



Radical Childcare: The KIDZ CITY MODEL

A "construction paper"

JUNE 2013/ALLIED MEDIA CONFERENCE
first edition

(look for a ~~better~~^{MORE} edited/reformatted 2nd edition
soon.)



KIDZ CITY MODEL assembled by China with a grant
from the INSTITUTE FOR ANARCHIST STUDIES

ENDING NOTE:

We hope that this has been inspiring but not overwhelming. It's ok to take it simple and start small and grow! We often struggle with stuff, all radical collectives seem too. We wanted to share, save, and pass along some of the stuff that we felt good about. This is not to say that we don't have difficulty with all of this ourselves, and especially with keeping a collective together, to grow, and not burn out and with feeling sure of what we are doing. We are currently taking a winter hiatus and plan on re-emerging and re-envisioning in the spring. So with that in mind, it feels especially important to record what we have learned so far.

Children and the City



Children are wonderful at noticing things adults don't, appropriating new uses for common objects, and expressing creativity to invent, or destroy, their environment.

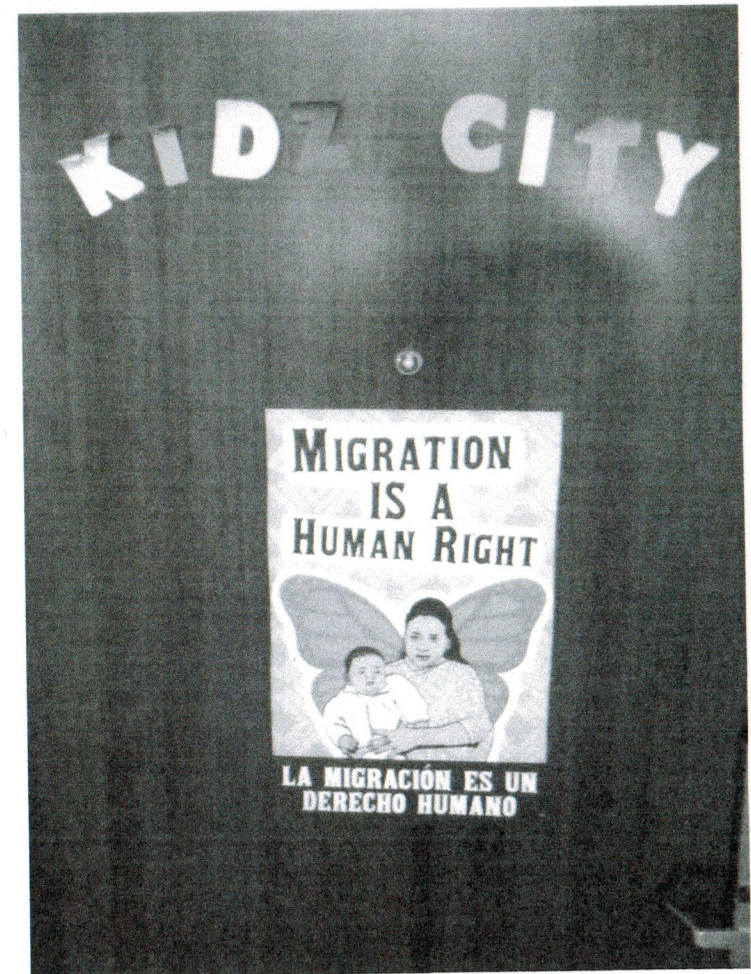
However, their basic needs are often ignored, challenged, even put last, by political systems as well as city planning and smaller social gatherings; and their proscribed spaces (school, playground, and private homes) marginalized. Even their natural desire to learn and meaningfully

participate is often dampened, instead molded to fit (as well as replicate) pre-existing power structures, and their "play" treated with less respect than "work". Depending on various factors, some much harder others, as within any oppressed group the most vulnerable are children.

How do we support the different needs of our city's children, their caretakers and communities, in an environment where access to resources is so divided by race, class, sex, as well as ageism? How do we create new, non-hierarchical structures of support, mutual aid, and include all-ages in the struggle for social justice?

Let's discuss and share information with each other on basic needs, problems, and radical solutions in a city where so many struggle just to get through the day.

-from *Children and The City Workshop @ The City From Below*, 2009



for coffee are best)

- juice boxes (or closed lid cups and bottles of juice) (no added sugar)

**some food is important, the following are suggestions:*

- carrot sticks
- sliced apples
- cheese (mild -- dairy and possibly vegan option)
- crackers, pretzels, bread
- yogurt (with fruit – preferably no added sugar or sugar substitutes)

NOTE: there might be other things we need as we continue to plan (ex: we might need special supplies for a specific project)

radkidcare@gmail.com / kidzcitybaltimore.blogspot.com

Radical Childcare: The KIDZ CITY MODEL

INTRODUCTION

Kidz City Baltimore is an anarcho-feminist collective, composed predominately of non-parents working as allies to support parents' and children's participation at social justice gatherings and events in Baltimore, Maryland. We started at the *City from Below Conference* in 2009. After working together at many subsequent events—including book-fairs, community dinners, and conferences such as the Fair Development Conference, DIY Fest, and IWW Convention—certain organizing patterns and methods emerged. We started to develop our own model for organizing collective support for caregivers and children.

Why Kidz City Model?

We often asked other collectives for tips when we were starting up and now that others are asking us; we thought it important to put this model down on paper.

We wish to present our model, which may be revised and added to over time, in hopes that this will help others with

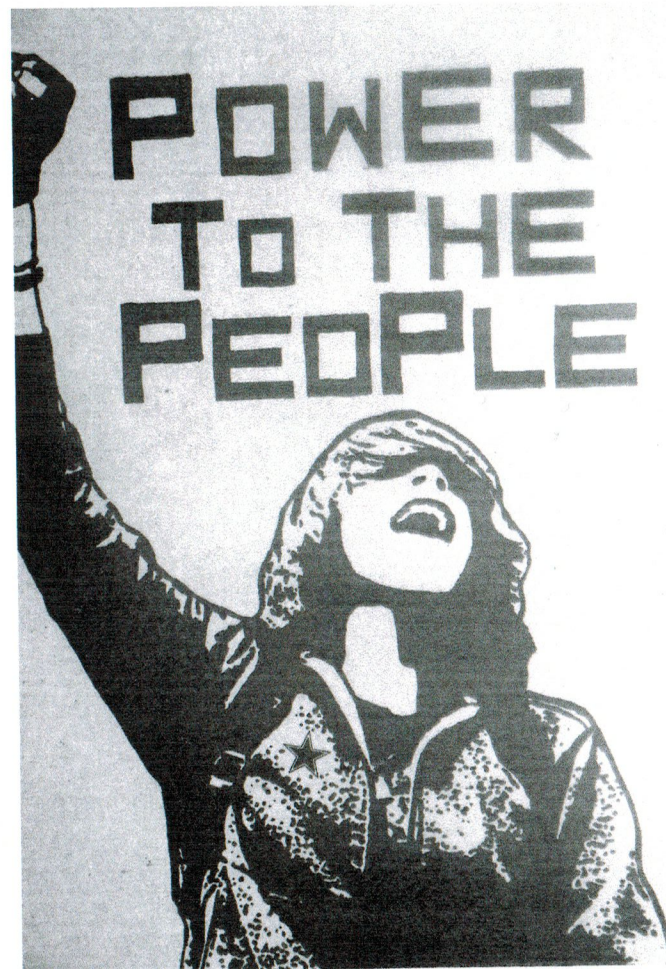
what we have learned in our experiences, with their endeavors.

Who is it for?

The Kidz City Model is for everyone, but especially for social justice event organizers seeking to provide childcare; and radical childcare providers/collectives.

How do you use it?

We have created this model to capture the process of what we do best: build transformative space. We have also included extra notes, tips, and an appendix of our forms at the back. You can read from front to back or flip through and look for a part that you are most interested in. This model is meant to supplement your own conversations and provide a tangible structure since there is not many spelled out models of radical childcare at present. The Kidz City model is unique and not the only way of doing things, although we imagine there must similarities to others. It is not a finished model to be exactly emulated but something one can experiment and find your own way and dialogue back and forth with as methods continue to evolve.



Materials to have on-hand at conference childcare

things to get/buy:

- paper
 - *construction paper, color paper, big roll of paper
- washable markers/crayons
- glue sticks/liquid glue
- tape
 - *masking, painters, clear
- paper towels
- baby wipes
 - *unscented, the less creepy ingredients the better
- band-aids with colors or designs
 - *no "flesh" colored band-aids and preferably no copy-written characters)
- optional random fun things: googly-eyes, beads, paint, fabric, play-dough, clay, boxes ...

things that could be lent to us and returned afterwards:

- books
 - *empowering, creative, gender non-conforming, include characters with a variety of gender, race, ethnic and sexual identities)
- safety scissors (if they are well labeled we can return them)
- toys:
 - *'outdoor' (balls, chalk, frisbee, jump rope, etc)
 - *'indoor' (puppets, dolls, stuffed animals, blocks, dress-up clothes, etc)

food: (make clear to parents -- and volunteers -- if the childcare area will be providing substantial food, or just snacks to have on-hand)

**water is a must-have*

- access to tap/filtered water and cups (closed lid cups -- like

Our Mission Statement:

Kidz City Baltimore is an anarcho-feminist collective dedicated to increasing access and support for parents, children, and caregivers in social justice organizing and at events. We partner with others to organize creative space, care, and programming for children. We see childcare as a form of activism and one part of creating a just world.

