

Child Engagement in Museums - School Holidays & Beyond

Choose a Theme

- *Have you got a solid collection of vintage toy cars or dolls that could be distributed across the entire collection?*
- *Anyone have grandkids who collected the McDonald's Happy Meal Minion toy series?*
- *Does a museum volunteer have a collection of cow/elephant/horse figurines?*

Go with a theme that you have easy access to or feel you could collect up a few in a relatively short period of time. Or, one that ties in with a particular event occurring in your town, i.e., our *monster* toys were collected to accompany an annual *Monster Stall*.

Collect the Items

We purchase our toy trail items from *Gumtree*, *Facebook Marketplace*, op-shops, and borrow items from local families - we just put a 'call out' on Facebook to borrow some monster truck toys and families let us know. The positive outcome of this is that family members always come into the museum to look at their items in the museum. (We show our thanks by baking them a 'thank you cake' to enjoy when returning their items.)

Collect figurines, plush toys, books, colour-in books in your chosen theme. Be sure to wash and clean items before putting them out to display and once more before putting them away in storage till the next time you use them.

Market your Trail

Type up a spiel and submit it to your local ezine, community rag, school newsletter...etc. Print off a couple of copies and pin them to community notice boards. It doesn't have to be a high-brow graphic design, just include a clear, bright, attractive image, a few details about the theme and the dates/times to come and explore the museum.

Some other things to consider...

Download and print off some free colour-in sheets for your young visitors. Set up a small table with the sheets and some crayons or coloured pencils for them to enjoy while older members are hunting for the Smurfs. These are found easily via a *Google Images* search. Here's a link for where we obtained Smurf colour-in sheets. <http://www.supercoloring.com/coloring-pages/cartoons/the-smurfs>



Take it to an extra level by displaying a couple of QR code posters in your museum that can be scanned by a phone or iPad which hyperlink to a quick YouTube clip related to your theme. This will engage your visitors who love digital activities. *Scan this QR code to see what we mean.*

