Big Data for Little Kids
Data Modeling with Young Children and their Families in a Science Museum

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Promising Math

To know more about how to activate and celebrate math learning in diverse racial, ethnic, cultural and socio-economic family and community contexts
Our motivation in this project

- Children need more and earlier opportunities to use math to answer real questions about the world. (NAEYC, 2002)
- Data literacy is an increasingly vital skill for learners of all ages. (Ben-Zvi & Garfield, 2004)
- Inquiry-based practices can support early data science learning for elementary school children. (English & Watson, 2016; Makar & Rubin, 2009)
- Existing research has provided theoretical frameworks, but mainly conducted in formal educational settings. (English, 2012; Konold, et al. 2015; Lehrer & Schauble, 2002)
Development of the program

- **Goal:**
  - Provide underserved young children and their caregivers an introduction to data science concepts in informal settings

- **Research questions:**
  - How do young children (ages 5-8) and their caregivers engage with data science concepts in an informal setting?
  - What are the factors impacted these families’ learning experience of data science?

- **Project format:**
  - Weekly family workshops

- **Project status:**
  - Ended August 2019
Broaden STEM participation at New York Hall of Science (NYSCI)

- Diverse audience, community-focused
- Design-Make-Play approach to STEM learning
Workshop design

- **Theme:** Use data to help you design a new exhibit for the science museum.
- **Structure:** 7-week workshop, meeting once per week for 2 hours
- **Iteration:** One pilot series and two workshop series (2017-2018)
- **Families:** Each iteration involved 7-10 local families
- **Languages:** Families and facilitators spoke English, Spanish, Mandarin
Workshop activities

- Hands-on introduction
- Collecting data in the museum
- Organizing & interpreting data
- Planning your own exhibit
Workshop activities

Week 4: How long do people play at different museum exhibits?
Final Projects
Research Methods

- **Participants (2nd iteration):**
  - 7 families with children ages 5-8 (Mean = 6.85 years)
  - 14 children total: data analyzed for one child per family
  - 5 families were bilingual (4 Spanish-speaking, 1 Mandarin-speaking)

- **Data sources:**
  - Audio & video recordings
  - Transcribed & translated parent-child conversations
  - Artifacts of children’s work
  - Pre-post interviews with children and caregivers
Results: Data science talk

- Over the course of the workshop:
  - Conversations about interpreting data increased \( (B = .35, \ SE = .04, 95\% \ CI [.28, .42], p < .01) \)
Results: Parent-child interactions

- Talk about analyzing/interpreting data related to level of parent direction (in particular, more frequent when parents were guiding than directing) ($B = .33, SE = .05, 95\% CI [.24, .42], p < .01$)
- Parent guiding increased over the workshop, while directing decreased
- Matched feedback from pre-post interviews
Parent engagement

- Building trust with parents and the community
  - Parents felt that they are welcome in the museum
  - Museums are safe places for learning

- Provide space for families to work on problems together
  - Families bring in their own knowledge, culture, and interest
  - Both parents and children take leads in the program

- Supporting parents in teaching
  - Parents may need more knowledge in data science to help their children
Conclusions

- Parents contribute greatly on the range and depth of children’s talk about data science concepts
- The direction and topics of data conversations shifted over the length of the workshop
- Qualitative data also shows that parents need additional support to feel confident in helping their children in learning data.
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Project materials:
- Curriculum:
- YouTube:
  - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=COODwL5g

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