Summary of Visitor Responses to the Tip Sheets  
Toddler, Preschooler, 5-8 year old and 9+ year old

40 visitors were asked to read a tip sheet appropriate for their child’s ages and also the adult sheet. Afterwards they were asked:

* Had you noticed these before? (If so, when/where?)
* What is the message that you take?
* Did reading it make you think about your visit in a different way?
* What advice would you give to someone else visiting the Museum with a (toddler/preschooler/ 5-8 year old/ child over 9)?   
  [For the adult sheet: What advice would you give to other adults visiting the museum?]
* What else could we add or change to make these better?
* What ages do you think the museum is for?

Questions 2-4 were repeated for each age group including the adult sheet but this summary will only include the sheets for Toddler, Preschooler, 5-8 year old and 9+ year old.

RESULTS:

* 40 adults were interviewed
* 21 toddler sheets were looked at, 19 responses were recorded
* 13 preschooler sheet were looked at, 13 responses were recorded
* 20 five to eight year old sheets were looked at, 20 responses were recorded
* 12 nine and up year old sheets were looked at, 11 responses were recorded

*Had you noticed these before?*Of the 40 adults interviewed, 4 (10%) said they had noticed the sheets before and 35 (87.5%) said they didn’t and 1 did not answer.

Of the 4 that had seen the sheets before

* 3 (75%) recognized it from the entrance of the museum
  + And all 3 have been to the museum 3-5 times in the last year
* 1 (25%)recognized it somewhere in the museum
  + And this person visited between 6-9 times in the last year

Of the 35 that had never seen the sheets before

* 11 said it was their first time (31%)
* 4 said they’ve been once or twice in the last year (11%)
* 10 said three to five times in the last year (29%)
* 5 said six to nine times in the last year (14%)
* 5 said 10 times or more in the last year (14%)

*I. Themes throughout the responses*

Based on this question, and supporting statements made in response to the subsequent questions, there were 5 different categories that visitors can be grouped in. This reflects only the visitor’s answers towards the sheets for toddlers, preschoolers, 5-8 year olds and 9+ year olds. Categories were not mutually exclusive; many visitors’ responses fell into multiple categories.

