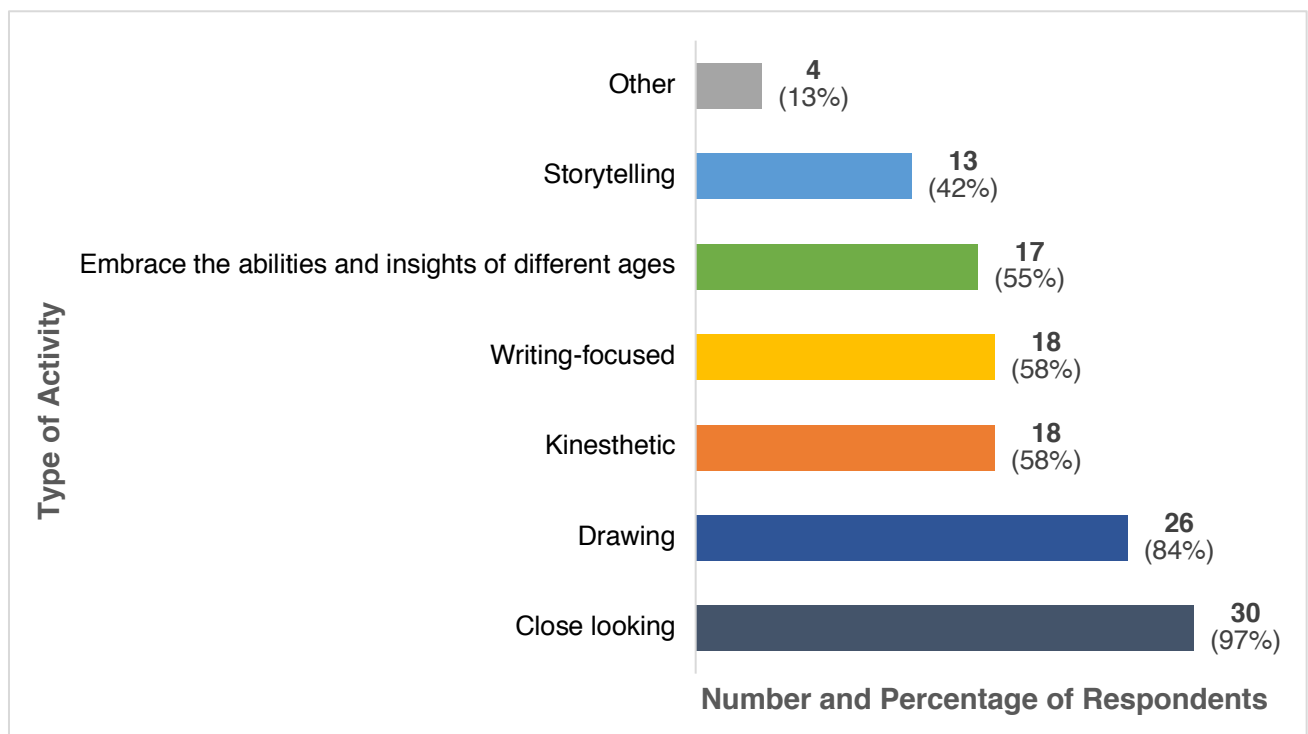


Figure 8. Number and percentage of respondents whose family guides include various types of activities. As shown by the bar graph, the 31 respondents were invited to “check all that apply” and responses total more than 100%. (n= 126)

¹¹⁸ Howard E. Gardner, *Multiple Intelligences: New Horizons in Theory and Practice* (New York: Basic Books, 2006) 8-17.

Ninety-seven percent of respondents claimed to have close-looking activities included in their family guides. The second highest percentage, 84%, was drawing activities. Fifty-eight percentage of respondents have kinesthetic and writing-focused activities in their guides while 55% of respondents have activities that embrace the abilities and insights of different ages. Lastly, this question generated 42% of responses for storytelling activities and 13% for “Other,” which were comprised of responses like multisensory activities (two respondents), reading a book (one respondent), and making connections to [visitor’s] lives (one respondent).

Which of these does your institution’s family guide(s) foster?

This question measured respondents’ family guides according to characteristics that are proven to support the learning and engagement of multi-generational families in museums. This multiple-choice question invited survey respondents to choose all options that applied to them, resulting in a percentage greater than 100%. The researcher provided seven options for respondents to choose from: 1) Collaboration with Other People, 2) Adult Participation, 3) Connections to Visitor’s Prior Knowledge, 4) Self-direction and Choice, 5) Multiple Interpretations, 6) Empowerment for Children and Parents, and 7) Opportunities to Celebrate. The options listed were directly drawn from Sheppard’s characteristics of family learning opportunities and the USS Constitution’s list of successful family learning outcomes.

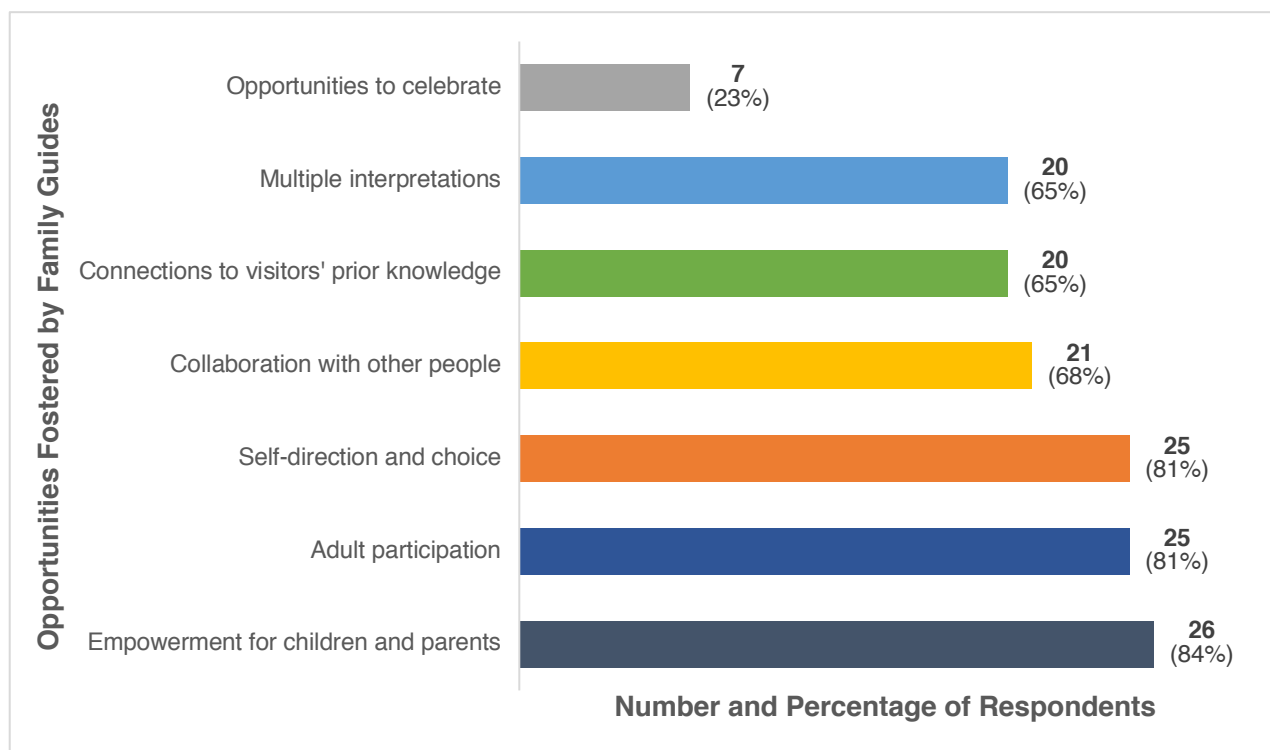


Figure 9. Number and percentage of respondents whose family guides foster various opportunities for visitors. As shown by the bar graph, the 31 respondents were invited to “check all that apply” and responses total more than 100%. (n= 144)

As shown in Figure 9, the highest-rated opportunity was “Empowerment for Children and Parents,” with 84%. “Adult Participation” and “Self-direction and Choice” were just under that, generating 81% of responses each. Over half of the respondents also selected “Collaboration with Other People” (68%), “Connections to Visitors’ Prior Knowledge” (65%), and “Multiple Interpretations” (65%) as opportunities that are promoted by their family guides. “Opportunities to Celebrate” received the lowest percentage of responses (23%).

How do you distribute your family guide(s) to the intended audience?

The researcher posed this question to get a sense of whether or not the display and distribution of family guides correlate with the information generated in other survey questions, such as purpose, visitor goals, title, and activities included. These connections may lead to further questioning about development processes. Like the questions before it, this multiple-choice question invited survey respondents to choose all options that applied to them, resulting in a percentage greater than 100%. The researcher provided four options for respondents to choose from, as well as the opportunity to write their own response. The options included: 1) Family guides are placed at the admissions desk for visitors to take freely, 2) Family guides are only distributed to visitors who request one, 3) Family guides are automatically distributed to families and children at the admissions desk, and 4) Family guides are available on the institution's website to print out before a visit. None of the respondents selected option 3, so it was discarded from the analysis. On the other hand, many respondents wrote their own responses, which the researcher sorted into two categories: 1) At family-specific times and locations and 2) In proximity to galleries.

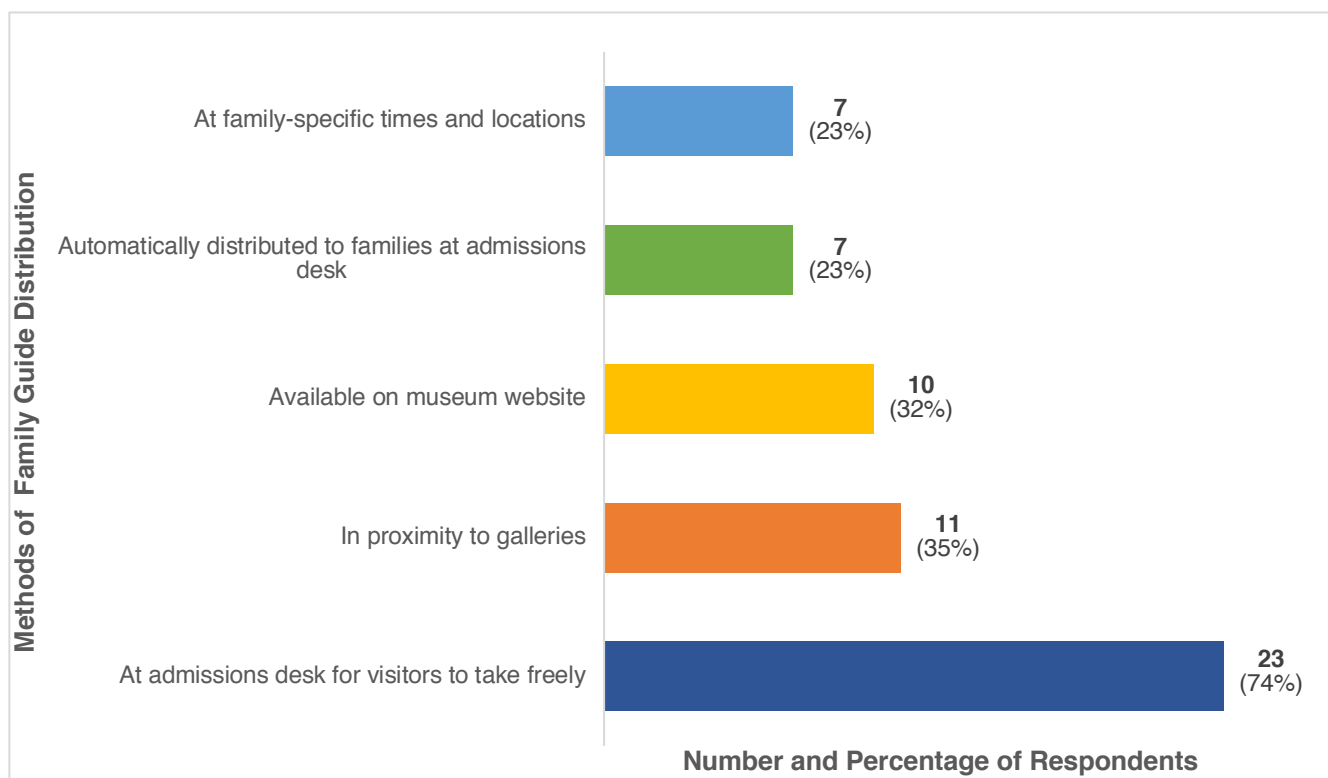


Figure 10. Number and percentage of respondents who use various methods for distributing their family guides. As shown by the bar graph, the 31 respondents were invited to “check all that apply” and responses total more than 100%. (n= 58)

As shown by Figure 10, 74% of respondents said they display family guides at the admissions desk for visitors to take freely. This was the highest-rated response and the only distribution method that was selected by the majority of respondents. Thirty-five percent of respondents distribute family guides in proximity to galleries, while 32% have family guides available on the museum website to print-out. The least favorable methods of distribution were automatically distributed to families at admissions desk and at family-specific times and locations, generating 23% each.