We believe childcare is vitally important, and often overlooked and undervalued. We wish to support parents' and children's access to, and participation in, social justice movements. We wish to create a network for discussion, taking the time to address root causes, and nurture change through creating alternatives. We support the struggle for basic needs as part of supporting social transformation. We are committed to being accountable for our actions, to lead through example, and provide actively nonjudgmental support. We respect parents and children as the best authority on their own lives. By increasing community support for parents and children, we hope to do our part to support happy, healthy intergenerational social justice movements.

Kidz City Baltimore is a Fusion affiliate. *Fusion Partnerships: A Catalyst for Justice and Peace:* fusionpartnerships.wordpress.com

- Lighting
- Rugs
- Decorations
- Signs – can people find the space
- Bathroom access
- Ask: “Do I feel like I am in a comfy, welcoming space? Or Do I feel like I am in a holding area?”

7) Sign-in sheet for kids/caretakers

8) Volunteers: _____ (volunteer coordinator for event)

- We need their cell numbers or other contact
- Volunteer schedules sent to individual volunteers and collective
- T-shirts, name tags, etc
- Need to know that they must contact us about cancelling (call volunteer coordinator)
- Need to know expectations about arriving 5-10 minutes early, staying in space, checking in with coordinator, etc

9) Schedule of the day for the “crossing guard” on duty to keep (activities, volunteer schedule, back-up/on-call volunteer contact list, and contact list for conference organizers)

10) First Aid Kit! (check to make sure we are not out of bandaids and other supplies)

**KIDz CITY Collective:
EVENT CHECK LIST!**

1) Who is the volunteer coordinator for this event?: _____

- They should use contact list and send e-mails from the group e-mail list
 - radkidcare@gmail.com

2) Who will be in contact with the "sponsor" "event group" about space issues?: _____

3) Who will serve as the parent/caregiver liaison (contact parents before event, get cell # or other contact, needs, wishes, etc and be on-call) (if needed): _____

4) Food:

- Snacks for the kids should be on-hand (juice boxes - no added sugar, graham crackers, baby carrots, etc)
- Food for volunteers

5) Things to do:

- The standard things: cards, books, jump rope, Frisbee, ball, chalk, face paint, craft supplies
- Activities that could tie into event theme:
 - ..
 - ..

6) Space (see space before hand and assess):

- Indoor space (how big) - safety issues
- Outdoor space (how big) - safety issues (near road, glass on ground, etc)
- Making the space more comfortable

KIDZ CITY MODEL

1. RECOGNIZE/PRIORITIZE: start with problem
2. REACH OUT: together we can do more then alone
3. BRAINSTORM: begin wildly with inspiration
4. ORGANIZE! : make a solid plan and prepare (everything leading up to the building of the childcare space and/or action or event)
5. BUILD: build and inhabit a temporary radical childcare space (set up/hold space; create & co-create; space to intersect)
6. REFLECT (feed-forward): so you can learn

Elementals:

These elements run through everything we do.

- Support
- Communicate
- Integrate the values of the larger event in the childcare; and childcare values in larger event

KID(z) CITY SIGN-IN and SIGN-OUT SHEET

PLEASE READ: KID(z) CITY is a participatory space for our youth to explore the themes of the _____ Conference. We will take responsibility for your child's safety while you attend other events at the conference, please understand that KID(z) CITY is not a licensed childcare facility, and KID(z) CITY, the _____ Conference and its sponsors (_____) cannot be held liable in the event of an accident. We will, however, do everything in our personal power to make sure your child stays healthy and happy. Please talk to a KID(z) CITY collective member or conference coordinator if you have any questions or concerns.

CHILD'S NAME and AGE	GUARDIAN'S NAME	TIME IN and TIME OUT	PHONE NUMBER (cell or home #)	WHAT WORKSHOP(S) DO YOU PLAN ON ATTENDING?	IS ANYONE BESIDES YOU AUTHORIZED TO PICK UP CHILD?	SPECIAL NOTES: (food allergies/restrictions, physical limitations, translation needs, etc)	PHOTOS: Is it okay to take photos of child?	SIGNATURE (please read above description)
		TIME IN: TIME OUT:						
		TIME IN: TIME OUT:						
		TIME IN: TIME OUT:						
		TIME IN: TIME OUT:						
		TIME IN: TIME OUT:						

Guiding Principles:

Ideals are like stars. We reach for/navigate by them.

- Anarcha-feminism
- Respect
- Space for all
- Anti-Oppression
- Mutual Aid
- Sustainability

Strategies:

- Model: Teach and Learn
- Boundaries/Problem solving
- Collective Liberation
- From each according to their ability, to each according to their need
- Transform/Radicalize/Femifest
- Include and listen to all
- Everyone can develop Leadership

We are builders, anarcha-feminist architects of space and co-creation, building support for real needs and ideal aspirations. We take time to reflect, share, feel, listen, change, and work together. We build upon energy, care, respect, joy and inspiration. We are an experiment. In the process we learn and teach; transform. With experience we experiment.



Caring and Sharing

Check in with coordinator: check-in with the coordinator about your needs, concerns, excitement, etc A LOT, too much is the right amount, it's good to practice prolific communication in childcare, check in with coordinator if you need to leave (go to the bathroom, fill up a water bottle, etc)

Check in with the other volunteers/take care of each other: check in with the other volunteers with how they are feeling (verbally or non verbally), remember to help each other out, if there's a young person who needs lots of energy and attention consider switching off so that no one gets burned out

Check in with yourself: do you need a drink of water? are you hungry? do you need to switch and participate in a low key activity? make sure you don't get burned out, it's easy and delightful sometimes to give an activity all your attention and energy, however make sure to respect your limits, breathe deeply and drink lots of water – your putting out a lot of care energy make sure that you turn some of that inward

We're all learning

- We strive to help each other and young folks learn and grow as people

- We want to foster and build upon everyone's critical thinking skills

Kidz City Baltimore

www.kidzcitybaltimore.blogspot.com

*a program of Fusion Partnerships, Inc

1. RECOGNIZE/PRIORITIZE:

The first step is to recognize there is a problem or need and then to prioritize doing something about it.

Conference and event organizers can start by recognizing caretaker and children's struggles; and including childcare as a collective concern in their planning. What are you doing? How does childcare intersect with that?

Recognize that larger systems of oppression (racism, sexism, ageism, classism, and other forms of oppression) affect everything. Everything affects everything. Everything is also a childcare issue.

Where are the children and caregivers? How do caregiver, children, and other social justice issues intersect? Who is missing from this conversation and why?

START EARLY! Childcare planning should start at the beginning of conference planning, along with other important logistics, and not as an afterthought.

Resource: *Kidz City Childcare Request Form* *

* all forms are included in the "Resource: Forms!" appendix in the back

Over time we developed a form that outlined what our expectations and requirements were in order to consider partnering with others. This helped immensely. Not only did it give us a first step to be contacted by – but also information to consider at a collective core meeting before deciding if we could take this on or not.



Kidz City Baltimore Volunteer Expectations

First off childcare volunteers are awesome-possum! To make things go smoothly and to make sure everyone knows what we expect, we've put together a quick expectations list.

The Basics

There will always be a Kidz City collective member there during every shift and they will be responsible for the big picture, and they are coordinating the planned programming and the volunteers for that shift

Arrive early: arriving 10 or 15 minutes before the shift starts, helps with the transition time between shifts and for volunteers to pass along information to each other, make sure you check in with coordinator when you arrive

Stay in the space: it's important that you stay in the space, or where childcare is happening, the whole time, always check in with the collective member if you need to go take care of something

Cancelling: if you can't make it to a shift you signed up for, let us know ASAP (48 or earlier would be ideal)

No one is alone with a child: to alleviate safety concerns, we decided that no one should be alone with children, this should be easy to manage because we try to assure there are lots of volunteers

Children need to be checked-in and out: we have a sign-in and out sheet for young folks, the parent or caregiver that brought them to the childcare area needs to check them in and out, please support the coordinator in reminding caregivers to do this

- Where do you anticipate childcare taking place?: _____
 - **note** we will need to take a tour of the space beforehand.
- How many (rough est.) attendees are you expecting?: _____
- How many children are you expecting at this point?: _____
- What kind of childcare are you envisioning? (i.e. children's programming? simpler childcare? field trip?): _____
- Anything else you want to tell/ask us?

Thank you for taking the time to fill this out.

You can send this form:

- Through e-mail to:
radkidcare@gmail.com
- Through postal mail to: PO Box
4803, Baltimore MD 21211



Please fill out the Form below to the best of your abilities & we will respond if we can help or not after our collective reviews. Thanks for reaching out -best wishes, Kidz City

- What is your event?
 - Name of event:_____
 - Theme/issues addressed:_____
 - Could you write a little bit more about the goals/mission/description of this event?_____

- When is your event?
 - Date(s) of event:_____
 - Hours of each day:_____
 - Will childcare need to be offered the whole time?:_____

- Where is the event?:_____

but like to be part of the larger event and incorporate its values.