1. What the child can do, what the exhibits are, and what is available. Overall 25 out of the total 63 (40%) responses who looked at the sheets suggested this.
   1. 7 of the 19 responses (37%) who answered about the toddlers suggested that the sheets provided them with what can be done in the museum.
      1. Basically different ways it looks like to go through and use things in the museum. Gives kids ideas of what they might want to do..
      2. I just thought they were going to come here and look at stuff. I didn't think that there was so much hands on and interacting with all those different things.
   2. 5 of the 13 (38%) visitors who answered about the preschoolers gave this response.
      1. Where to play.
      2. The same thing, giving ideas what they can do in all the areas they can play in.
   3. 8 of the 20 (40%) visitors who answered about the 5-8 gave this response.
      1. It's telling me where to go to do certain things, what they might enjoy at that age.
      2. It shows me the concept of what you're suppose to do in each one. Try to explain to them at the same time what the purpose of this whole thing is.
   4. 5 of the 11(45%) visitors who answered about the 9+ gave this response
      1. To be honest, it was more ideas and ways they can interact. My ten year old is saying, "there is nothing for me to do here." This was probably the most helpful one because it gave me some ideas with what to do with her while we are here. In fact, you need to read this (in reference to daughter)
      2. It gave me more ideas on what to. Probably to look if these were available someplace else to look at and see what things may be more appropriate for them and direct them to those areas.
2. Kids can learn here, that the museum is an institution in which learning can happen. Overall 12 out of the 63 (19%) responses who looked at the sheets suggested this.
   1. 5 out of 19 (26%) visitors who looked at the toddler sheet gave this response.
      1. They can be creative and fun at the same time and just learn how to use their brains and have a great time doing it.
      2. A lot of things to learn
   2. 2 out of 13(15%) visitors who looked at the preschoolers gave this response
      1. Let them do whatever they want to do, learn and have fun.
      2. To give them the opportunity to learn and not try to force them
   3. 3 out of 20 (15%) visitors who looked at the 5-8 year old sheet gave this response
      1. That children will learn as they go to the different areas of the museum.
      2. Basically that you are letting kids have fun and make them learn.
   4. 2 out of the 11 (18%) visitors who looked at the 9+ year old sheet gave this response
      1. At that level they really want to learn and figure out stuff and that's what they're doing here.
      2. Well, I think they're looking at their honing in skills more.
3. Learning and play are connected and that kids are learning through play. Learning is facilitated through play. Overall 14 out of 63 (22%) responses suggested this.
   1. 7 out of 19 (37%) visitors who looked at the toddler sheet gave this response
      1. That it's important for children to learn through play and for children experiment with their own ways of play and can learn a lot how they interact with their environment.
      2. Pretty much there are a lot of things like this for you know like by them being here, they are learning as well and not just playing but learning.
   2. 2 out of 13 (15%) visitors who looked at the preschooler sheet gave this response
      1. The message? That they're always learning through playing.
      2. Again that kids always learn through play and perhaps at different levels.
   3. 3 out of the 20 (15%) visitors who looked at the 5-8 year old sheet gave this response
      1. It's fun play with learning at the same time and I am cool with that.
      2. Basically that you are letting kids have fun and make them learn.
   4. 2 out of the 11(18%) visitors who looked at the 9+ year old sheet gave this response
      1. They're doing something. They're not just building blocks, creating designs. It's a little different.
      2. They can do more higher level games and thinking of play but they can still learn a lot from play even at that age.
4. There are different forms of play as indicated on the sheets such as pretend play, social play and physical play. Responses usually were given with examples of how their children play and what they liked to do. Overall 8 out of 63 (13%) responses suggested this.
   1. 2 out of 19 (11%) visitors who looked at the toddlers sheet gave this response
      1. It pointed out the different types of play.
      2. Basically things that are here, if they like certain areas they're playing in they might like doing this stuff outside of the museum. Pretend play, move block with trucks. My daughter is always outside with my little one doing stuff. The older kids like these type of things, the nine year olds pretend play not so much. They don't pretend play. Creative play, they do a lot of the stuff like putting words together. The water, the love the water.
   2. 2 out of 13 (15%) visitors who looked at the preschoolers sheet gave this response
      1. To try. It's kind of different because everyone is different. So my little one he bounces from one part to another but my older one he just keeps to one side for a long time.
      2. I think I took away the same message. Let them explore, pretend, be creative.
   3. 4 out of 20 (20%) visitors who looked at the 5-8 year old sheet gave this response
      1. Just how they can use their imagination and be creative. Pretend play. They're here at the with the ship. They pretend they're little marketers. The will get dressed and they'll role play. it's good because my six year old interacts more with my nine year old doing things like that. They're doing that right now.
      2. I'm a grandmother. For a parent it gives some ideas too. Exploratory play. If you said that to some parents, "what is that?", they'd look at you like, "well. going in the forest I guess or something." They wouldn't. This helps zero in on pretend play, invent new things, be creative. I think these are all very good things. Social play. I think that there is so much going on that they don't have the concentration power. It's about play. They'll pick up things. I know when we go home, he will say, "Do you have that book on water with the locks." He will take that home. He will take some of it home.
   4. 0 out of the 11 (0%) visitors who looked at the 9+ year old sheet suggested that there are different forms of play.
5. There is exploration, independence, and unstructured play in the museum and for kids and to let them have the opportunity to explore, be independent and have unstructured time . Overall 47 out of 63 (75%) responses suggest this.
   1. 14 out of 19 (74%) visitors who looked at the toddlers sheet gave this response
      1. To let them explore on their own and lead.
      2. To let them explore. Do their thing, not to rush them. Exploring. Not to rush them. Let them be creative. Kind of self directed. That's how I try to do things with them.
      3. Just let them play.
   2. 9 out of 13 (69%) visitors who looked at the preschoolers sheet gave this response
      1. Just kind of the same, let them explore and have fun.
      2. What I usually do is let the kids play with what they want, see what they're interested in. Try to expand on that, see what they enjoy, see what they don't.
      3. To let the preschooler dictate the visit.
   3. 16 out of 20 (80%) visitors who looked at the 5-8 year old sheet suggested gave this response
      1. Different exploration.
      2. Just to let them explore and go off on their own.
      3. Allow the children to be children and use the activities that they want to use it.
      4. See what your child is doing, letting them decide what they want to play with and just expanding on it whenever possible
   4. 8 out of the 11 (73%) visitors who looked at the 9+ year old sheet gave this response
      1. My nine year old tends to get bored real quick but I let her explore. Just somewhere where they don't see the parents. Somewhere they can be just be like, "alright. I am on my own. I am going to explore on my own. I don't know where daddy is." I would like to see them behind a mirror and let them see. Just watch them behind the mirror. Just see them but knowing they are on their own. "What can I do?" But they'll see daddy. "Aww daddy is here. I can't find nothing to do." But then I am like "go run around and there is enough adults here."