Anything else?

Lastly, the researcher offered respondents the opportunity to write anything else about their family guides that they considered important to note for the study.

Seventeen respondents left comments for this last question, but only 13 respondents responded with answers that related to the question and that were able to be coded. Of the 13 responses, some answers fit within multiple categories. As shown in Table 8, the answers were analyzed and coded into three themes: Frequency and Capacity, Languages Offered, and Other.

Table 8. Breakdown of categories used to analyze respondents' responses to the miscellaneous, open-ended question of the survey as well as examples of respondents' responses within each category. Some of the responses fit within multiple categories.

Category	Example	Number of Respondents (n= 15)
Frequency and capacity	"They vary according to the exhibitions and the budget attached to that from a very simple scavenger hunt to a much more elaborate booklet."	6
Languages offered	"Our guides are also bilingual in English and Spanish."	5
Other	"We are working on a more sustainable model and one that would be taken home to complete."	4

The category “Frequency and Capacity” is comprised of six responses that discussed how frequently or infrequently they develop family guides and/or their capacity for creating guides, whether it be related to staffing or budgets. For example, Respondent 31 stated the family guides “vary according to the exhibition and the budget attached to that from a very simple scavenger hunt to a much more elaborate booklet.”

The “Languages Offered” category is composed of five respondents who revealed that their family guides are bilingual, specifically English and Spanish.

Finally, the “Other” category is comprised of four distinct responses that did not fit into the categories above. Respondent 28 explained the reasoning for their family guide’s title, Respondent 18 mentioned that their family guide is paired with activities in a particular space, providing multiple avenues for interaction. Respondent 20 described the design of their family guide, which helps families to easily see which programs and amenities within the museum are appropriate for them. Lastly, Respondent 5 shared in their response that they offer a prize to visitors who complete the family guides, which brings families back to the lobby in hopes they will go into the museum shop.

Chapter Five: Analysis & Conclusions

The analysis and conclusions of the data is organized first with the study's main research questions, and second, with any additional questions listed on the survey. The one exception is survey Question #10, "How do you distribute the family guide(s) to the intended audience?", which is presented in the areas for further research section of this thesis.

The researcher acknowledges that the study generated a small sample size. This was in part due to the limited sample size to draw from since there is no definitive place for the researcher to find art institutions that have family guides. Even so, the conclusions from the survey data still have relevance to the field. Survey responses derive from an assortment of major art institutions and smaller institutions across the United States, which demonstrates that a larger-scale study of this kind can produce valuable results for the field.

Research Questions

In response to the survey Question # 2, "Why did your institution create a family guide(s)?", a majority of respondents' family guides were intended to encourage family visitors to engage with the collection (70%). This data is not surprising since it reflects the historically challenging environment that art museums present to families. Museums desire to cultivate engagement amongst families in order to make up for the lack of hands-on activities. Respondent 4 states "We are a hands-off museum. We offer a robust slate of family programs, but this gives families an opportunity to interact with our

art when a family program in the galleries is not taking place.” “In other words, many respondents, including Respondent 4, recognize that their families are unlikely to explore the galleries without a staff-led program and consequently are spending little to no time solely in front of the collection. In attempts to encourage families to explore galleries on their own, respondents’ responses stressed “fun,” “interact,” “enjoy,” and “discover,” to describe the types of engagement they hope will result from the family guides they offer.

According to the large number of responses in the “Family-friendly” category, there is a common understanding and concern among respondents that family visitors may not be feeling welcomed or comfortable in an art museum and that many art institutions place importance on making families feel more at ease. As illustrated by research, art museums have often been challenging museum environments for families, and that still holds some truth. To counter this, participating museums offer parents guidance on discussing artwork with children, they present more relevant interpretation, and they familiarize families with museum amenities. Just as professionals from the Denver Art Museum stated, simply having a family guide to distribute to family members indicates to families that the museum is acknowledging and responding to their needs.¹¹⁹

While “Social Interaction” did not generate a majority of responses on its own, it was a common thread throughout respondents’ responses regarding the intent for family guides. A reasonable portion of museum professionals understand conversation

¹¹⁹ *Families and Art Museums, Part 1*, 42.

is important for family learning, as proven by Knutson & Crowley and Falk & Dierking, and that it is a natural occurrence in the family dynamic that museums can build upon when developing their family guides.

The responses for survey Question #6, “What are the learning or experiential goals of the family guides for visitors?”, correspond strongly with respondents’ responses for Question #2.¹²⁰ In other words, museum’s goals for family visitors who use the guides match the overall purpose of the guides.

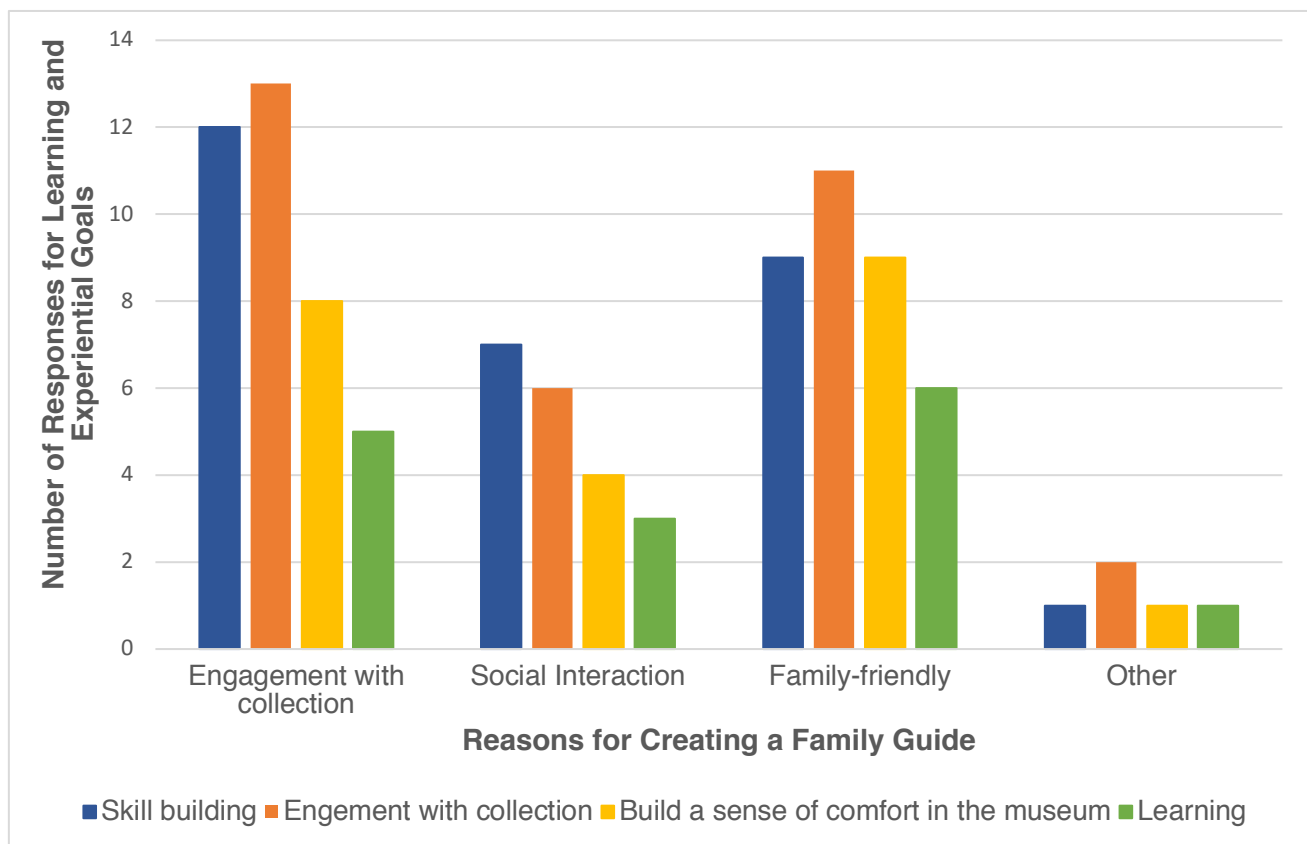


Figure 11. A cross-tabulation of respondents’ reasons for creating a family guide and the learning and experiential goals of their guides.

¹²⁰ See Figure 6.

Art museum's desire to connect families with objects, as shown from results of Question # 2, is reinforced in the guide's visitor goals. A cross-tabulation between responses to Question #2 and Question #6 revealed that "Engagement with the Collection" was the highest-rated category in both questions.

In addition, the highly-rated visitor goal, "Skill Building," rated especially high among family guides where the purpose was "Engagement with the Collection." This correlation makes sense since many of the desired skills listed by respondents related to ways of engaging with artwork, like close-looking, critical thinking, and describing art forms.

Furthermore, many family guides from this study are created with the emphasis to *assist* families in engaging with artwork and buildings skills since the data shows a strong correlation between the visitor goals "Engagement with the Collection" and "Skill Building" with the guide's purpose "Family-Friendly." As pointed out in literature, parents do not feel equipped enough to help their children and family learn during their visit.¹²¹ Therefore, based on this data, participating institutions understand that they cannot just draw families into the galleries but must also provide them with suggestions for how to interact with the artworks on display.

Likewise, it appears that engaging families more with the collection can certainly help build their level of comfort in the overall museum as well. The cross-tabulation of survey Question #2 and Question #6 reveals that many respondents' guides categorized with the purpose "Engagement with Collection" and "Family-friendly"

¹²¹ Knutson and Crowley, "Connecting with Art," 196.

frequently listed “Build Visitor Comfort in the Museum” as their experiential goals for families.

Overall, the correlation between Reasons for Creating a Family Guide and Learning and Experiential Goals show successful interpretive planning by museum staff in the family guide development. Moreover, the data indicates that in developing family guides, the ideas of visitor engagement and making the museum more family-friendly are not mutually exclusive but rather, go hand-in-hand.

The results from the survey question, “*Who in or outside the museum is involved in developing family guides?*” reinforce museum experts’ claims, noted in the literature review, that education staff are the first supporters of the needs of the visitor. All 31 respondents involve education staff in the development of family guides.

While this points underlines the researcher’s primary audience for this study, many educators are still being left to develop family guides alone. The numbers show that while some institutions are involving more than one department in the development process, more than half do not. In a tabulation to find out how *many* different types people were most commonly involved in family guide development throughout the survey sample, the highest point was ten respondents (32%), who said they involve three different people in the development; and the second highest points were one person and two people, each comprised of eight respondents, or 26%. Therefore, given that Education Staff was chosen by all the respondents, some institutions are clearly still leaving family guides solely in the hands of this department. This can inhibit a family guide’s potential effectiveness since education staff do not have expertise in other

realms of the museum that relate to a family guide's content, such as collections and marketing. According to the developmental collaboration model discussed by Rand and Kiihne, museum departments must collectively contribute to audience-centered projects so that the institution as a whole is supportive of their needs.¹²²

The researcher found it surprising that only 39% of respondents recorded curators. Likewise, marketing and communications staff only generated 35% from respondents. In keeping with the developmental collaboration model, it was expected that these staff members would be high-rated category. The input of curators can be important, especially to ensure the accuracy of collection information and exhibition content. Also, as experts in attracting museum audiences through various channels, the marketing department's input can be particularly valuable in regard to the family guide's design.