- Provide space as close as possible to the main event, supplies, and food.
- Depending on the situation, contribute a substantial amount of volunteers to do childcare from your group and community. We can train and coordinate.
- We would love (and encourage!) to have one of your organizations core members who hasn't done childcare before to come be part of our team—in whatever capacity is possible— in order to learn, pass on, and integrate issues. We like to challenge the status quo of who does the bulk of “care work” and offer opportunities for learning no matter your previous experience.
- Keep us “in the loop” and updated with all changes. We would like at least one member of your organizing group to be the liaison to Kidz City. Kidz City will also assign a liaison for communication to your organizing group.
- Feel free to ask questions! We are flexible but want to provide some guidelines.

2. REACH OUT:

You do not need to know everything or do everything yourself. It is good to make inquiries, ask questions, and find others to work with as well as to communicate with those most directly affected so you can know how they would like to be supported.

Reach out:

- to gather others to work with.
- to start a collective.
- to start temporary group for one goal.
- to put out a call for allies.
- to look for alternatives, answers, suggestions, others involved or who might be possible allies.
- to the children and caregivers in your communities and ask others to do so as well.
- by putting childcare questions on your registration
- by making sure “Childcare is available” on ALL your media, literature, flyers and publicity. (If parents do not know there is childcare they might not plan on being able to attend.)
- to the organizers and their networks.
- to your networks.
- in your geographical location.
- to those who are involved in the issue you are working on.
- to those who have done it before,
- to those who are doing it now, and
- to those who have never done it before!

This can take the form of emails, phone calls, research, reading, face-to-face questions, fliers, and meetings. Go to others meetings and spaces as well as invite others to your own. What are the resources in your community? Who may be interested in this concern? You might also be surprised that by getting the word out, as you reach out to others, that you find allies in unlikely places. Keep your mind open as you reach out. Building relationships is a form of activism. Find what resources are out there and orient yourself with your mission. Don't feel limited to only one approach or that everything must be collective or unpaid in order to be radical, for doing everything collectively can also take too much energy and time. One option may be, for instance, paying a mother owned small business in the community to cater the food. Continue to reach out but starting with reaching out is a crucial step. You need input and to consult with others (Ask specific questions, like "what do you like to eat?") in order to gain ideas; and build strategies and collaborations. Together we can do more than we can alone.

KIDz CITY Childcare Request Form

Kidz City Baltimore is an all-volunteer anarchy-feminist collective dedicated to increasing access and support for parents, children and caretakers in social justice organizing and events. We partner with others to brainstorm and organize creative space, care, and programming for children. We see childcare as a form of activism and one part of creating a more just world.

Our needs are:

- Contact us at the start of your event planning, or as early as possible. We need at least a month ahead of time for a 1-4 hour event; 3-4 months for an event longer than that; and 5-6 months or more for a 3-day conference. Quality childcare takes time to plan and means being valued and integrated from the start.
- Publicize that Childcare (or children's workshops or child-friendly planning you have in mind, etc.) is available on all your outreach, media, posters, registration forms, website etc. so parents know it's available and can plan accordingly.
- Meet throughout the planning process to discuss ideas. We work independently as well

RESOURCE: FORMS!

Note: our forms have been re-formatted in order to fit this zine – so they are not as beautiful as they once were. These examples are not meant to be used at this size, but are being shared in order to help generate your own.



most accessible. The young have energy, they learn, they come up with new solutions, and they take over, faster than we imagine in our age-stratified and specialized post industrial society. As we refresh our culture, shall we just keep repeating the same patterns of abuse, as we proclaim for the entire world to hear that we don't believe in such a thing?

There are those who feel there is not enough space for all the workshops, all the needs. However, when childcare organizing is seen as one of the last concerns while planning an event, as it often is: will the larger organization understand the importance of space to the children's programming? That creating space itself, can create opportunities for change?

3. BRAINSTORM:

Start big! Explore the possibilities: what is your biggest wildest craziest greatest hope or dream? What would be the most wonderful thing you could do? What are just some ideas to start: spit them out! Write down every suggestion anyone tells you. Keep your mind open and widen your horizons, also this is good for letting the ideas flow freer without any pressure upon them to be the final decision. Narrow them down and think what is possible later, but start big – don't let reality get in the way. As the saying goes: Ideals are stars, we may not always be able to reach them but we can navigate by them. Brainstorming starts early, so there is no pressure, there is time to ponder. Time to get inspired!

Questions may be:

- theme?
- ways to take the spirit of this event into childcare
- ways to create points of all-ages interaction
- ways to more equitably distribute the work
- invite input from conference, ask them to reach out to their communities
- activities and plans
- might already start taking on responsibilities for certain tasks at this point, or even earlier

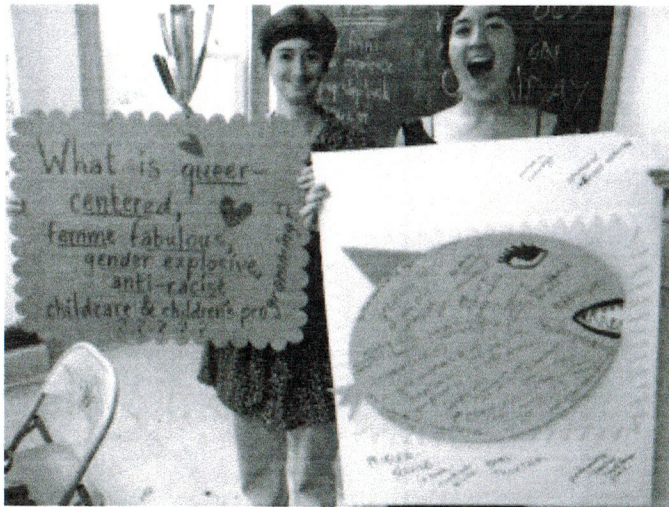
Take notes! Bake a cake! Serve snacks and punch. Decorate with inspiring slogans. Invite folks to your

envisioning community meeting. Have a question to brainstorm on.

For instance:

"What is queer centered, femme fabulous, gender explosive, anti-racist childcare and children's programming?"

- was the question we asked ourselves and others in preparation for planning childcare for Femme Con 2012.



structure of the conference—in a way that respects everyone's right to participate.

While space is at a premium, time is short, (etc.) and it may be difficult, we must creatively view our space and think about its possibility for transformation instead of falling into patterns to use what has already been built. We can delight in building, and changing, our own spaces: a snack bar becomes a (temporary) child's space, a church shares its building with an anarchist collective, and an empty lot becomes a garden.

Choosing the space for the childcare area of a conference helps to dictate what activities will go on within that space. If the childcare is relegated to a room without windows in the basement, that any vendor would be insulted to table in, or secluded in a pre-modified assumed space for children, already used for after school care, safe and carpeted (with Berenstain Bears and Babar the Elephant books—teaching patriarchy and colonialism—already stocked)—then we are rebuilding the structures of those we protest within our own new gatherings.

What do we value and where do we prioritize our energy? Shouldn't we respect, not only those who can tell us where they have been—but those who can see with new eyes, searching for the places no one has yet been, who will walk into the future beyond us, as well? It's in how we treat them that they will be taught to treat others, and in what we hand down to them that will be

installation in its own right. Creating a space like that is a living workshop for all age interaction; a place where borders can be gently slipped between to learn and experience different ways of interaction with young people, where they—and their caretakers—are valued. In our society, age-segregated space is not questioned and the lack of children at many key events, as well as many other groups of people, is for many an unremarkable exclusion. For example, those who clean and prepare spaces are often “invisible” to those who benefit from their labor. Space is selected for some use, while others may be unable to access it due to an assortment of factors such as age and ability as well as sexism, racism, classism, and more.

The childcare space should be close to the main event: to the heart of the conference. Not only is it easier for parents to leave their children and check in on them, it allows the children better access, and becomes easier for all ages to interact. How will anyone learn to interact with children respectfully if they never get the chance to see for themselves? If children’s presence is unfamiliar to all beside their parents and only seen as the concern of those who “have” them? And how will the children learn the skills from older members in the conference who have so many good ideas to hand down and share? Creating a space that simply “stores” children so their parents have better access to the conference is not good enough. We need to learn how to involve them and their needs in the larger

P.S. Here are some of the responses:

Subverting/smashing patriarchy
many models of care – not eurocentric
Expanding notions of beauty
Proud
Respect
Communication: teaching, helping, showing
Solve problems for self – by words and actions, even if that means asking for help
Independence/interdependence
Empower
Femme-inist
Respecting differences
Anti- oppressive, Anti-authoritarian, Anti-capitalist (consumer)
No mother blaming
Everyone takes care of the children – communal
Creative with resources/making something from little/fabulosity
Assessable for all
Holding Space
Fiercely Protective
Active resistance against injustice

Then we went onwards to concretely brainstorming ideas in bubbles - of practices and workshops stemming from these ideals.

Creating Space: Reflections on Children in the City

“Change life! Change Society! These ideas lose completely their meaning without producing an appropriate space. A lesson to be learned from soviet constructivists from the 1920s and 30s, and of their failure, is that new social relations demand a new space, and vice-versa.” – Henri Le Febvre (*Critique of Everyday Life, The Production of Space & The Right to the City.*)

Children’s space in the city is often marginalized, put last or pushed aside altogether: schools, playgrounds, private houses - stratified and separated by access depending on class, race, sex, and more; manufacturing and replicating oppressive models by controlling children to fit into these unequal spaces.

