Mind in the Making:
Engaging Young Children in Interactive Learning and Doing

Grant Amount: $10,000

Time Range: 1 year

Eligibility: Public Libraries

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Summary: Establish or improve play spaces for young children

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

This grant allows libraries to carry out a program to establish or enhance play spaces for children ages 0-6 in public libraries. These play spaces are aimed at early learning and social interaction among children and their caregivers.

Suggested components include:

- Creating an interactive play and flexible learning space
- Designating a space for tinkering and invention
- Offering activities such as a Countdown to Kindergarten program, family programs on “Brain Building in Progress”, or creation of Creativity Kits to be borrowed by parents and caregivers and used in local preschools
- Purchasing materials supporting emergent reading, writing, and fine motor skills
- Developing collections of print, digital materials, and realia

BACKGROUND

Ellen Galinsky’s book Mind in the making highlights the seven essential life skills children need most: focus and self-control, perspective taking, communicating, making connections, critical thinking, taking on challenges, and self-directed engaged learning. In their report Growing young minds, IMLS highlights how libraries can support these types of skills through hands-on experiences. By providing play and inquiry-
based programs, libraries increase the opportunities for young children to participate in activities that will help develop critical skills and result in their becoming more confident and engaged learners.

*Create a circulating library of toys or “make and take kits” and items that support social-emotional learning development for toddlers and preschoolers, or creation of kits such as Beverly Public Library’s kits.

Provide augmented virtual programming using library staff and outside performers.

Develop a regular kids “Pop-up library” either outside library building or in designated community location.