

Guide for Research Toy Interaction Protocol: Observation and Interview

Date: _____

Evaluator's
initials: _____

Research Toy: _____

Visitor Group composition, including interviewee	Children (#)	Adults (#)

Facilitator's role at the museum (Check all that apply)

Volunteer Intern Staff Other:

Behaviors: In your notes, use A: to indicate what the adult caregiver is saying or doing C: to indicate things the child is saying or doing, and E: to indicate what the educator is saying or doing). *Try to record statements or ideas verbatim where possible, rather than summarizing what is said. It is often helpful to record key words during the conversation, and then to fill in details after the conclusion of the interview.'*

Educator, caregiver, and/or child discuss:

- Research questions (i.e. "E: What do you think the researcher was hoping to learn through this work?" Or "A: She wanted to find out how people group things at different ages.")
- Description of study (i.e. what the participant does or will do during the study) (i.e. "E: He's going to play with these different toys. Let's watch what he does.")
- What the researcher was focusing on (i.e. what evidence the researcher was recording) (What data were collected. i.e. "E: The researchers wanted to see what toys the children touched first, as an indication of how they were grouping objects.")
- Different conditions or groups (i.e. with and without instructions; differences between ages or genders) (i.e. "E: In some cases, the children were given all of the objects at the same time, and in other cases, the children were given the objects one at a time to see if the way children were introduced to the objects made a difference." Or "E: They found that younger kids touched the familiar-looking objects first, while the older kids first touched the unfamiliar objects first.")
- Predictions/Theories (i.e. what the researcher or participant thought will happen and why) (i.e. "E: Why do you think he chose those three objects first?" or "E: The researcher thought that kids might choose familiar objects at younger ages, because...")
- Findings (i.e. "E: The researchers found that kids in different age ranges tended to group things differently.")
- Relevance of the research or why it is interesting (i.e. "E: This research can help us begin to understand how children think about similar and different objects, and how they make sense of novel objects.")
- Cognitive science / Child development research in general (i.e. discussion of the field or methods used in cognitive science or child development research.)
- Related activities to do at home / in the museum (i.e. "A: I've watched the kids at the seashell exhibit too – it's interesting to try to figure out how they're trying to make sense of unique seashells.")
- Follow-up research studies or related work (i.e. "E: Building on this work, the researcher is looking at how grouping relates to language development by asking kids to describe the groups they've created.")

Caregiver asks questions:

- About study (please note) (i.e. "A: How do they know that kids are intentionally grouping, and that they aren't just touching the closest objects?")
- About performance (i.e. How did I do? Did my child do it correctly?) Please note both questions and educators' responses below) (i.e. A: "Did he do it right?" E: "Well, the psychologists were really just trying to learn more about how people think, but there isn't really a good or bad way to group things.")

Caregiver facilitates child's interaction with research toys (Caregiver repeats educator instructions, asks probing questions, prompts child, or helps child use toys.)

Caregiver observes child's behavior with toys

Caregiver explains child's behavior- Please record what the caregiver says. (i.e. "A: Tim always chooses the cars first – you know, boys." or "A: Oh – she was grouping all of the things that look normal to her together.")

Notes (conversations, questions, interesting interactions):

[E]: Why do you think your child grouped the objects that way?

[A]: It looks like she grouped all of the normal-looking objects first.

Did the visitor give consent to be interviewed?

- No Yes

If no, thank the visitor, then explain their refusal briefly below. **If yes**, continue to the next question.

What is your relationship to the child or children you came with today?

- Parent Grandparent Other relative Sitter/nanny/Au Teacher Other
or
guardian (cousin, aunt, uncle, Pair
brother)

Interview related to interaction with educator:

1. As the educator mentioned, this was an activity that was created as part of a research study. What is your understanding of what the researcher wanted to find out, and how did he/she studied it?

The goal of this question is to learn what the visitor understood and took away from the interaction about the study overall, including research questions or objectives, the study design, the types of evidence, or findings. (ex "They wanted to learn about how kids group objects, and to see if grouping changes with age.") Make sure to note if the visitor mentions that they thought the educator was a researcher.

2. From your perspective, was this activity and discussion interesting? Yes / No (circle response)

- a. *If yes: What was the most interesting thing about this activity, to you?*
b. *If no: Why not? (or, tell me more.)*

The goal of this question is to learn more about what aspects of the activity or discussion were most compelling to visitors, or to find out what kinds of interactions or activities do not capture visitors' interests. (ex. I thought it was interesting to think about how my daughter might think about things.)

3. Did you learn anything new from this activity and discussion? Yes / No [If yes: Probe: What kinds of things did you learn? If no: Why do you feel that you didn't learn anything?]

The goal of this question is to find out whether adult visitors see the activity / discussion as a learning experience for themselves, or if the activity/discussion might help the visitor think about things in a new way. We also hope to learn details about the kinds of new things people are taking away from participating in Living Lab. (ex. Sure – I learned that kids group things differently at different ages.)

4. Did this study raise any questions for you about how people think or act? [Probe: Did the study make you wonder about any other aspects of your thinking, your child's thinking, or other peoples' thinking?]

Yes / No

- a. *[If yes]: Can you say a little more about your thoughts and questions?]*

The goal of this question is to learn if the research toys experience made visitors think about other things that they could learn through observing behavior, or about other questions they might have about how people think and behave. (ex. "I wonder whether boys might do this differently than girls.")

5. Was this study relevant to you? Yes / No

- a. *[If yes] how so?*
b. *[If no] why not?*

In this question, we're hoping to learn about meaningful aspects of the research toy interactions for visitors, and to learn more about connections that visitors might see between their research toy experience and their everyday lives. (ex. "I guess because it helped me better understand my own child, but I'm not sure how I could use this information.")

6. What would you suggest to help us improve this activity? [Probe: Was anything confusing or frustrating for you or your child?]

This question is a catch-all – an opportunity for the visitor to ask further questions or make further comments. It is not unusual for visitors to say that they don't have further questions, but often, visitors have suggestions or questions that can be informative. (ex. "I'd love to hear more about things I could do with my child related to this research study.")

Thank you for your participation!