Space, itself, is a very important thing. Walking across an unbroken sheet of ice and snow early one winter morning, in a city park, for instance – one may reflect on the importance of space and city planning. Could one experience a vast expanse of snow in this way, as a city dweller, without a park?

A lot of things go into planning a children’s program for a conference but to have a space visible creates an additional benefit: an art

and we will help you develop ideas on how your work applies to children. We plan on having a Kidz City coloring book/workbook that will represent each of the larger adult workshop themes of the conference.

Parents: Please contact us ahead of time. Let us know the ages of the children you are bringing, as well as other concerns, especially those with special needs, so we can provide for them.

Conference Participants: Look out for the children around you and support everyone's right to participate.

Volunteers: We need you! All experience levels /no experience: We will have crossing guard training. You can volunteer for as little as one hour.

CONTACT: radkidcare@gmail.com

-from *1st Kidz City flier @ The City From Below*, 2009

4. ORGANIZE

Now it is the time to narrow down and solidify the possibilities, to make a plan and get things ready! New concerns will still come up, plans shift, and different people may add input and program ideas. We try to balance flexibility with structure and each situation is a little different.

These are the processes that we generally go through when we prepare for an action or event. We don't necessarily do these in this order nor do we always use every step every time:

A: ORGANIZE WITHIN YOUR COLLECTIVE:

- Decide on the theme/general idea of what you are going to do.
- Timeline - Set deadlines (by counting backwards from when you need to be done) and help keep each other on track.
- Break down tasks and roles - Discuss who is responsible for what and when. We organize by deciding who will be the bottom-liner for:
 - Communication with conference
 - Coordinating childcare volunteers
 - Coordinating programming & workshops

- Meetings - Have meetings and check-ins. You may want to have:
 - Bi-weekly meetings. We tend to meet more often as the event grows near.
 - When in-person meetings aren't feasible, commit to phone or email check-ins.
- Check lists and to-do lists - Send-out notes.
- Manifestita - Write up a paragraph or more about what you are doing and why. You can tailor this statement in different ways over time and use it for: media, propaganda, outreach and programming.
- Programming and activities – Brainstorm and plan activities and workshops if applicable.
- Schedule - Create schedules with slots to fill-in for volunteer shifts; any programming or workshops; and who is bottom-lining what segment of the main event. *Note: more on scheduling and bottom-lining in Notes below.*
- Embed - Continue to discuss how to embed the values of the event into childcare and radical childcare values into the larger event:
 - activities for youth on their own level in the theme of the larger event
 - ways youth can be more visible, such as a children's parade or a mural/
 - group art project
 - youth leadership/tasks/input

often grow up feeling less equipped than others interacting with kids. This too needs to be changed.

KID(z) CITY is ultimately an experiment, created to explore right-to-the-city values with some of its smallest members, and to act as a living dialogue in how the community can best support the mostly unpaid, or low paid, but vitally important work of taking care of children. We respect the role of community support to make a difference: We can do more together than we can alone. Children's issues are everyone's issues.

WHAT YOU CAN DO:

Workshop presenters: Please submit a page to our KID(z) CITY coloring book that relates an aspect of your theme on a children's level. Consider dropping by and sharing your skills/concepts in the children's space. Feel free to contact us



We have formed the "KID(z) CITY Crossing Guard Committee" to help address these needs. (We chose crossing guards because they help children and others to navigate the city.)

The Crossing Guard Committee recognizes that women have historically and continue to be the primary caretakers of children, and are often the ones that must miss activities to care for their children. We are calling on people with male privilege to sign up for childcare as an act of solidarity. Placing the onus of childcare on women and girls sends a message that males cannot take care of children. Boys

- points of intersection where all-ages can experience positive time together based on values/skills of larger event.
- encourage ways that everyone can get involved; experience some of the programming/environment; and learn intergenerational skills of liberation.

B. ORGANIZE WITH OTHERS:

I. Partnership with Conference or Event -

- Have a contact person.
- Know timeline for the conference or event.
- Expectations - Set some shared expectations.
- We partner with conference/event organizers and have certain expectations that we help them to meet:
 - **"Childcare provided" needs to go on the website; and be included in all their media about the event ***
 - Childcare registration for parents to register ahead of time (how many, what age, and special needs) – to help with preparation.
 - Help with the outreach for childcare and children's programming within their networks (Forward our emails to their contacts)

- Help provide concrete resources such as space, food, and some of the volunteers and activity materials
- To be responsive and committed to working together to better support parents and children access and participation in the conference/event.
- Meetings - Have meetings and check-ins. You may also want to:
 - Go to the larger event organizing meetings so you can keep in better contact with them.
 - Invite organizers to your meeting.
- Embed – Keep thinking of ways that there can be all-ages interaction between the children’s programming and larger event, such as:
 - Children present at closing ceremony.
 - Workshops for youth. Reach out to conference presenters to see if they will share their skills at a youth’s level.
 - Statement send out on inclusion or family friendly policy

** The importance of this cannot be stressed enough—if parents do not know there is childcare they cannot plan ahead and will not know to come--and you will probably have to keep checking and reminding others of this step.*

KID(z) CITY is a creative program intended to support children and parents' access to participation at the *City from Below Conference* and to promote all ages interaction—with respect and equality. We recognize that the city is a structure that should serve its inhabitants (and not the other way around): KID(z) CITY will include a city of boxes to build or destroy one's own space. It will also include children’s workshops to explore nature in the city, sidewalks, and radical singing that will include a symphony of found and urban sounds.

One important component of any conference/gathering is access to that conference. Access for parents and childcare givers are an important part of any grassroots or community gathering. However, at many conferences and gatherings, children’s and caretakers’ issues are often marginalized and addressed last, if at all.

II. Volunteers -

- Keep looking for volunteers.
- Have a list of previous volunteers.
- Create many different levels of participation from doing childcare to dropping off snacks.
- Find volunteers who will share their skills at a child's level. Help support folks who are not sure how to do that.
- Childcare volunteers are never left alone with children. We always have at least one core Kidz City Collective member bottom-lining as well as other childcare volunteers. We also have a policy that no one Kidz City collective member should be left alone with children, no matter who they are, as a safety measure.
- How will you screen new volunteers? We ask them their experience, interest, references, and what organizations, collectives or folks that we may know in common; and try to get a sense of them in this manner. Then we always pair new volunteers with folks that we have worked with before.
- Childcare volunteer slots are between 2-3 hours. If someone wants to volunteer twice or more we highly encourage taking breaks between shifts.
- Will volunteers get a discount or attend for the conference for free the day they volunteer?

- Will you have a volunteer orientation? Or just send out materials/emails with info (including location, contact info) they need to know before the conference?

III. Reach out to parents and children for input

- Continue to consult with parents and youth on how to best support them by asking the parents and youth that are: either involved in the event; or that you know; or asking your collaborators to reach out in their networks.
- Asking specific questions such as: input on food, childcare needs, activities, and consult on event/conference planning. As well as less specific input like: *How can we support you? What do you need to be able to participate?*
 - Informally by person, phone or email
 - by survey, registration
 - having childcare and food at meetings during times parents can attend

III. Reach out to all networks to gather volunteers, resources, and get the word out

- Donations – Sometimes people may want to donate things. We have an amazing dress-up clothes box because of one of our friends donating her old childhood tap and dance costumes.

APENDIX: Kidz City @ The City From Below

C. NUTS AND BOLTS (SPACE, MEDIA, SUPPLIES, FOOD, PROGRAMMING AND ACTIVITIES):



- 1. Space** - Tour the space ahead of time. These are some things to look for:
 - Is it near where the parents and main activities will be? Is it accessible and safe?
 - Is it visible or is it pushed away as far as possible, at the end of the longest hallway on the top floor or basement? You might need to discuss procuring a better space. Remember the radical childcare activist credo: *We hold babies; we hold space!*
 - Previewing your space gives you the information to prepare. It lets you know what attributes to plan around. Ex. - lots of blank white walls, you need sticky stuff to put up posters with that won't damage the paint. Cold floor, you need rugs.
 - Also check out what is neighboring your space. Where are the bathrooms? Close to beautiful walled outdoor space, you may plan some outdoor workshops. Near a kitchen or another workshop, you need to know what will be child-safe and what you need to stay away from. It's best to minimize what can't be touched by selecting the most child-safe space you can. Previewing/asking about what is going on around the childcare space,

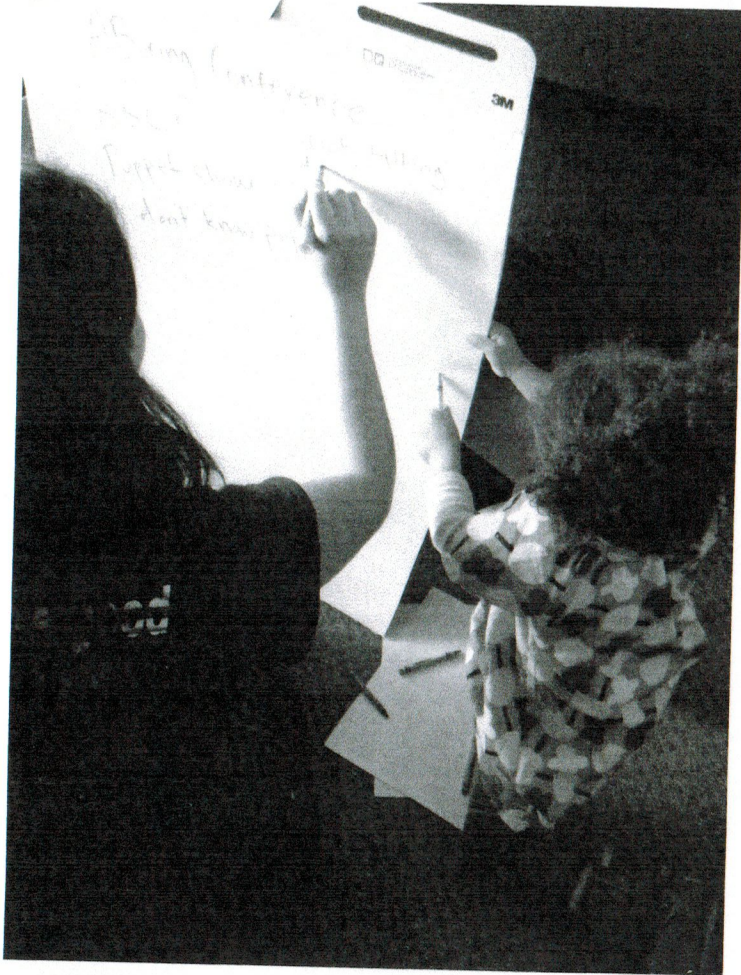
including activities going on next to your space, lets you see any issues you need to discuss, plan, and coordinate with others of how everything will work out.