In response to the survey question, "Who is involved in the development of your family guide(s)?" only 6% of this study's respondents involve child visitors in the development of family guides. Although, it is more difficult to reach out to minors since it requires parental permission or supervision, so this statistic seems logical. Even so, with a better chance of receiving input from *both* adults and children, only 23% of this study's respondents involve family visitors. Researchers Wood and Wolf argue for a balance between museum staff's concerns and audience input when designing family-centered projects. Families today want to take part in creating their own educational experiences. Museums should also take advantage of families as partners in the

¹²² Rand and Kiihne, "Experts, Evaluators, and Explorers: Collaborating with Kids," 75.

development process due to the innate diversity in family dynamics and parenting styles., This point in the data brings to light a general lack of collaboration or exchange with family audiences during the creation of family guides in art museums.

The number and variety of respondents included in the development of family guides at the institutions surveyed is not as high as the researcher expected. With the proven success of involving multiple museum departments and the intended audience in developing museum interpretation, this is a definite area for future improvement.

More than half of respondents claim to use tools and resources in their development process (61%). Seventeen out of the 19 respondents consult resources *outside* their institutions. This means that respondents are specifically seeking out information from other experts, scholars, and museums, and in doing so, they are able to create more well-informed and effective family guides, rather than ones that reflect an internal, single-institution viewpoint. As noted in the literature review, museum experts strongly encourage institutions to consult outside resources when they are creating with a targeted audience in mind. Adequate research on learning styles, for example, can help museum staff to create effective family guides.

Nevertheless, the researcher expected that close to all of the participating institutions would refer to other museums' family guides, yet, that was not the case and only eight respondents claimed to do so. In today's digital age, it is quick and easy to draw upon the abundance of institutions with family guides for guidance and ideas. Perhaps if there was some more widely-known tools and better resources on this topic, the number of educators using outside resources may increase in future years.

A significant minority of the sample do not consult any resources during family guide development (39%). This point in the data surprised the researcher, especially since the survey question was worded to encompass a wide range of responses. This number is a bit concerning and begs the question, are people just making something up based on their whims?

To the researcher's surprise, more than half of the respondents do not test or evaluate their family guides. This data begs the question: why don't most institutions evaluate their family guides despite the conceivable benefits? Possible reasons may include cost, staff time, staff's lack of knowledge on evaluation, and that the project timeline is tight. Nevertheless, the literature review of this thesis underscores the importance of measuring the intended audience group's response to a project through evaluation. Evaluation is imperative to fulfil an institution's commitment to the public and to create a successful end-product.

The smaller number of respondents who conduct evaluations mostly perform formative and summative evaluations. once the family guide has been distributed to visitors. Respondents are mostly concentrating on creating prototypes that they can test as well as assessing how visitors use the guides in the galleries after they are officially distributed. These assessments are reliable ways to measure and improve a family guide's effectiveness. Nevertheless, front-end stages of evaluation can acquire the same type of information earlier in the development process. As recommended by the USS Constitution Museum, institutions should start testing and evaluation early and

frequently throughout a project. By doing so, museum staff are less likely to have to revise or recreate family guides they have already created.

For this reason, the researcher was surprised of how few respondents conduct front-end evaluations, such as focus groups, interviews, and surveys. However, these findings are consistent with the low number of respondents who claimed to involve family visitors in the process in survey Question #4.

Overall, the researcher concludes that evaluation of family guides is an area that institutions can better inform themselves of and incorporate more frequently to provide families with materials that are accurate and effective.

Additional Findings

The majority of family guide titles from the survey sample suggest the type of activities that the family guides involve, such as Art Connection Cards, Discovery Guide, and ArtSee Gallery Kits. As evident by the responses in earlier survey questions, respondents have a strong desire to present families with ways to engage and approach artwork, especially since visitors show hesitation to do so. The researcher feels this is significant because it shows consistency between the purpose of the guide and how the guide is marketed to visitors. Hence, families who enter the museum uncertain of what to do are more likely to pick up and use the guides. In fact, a cross-tabulation of respondents' family guide titles and responses from survey Question #2, "Why did your institution create a family guide(s)?", shows that 12 guides with titles alluding to the types of activities inside were said to be made with the intention of helping families engage with the museum collection. Similarly, guides categorized as "Family-friendly" in

survey Question #2 had nine titles alluding to child-friendly activities. In this case, the titles are making families feel more welcomed in the museum by suggesting ways to interact with and enjoy the objects inside.

To the researcher's surprise, Respondent 27, whose family guide is titled "Discovery Guide," explains that "while families are certainly a primary audience, we named the guide "Discovery Guide" to encourage engagement from all audiences." This quote reveals that while the researcher's findings may be true, titles suggesting the type of activities of the family guide are also appealing to a wide range of audiences, not just families, and some art museums may find these titles a better choice.

In contrast, almost half of the respondents' guides have titles that specifically address children and families, which the researcher speculates is also to appeal to families who may be unsure of what they can do at the art museum. The survey sample is almost evenly split between titles that explicitly address children and families versus those that are non-specific and allude to in-gallery activities. Hence, the data proves that it is important to conduct evaluations with the target audience to inform the name of a family guide.

Because the majority (81%) of the survey sample indicates a lack of family-friendly interpretation in the galleries, there may have been a greater perceived need to create a family guide. This places greater importance on family guides to welcome this visitor body.

Among the respondents with family-friendly interpretation, most of the interpretation is permanently installed. In a cross-examination of the four respondents"

responses to survey Question #2, “Why did your institution create a family guide(s)?” their purposes all ranged. While this is still a statistically small portion of respondents, the researcher still felt this data demonstrates that no matter the reason for the guide, institutions with permanent family-centered interpretation in the galleries still have the same difficulties serving families and find it necessary to develop additional material for enhancing families’ experiences. Therefore, their guides still have significance in mediating families’ experiences.

The researcher inquired about the family guides’ activities to get a better sense of what families are encouraged to do when using the family guides. Based on this question’s findings, respondents are very aware that families, especially children, need to stay occupied in the galleries. Five of the activity categories in this question each generated responses from over 50% of respondents. In other words, more than half of the family guides offer several different activities for families to engage in. As noted in the literature review, Adam et al. discusses studies from the field in which families express a lack of activities for their children to do in the galleries that will hold their interest. In addition, the researcher also infers that respondents have an understanding of the differences in learning styles amongst multigenerational families and family members since the variety in activities compliment different learning proficiencies.

The data indicates that close-looking is the most prominent activity in art museum family guides. This seems logical considering close-looking is an innate component in many other activities, including those listed as possible responses to the question. Drawing, for example, rated highly and is a proven way to teach close-looking.

Also, in previous survey responses, respondents noted close-looking as a way to facilitate skill-building and engagement with the collection.

The researcher expected many respondents to use kinesthetics in their guides, and 58% do so. Physical movement in the galleries can be a way to compensate for the inability to touch objects.

With 55% of family guides offering activities that embrace the abilities and insights of different ages, it is evident that more than half of respondents understand the benefits to children's learning in the museum if parents and adults are actively involved. This valuable interchange, referred to as the "learning bond" by Sheppard, involves *equal* exchange of learning and teaching between parents and children.¹²³ Thus, both need to be equally engaged for this learning to happen. Although the researcher was hoping that this percentage would be higher, it is unknown whether museums that do not include activities for older age groups in their family guides do so for a reason. Possible speculations for a lack of adult-centered activities in family guides are that the institution's family groups may have expressed certain types of parenting styles in previous visitor evaluations, that the family guide is more devoted to keeping the children busy throughout the galleries, or that the institution has not embraced family learning. As the literature review reveals, some families prefer to stay together throughout their museum visit and others split up; some parents are very involved with their children and other parents are more distant. Unfortunately, the question and responses do not explain these gaps.

¹²³ Beverly Sheppard, "The Learning Bond."

The researcher was surprised that so few family guides offer activities to complete after the museum visit. Sheppard encourages museums to offer something for families to take home in her suggestions for creating family learning opportunities. Yet, it may be difficult for museums to know or test the efficacy of take-home activities. Also, based on earlier findings, the data suggests museums may be more concerned with tackling families' learning and engagement *inside* the museum, so extending families' learning after the visit is a secondary goal.

The researcher cross-tabulated the data pertaining to family guide activities with some of the overarching goals and objectives that emerged in previous survey questions. The goal was to observe whether or not the activities within the guide related to their goals and objectives mentioned in previous survey responses.¹²⁴

¹²⁴ See Figure 10.

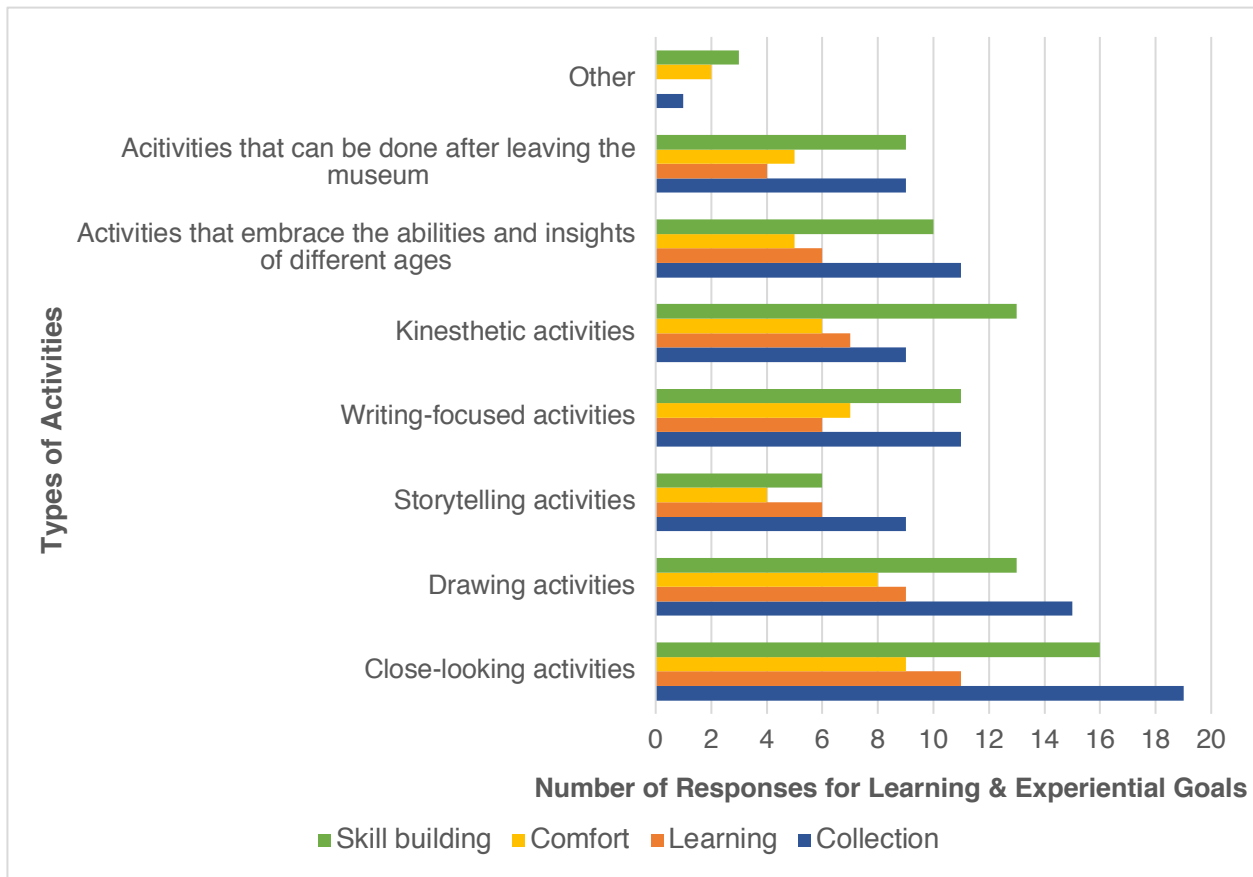


Figure 12. A cross-tabulation of family guide’s learning and experiential goals and the types of activities they include.

The highest-rated category in survey Question #2 and #6,¹²⁵ “Engagement with the Collection,” strongly correlates to the activities included in respondents’ family guides, especially close-looking, drawing, writing, and activities for different ages. This data strongly indicates that respondents are presenting families with different and enjoyable ways to interact with art. As established from the results of survey Question #2, respondents are most likely offering multiple approaches in order to increase

¹²⁵ See Appendix C.

families' interest in the collections. Likewise, these activities bolster families' comfort and confidence within the galleries, which is another highly-regarded goal that was expressed in the survey responses.