*II. Did reading this make you think about your visit in a different way?*Visitors fell into three distinct categories

1. Yes. Overall 27 out of 62 respondents (44%) said Yes.

* 9 out of the 19 visitors who read the toddler sheet (47%)
* 6 out of 13 visitors who read the preschooler sheet (46%)
* 6 out of 19 visitors who read the 5-8 year old sheet (21%)
* 6 out of 11 visitors who read the 9 and up year old sheet (55%).

Thematically, visitors also fell into 4 different categories based on their elaboration of what changed about their experience or their thoughts about their visit. Some people did say yes but then stated that their beliefs were confirmed because of what they had been doing already.

1. Thinking about how learning and playing are connected (3 of 27, or 11% of the visitors who said that their thinking changed)
   1. 1 out of 9 (11%) visitors who said yes gave this response with the toddler sheet.
      1. Yes. And I think reading the information around the museum makes me think about the museum in a different way. I can see that the children basically learn on their own through play. There is no teacher necessarily.
   2. 0 out of 6 visitors who read the preschooler sheet and said yes gave this response
   3. 1 out of 6 (17%) visitors who read the 5-8 year old sheet and said yes gave this response
      1. It's fun play with learning at the same time and I am cool with that.
   4. 1 out of 6 (17%) visitors who read the 9+ year old sheet and said yes gave this response
      1. You see them learning. See how well they play for others. It's a learning experience for parents as well. Just where they from for.
2. Kids should explore and lead through the visit in the museum (7 of 27, or 26%)
   1. 3 out of 9 (33%) visitors who read the toddler sheet and said yes gave this response
      1. Yeah. [I: How so? ]Think early cause kids like different stuff. Just let them explore.
      2. I try to kind of designate my play time with my kids to be just that. Try not to do anything else. I know they're here and they can play on their own freely and safely which is kind of a key note of all the places we visit with their play time. But usually when I play with them it's about them and sitting down with them, keeping the phone off, try not to take any calls, trying to try and stay attentive to what they're doing. I don't get it all the time.
      3. So he leads the entire play activities. I follow but he does what he wants to do.
   2. 1 out of 6 (17%) visitors who read the preschooler sheet and said yes gave this response
      1. Yeah.[I: How so?] Not making them do things that isn't specifically suppose to be done but let them do it their own way.
   3. 1 out of 6 (11%) visitors who read the 5-8 year old sheet and said yes gave this response
      1. I let them lead the way instead of making them play with what I thought was good.
   4. 2 out of 6 (33%) visitors who read the 9+ year old sheet and said yes gave this response
      1. No because you have a little bit of everything. They're playing with the global map. It was more like. They were using it in a different way, you see how there are nine pieces. They were using it as if they were playing dots. Maybe like a global dot game or something. They just made it out of nowhere. But that's how they were using it. Just dots. They find ways to have fun.
      2. Yeah, I think I am doing the right thing letting them play on their own. I think being here without their mom is helpful because I am just relaxed, sit back and let them do. They want to spend half an hour on an activity, I'll sit back and let them do their own thing.
3. Learning more about what is there to do (12 of 27, or 44%)
   1. 3 out of 9 (33%) visitors who read the toddler sheet and said yes gave this response
      1. I would say yeah. [I: How so?] I just thought they were going to come here and look at stuff. I didn't think that there was so much hands on and interacting with all those different things.
   2. 4 out of 6 visitors (67%) who read the preschooler sheet and said yes gave this response
      1. Yes. If I had seen these, then we would have been directing them to the different places.
      2. I guess a couple things I didn't notice. Like the making music thing. [I: Anything else?] No that's pretty much it. I didn't notice the making the music thing before. Wherever that is. [I: Outside.] That's why. I was like, I don't remember seeing that today.
      3. I guess it made me thinking for what ages, for preschoolers might but interested in this but older kids might be interested in that. That's helpful to know which to try first.
   3. 3 out of 6 visitors (50%) who read the 5-8 year old sheet and said yes gave this response