- Creative space: Besides setting up childcare/activities in a room at conferences we have created sofa forts, children's tables, dinosaur nests, community games, scavenger hunts, picnic blanket activities, and other nooks and nests of liberation within one room or open air events.
- Also tour outside and surrounding space to check out any playgrounds, outdoor spaces, grassy areas, or sidewalks to use for kinetic, outdoor play, or field trips.

2. Media -

- Make fliers to get the word out.
- Make a flier/pamphlet for the childcare programming.
- Make a coloring book!
- "Childcare provided" - Make sure a description of your programming is on all conference/event related media.
- Banner, sign/s, or artwork to be put outside of the childcare space.
- Create visibility and spread the message/meaning of the childcare action.





3. Supplies -

- Art and media to decorate the room with
- Building Supplies – Blankets, pillows, clothesline, clothespins, tape, sticky stuff for wall, brown paper to paper a coffee table for drawing, cushions to sit on, empty boxes, ect.
- Toys -games, a soft ball, dress-up clothes, etc.
- Diaper wipes? Paper towels or other cleaning supplies? First Aid Kit?
- Car seats? Wagon to pull tired children in or snacks and water? Rocking chair for pregnant and nursing moms? What are the particular needs to support parents and children at your particular event?

4. Food –

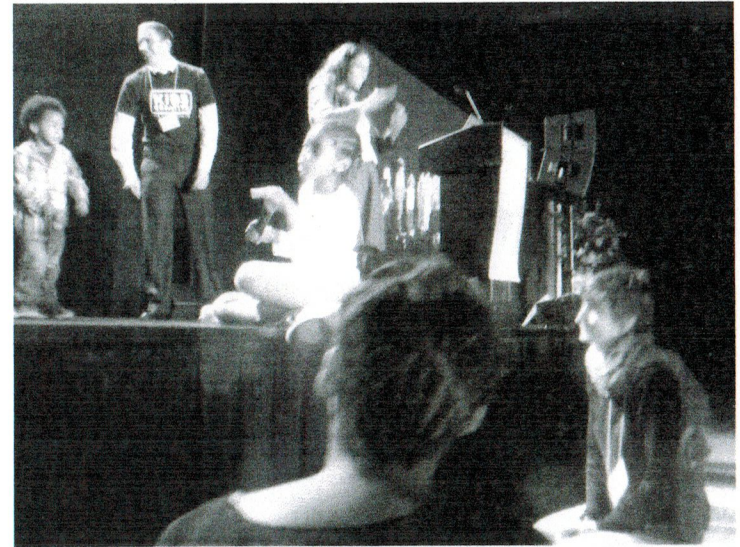
- How is the event/conference handling food? Is food being provided? Will children eat there or eat in childcare?
- Will parents pick up children or children eat lunch in childcare, or have a choice?
- If children eat with group they need more time in transport; should be served first.
- What are the children's food allergies and dietary restrictions? Is this on the registration form? On name stickers?
- Will snacks be provided? Is there a budget? Will you need to shop for the snacks?
- Drinks – water, cups, juice boxes

5. Programming and Activities:

- Programming – Keep finalizing the program.
- Schedule – Organize what classes will happen when, so you can share with others as well as organize with volunteers.
- Plan a range of children’s activities:
 - Artistic – art supplies and projects
 - Play/Learn/Work – toys, puppets
 - Build –
 - (autonomous) - boxes, forts
 - (community) – games
 - Calm – books, stuffed animals, nap
 - Kinetic – outdoor time. Jump rope, ball, chalk, games, dance, yoga
 - Exploration – visit areas around you, go on fieldtrips, scavenger hunts and walks
 - Political – tie the issues together

6. Zones –

- You may want to organize your activities into “zones” or have their own special spot in the room. You can label these zones with signs.
- Also you can organize your supplies into boxes that can be pulled out sometimes but not everything always in view/available at all times.



D. LAST STEPS

Go over your plan/checklist and make sure you are ready:

- All printed matter & forms printed out.
- Volunteer and Activities schedules
- Artwork
- Food
- Supplies
- Gather everything needed for set up
- Update everyone. Send out emails
- Everyone you want to has your phone number
- Who can bring stuff – who is bringing what? Who is going set up and break down?
- Make sure volunteers know where to go and send out volunteer expectation sheet.

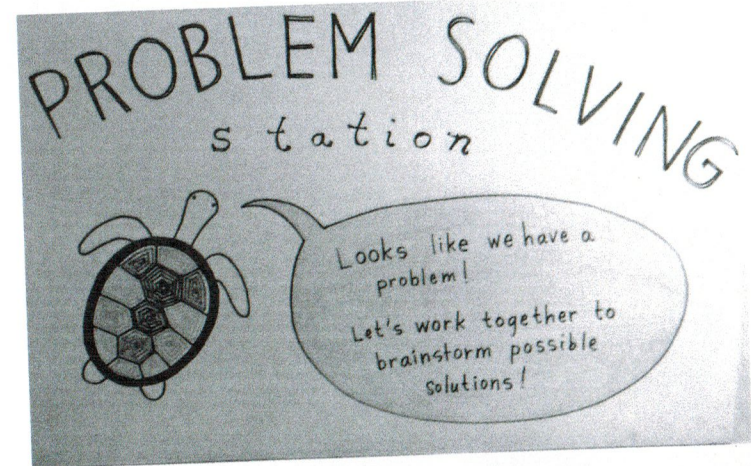


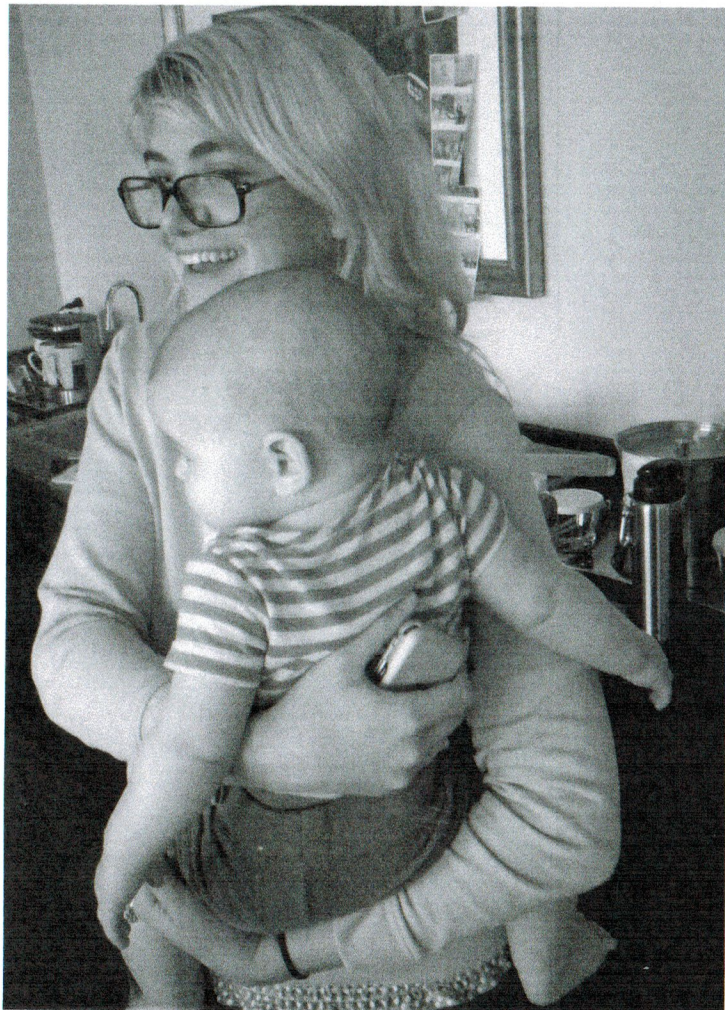
NOTES ON ORGANIZING:

SCHEDULING

Tips for Scheduling:

- Review event/conference hours
- Start childcare a half hour early/later than the main event.
- Create schedule to organize the childcare volunteers. We usually plan 2 or 3-hour shifts for childcare volunteers. Make sure you sync up volunteer slots with conference workshop schedule.
- Schedule some back-up childcare volunteers, if possible. Individuals who will be at the site and can be on call in case of an emergency.
- Divide up core organizer's bottom-lining shifts into day/s or half-day/s. We always have one core member watching over the room/big picture. We usually divide an event into half days (4/5 hour shifts). If one person bottom lines a full day we make sure they have a lunch break, and/or can leave a few hours early.
- Create schedule to organize the children's programming. We usually plan for 45 minutes to an hour workshops/activities, with some space between planned activities.