Overall, respondents have a good sense of how to achieve the goals of the family guides. In doing so, respondents show an understanding of family learning research since they offer a wide variety of activities to keep families of various learning styles and ages engaged and more at ease in the galleries.

The survey question "Which of these does your institution's family guide(s) foster?" was intended to gauge the amount of support respondents' family guides offer to the learning and engagement of multi-generational families since the options listed were drawn from research on family learning.

Overall, the high ratings generated among six of the categories show that respondents are aware of the complexity of the "family agenda," as Adams, et al. terms it. Many of the art institutions are conscious of including adults and parents into the family guide experience, which is proven to further children's learning on a museum visit. The researcher, however, found the numbers for "Empowerment for Children and Parents" (84%) and "Adult Participation" (81%) in this question much higher than the 55% of respondents who responded to having activities that embrace the abilities and insights of different ages in survey Question #7. Even so, it is difficult to suggest reasons for this inconsistency without examining the actual content of the family guides.

In addition, the majority of respondents' family guides encourages multiple interpretations as well as self-direction and choice, which demonstrates that respondents are cognizant of the wide spectrum of family styles that enter the museum.

Though there were only 13 responses to analyze from the survey's final, open-ended question, the responses gathered generated two prominent themes. First, respondents emphasized how different elements of the development of family guides are greatly influenced by the museum's capacity at the time, i.e. staff, budgeting, and exhibition scheduling. Particularly, respondents stressed the difficulty involved in updating family guides every few months to correspond with the changing exhibitions. For example, Respondent 31 shares "With short staffing and changing exhibitions it has been a challenge to provide up-to-date family guides. We are working on a more sustainable model." Respondent 31 introduces an important distinction between guides that are intended to be collateral material for the duration of an exhibition versus those that are permanent. This raises the question: are there differences in developing an exhibition-specific guide versus an evergreen guide, and if so, what are those differences? Based on Respondent 31's response, a possible distinction could be that close-looking activities are challenging to incorporate when objects in a gallery rotate often.

In support of Respondent 31, the researcher speculates that the issue of capacity affects many stages of family guide development. For example, capacity may be a reason why a greater number of respondents do not conduct evaluations or testing during family guide development. Also, the size of an institution can affect the number of

staff that are available to assist in the process. Similarly, staffing or budget shortages may explain why a large percentage of respondents do not involve family visitors in the conceptual phases.

The second prominent theme that emerged from the open-ended responses was bilingual family guides. The appearance of this theme within the data demonstrates that respondents are responding to their audience's need for a more inclusive family guide, which can be determined through audience evaluations. Many respondents accommodated families who may learn best together when speaking in a native language by creating a family guide in multiple languages. These efforts reinforce Adams et al.'s notion of the family agenda, which recognizes families as experts of their own way of learning.

Overview of Conclusions

The survey data presents three key conclusions about the respondents' guides and their development practices. First, the art institutions included in this study have a general understanding of family learning in museums as well as the challenges families face in art museums. In accordance with Sheppard's notion of the "learning bond," which argues for museums to pay equal attention to the child and the adult in the learning context, respondents' family guides include content that is comprehensible for multiple ages and knowledge levels. The museums encourage the insight and participation of multigenerational family members. In addition, Dierking asserts that families' implicit goal is to learn and have fun together in the museum, which the

respondents seem to recognize is often a challenge due to the limitations set by art museums. For this reason, respondents' guides offer various types of activities that are meant to engage families with collections and make them feel more comfortable doing so.

A second conclusion from the survey is that respondents consciously try to suit the guides to the diverse nature of families. Overall, respondents' claim their guides are conducive to supporting successful family learning and engagement in survey Question #8. In regard to the family group's complexity, Dierking point out the differences in family learning styles, ranging from independent to collaborative, and Sheppard also argues that families come with different expectations of what they want out of the museum experience. Based on the high ratings in all of the categories for survey Question #8, which were drawn from published family learning approaches, respondents demonstrate a good effort in supporting this wide spectrum of families and learning styles, through their self-reported responses.

Third, it is most evident that among the respondents there are discrepancies in how they are creating family guides. Some of the major discrepancies emerge particularly in the development phases include type of staff involved, the kinds of resources consulted, and whether evaluations for the family guides are conducted or not. Not only does the data show inconsistencies between respondents' practices, but also it shows deviations from established development practices for other types of family-centered interpretation. Along with other outcomes from the survey, these

inconsistencies lead to the researcher's recommendations for how to better develop family guides in the future.

Recommended Practices for Developing Family Guides

With family learning as a newly-explored subject in art museums, interpretive materials such as family guides hold an even greater weight in supporting this audience group's experiences. Families indicate they need additional interpretation in art institutions; hence, the expectations for family guides are higher. To that end, there is an evident need for a formalized process to develop family guides. McKenna-Cress and Kamien warn that without an established process for a project, "the team does not clearly understand how progress will be achieved, how and when decisions will be made, and the required sequence of events to reach milestones, it will not fully capitalize on creative potential."¹²⁶ It is crucial to note that while the researcher argues for a more standardized approach to developing family guides, she understands that every institution and project is different. Respondent 10 attests to this point, stating "Each individual institution should have its own very specific goals about what they what to accomplish with a family guide. I would caution against a 'one size fits all' approach." With that said, readers should use this list as a guide, tailoring it to their specific circumstances and adhering to these practices when it is appropriate and feasible for them to do so.

¹²⁶ McKenna-Cress and Kamien, *Creating Exhibitions*, 265.

After analyzing the available literature and survey results, the following is a list of recommended steps and methods that can help art museums develop more effective family guides. This list was compiled by evaluating the dataset and determining which development practices are most consistent with established best practices used for developing other larger family-centered interpretation, like programming and exhibitions.

Collaborative Development

Family guides should be developed collaboratively across multiple museum departments as well as with targeted audience members. While not as complex as planning, developing, and designing an exhibition, family guides still require “coordination of multiple professionals and a planned sequencing of phases”,¹²⁷ as do larger interpretation projects, in order to create an effective and successful family guide. It is advised that a project team, no matter the size of the institution, have representation from multiple departments with diverse expertise rather than rely solely on the views of an educator. As a guide, art museum educators can consult McKenna-Cress and Kamien’s list, Five Advocacies Needed for Every Team, to ensure there is substantial representation.¹²⁸ Important contributors, that were also among the highest-rated by respondents in this study, include the education department for making family-appropriate materials, the marketing department to best inform families of the availability of these guides, visitor services staff to provide insight on visitors’ behaviors

¹²⁷ Ibid, 263.

¹²⁸ Ibid, 22.

and testimonies, and personnel from the curatorial team to provide specific information on the museum's collection.

Intentional Development

Once a development team has been assembled to create a family guide, it is essential that staff discuss an interpretive plan. McKenna-Cress and Kamien stress that when outlining an interpretive plan, staff must take into account “an organization’s mission and vision statements, community and visitor needs, organizational resources and values, and revenue aspirations.”¹²⁹ The authors point out that while an interpretive plan identifies the target audience, defines clear learning objectives, and establishes measurable outcomes before the start of the creation process, the plan should always align with the institution-wide mission. Like an exhibition or a gallery label, family guides are communicating information to visitors and should therefore embody the views and values of the institution.

The visitor objectives in an interpretive plan characterize the intent of the interpretive material, outline the visitor experience, and shape the kinds of evaluation that are conducted to measure the material’s success. McKenna-Cress and Kamien state that the visitor objectives can be cognitive, emotional, and experiential.¹³⁰ In addition, these goals keep staff accountable and on-track during the development process. Overall, respondents in this study show they have a good sense of how to achieve the goals of the family guides since the data revealed was a strong correlation

¹²⁹ Ibid, 41.

¹³⁰ Ibid.

between the goals of the guides and the types of activities and opportunities that they encourage. Nevertheless, many of the survey responses to the family guide's purpose and visitor goals included vague terms like "learn," "interact," and "engage." Without well-defined objectives, the evaluation measurables are also unclear. Hence, during the interpretive planning, it is strongly recommended that museums define any ambiguous terms in the context of the family guide. Staff may also find that in order to more closely define some of these terms or the family guide's objectives, certain types of evaluations with the target audience will be necessary in order to gain their insight, which is a process that will be discussed further in a later recommendation.

Expanded Resources

It is beneficial for museums to utilize various resources in *and* outside their institution. Examples of resources educators should consult as they begin family guide development include published literature in education and museum studies, relevant pedagogy, and advice from colleagues in the field. As stated by McRaney and Russick, it is strongly advised that museum staff particularly use *outside* resources because many museums are not expert in the field of children's or family learning.¹³¹ The expertise from various outside sources will better inform planning the family guide's content and structure. An outside resource that was not mentioned by survey respondents but can be very advantageous are location, regional, and national museum organizations, including roundtables and other professional networks. Depending on the

¹³¹ McRaney and Russick, preface to *Connecting Kids to History with Museum Exhibitions*, 15-16.

size and structure of the organization, becoming a member of museum networks can unlock knowledge, prior work, and research from peers in the field and sometimes permit opportunities for peer reviews or critical analysis of one's family guide.

Likewise, referencing other museums' family guides will help museum staff become aware of different approaches to engaging families in different museum settings while providing inspiring creative and practical insights. While this inspiration is valuable in the early development stages of a family guide, it is not recommended that development teams consult other museum family guides to determine substantial elements, such the types of activities that will best engage audiences, since the results of this study show it is unlikely other museums test their family guides. Therefore, it is suggested that staff consult published and peer-reviewed journal studies and conference papers throughout the majority of the development process.

In any case, due to the significant number of respondents in this study who do not use any resources or tools to create family guides, it is important to note that there are many effective options available that can substantially improve the final product.

Evaluation

This thesis has reiterated how crucial evaluation is to the development process of museum interpretation. Employing the USS Constitution Museum's suggestions, the researcher advises that institutions start testing and evaluating early and frequently throughout a project. While doing so, members of the family audience should serve as test subjects, no matter the type of evaluation that is being conducted, as a way to seek

the target audiences' contribution. Families' prior knowledge and experiences should not only inform the purpose of the family guide and the visitor goals, as mentioned earlier, but also be a roadmap to understanding the types of activities families enjoy most, the languages they prefer to speak in, and the artworks they are most interested in seeing.

Although summative evaluations, the most reported method in this study, is proven effective for measuring a family guide's successes and shortcomings, museum staff should conduct earlier stages of evaluations to prevent from having to work retroactively to revise the guides. This is especially important for those museums that expressed institutional capacity as a limiting factor in family guide development. It is also important for the majority of study respondents who do not test their guides yet but may like to start. Institutions without a substantial budget should refer to the responses shared by respondents from this study that described utilizing previous audience evaluation results to inform their family guide development. Furthermore, several respondents revealed options for low-cost formative evaluation methods, including user testing with onsite family visitors, staff members and their children, or young volunteers. As the data shows, these constructive and inexpensive evaluation methods should, whenever possible, be adopted by museums.

Chapter Six: Application to the Field

The research in literature and original survey findings from this thesis demonstrate several significant applications to today's cultural institutions, particularly to art museums.

The main focuses of the literature review, such as the prominence of families in museums as well as the value in family guides as supportive tools, hold importance across the museum field. If any museum professionals have not considered the family audience as a main interest or have not considered family guides as a potential tool for assisting families, the research will inform them of such. Especially in the case of art museums, a greater awareness of both families and family guides can ensure that museums are inclusive of these groups and are equipped with appropriate ways to serve them.

The results of this study's survey reveal current trends in the field, the inconsistencies in family guide development, and where the development can be improved. Most notably, the results show inconsistent and ineffective development practices due to a lack of research in the area. Without guidelines or criteria set in place by the field, museums are left to create guides as they see fit. This finding raises two concerns; the first is that family guide development teams are creating more work for themselves. Without guidelines or criteria, teams will not "capitalize on creative potential," as stated by McKenna-Cress and Kamien.¹³² In addition, the authors point out that staff are likely to spend more time and money on a project if there is no

¹³² McKenna-Cress and Kamien, *Creating Exhibitions*, 265.

formalized process. A second concern is that this lax system of creating family guides does not best adhere to the professional standards of the field. According to the Core Standards for Museums published by AAM, under the Education and Interpretation Standards museums are expected to “use techniques, technologies, and methods appropriate to its educational goals, content, audiences, and resources.”¹³³ Based on this principle, this study demonstrates that the field can employ appropriate techniques and methods more often in their family guide development to meet the field’s values.