      1. Kind of. [I: How so?] It shows me the concept of what you're suppose to do in each one.
      2. No. It made me think about what I was doing or what my kids are doing. [I: And what is that?] It talked about different areas of the museum, where to go. Cause when we first got in here I want to stay on the first floor but the kids checked out and came up to the second floor. I let them lead the way instead of making them play with what I thought was good.
      3. I guess. I kind of knew all this because I work in pediatrics. I work in the medical field. But yeah they can enjoy the same activities but in a different way.
   4. 4 out of 6 (67%) visitors who read the 9+ year old sheet and said yes gave this response
      1. No. Just gave me ideas. How you can enjoy the museum.
      2. It gave me more ideas on what to. How to help them enjoy the experience.
      3. Maybe.[I: How so?] Not sure. If there was more that we can look into that I could have anticipated.
      4. Yeah. I think, there is much more to this place than looking at things. It's like interact stuff.
4. It is okay to relax and watch your kids (6 of 27, or 22%)
   1. 3 out of 9 (33%) visitors who read the toddler sheet and said yes gave this response
      1. Yeah it made me think about watching him a little more while he copies the older kids
      2. Kind of seeing the observer.
   2. 0 out of 6 (0%) visitors who read the preschooler sheet and said yes gave this response
   3. 1 out of 6 (17%) visitors who read the 5-8 year old sheet and said yes gave this response
      1. Letting them watch me play on my own.
   4. 2 out of 6 (33%) visitors who read the 9+ year old sheet and said yes gave this response
      1. It's not just play, you do observe your children
      2. I think being here without their mom is helpful because I am just relaxed, sit back and let them do. They want to spend half an hour on an activity, I'll sit back and let them do their own thing.
5. Miscellaneous Responses
   1. A little bit, it made me think about which in ways I can show them to have a little bit more fun or more understanding also at the same time
   2. I don't know not really. When my brothers come here they like to do the same thing over and over.
   3. Yeah I guess, things I might not have noticed.
   4. I think it is well done. I think this would be her [girl] last year probably. But I think that the younger ones. Although she might like to come again.
6. No. Overall 26 out of 62 respondents (42%) said No.
   1. 6 out of the 19 (32%)visitors who read the toddler sheet said No. None elaborated on why their visit experience wasn’t changed.
   2. 7 out of the 13 (54%) visitors who read the preschooler sheet said No. None elaborated on why their visit experience wasn’t changed.
   3. 9 out of 19 (47%) visitors who read the 5-8 year old sheet said No. One respondent did not answer.
   4. 4 out of 11 (36%) visitors who read the 9+ year old sheet said No.
7. Visitor stated that the sheet confirmed previous beliefs. Overall 7 out of 62 respondents (11%) said that the sheets confirmed their beliefs (some said their thinking did not change much if at all, others said yes but then went on to say that the sheets simply stated things they believed or had studied, and others said that the sheets weren’t informative for them but might be for other people).
   1. 3 out of the 19 (17%) visitors who read the toddler sheet stated that it somehow confirmed their previous beliefs.
      1. Not quite because I pretty much... I'll say our view on these already. We're always here. Just by being here we get that message. It's obvious, I didn't have read that to know.
      2. Yeah probably. [I: How so?] See it's hard. I am an early childhood ed teacher so I already know a lot of this. As somebody who might not know that, it might give them an understanding as to what their child is doing in the development stages that they're going through.
      3. Well, like I said I've been taking college courses on this. I run a daycare so I am trying to give broad experiences to the kids.
   2. 0 out of the 13 visitors who read the preschooler sheet stated that it somehow confirmed their previous beliefs.
   3. 4 out of the 19 (21%) visitors who read the 5-8 year old sheet stated that it somehow confirmed their previous beliefs.
      1. Not really, I already do most of the things on here already
      2. No. Same, it's right on. Pretty much everything we just did.
      3. Yeah. I've been here it's my 5th or 6th time. If my child was younger I would be more engaged. There are a lot of little kids today. But I don't think you need to read this to play with your child. That's just me personal
   4. 0 out of the 13 visitors who read the 9+ sheet stated that it somehow confirmed their previous beliefs.