Example: One day's schedule may look like this:

FRIDAY, Nov. 16

FRIDAY	Kidz City volunteers	Kidz City volunteers	Conference supplied volunteers	Kidz City Bottom-Liner
8:30-- 11:00	1a- Sierra	1b- Melissa	1c - Adam	China
11:00-- 2:00	2a- Kaity	2b- Shira	2c - Suzu	China - to noon. - Harriet
2:00-- 5:15	3a- Sine	3b- Maegen	3c - Adam	Harriet

Kidz City volunteers:

8:30 am - 11:00 am - Volunteer slot 1a: _____

8:30 am - 11:00 am - Volunteer slot 1b: _____

8:30 am - 11:00 am - Volunteer slot 1c: _____

11:00 am - 2:00 pm - Volunteer slot 2a: _____

11:00 am - 2:00 pm - Volunteer slot 2b: _____

11:00 am - 2:00 pm - Volunteer slot 2c: _____

We asked the conference organizers to provide a volunteer for one shift every slot/in order to partner with us:

2:00 pm - 5:15 pm - Volunteer slot 3a: _____

2:00 pm - 5:15 pm - Volunteer slot 3b: _____

2:00 pm - 5:15 pm - Volunteer slot 3c: _____

Bottomliners:

8:30 am - 12:00 pm: Kidz City bottom liner A: _____

12:00 pm - 5:15 pm: Kidz City bottom liner B: _____

**Example: Schedule for: Kidz City Track @ D.I.Y. Fest -
Sat. Sept 15, 2012**

12 - 12:50 PM - Seed "Bomb" Making - green up an empty lot with Harriet

2 - 2:50 PM - Watermelon-Strawberry-Rose Punch - Learn how to make a delicious and calming punch (did you know that rose petals are edible and also soothing) with China and Lucy. The smallest folks can help cut pieces with a butter knife, older participants can also help younger ones and run the juicer and we can all drink together - yum!

3 - 3:50 PM - Games with Kidz City: Build All Ages Community - using games learned from other radical childcare collectives at the 2012 Allied Media Conference in Detroit and Theatre of the Oppressed we will play cooperative games for all ages community skill building and liberation! No experience needed, learn how to play with kids 101 - with Sine and China

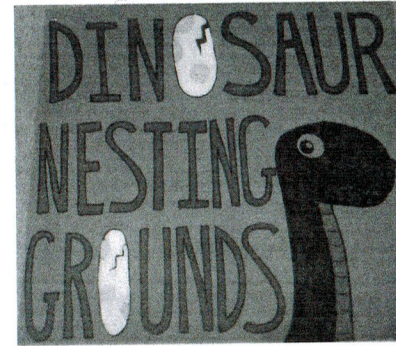
4 - 4:50 PM - Learning about Herbal Medicine: Make Your Own Lip Balm. Come create your own lip balm with Amy and Beth.

5 - 5:50 PM - Sewing Skills: Make a Pouch. Join an amazing and creative seamstress to learn beginner skills to create a useful pouch that can be put on a belt. - Harriet





And another Example:



Kidz City is excited to be working with DIY Fest to program more activities for children, support for parents, and all-ages community building skills. There will be:

- children's craft table with Grandma Shirley;
- making dinosaur eggs (and hang out in the dinosaur nest) with Kidz City;
- puppet theatre;
- and jewelry making for (older) children at the jewelry making table

Come to DIY Fest and bring your children!

The flower of independence blooms from the soil of interdependence. Let's work together to make a great DIY Fest for all.

More Info about DIY Fest: DIY Fest 2011 (Do It Yourself Festival) will be the 5th DIY Fest to be held in Baltimore City. The event is free (donations are greatly appreciated) and is open to anyone wanting to learn a new skill, teach or present one of their skills/hobbies or just check out what goes down at a DIY Fest.

BOTTOM-LINING

What bottom-lining is:

Bottom-lining is an important thing and also a funny word with us at Kidz City. Bottom. Lining. (ha ha) Anyway – what a bottom-liner is someone that has volunteered to take ultimate responsibility for a task and to keep everyone else involved updated, as well as ask for input and help when needed. By dividing these big responsibilities we can concentrate on a certain task and then check-in with each other at meetings. We can cover much more territory working together like this.

Why bottom-lining is important:

How we divide up responsibilities is a very key element of Kidz City and we feel it is an integral component of creating responsible safe inspiring radical childcare. When responsibility is shared there is more energy to be respectful and responsive to children and parents needs, to each other, and to ourselves. This is a very different model then the capitalist one of over-burdened and exploited labor. It takes a lot of energy, coordinating preparations and then working with different, and often new, people in these temporary radical spaces. Having a good experience in the childcare space is something we really value.





Being supported, while supporting others, and working together to increase community support for caregivers and children in these short periods and spaces of time—makes a world of difference.

How we do it:

We have two different periods of bottom-lining: 1) leading up to the main event; and 2) during the event itself.

1) Leading up to the event we usually have three main Organizing Bottom-liners:

- A bottom-liner that communicates back and forth between collective and designated event/conference organizer contact
- A bottom-liner for coordinating childcare volunteers
- A bottom-liner for coordinating children's programming/workshops

Sometimes we have also had:

- A bottom-liner for food, materials, or supplies.

You can divide these tasks the way you see fit. Depending on how many tasks, how big the conference and how many core members you have. In rare cases a bottom liner of food, materials, or supplies may not be a core-member or there may be two bottom liners for a task.

When there is a shortage of members there could even be one bottom-liner for numerous tasks such communication, volunteer coordination, and limited workshop but you can still ask for others to do tasks, such as make a form for filling in names and help get the word out.

It also depends what is going on in each of our lives (with school, work, other projects, family, and personal issues). Sometimes one of us takes on more-or-less responsibility, or even decides they are not taking part in organizing this go-round. We decide this at the beginning when we meet to decide if we will take on a project. If we did not feel we had enough collective energy we would not accept to collaborate on childcare in the first place.

As emergencies come up, as they have, we may also shift who is a bottom-lining and a Kidz City core member may step back in, sometimes working together in partnerships to cover a certain responsibility. We also may break down bottom-lining in time sensitive ways as well.

2) Bottom-lining during the Main Event: Shift (or Room) Bottom-liner

We divide being the main person for watching over and coordinating the children's room into days, or half-days. At least one core member must be in the





room at all times. It feels really good when there are two core members in the room together, and sometimes we visit each other or help out during harder parts of the day. The important thing is to divide responsibility so the space bottom-liner stays sharp. Half a day of bottom-lining is ideal. If you must bottom line all day being relieved a few hours early or taking a long lunch is good. We do not believe putting all the responsibility on one person for the entire event but doing shifts in bottom-lining, which are longer than volunteer shifts, as to create cohesion in knowing what has been going on.

By splitting up the responsibilities and duties of bottom-lining our children's space by our core collective members (usually three available members of our three to four core collective members) we are very different than having one person, who has been hired or who volunteered, to be responsible to watch over and coordinate childcare for the entire weekend which is what often happens with childcare during radical events and conferences, when it is offered at all. This may take more effort in communication and organization but ultimately it creates a model of more supported childcare on all levels. We believe it is a more equitable model.

There will be more about bottom-lining during the main event in the next segment.

SOME LAST TIPS:

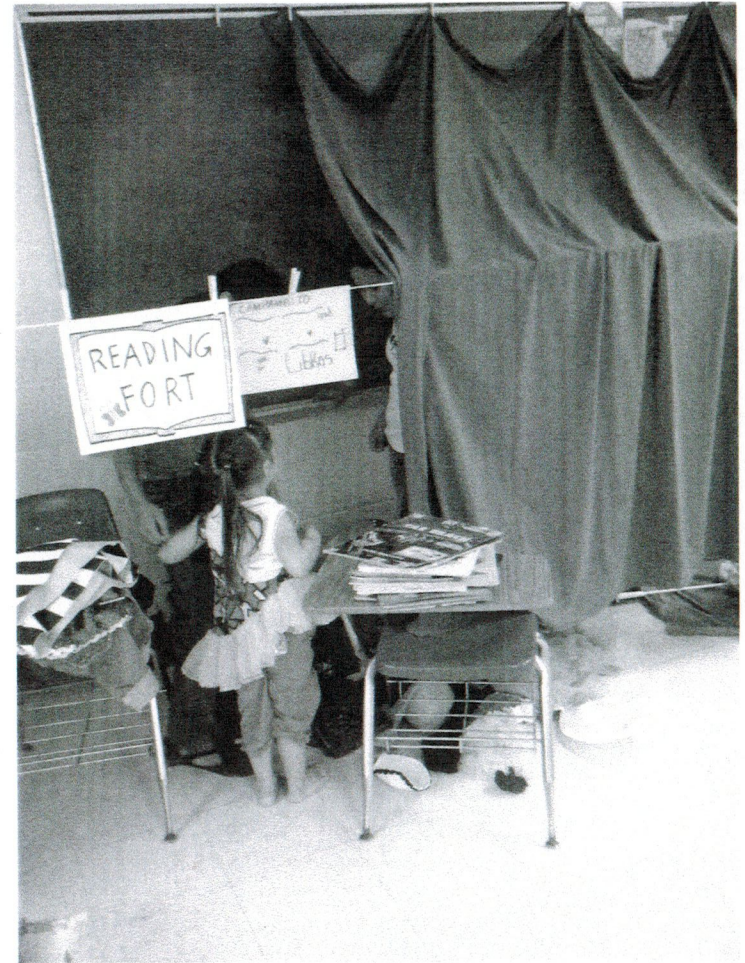
Planning is important: Even the smallest events can be a social and stimulus overload. Planning ahead, clarifying tasks and responsibilities – to the best of your ability – makes for better radical childcare environments.