Similarly, another area of concern for the field is the majority of art museum respondents that do not evaluate their family guides. Evaluation is not only a key signifier of how well a family guide is working and why but it is also a specific requirement of the Education and Interpretation Core Standards for Museums, which is implemented in museum accreditation. According to AAM, a museum is accredited when “the museum assesses the effectiveness of its interpretive activities and uses those results to plan and improve its activities.”¹³⁴ As institutions who serve the public, it is an art museum’s ethical duty to create interpretation with the audience in mind and just as importantly to also measure a program’s audience impact. Hence, conducting consistent evaluations will ensure a high quality of family guides and satisfy expectations for professional practices in the field.

By sharing shortcomings and successes of current practices, such as the lack of evaluations, this thesis hopes to spark change in readers’ family guide development

¹³³ “Core Standards for Museums,” *American Alliance of Museums*, January 18, 2018, accessed March 6, 2019, <https://www.aam-us.org/programs/ethics-standards-and-professional-practices/core-standards-for-museums/>.

¹³⁴ Ibid.

procedures. In fact, Respondent 22 stated in response to the survey's final, open-ended question "Thank you for this survey. Your questions have prompted me to think deeply about our guides and ways that we could improve them!"

The researcher's Recommended Practices for Developing Family Guides¹³⁵ provide a framework that can assist art museum professionals as they seek ways to improve audience engagement through family guides. This part of the study offers a starting point for readers to reflect on their current development processes in order to improve existing family guides until further research is conducted and published; whether by fine-tuning some steps, implementing specific recommendations, or drafting an entirely new system. While institutions vary in their capacity to develop family guides, art museum professionals can use the recommended practices offered in this thesis to best determine which they are most capable of achieving. This may vary based on staff size, budget, and audience needs.

The researcher hopes that the concerns of this study will eventually be addressed more publicly in the field and lead to a more unified, formalized way of developing family guides in art museums so that these interpretive materials can reach maximum effectiveness.

¹³⁵ See page 90.

Chapter Seven: Implications for Further Research

Additional research can be conducted on this topic in several areas. The first would be to conduct a similar survey, or the same survey to a wider variety of participants and to generate a much larger sample size. The researcher was limited on the types of conclusions that could be made from the data gathered. Therefore, it may be best to gain more samples from different types of art institutions, and to create a more nationally-representative demographic by generating answers from institutions located in the American Midwest. This will help to see how more institutions are implementing these guides, if at all, and may be able to help identify regional similarities between institutions. Once the sample is large enough, it would benefit the field to compare data from different types of institutions represented here: art museums, university art museums, and art centers. This analysis may reveal differences in family guide development between institutions of various sizes and structures.

A second point that can be further analyzed pertains to Question #10 of the survey, in which respondents were asked how they distribute family guides to the intended audiences. The results from this question showed that a majority of participating museums display family guides at the admissions desk for visitors to take freely. This seems logical since the front desk is where every visitor starts their visit and is a point where they can ask questions about the museum's amenities and programs or pick up informational brochures. Although they did not produce numbers from the majority, other common methods were distributing family guides in proximity to galleries and having family guides available on the museum website to print-out. A follow-up

question can be asked to determine whether the respondents consider these methods of distribution successful for attracting families or if they have any other methods of distribution that they would like to try and implement. This particular question is one that can be further examined with the insight of visitor services staff.

Closer attention to testing the number and type of activities included within a family guide can greatly enhance the effectiveness of family guides in fostering learning and engagement. Too few activities may result in boredom or distraction, and too many may seem overwhelming for both the parents and the children. As noted by Tenenbaum, et al., “more research is required in the field to better understand these types of interpretive materials, such as which specific activities are best to include for enjoyment and conversation as well as how much guidance is necessary for different types of exhibits.”¹³⁶ Many respondents shared in their responses that they survey family guide users to inquire about their experiences with the number of activities and the ease with which they understood the guide, if it was entertaining, and if it helped them learn. A compilation of these institutions’ findings would be beneficial to the field and especially helpful to institutions that are either in the process of creating their first family guide or that do not have the means to conduct adequate visitor evaluations. In addition, the field would also benefit from compiling case studies of institutions who test high in their evaluations in order to build a larger body of knowledge on family guides.

The third and final point is for future researchers exploring this subject to observe and oversee family guide development as they are created at different institutions. This

¹³⁶ Tenenbaum et al., “Supporting Parent-Child Conversations in a History Museum,” 250.

may help provide further insight into their effectiveness instead of analyzing them retroactively. Seeing how the guides are developed and being able to spot potential pitfalls can help maximize effectiveness.

Appendix A: List of Organizations and Institutions Contacted for Survey Distribution

Organizations

American Alliance of Museum's, Education Professional Network (EdCom)
American Alliance of Museums, Open Forum
Association of Art Museum Curators
Listserv, Museum-L
Mid-Atlantic Association of Museums
Museum Council of Greater Philadelphia
Museum Education Roundtable
New England Museum Association
Philadelphia Museum Education Roundtable
Talk@Museum-Ed
Visitor Studies Association

Institutions

Alexandria Museum of Art	J. Paul Getty Museum
American Folk Art Museum	Milwaukee Art Museum
Baltimore Museum of Art	Mississippi Museum of Art
Barnes Foundation	Montclair Art Museum
Boise Art Museum	Museum of Fine Arts, Boston
Cincinnati Art Museum	National Gallery of Art
Crocker Art Museum	Oakland Museum of California
Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art	Parrish Art Museum
Dallas Museum of Art	Portland Art Museum
Denver Art Museum	Princeton University Art Museum
Florence Griswold Museum	Ringling Museum of Art
Guggenheim Museum	San Francisco Museum of Modern Art
Hammer Museum	Santa Barbara Museum of Art
Harwood Museum of Art	Seattle Art Museum
High Museum of Art	Westmoreland Museum of American Art
Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum	Yale University Art Gallery

Appendix B: List of the Geographical Locations of Participating Institutions

Athens, GA
Atlanta, GA
Bentonville, AR
Boston, MA
Cincinnati, OH
Dallas, TX
Druid Hills, GA
Findlay, OH
Greenwich, CT
Houston, TX
Lafayette, LA
Los Angeles, CA
Melbourne, FL
Milwaukee, WI
Nashville, TN
New York, NY
Old Lyme, CT
Palo Alto, CA
Philadelphia, PA
Princeton, NJ
Raleigh, NC
Sacramento, CA
Santa Barbara, CA
Seattle, WA
Springfield, IL
Taos, NM
Washington, D.C.
Williamsburgh, VA

Appendix C: Development of Family Guides in Art Museums Survey

Thank you for agreeing to take part in this survey. Your feedback will be used in a master's thesis examining different development processes art museums take to create family guides. This survey should only take 5-8 minutes to complete.

The name and photo associated with your Google account will be recorded when you upload files and submit this form. Not **sstrucaly@uarts.edu**?

Email address:

Please enter the name of the institution to which you are employed:

Please enter the name and the position you hold at your institution:

1. What is/are the title(s) of your family guide(s)?

If you would like to upload your institution's family guide(s), please do so here.

2. Why did your institution create a family guide(s)?

3. Does your institution have any family-friendly interpretation such as labels, throughout its galleries? i.e. labels targeted for a child or family audience that are apart from tombstone labels

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

3a. If yes, are these labels a permanent part of your exhibit?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No, they are temporary

4. Who is involved in the development of your family guide(s)? (check all that apply)

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="radio"/> You | <input type="radio"/> Curatorial staff |
| <input type="radio"/> Education staff | <input type="radio"/> Family visitors |
| <input type="radio"/> Visitors Services staff | <input type="radio"/> Child visitors |
| <input type="radio"/> Communications and Marketing staff | <input type="radio"/> Other: |

5. Did your institution use any research tools, studies, or books to develop the family guide(s)?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

5a. If yes, please list them below:

6. What are the learning or experiential goals for your family guide(s)?

Appendix C: *Development of Family Guides in Art Museums Survey (continued)*

7. Which of these best describe the activities included in your institution's family guide(s): (check all that apply)
- ☐ Close-looking activities
 - ☐ Kinesthetic activities
 - ☐ Writing-focused activities
 - ☐ Drawing activities
 - ☐ Storytelling activities
 - ☐ Activities that embrace the abilities and insights of different ages
 - ☐ Activities that can be done after leaving the museum
 - ☐ Other:
8. Which of these does your institution's family guide(s) foster: (check all that apply)
- ☐ Collaboration with other people
 - ☐ Adult participation
 - ☐ Connections to visitor's prior knowledge
 - ☐ Self-direction and choice
 - ☐ Multiple interpretations
 - ☐ Empowerment for children and parents
 - ☐ Opportunities to celebrate
- 9a. Did your institution conduct any evaluation or testing in developing the family guide(s)?
- ☐ Yes
 - ☐ No
- 9b. If yes, please elaborate on the evaluation or testing that was done and the results.
If you would like to upload any results from the evaluation or testing, please do so here.
10. How do you distribute the family guide(s) to the intended audience? (check all that apply)
- ☐ Family guides are placed at the admissions desk for visitors to take freely
 - ☐ Family guides are only distributed to visitors who request one
 - ☐ Family guides are automatically distributed to families and children at the admissions desk
 - ☐ Family guides are available on the institution's website to print out before a visit
 - ☐ Other:
11. Is there anything else I should know about your institution's family guide(s) that was not covered in this survey?

Appendix D: Raw Data

1. What is/are the title(s) of your family guide(s)?

Respondent #	Response
1	"Find Your Fears" and "Toys"
2	Egyptian Family Guide, South Asian Family Guide, Greek Family Guide
3	Family Gallery Guide
4	Family Guide is the overall name of the guide. Within the guide, there are 5 activity cards entitled: Birds of a Feather; Action Figures; Cosmic Dance; Live Like a King; Monkey Business
5	Miss Florence's Scavenger Hunts
6	Family Day Gallery Guide
7	I created an Art Cart with about 24 family activity cards.
8	Family Fun Guide
9	They change each month
10	A Looking Adventure: Eye Spy; A Looking Adventure: Connect 4; A Looking Adventure: Weird & Wonderful Adventures
11	Once Upon a Time, Go for the Gold!, Music Maestro!, Friendly Felines, Top Dog, In the Swim, Modern Mysteries
12	Exhibition-specific: Family Guides; Permanent Collection: Gallery Reads; Currently in-development: Family Fun Packs & "self-guides"
13	ArtSee Gallery Kits
14	Art Connection Cards, A Guide to Family Fun at the MFA, Exhibition specific guides
15	Family Gallery Guides (Usually includes the exhibition title)
16	Gallery Guide
17	Take a Closer Look! African Art, Tour in a Tote, ABCs of the Museum Park
18	Activity Guides
19	Art Guide
20	Bonjour, Paris!
21	Family Adventure Guide
22	Gallery Guides and Take and Talk Cards

23	Animals + Creatures, Nature + Landscape, People + Portraits. These are our latest permanent collection family guides, in card form. I have worked on numerous booklet style family guides for CB as well.
24	We have two series: Artful Adventures (7-12 yrs) and Smartkids (3-7yrs) there are 10 Artful Adventures guides and 20 Smartkids. the Artful Adventures are booklets that explore a collection and the kids get a passport and collect stickers for each Adventure they complete. The Smartkids are one page, double sided and help the kids and their adults engage with one work of art.
25	Detail Detectives and Journey around the World
26	We create three guides a year in conjunction with feature exhibitions, plus have an evergreen Architecture Family Guide.
27	MyCAM
28	Discovery Guide
29	Family Guide: An Introduction to Folk Art
30	multiple. one is What If Guides, another is We'll Give You Something to Talk About
31	Family Guide

2. Why did your institution create a family guide(s)?

Respondent #	Response
1	To make exhibitions more family friendly for younger visitors. Great opportunity for guests when there isn't a schedule tour or program. Every guests engages with the objects in different ways-not everyone like a guided tour. Fun way to engage guests.
2	The guides help families with children have a fun and informative visit to the museum. Using the guides, children are able to engage with the objects in three of our collections (Greek, Egyptian, and South Asian) through fun facts, myths and stories, and connections with popular culture.
3	I wanted a way for families to interact with the museum's art gallery. I noticed a lot of time families would skip the art gallery and not take their kids through it. I wanted to create a guide that would give parents information about the art, ways to talk to their kids about art, and have an interactive portion for kids.
4	to give grownups ideas on how to look at art together and facilitate discussions about the art with kids. we are a hands-off museum - we offer a robust slate of family programs, but this gives families an opportunity to interact with our art when a family program in the galleries is not taking place
5	To offer a younger audience an age-appropriate activity.
6	We have a monthly family day program that the guide,
7	As an Art Center, with weekly classes for children and teens, we needed a reason for families to visit the galleries more than once during the run of an exhibition.
8	To make exhibits relatable to kids and families.
9	Multiple caregivers had expressed that they needed more tools to help them facilitate an experience in front of a work of art with their children.
10	The historic galleries here contain very little interpretation (as Isabella Stewart Gardner wanted) and can be somewhat overwhelming and challenging for the average family audience - some aren't sure what they're supposed to do. What our evaluations have shown is that these guides help facilitate engaging experiences, primarily through active looking, for intergenerational audiences with kids. They provide the adult facilitator with concrete activities to do with kids.