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III. What advice would you have?

After reading the child tip sheet, adults were asked if they had any advice for an adult visiting the museum for that age group. Categories were not mutually exclusive; many visitors’ responses fell into multiple categories.

1. After reading the toddler sheet, 19 adults were asked what advice they would give to somebody with a toddler.
   1. 4 out of 19 (22%) visitors gave advice about logistics about coming to the museum
   2. 2 out of 19 (11%) visitors said to provide guidance and support to toddlers.
      1. I would advise to let them be more in a supportive role and let them learn how to play. If they need help then you step in. But let them do it and explore.
      2. I feel not just sitting back and letting them play but be there with them, They need you because they can't be on their own. They're still learning and they're still growing so, they need that attention too.
   3. 12 out of 19 (63%) visitors gave advice about having unstructured time for the toddlers such as letting them explore on their own pace.
      1. I would say let them take their time with each thing. Parents want to drag through each thing right away. But let them enjoy it. Twenty minutes if they want to and move on.
      2. Let the kids go on their own pace.
      3. Let them go crazy, let them do what they want to do. Don't hod them back. Let them explore.
      4. Just let them explore, let them touch everything. To do it on their own.
   4. Miscellaneous advice that did not fall into any category
      1. Stay close to them. They're young so they can get hurt.
      2. To watch them.
2. After reading the preschooler sheet, 11 out of 13 adults responded to what advice they would give to somebody with a child that is preschooler.
   1. 3 out of 11 (27%) visitors gave advice about logistics about coming to the museum
   2. 6 out of 11 (55%) visitors gave advice about having unstructured time for the preschoolers such as letting them explore on their own pace.
      1. To let the preschooler dictate the visit.
      2. What I usually do is let the kids play with what they want, see what they're interested in. Try to expand on that, see what they enjoy, see what they don't.
      3. Let them play, let them go.
      4. Preschoolers are able to explore more on their own. So, kind of let them interact with other kids more. Venture and see what they're more interested in. Instead of just telling them "run this way" or "play with that one." Let them play on their own.
   3. Miscellaneous advice that did not fall into any category
      1. I guess the same with preschoolers. You can introduce more information through. The activity upstairs with the bulletin, it tells you about people who have immigrated and how those family continue. I think that is something that you can introduce to the preschoolers.
      2. To try. It's kind of different because everyone is different. So my little one he bounces from one part to another but my older one he just keeps to one side for a long time. But for preschool they can have a lot of fun doing a lot of the stuff.
3. After reading the ages 5-8 sheet, 19 out of 20 adults responded to what advice they would give to somebody with a child that is 5-8.
   1. 4 out of 19 (21%) adults gave advice about logistics when coming to the museum.
   2. 6 out of 19 (32%) adults gave advice about providing guidance and support 5-8 year olds.
      1. Like I said before, see what they're interested in and expand on it.
      2. Maybe interact with them a little bit? Guide them a little bit. Show them something that they may not know
      3. Particularly if they're not from Rhode Island, I love this, Coming to Rhode Island. The historical piece they can maybe walk them through that. If you're not from here you won't really understand anything about that. Engage them in that, talk to them about that. It's really special.
      4. Try to explain to them at the same time what the purpose of this whole thing is.
   3. 7 out of 19 (37%) adults gave advice about having unstructured time such as letting them explore on their own pace.
      1. Just to let them explore and go off on their own.
      2. I don't know. [I: What would you tell your friends?] It's a great time, acceptable for their age and they have a lot to do. Play and explore on their own.
      3. Allow the children to be children and use the activities that they want to use it.
   4. Miscellaneous advice that did not fall into any category
      1. Advice? Just have a little bit of everything to grow. Yeah. I like it here it's nice.
      2. That the child will learn a lot by what they see and what they interact with.
      3. That there are still things for them to do. It might be something are for younger kids but there are other opportunities in the same play area.
4. After reading the ages 9+sheet, 9 out of 10 adults provided with advice they would give to somebody with a child that is 5-8.
   1. 4 out of 9 (44%) of adults gave advice about guiding the child through the museum.
      1. Probably to look if these were available someplace else to look at and see what things may be more appropriate for them and direct them to those areas.
      2. To try to research a little more so you know the areas they're going to have more fun in. Rather than just going in mixing it in, they're not having fun and enjoying it. Older kids you know. The science that they're into. So research more so you know the spots in the museum to go to.
      3. Maybe give a suggestion but they should use their own imagination and own creativity.
      4. I think I would start off with this.[I: The water one.] Get their interest right away. And they're going to look at that. Build pipes and moving things. They're going to see it in a different way than I do or an older person. Then go upstairs. They can always come back later. This is very popular. I've heard everyone talk about this. There is enough here for everybody and one of the things that is nice is upstairs. A handle on the wall. He's like, "what is that?" And he wasn't going to leave there until he found out what that did. Tried to move it. Nothing is happening. Then the guys face is on there, the jaw opening. I think it's. As you can see, with this water they can stay here all day.
   2. 2 out of 9 (22%) of adults gave advice about having unstructured time such as letting them explore on their own pace
      1. Advice? To take their time and enjoy their selves
      2. I would let them play on their own.
   3. Miscellaneous Advice
      1. To read that.
      2. Time well spent between. It's family time. Time well spent between siblings. No concerns. We like to have fun.
      3. No. I think the cards are great, it made me think about my visit generally but it's nice that they give you some ideas for older kids what to do.
      4. They would find it interesting. They may not interact with everything.