Realistic Appraisal: Try to realistically gauge (and re-assess/check in as needed) your collective and individual energy, and commitment level. There is nothing wrong with knowing your limitations or feeling that you do not have enough time and energy to do some of these steps that we have outlined or to make all your fantastic ideas a reality.

Communicate limitations: It is better to realistically communicate and try to gage your group's capacities than to have to deal with issues of burnout later. However even if you do over reach – open communication can still help assess and pull back to make a more realistic goal.

Keep your Boundaries: It took us a while to learn to get better about this. Boundaries are such a beautiful thing! Also being assertive is not the same thing as being aggressive or rude.

Hold Space: Keep taking childcare work and activism seriously. Society often underestimates,





undervalues, as well as marginalizes caregiving, parents and children's issues.

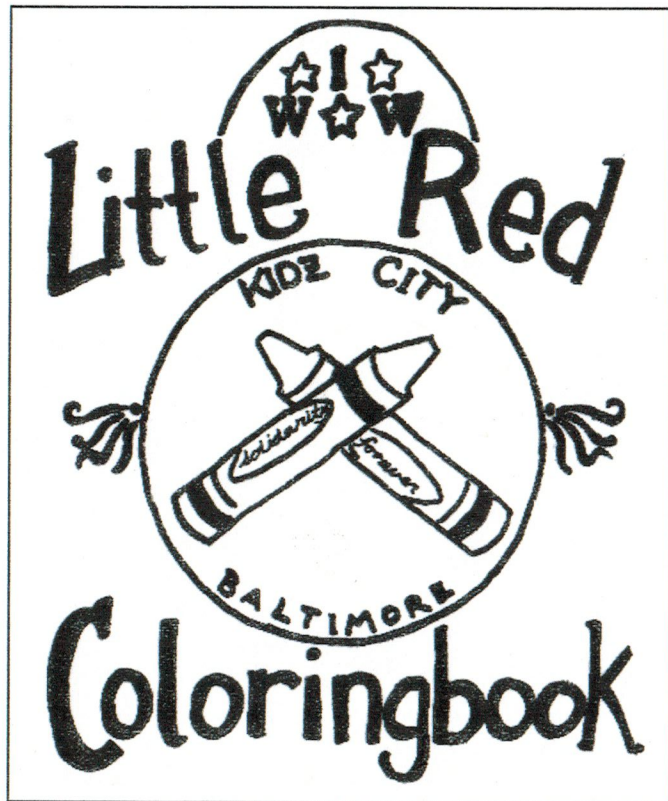
Be accountable: It is important to provide the safe and accountable childcare that you set out to achieve. Take responsibility for your actions. Communicate through difficulties.

Be gentle with yourself and each other: There is no perfect way forward. Each group and person has to find their own way and make it up as they go: responding and modifying as needed. This is hard work! So celebrate your accomplishments and be as kind as you can with learning lessons and places for improvement.

Organization takes time: Building relationships take time. Over time organization becomes easier, and the discussions you have and problems you work out with each other build trust and goodwill. We increase our capacities through practice.

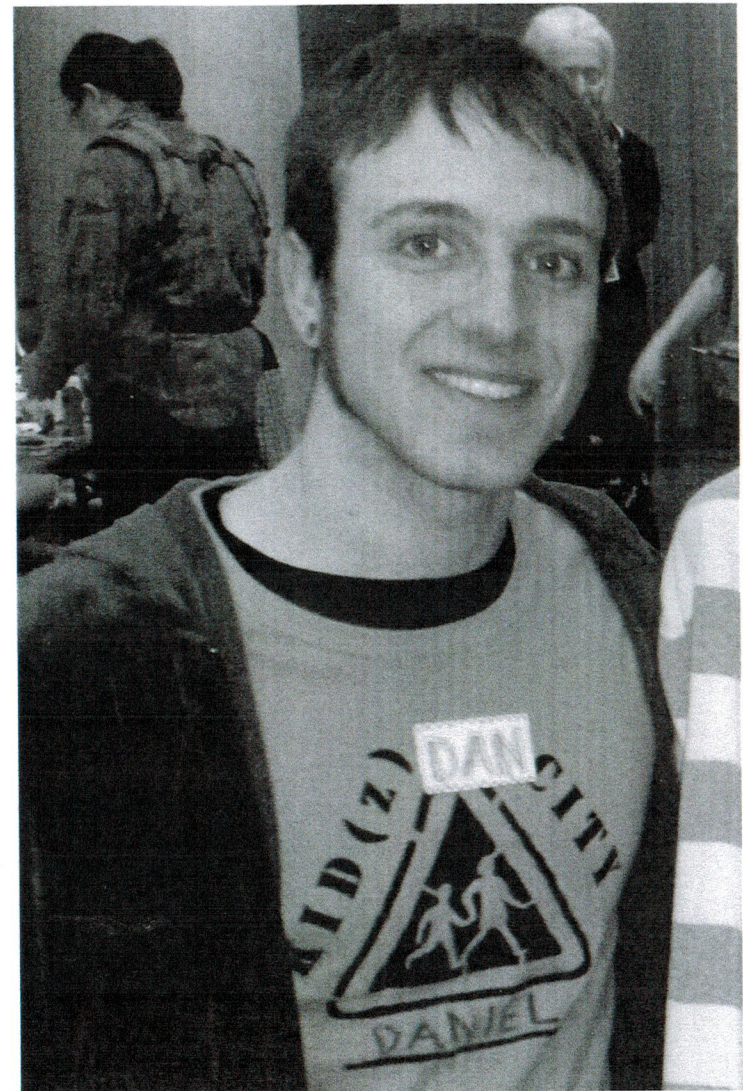
Resource: *Kidz City Baltimore Volunteer Expectations* *

Resource: *Kidz City Sign-In and Sign-Out Sheet* *



web link to Kidz City/2011 Wobbly Convention coloring book PDF:

<http://libcom.org/library/little-red-coloring-book>



*all forms are included in the "Resource: Forms!" appendix in the back



Other Links:

This is a Wiki of games for radical childcare, including cooperative games, learning games, radical games etc from various sources. You are encouraged to add to it!
This wiki is hosted by the Bay Area Childcare Collective:

<http://childcaregames.wikispot.org/>





5. BUILD (SET UP/HOLD SPACE)

We have built Kidz City in Sofa Forts, on picnic blankets, out of cardboard boxes, and within rooms during 2-3 day conferences. This section will focus on childcare during conferences and events and is broken into three sections: Kidz City, Taking Care, and People Power.

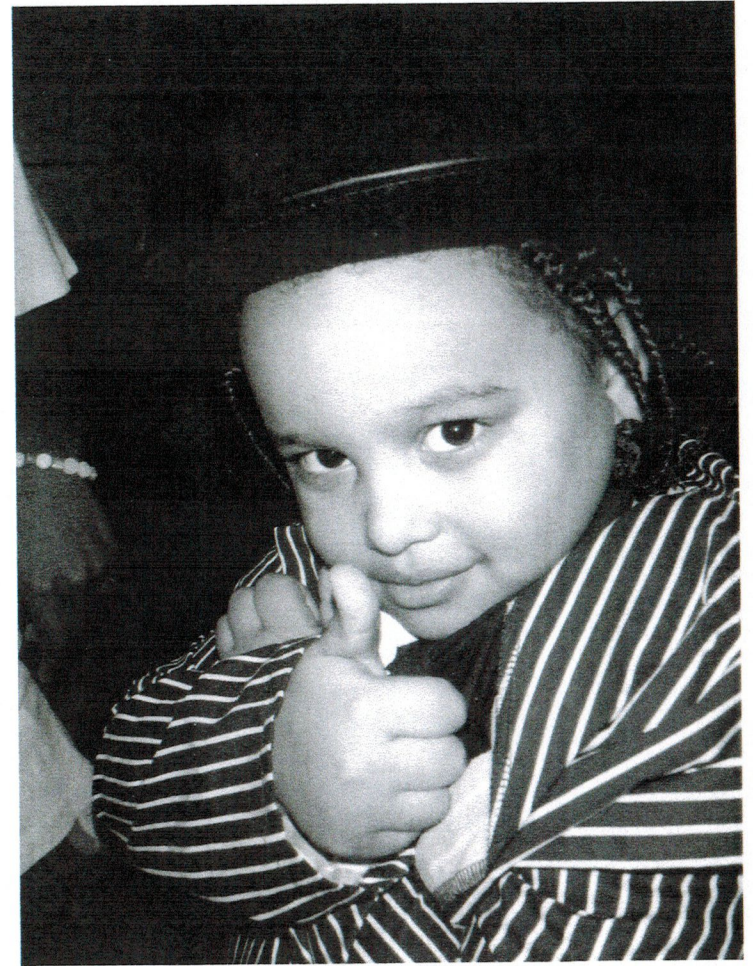
Note: Start by being as well prepared as you can. Make sure you are rested and have eaten beforehand (or at least on site before one's shift starts), as well as encourage others to do the same. Quality building starts with taking care of ourselves.