11	In 2013 we switched to a free general admission format and realized that with increased attendance, more and more children and families would be visiting the Museum. Since the permanent collection is not presented with children in mind, family guides were a way to direct families--especially first-time visitors--through the galleries in a way that would be appealing to children. Each guide focuses on 3-4 works of art around a kid-friendly theme. Each stop in the guide presents fun facts, questions to inspire close looking, and suggested activities that families can do in the galleries to have a deeper experience with the art.
12	To have a free, always available (unlike programs), resource for family audiences. An access point that gives tools for parents to engage with the collection or exhibition.
13	To provide an interactive family resource and education tool for museum visits
14	To welcome families, to assist families with engaging in an exhibition.
15	To help families engage temporary art exhibitions and extend their stay in the temporary art exhibitions.
16	To engage families and children. We initially distributed it at a day long family event.
17	Included in our mission is to serve all people of North Carolina, which includes children! The Audience Engagement department is tasked with fostering personal connections between people and works of art and ideas. Plus, we received specific funding from donors to create these guides.
18	To provide a framework for families and visitors to explore the exhibition on their own while encouraging close looking, discussion, and relating the exhibition back to their own communities and experiences.
19	To create a way for people of all ages to slow down and look more closely at the art.
20	we have family guides for our major exhibitions to create experiences for younger or first-time visitors and to highlight certain areas of the exhibition
21	We consider ourselves extremely family friendly, and we wanted to make sure that families had a way to zero-in on all we offered families. Please note it a folded brochure.
22	We wanted visitors of all ages to be able to have a similar experience to our school tours. The guides ask questions which are designed to help the guest with interpretation of the art. The Take and Talk cards are geared specifically for children. These are intended to encourage a deeper evaluation of the art and to be inspirational in creating their own art.

23	To help adults and children discover and discuss artwork together. To help make the galleries more engaging and meaningful for family audiences. To model ways of exploring art that can be used by families whenever they visit a museum or gallery.
24	We wanted to help families engage with the artwork and with each other
25	To help children engage with the collection while on a tour of the Rosenbach brothers' home. To take a little bit of the pressure off our volunteer guides who lead the tours of the house. Guides are meant to be used by the child and their caregiver and the guide only has minimal involvement.
26	To help guide family visitors through exhibitions in fun ways, and as a keepsake of the experience.
27	To create a choose your own adventure guide of the museum. MyCAM is a digital family guide that allows families to choose the objects they would like to see.
28	As a contemporary art museum, we wanted to give families tools for engaging with non-traditional art forms. We had produced exhibition-specific family guides but recognized a need for an evergreen guide.
29	To create an opportunity for self-guided family visitors to explore the exhibitions, interacting with the artwork and one another.
30	to help families connect to museum, art on view and each other
31	To provide activities that families visiting the museum can use to engage with their children while viewing the museum.

3a. Does your institution have any family-friendly interpretation such as labels, throughout its galleries? i.e. labels targeted for a child or family audience that are apart from tombstone labels (Yes/No)

3b. If yes, are these labels a permanent part of your exhibit? (Permanent/Temporary)

Respondent #	3a. Response	3b. Response
1	Yes	Permanent
2	No	
3	No	
4	No	
5	No	
6	No	
7	No	
8	No	
9	No	
10	No	
11	No	
12	No	
13	No	
14	Yes	Temporary
15	No	
16	No	
17	No	
18	Yes	Permanent
19	Yes	Temporary
20	No	
21	Yes	Permanent
22	No	
23	No	
24	No	
25	No	
26	No	
27	No	Permanent
28	No	
29	No	
30	No	
31	No	

4. Who is involved in the development of your family guide(s)? (check all that apply)

Respondent #	Response	Other
1	You, Education staff, Curatorial staff, Other (please specify)	Graphic Designer
2	Education staff	
3	You, Education staff	
4	Visitors Services staff, Child visitors, Other (please specify)	our family programs manager (who works in public programs, not the education department) and our manager of visitor experience (again, not in the education department) spearheaded the project with the help of input from children associated with staff
5	You	
6	You, Education staff, Communications and Marketing staff, Other (please specify)	Education Interns
7	You, Education staff, Family visitors, executive staff, contracted evaluators	
8	You	
9	You, Curatorial staff	
10	You, Education staff, Family visitors	
11	You, Education staff, Family visitors	
12	You, Education staff, Communications and Marketing staff, Curatorial staff, Family visitors, Child visitors	
13	Other (please specify)	Family Coordinator, Family Program Volunteers, Art Educators
14	You, Curatorial staff	
15	You, Education staff, Visitors Services staff, Other (please specify)	Exhibitions team

16	You, Education staff, Visitors Services staff, Communications and Marketing staff, Other (please specify)	Graphic Designer
17	You, Education staff, Communications and Marketing staff, Curatorial staff, Other (please specify)	Interpretation, Collections
18	You, Education staff, Communications and Marketing staff, Curatorial staff, Other (please specify)	I work very closely with our curator on all gallery interpretation
19	You, Communications and Marketing staff, Curatorial staff	
20	You, Education staff, Curatorial staff	
21	Education staff, Visitors Services staff, Communications and Marketing staff	
22	You	
23	You, Communications and Marketing staff, Other (please specify)	Interpretation staff
24	You, Education staff, Communications and Marketing staff, Curatorial staff	
25	You, Education staff, Family visitors, Child visitors	
26	You, Education staff, Communications and Marketing staff, Curatorial staff	
27	You, Education staff, Visitors Services staff, Communications and Marketing staff, Curatorial staff	
28	You, Education staff	
29	You, Education staff, Family visitors	
30	You, Education staff, Curatorial staff, Family visitors, Child visitors	
31	You, Education staff	

5a. Did your institution use any research tools, studies, or books to develop the family guide(s)? (Yes/No)

5b. If yes, please list them below.

Respondent #	5a. Response	5b. Response
1	No	The educators who present family tours every day are the ones who develop family guides. They know first-hand the questions and interests of our young guests.
2	Yes	Content-specific research
3	Yes	How to Talk to Children About Art by Francoise Barde-Gall and Looking at Art in the Classroom
4	Yes	examining family guides from other institutions
5	No	
6	Yes	
7	Yes	I wrote an article for the Journal of Museum Education on the creation of our Art Cart. I uploaded a pdf above. (Design Thinking from Stanford's d. school, best practices research from other museum's family guides,
8	Yes	Examples from other institutions
9	Yes	We have done some informal evaluation in the galleries with users.
10	Yes	Many wonderful resources can be found on the "Engage Families: A Project of the USS Constitution Museum" website, an IMLS funded project.
11	Yes	general understanding of Gardner's Multiple Intelligences, Bloom's Taxonomy of Questions, and Vygotsky's theory of zone of proximal development
12	Yes	The resources were specific to our collection
13	Yes	The kits were created before my tenure. Not sure what the sources were beyond the museum's collection and research from the education dept.
14	Yes	Other institutions guides, curatorial research
15	No	
16	Yes	We gathered examples of other family guides from museum around the country, particularly MoMA's gallery materials. We focused on art

		elements and activities that encouraged close looking.
17	No	
18	Yes	If You Can't See It, Don't Say It by Kris Wetterlund
19	Yes	Research from other institutions, Keri Smith
20	No	
21	No	
22	Yes	I use the book from which the artwork comes, the illustrators of the art have been helpful as primary sources for the guides, and our Mazza database with research done by Dr. Jerry Mallett has been useful as well.
23	No	This is kind of hard to answer. I have been creating guides like this for many years, and have a library of hundreds of family guides I've collected over the years, and my staff and I are constantly reading about what our peers are doing in the field. So I am not able to point to specific sources, rather experience with youth and family audiences, familiarity with museum education practices at numerous institutions, and continuous learning/reading in the field.
24	No	
25	No	
26	Yes	
27	Yes	It is based on Journey Maker from the Art Institute of Chicago
28	No	
29	No	
30	Yes	museum 2'0, other Museum examples
31	No	

6. What are the learning or experiential goals for your family guide(s)?

Respondent #	Response
1	That our young guests leave the museum having learned something about an exhibit or group of objects, been encouraged to be creative, and have fun in the museum. Depends on the guide.
2	Featuring images of objects in the collection, lively text, and quotes from ancient sources, these collectable guides make exploring the galleries fun for children (and their accompanying adult) as they search for the featured objects and discover more about them.
3	parents and children interact with each other and the art; parents feel more comfortable talking with their kids about art and taking them through the space; kids gain an appreciation for art
4	to make a visit more accessible and enjoyable for families
5	Close looking. Learning vocabulary words. Developing questions inspired by historic objects.
6	For families to learn a little about the exhibition, feel more engaged with the works of art, and hopefully take away some simple techniques that they can apply to other museum experiences.
7	connect families to the "seeing" part of the mission [looking at art], activities to engage with in the galleries
8	To help families discuss the objects and make them relevant to the child's life.
9	To help families feel empowered with new strategies. To provide multiple types of engagement: games, conversation starters, and movement and drawing prompts.
10	The broader goal of these guides is to facilitate engaging museum experiences, primarily through active looking, for intergenerational audiences with kids.
11	Our goals are to provide families with practical tools to engage in close looking of the art, create a space for families to form museum memories together, and help caregivers feel confident in their ability to lead their children in an art museum experience.
12	Close-looking; developing vocabulary/visual literacy; welcoming and giving families/children a sense of belonging in the museum
13	Interactive, fun, learning
14	Welcome and engage families, provide an opportunity for closer looking, make clear amenities
15	To give families an opportunity to learn about art, artists, extend their interactions within the exhibition/museum, to support inter-generational learning
16	Increase families visits to the museum. Increase time families spend in the museum. Encourage families to look together.

17	To engage adults and children with art through multiple modalities, to encourage close looking
18	To encourage the development of observation skills, communication, critical thinking skills, to feel connected to the works of art through their prior knowledge and experiences.
19	We do not have a permanent collection, so we were looking to create something evergreen that would also let our visitors know that families are welcome in the space. We also create an "insert" that is exhibition specific and fits in the art guide.
20	to learn about important parts of the exhibition and to have an interactive or activity-based option in the galleries (and as a take-home)
21	Our guide is really about ensuring families don't miss anything and understand how to navigate their way through the Museum with ease. The iteration of the family guide before our current one had a drawing activity, but it didn't really make sense given all the activities we had for families to do throughout the building. So, now the guide is more about way-finding, support, and increasing the knowledge base about what we offer.
22	1. To spend more time looking at the art! We want our visitors to take time to deeply appreciate the art. 2. We also hope the visitor will read the book from which the art comes. The book is the impetus for the creation of the art, so we feel that reading the book enhances the experience.
23	Each of the guides we've created have had unique learning goals based on the artwork and exhibitions featured, e.g. learning about individual artists, media, styles, elements of art. However, the overarching goal for our family guides is to help guests learn techniques and tools for exploring artwork on their own, with children.
24	We want to encourage close looking and thoughtful discussion
25	The importance of close observation. All countries make art. Art comes in many shapes and sizes.
26	To encourage looking, reflection, and an increased comfort level in the galleries.
27	Create an interactive learning experience for families. Create ownership in the museum's collection. Create a fun and immersive opportunity for all ages.
28	-Describe and analyze contemporary art forms -Use the elements of art to explore the artist's process -Make meaningful connections to artwork
29	To learn about the art/artists on view, share their impressions, and work together to have fun.

30	to get families to look more closely, notice details, make connections, compare and contrast, form hypothesis
31	Develop Creativity Develop Critical Thinking Foster Cultural & Community Awareness Increase Understanding of Art Viewing and Making Express Joy through Learning

7. Which of these best describe the activities included in your institution's family guide(s): (check all that apply)

Respondent #	Response	Other
1	Close-looking activities, Drawing activities, Activities that can be done after leaving the museum	
2	Close-looking activities, Storytelling activities	
3	Close-looking activities, Storytelling activities, Activities that embrace the abilities and insights of different ages, Activities that can be done after leaving the museum	
4	Close-looking activities, Kinesthetic activities, Writing-focused activities, Drawing activities, Storytelling activities	
5	Close-looking activities, Kinesthetic activities	
6	Close-looking activities, Kinesthetic activities, Writing-focused activities, Drawing activities, Storytelling activities, Activities that embrace the abilities and insights of different ages	
7	Close-looking activities, Kinesthetic activities, Writing-focused activities, Drawing activities, Activities that embrace the abilities and insights of different ages, Activities that can be done after leaving the museum	
8	Close-looking activities, Activities that can be done after leaving the museum	

9	Close-looking activities, Kinesthetic activities, Writing-focused activities, Drawing activities, Activities that embrace the abilities and insights of different ages, Activities that can be done after leaving the museum	
10	Close-looking activities, Kinesthetic activities, Drawing activities, Activities that embrace the abilities and insights of different ages, Activities that can be done after leaving the museum, Other (please specify)	multisensory exploration (olfactory, auditory)
11	Close-looking activities, Kinesthetic activities, Writing-focused activities, Drawing activities, Storytelling activities, Activities that can be done after leaving the museum	
12	Close-looking activities, Kinesthetic activities, Writing-focused activities, Drawing activities, Activities that can be done after leaving the museum, Other (please specify)	Reading a book
13	Close-looking activities, Kinesthetic activities, Writing-focused activities, Drawing activities, Activities that embrace the abilities and insights of different ages, Activities that can be done after leaving the museum	
14	Close-looking activities, Kinesthetic activities, Drawing activities, Activities that embrace the abilities and insights of different ages	
15	Close-looking activities, Kinesthetic activities, Drawing activities, Storytelling activities,	

	Activities that embrace the abilities and insights of different ages	
16	Close-looking activities, Writing-focused activities, Drawing activities, Storytelling activities	
17	Close-looking activities, Kinesthetic activities, Writing-focused activities, Drawing activities, Activities that can be done after leaving the museum	
18	Close-looking activities, Writing-focused activities, Drawing activities, Activities that embrace the abilities and insights of different ages	
19	Close-looking activities, Writing-focused activities, Drawing activities	
20	Close-looking activities, Writing-focused activities, Drawing activities, Activities that can be done after leaving the museum	
21	Other (please specify)	We have a Sensory Scavenger Hunt on the Guide--all the other activities you have listed take place somewhere within the galleries.
22	Close-looking activities, Drawing activities, Storytelling activities, Activities that embrace the abilities and insights of different ages, Activities that can be done after leaving the museum	
23	Close-looking activities, Kinesthetic activities, Writing-focused activities, Drawing activities, Storytelling activities, Activities that embrace the abilities and insights of different	

	ages, Activities that can be done after leaving the museum	
24	Close-looking activities, Kinesthetic activities, Other (please specify)	making connections to their lives
25	Close-looking activities, Kinesthetic activities, Activities that embrace the abilities and insights of different ages, Activities that can be done after leaving the museum	
26	Close-looking activities, Writing-focused activities, Drawing activities, Activities that embrace the abilities and insights of different ages	
27	Close-looking activities, Kinesthetic activities, Writing-focused activities, Drawing activities, Storytelling activities, Activities that embrace the abilities and insights of different ages	
28	Close-looking activities, Writing-focused activities, Drawing activities, Storytelling activities, Activities that embrace the abilities and insights of different ages	
29	Close-looking activities, Drawing activities	
30	Close-looking activities, Kinesthetic activities, Writing-focused activities, Drawing activities, Storytelling activities, Activities that can be done after leaving the museum	

31	Close-looking activities, Kinesthetic activities, Writing- focused activities, Drawing activities, Storytelling activities, Activities that embrace the abilities and insights of different ages, Activities that can be done after leaving the museum	
----	---	--

8. Which of these does your institution's family guide(s) foster: (check all that apply)

Respondent #	Response
1	Adult participation, Empowerment for children and parents, Opportunities to celebrate//Collaboration with other people, Adult participation, Connections to visitors' prior knowledge, Empowerment for children and parents
2	Connections to visitors' prior knowledge, Self-direction and choice, Empowerment for children and parents
3	Collaboration with other people, Connections to visitors' prior knowledge, Self-direction and choice, Multiple interpretations, Empowerment for children and parents
4	Collaboration with other people, Adult participation, Self-direction and choice, Multiple interpretations, Empowerment for children and parents
5	Collaboration with other people, Adult participation, Connections to visitors' prior knowledge, Self-direction and choice, Empowerment for children and parents
6	Collaboration with other people, Adult participation, Connections to visitors' prior knowledge, Self-direction and choice, Multiple interpretations, Empowerment for children and parents
7	Collaboration with other people, Adult participation, Self-direction and choice, Multiple interpretations
8	Adult participation, Connections to visitors' prior knowledge, Self-direction and choice, Multiple interpretations, Empowerment for children and parents
9	Collaboration with other people, Adult participation, Connections to visitors' prior knowledge, Self-direction and choice, Multiple interpretations, Empowerment for children and parents
10	Collaboration with other people, Adult participation, Connections to visitors' prior knowledge, Self-direction and choice, Empowerment for children and parents
11	Collaboration with other people, Adult participation, Connections to visitors' prior knowledge, Self-direction and choice, Multiple interpretations, Empowerment for children and parents
12	Adult participation, Multiple interpretations, Empowerment for children and parents
13	Adult participation, Self-direction and choice, Multiple interpretations, Empowerment for children and parents
14	Adult participation, Self-direction and choice, Empowerment for children and parents, Opportunities to celebrate
15	Connections to visitors' prior knowledge, Self-direction and choice, Multiple interpretations, Empowerment for children and parents

16	Collaboration with other people, Adult participation, Connections to visitors' prior knowledge, Multiple interpretations
17	Adult participation, Connections to visitors' prior knowledge, Self-direction and choice, Multiple interpretations, Empowerment for children and parents, Opportunities to celebrate
18	Collaboration with other people, Adult participation, Connections to visitors' prior knowledge, Self-direction and choice, Multiple interpretations, Empowerment for children and parents
19	Self-direction and choice
20	Collaboration with other people, Adult participation, Connections to visitors' prior knowledge, Self-direction and choice, Empowerment for children and parents
21	Collaboration with other people, Adult participation, Self-direction and choice, Empowerment for children and parents
22	Collaboration with other people, Adult participation, Connections to visitors' prior knowledge, Self-direction and choice, Multiple interpretations, Empowerment for children and parents, Opportunities to celebrate
23	Collaboration with other people, Adult participation, Connections to visitors' prior knowledge, Self-direction and choice, Multiple interpretations, Empowerment for children and parents
24	Collaboration with other people, Adult participation
25	Collaboration with other people, Adult participation, Connections to visitors' prior knowledge, Multiple interpretations, Empowerment for children and parents, Opportunities to celebrate
26	Connections to visitors' prior knowledge, Multiple interpretations, Empowerment for children and parents
27	Collaboration with other people, Adult participation, Self-direction and choice, Multiple interpretations, Empowerment for children and parents, Opportunities to celebrate
28	Collaboration with other people, Adult participation, Connections to visitors' prior knowledge, Self-direction and choice, Multiple interpretations, Empowerment for children and parents, Opportunities to celebrate
29	Collaboration with other people, Adult participation, Self-direction and choice
30	Collaboration with other people, Adult participation, Connections to visitors' prior knowledge, Self-direction and choice, Multiple interpretations, Empowerment for children and parents
31	Self-direction and choice, Empowerment for children and parents

9a. Did your institution conduct any evaluation or testing in developing the family guide(s)? (Yes/No)

9b. If yes, please elaborate on the evaluation or testing that was done and the results.

Respondent #	9a. Response	9b. Response
1	No	
2	No	
3	No	
4	No	
5	No	
6	No	
7	Yes	previous audience research, visitor surveys, prototyping, visitor testing
8	No	
9	Yes	It was very informal. We hired someone to interview families who were using the guide on their feelings about the length, the language, etc.
10	Yes	Pick-up rate evaluations, in-gallery spot interviews with visitors, in gallery-observations, general prototyping through a design-thinking approach.
11	No	
12	Yes	For our gallery reads, we did a focus group
13	No	
14	Yes	We wanted to know which guides and activities were used the most and why. We tried to discern what families needed to best navigate the museum.
15	No	
16	No	
17	No	We have not completed evaluations, but are in the early stages of creating an evaluation protocol for the African art family guide
18	Yes	Gallery mapping of use, collecting completed Activity Cards, and in-person conversations with families

19	No	
20	No	
21	No	
22	Yes	The questioning techniques that are utilized in the gallery guides are the same techniques that our docents use in school tours. We have had positive feedback and have collected data from teachers that shows this is effective in their students' experience. We wanted to emulate the same experience for our everyday guest.
23	Yes	I will send under separate cover.
24	Yes	We surveyed families in the galleries who used the guides. We asked questions like: What questions or activities did you like best/ least? What would have made it better? What would you like to see more of. or what else would you like to see? We learned for example, that they didn't like reading stories. too long. said they might take them home and read them, but in the gallery they wanted shorter activities, more interactive.
25	Yes	We (informally) tested draft guides with kids and their caregivers as well as with our volunteer guides
26	Yes	Tested Architecture Guide with families and staff; streamlining of information and directions.
27	No	
28	No	
29	Yes	We shared the drafts with families in our Museum community, received written feedback.
30	No	
31	No	

10. How do you distribute the family guide(s) to the intended audience? (check all that apply)

Respondent #	Response	Other
1	Family guides are placed at the admissions desk for visitors to take freely, Other (please specify)	Examples of family guides are visible at the admissions desk but available at the actual entrance to the museum exhibits.
2	Family guides are automatically distributed to families and children at the admissions desk	
3	Other (please specify)	The guides are hard laminated and available for use while in the gallery and then left for the next visitor. They are located in two different entry points into the gallery.
4	Family guides are placed at the admissions desk for visitors to take freely, Other (please specify)	guides are handed out to families participating in our family studio programs
5	Other (please specify)	Scavenger Hunts are often distributed by docents after being mentioned by front desk staff. Pencil prize at completion.
6	Family guides are placed at the admissions desk for visitors to take freely	
7	Family guides are placed at the admissions desk for visitors to take freely	
8	Family guides are placed at the admissions desk for visitors to take freely, Other (please specify)	Available in the galleries for families to take
9	Family guides are placed at the admissions desk for visitors to take freely, Family guides are available on the institution's website to print out before a visit	
10	Other (please specify)	family guides are available at an information table in the galleries

11	Family guides are available on the institution's website to print out before a visit, Other (please specify)	Family guides are placed in a specialized family activities cart for visitors to take freely
12	Family guides are placed at the admissions desk for visitors to take freely, Family guides are available on the institution's website to print out before a visit, Other (please specify)	Available at Education Resource Center (teacher/family library) and at the entrance to special exhibitions when applicable
13	Family guides are placed at the admissions desk for visitors to take freely, Family guides are automatically distributed to families and children at the admissions desk	
14	Family guides are placed at the admissions desk for visitors to take freely, Family guides are available on the institution's website to print out before a visit	
15	Family guides are placed at the admissions desk for visitors to take freely	
16	Family guides are automatically distributed to families and children at the admissions desk, Other (please specify)	We have a partnership with our local library that allows families to check out a museum pass. We give families with library passes bags that encourage visual literacy and the guides are included in the bags.
17	Family guides are placed at the admissions desk for visitors to take freely, Family guides are automatically distributed to families and children at the admissions desk	
18	Other (please specify)	Activity cards, clipboard and pencil are located inside the

		exhibition in an interpretive space.
19	Family guides are placed at the admissions desk for visitors to take freely, Family guides are available on the institution's website to print out before a visit, Other (please specify)	Always available at Family Days, Open Studio, and sometimes during tours
20	Family guides are placed at the admissions desk for visitors to take freely, Family guides are available on the institution's website to print out before a visit, Other (please specify)	family guides are placed at exhibition entrance
21	Family guides are placed at the admissions desk for visitors to take freely, Other (please specify)	Along with our family guide. We have a Tips for Tots guide, which is available on our website.
22	Family guides are placed at the admissions desk for visitors to take freely, Other (please specify)	Our Gallery Guides are available in wall-mounted cases in each gallery.
23	Family guides are placed at the admissions desk for visitors to take freely, Family guides are automatically distributed to families and children at the admissions desk	
24	Family guides are placed at the admissions desk for visitors to take freely, Family guides are available on the institution's website to print out before a visit	
25	Family guides are placed at the admissions desk for visitors to take freely, Family guides are available on the institution's website to print out before a visit	

26	Other (please specify)	Distributed outside feature exhibition by a volunteer, display at family activity station and studio.
27	Family guides are placed at the admissions desk for visitors to take freely, Family guides are available on the institution's website to print out before a visit	
28	Family guides are placed at the admissions desk for visitors to take freely, Family guides are available on the institution's website to print out before a visit, Other (please specify)	The guides are also located on our main gallery level
29	Family guides are placed at the admissions desk for visitors to take freely	
30	Family guides are placed at the admissions desk for visitors to take freely, Family guides are automatically distributed to families and children at the admissions desk	
31	Family guides are automatically distributed to families and children at the admissions desk	

11. Is there anything else I should know about your institution's family guide(s) that was not covered in this survey?

Respondent #	Response
1	We have used family guides/self-guided tours at our institution for 15 years. We change them seasonally. The attached two family guides are currently available.
2	
3	
4	
5	We offer a prize for a completed scavenger hunt that gets families back to the lobby and near the Museum Shop.
6	The family day guide is only handed out during family day and relates to a specific exhibition each month. The museum also has an "Art in Focus" tour guide card that is geared towards families with the theme of "Fun in the Galleries." This guide is available all the time for visitors to take freely.
7	
8	
9	Our guides are also bilingual in English and Spanish. I would be happy to have a follow up call with you if you would like. Good luck with your project! I'll send you a couple of examples.
10	Family guides are very hard to right. There are a lot of really bad family guides out there that are very pretty but unsuccessful in facilitating any kind meaningful family experience. The development of our guides was a long, long process (probably about a year) and I'm really happy with the final product. Each individual institution should have its own very specific goals about what they want to accomplish with a family guide - I would caution against a "one size fits all" approach.
11	We have guides in English and in Spanish.
12	
13	
14	
15	
16	
17	All our family guides are bilingual in English and Spanish.
18	Our guides are paired with a making activity in our interpretive space. This space explores other goals of the exhibition and provides for a space for active learning and creativity. Together they create multiple avenues for interaction. Our Activity Cards are also always bilingual (Spanish).

19	
20	As an institution without a permanent collection, we create three to four family self-guides each year. This is just for the most recent as it was produced by new education team members.
21	We have a couple of brands and an icon for family programs, and we use all of these to communicate to families what they can/will encounter. Also, it is in English and Spanish.
22	Thank you for this survey. Your questions have prompted me to think deeply about our guides and ways that we could improve them!
23	
24	
25	
26	
27	
28	While families are certainly a primary audience, we named the guide "Discovery Guide" to encourage engagement from all audiences.
29	
30	they vary according to the exhibition and the budget attached to that from a very simple scavenger hunt to a much more elaborate booklet
31	With short staffing and changing exhibitions it has been a challenge to provide up to date family guides. We are working on a more sustainable model and one that would be taken home to complete. We also do not have a space for families to sit and draw or take part in other activities ... we used to have a corner for families to settle in.

Bibliography

- Adams, Marianna, Jessica Luke, and Jeanine Ancelet. *What We Do and Do Not Know about Family Learning in Art Museum Interactive Spaces*. PDF. www.familiesinartmuseums.org, 2010. Accessed October 18, 2018. <http://www.familiesinartmuseums.org/images/pdf/SUMMARYLitReviewENGAGE.pdf>.
- Alexander, Edward P., and Mary Alexander. *Museums in Motion: An Introduction to the History and Functions of Museums*. 2nd ed. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2010.
- Black, Graham. *The Engaging Museum: Developing Museums for Visitor Involvement*. London: Routledge, 2010.
- Borun, Minda. "Why Family Learning in Museums?" *Exhibitionist* 27, no. 1 (January 1, 2008): 6-9. Accessed November 16, 2018.
- Brown, C. "Making the Most of Family Visits: Some Observations of Parents with Children in a Museum Science Centre." *Museum Management and Curatorship*, no. 14 (1995): 65-71. Accessed November 16, 2018.
- Committee on Education. EXCELLENCE IN PRACTICE: Museum Education Principles and Standards. PDF. Washington, D.C.: American Association of Museums, 2005.
- "Core Standards for Museums." *American Alliance of Museums*. January 18, 2018. Accessed March 6, 2019. <https://www.aam-us.org/programs/ethics-standards-and-professional-practices/core-standards-for-museums/>.
- "Designing for the Family Agenda." YouTube video, 4:38. Posted by USS Constitution Museum, May 6, 2016. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BOzQrZhpF4>.
- Diamond, Judy, Jessica L. Luke, and David H. Uttal. *Practical Evaluation Guide*. Lanham, MD: AltaMira Press, 2006.
- Dierking, Lynn. "Laughing and Learning Together: What is Family Learning?" Engage Families: A Project of the USS Constitution Museum. Accessed October 4, 2018. <https://engagefamilies.org/family-learning-101/what-is-family-learning/>.
- Ellenbogen, K., Jessica J. Luke, and Lynn D. Dierking. "Family Learning Research in Museums: An Emerging Disciplinary Matrix?" *Science Education* 88, no. S1 (2004). Accessed October 23, 2018.

Falk, John H., and Lynn D. Dierking. *Learning from Museums*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2018.

Falk, John H., and Lynn D. Dierking. *The Museum Experience Revisited*. Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast Press, 2013.

Families and Art Museums, Part 1. Report. Denver Art Museum. 2003. Accessed February 16, 2019. https://denverartmuseum.org/sites/all/themes/damthree/files/family_programs1.pdf.

Gardner, Howard E. *Multiple Intelligences: New Horizons in Theory and Practice*. New York: Basic Books, 2006.

Genoways, Hugh H., Lynne M. Ireland, and Cinnamon Catlin-Legutko. *Museum Administration 2.0*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2017.

“Google Forms- Create and Analyze Surveys, for Free.” Google Search. Accessed October 2, 2018. <https://www.google.com/forms/about/>.

Hein, George E. *Learning in the Museum*. London: Routledge, 1998.

Hein, George E. “Museum Education.” In *A Companion to Museum Studies*, edited by Sharon Macdonald, 340-352. Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2006.

[Home.ease.lsoft.com](http://home.ease.lsoft.com). Accessed October 2, 2018. <http://home.ease.lsoft.com/archives/museum-l.html>.

Kingsburg, Nancy, et al. *Designing Evaluations: 2012 Revision*. Publication no. GAO-12-208G. U.S. Government Accountability Office, Washington, D.C., 2012.

Knutson, Karen, and Kevin Crowley. “Connecting with Art: How Families Talk About Art in a Museum Setting.” *Instructional Explanations in the Disciplines*, 2009, 189-206. Accessed October 23, 2018.

Larson, Lucy. “Engaging Families in the Galleries Using Design Thinking.” *Journal of Museum Education* 42, no. 4 (2017): 376-84. Accessed October 27, 2018.

Littleton, Jackie. “Getting Down to Basic.” *The Docent Educator* 13, no. 1 (2003): 18-20. 2019. Accessed February 16, 2019. <http://www.museum-ed.org/getting-down-to-basics/>.

Mary Jane Taylor, Anna Hanusa, and Beth Wilson. "Family Guides: Do they Work?" Presentation. Visitor Studies Association Annual Meeting. 2006.

McKenna-Cress, Polly and Janet A. Kamien, *Creating Exhibitions: Collaborating in the Planning, Development, and Design of Innovative Experiences*, Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2013.

McRaney, D. Lynn and John Russick. Preface to *Connecting Kids to History with Museum Exhibitions*, 15-16. Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast Press, 2010.

Merriam-Webster Dictionary. "community." Accessed October 19, 2018. https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/community?utm_campaign=sd&utm_medium=serp&utm_source=jsonld.

Moffat, Hazel and Vicky Woollard, *Museum and Gallery Education: A Manual of Good Practice*. Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press, 2013.

"Museum Junction-Open Forum." American Alliance of Museum. Accessed October 2, 2018. <http://community.aam-us.org/communities/community-home?CommunityKey=d34b2dfb-4151-4629-a59a-553d0ae428d9>.

Prabhu, Vas, and Kris Bergquist. "Developing Effective Family Guides." Museum-Ed. Accessed February 17, 2019. <http://museum-ed.org/developing-effective-family-guides/>.

Puchner, Laurel, Robyn Rapoport, and Suzanne Gaskin. "Learning in Children's Museum: Is It Really Happening?" *Curator: The Museum Journal* 44, no. 3 (July 2001): 237-59. Accessed November 16, 2018.

Rand, Anne Grimes, and Robert Kihne. "Experts, Evaluators, and Explorers: Collaborating with Kids." In *Connecting Kids to History with Museum Exhibitions*. Edited by D. Lynn McRaney and John Russick, 75-93. Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast Press, 2010.

Sheppard, Beverly. "The Learning Bond." Presentation. Family Learning Roundtable Forum. June 14, 2005. Accessed October 3, 2018. http://engagefamilies.org/wp-content/uploads/dlm_uploads/2018/05/The-Learning-Bond-Transcript.pdf.

Silvers, Dana Mitroff. "What is Design Thinking?" *Design Thinking for Museums* (blog). November 17, 2017. Accessed November 13, 2018. <https://designthinkingformuseums.net/what-is-design-thinking/>.

- Sterry, Pat, and Ela Beaumont. "Methods for Studying Family Visitors in Art Museums: A Cross-disciplinary Review of Current Research." *Museum Management and Curatorship* 21, no. 3 (2006): 222-39. Accessed November 16, 2018.
- Talk at Museum-Ed. Accessed November 12, 2018. <http://www.museum-ed.org/cgi-bin/dada/mail.cgi/list/talk/>.
- Taylor, Mary Jane, Anna Hanusa, and Beth Wilson. "'Family Guides: Do they Work?'" Presentation, Visitor Studies Association Annual Meeting, 2006.
- Tenenbaum, Harriet R., Jess. Priot, Catherine L. Dowling, and Ruth E. Frost. "Supporting Parent-Child Conversations in a History Museum." *British Journal of Educational Psychology* 80, no. 2 (2010): 241-54. Accessed February 22, 2018.
- USS Constitution Museum. *Engage Families: A Guide to Family Engagement in Exhibits and Programs*. PDF. Boston, MA: USS Constitution Museum, 2018.
- Weil, Stephen. *Making Museums Matter*. Smithsonian Institution Press: Washington, D.C., 2002.
- Wells, Marcella D., Barbara H. Butler, and Judith Koke. *Interpretive Planning for Museums: Integrating Visitor Perspectives in Decision Making*. Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast Press, 2013.
- Wood, Elizabeth, and Barbara Wolf. "When Parents Stand Back Is Family Learning Still Possible?" *Museums and Social Issues* 5. no.1. (2010) 35-50. Accessed February 22, 2018.
- Zolberg, Vera L. "'An Elite Experience for Everyone': Art Museums, the Public, and Cultural Literacy." In *Museum Culture: Histories, Discourses, Spectacles*, edited by Daniel J. Sherman and Irit Rogoff, 49-65. London: Routledge, 1994.