KIDZ CITY

1. SET UP:

- How early can you come ahead of time? The night before? That morning? Get there as early as you can. Usually we have 1 - 2 hours to set up.
- Clean and baby proof. Sweep if needed. Remove small and unnecessary objects that infants, babies, and some toddler's can choke on. Duct tape can be used to put over outlets. Look around for anything that can be pulled over or sections that should be blocked off.

- Know what's around you. Where's the bathroom? Where is the outside area? What are your options? Take a moment to look at the big picture. Think about how events will flow and look for the paths between activities so you can plan/prepare accordingly.
- Clearly label and put up signs outside the door and in the hallways, where needed, so the space can be easily located.
- Check in table - Set up a sign in/sign out table near entry to sit and watch who goes in and out. Set up all info there, such as: sign-in-sheet for parents checking in children; a separate sign-in-sheet for childcare volunteers, with optional extra space for day-of-event volunteers; and any other handouts. (This can include an info sheet about who you are; the schedule for the day; and a sign-up sheet to be on your mailing list).
- Tape the day's schedule to the wall. Also tape up any other information you want everyone to be able to see clearly
- Have copies of the volunteer and activity schedules (with their contact info on it) for each bottom-liner as well.
- Decorate to inspire and set the tone. Put artwork with radical and positive messages on the wall. Create posters with inspiring slogans to bring meaning to the endeavor.





Acknowledgements:

Thank You to everyone who has supported, inhabited, and co-created Kidz City over the last few years – you have made it great!

- Bring homey, soft, and cozy elements like quilts, pillows, afghans, as well as other handcrafted or personally meaningful items. Handmade items can create a welcoming feeling within any institutional space.
- Build – move chairs, set up zones for different areas. You can create blanket fort, space for imaginative play, calm play area for toys and little kids, open space for more active play, corner for napping, table for games. Create community space by taping brown paper over a coffee table and leave crayons on top. Put pillows on the floor so folks can gather around the table. Designate space to stash your bags (we usually put this behind the check in table), your food, and storage for parents dropping off diaper bags and other items. You may even want to create a lounge for parents to hang out/socialize depending on your space and needs. Let your environment inspire your building. Build space that allows interaction and for kids (and childcare people) to shift and build in their own creative ways.
- Fill with toys, arts activities, books, stuffed animals, and other items. Lay out some to be welcoming as kids first arrive and tuck other supplies and projects away in boxes you can pull out and use later.

- Who do you contact in an emergency? Check in with the organizers. In some instances we have had security to call, phone number contacts, or even a safety team to call for any issues at all.
- Focus. Keep track of time and get ready so you are prepared to start the day organized and on the right foot.

2. STARTING THE DAY

Kidz City Shift Bottom-liner/Structure

The day should be broken up into one or two Bottom-liner shifts (An important note of caution is to not have one person do too much and burn out/exhaust themselves in the process) that are done by Kidz City Core Collective members. Bottom-liners look out for the “big view,” watch over the room and help orient volunteers to what is going on. It’s easier for someone to be looking out for the room, over all, while others get immersed in activities. We are also accountable in this manner.

There is always at least one core Kid City collective member in the room. It’s a nice feeling when there is more than one collective member or when you know and have worked with other volunteers before. It's

6. REFLECTION

Often folks get tired when a big event is over, and you don’t discuss, or hear from others, how it went. Try to take the time for these last steps for you can learn so much that you can also put in use, or share with others, for next time.

- Thank everyone, send out a group thank you email
- Ask for feedback, what was good and where there was room for improvement.
- Hold a debriefing meeting over food where collective members and volunteers can take a turn sharing their experiences and thoughts.
- Create supportive environment where folks can talk about personal struggles while organizing if they wish as this is often useful for everyone
- Reflect on lessons learned for next time
- Congratulations – Yay, you did it! Celebrate your successes as well.
- Update your blog or share a report back and/or some photos

good to have a mix of folks you have worked with before as well as new folks.

No one is ever left alone with children. This is another way we are accountable and a safety and support feature.

Volunteers

There should be a high ratio of childcare volunteers to children: at least two childcare volunteers in addition to the Shift Bottom liner.

Children

We do childcare for all ages from babies to tweens. We do childcare for approx. 1 - 15 children usually so its not a large enough of a group that we have needed to divide based on ages. Older children can help with younger children and we have a range of activities. Once we had a heads up that a large group of tweens were coming so we built a hang out area for them with older radical books and also planned a collage workshop. By the end of the day they were helping with the smaller children, dressing up and putting on a play for the whole room.

Sign In Table

The Sign In Table should be the first thing you see when you enter the room. The Shift Bottom-liner—or another person in charge of watching who comes in-and-out of the room—sits behind the table. The person designated to this task should welcome folks and help orient them, although if other volunteers notice someone who needs help with orienting themselves or signing in, they can step up too.

Make sure caregivers register their children. Direct parents to the sign-in-sheet and make sure they fill out the form. It can help to ask them the questions for anything they have left blank or quickly go over it with them to make sure you can read their handwriting. Lunch? Potty trained? Special needs? Medical issues? Write on form, contact info—and fill it in more if they have not.

Welcoming Children:

- Make name tags with children
- Have a welcoming activity, such as art materials set up around a table everyone can join in, or stuffed animals and toys.
- Introduce child to others, activities, or a mini-tour of the space

- We are building a different way where we can all work together and respect each other.
- We are continually working on time, space, cooperation, and communication
- Even in the best of times, trying to be clear, there will be miscommunications and problems that will come up. We work on our problems.
- We back up and take time out when needed
- We take care of ourselves and each other
- We nurture positive change
- We do our best to create an ideal temporary autonomous inspiring happening

The ideal childcare action is one that leaves children, parents, childcare volunteers, and organizers all with a good feeling and conference participants who have not participated in childcare (this time) exclaiming, "Next conference I go to – I'm volunteering for childcare!" because it looks so fun. And Radical!

- Look out for new children and welcome them into your activities, help direct a new volunteer to them, or simply keep an eye out.
- Let children warm up in their own time
- Play getting to know each other games or create a tree of intention drawing with goals for the room

Welcoming Volunteers:

- Childcare volunteers should also check in and out.
- Introduce volunteers to each other.
- Childcare volunteers should also have name-tags. (They can ask kids to help them make/draw them if they think it will be a good getting-to-know-you activity).
- Have clear set up, things to do

Stuff:

- Have an out-of-the-way place to put extra stuff, like behind the table, in a corner or a closet, shoes lined up by the door.

3. ACTIVITIES

-Workshops -Projects -Games -Story-time -Songs



“The Huddle”

Room/Shift Bottom-liners (and other anarcho-feminists) may need to make decisions quickly at times. One move is “the huddle” where you consult with others to get input and information in order to coordinate a play. Moving close together, putting your shoulders side by side, throwing out strategies and deciding on the plan of action – lets go!

Maybe I’ve overstretched with this football metaphor but it feels good when we have been working together for a while and can coordinate a plan to take care of everyone during complications and stress – who does what – quickly, and we all feel good and it works out. Yay!

In our City:

- We welcome feedback/input/flexibility – the “city” has been built and now it is for the inhabitants to occupy and build and grow and co-create in. Let movements unfold and people use their space.
- Flexibility
- Accountability
- Listening to each other
- Values: the way we do things/expectations.

- Share information with others.
- Watch over the room and volunteers rather than getting too caught up for too long in what you are doing.
- The person who takes ultimate responsibility for what is happening in the space.
- Also a person can be the one who is bottom-lining/over-viewing a certain activity: going outside to play, one person should be watching everyone, the big picture.
- This is a rotating position for those who are core organizing members.

When people do not designate a person to watch the overview, and a system to do if something goes wrong, often folks fragment, sit around talking not watching, or become authoritarian. A system, when worked on, and continually worked on, is a structure to share and debate, change, work within and be flexible, a common language of coordination. Humans are always looking for a pattern: patterns can be orchestrated and free-styled upon, to make sense of things and to orchestrate, balance or jump off their own movements.

Individuals:

Ultimately we are all in charge of ourselves. Trust your instincts what feels right or wrong. Everyone has their own way.

Places For Interaction/ Some ideas:

Workshop presenters do workshop or submit a coloring page, on the issues they are working on broken down appropriately for children

Community members share a skill

Children teach a workshop for all-ages (8 year old Malila gave a button making workshop to all ages, inviting older conference goers into the kids space)

Different points of entry that all-ages and abilities can participate and contribute to the larger event

Parade. Create a book monster to threaten the books and zines at the Bookfair - if you like. March for fun. March for any reason that you like.

Children participate in the closing ceremony

Art or interactive art hanging in the hallways

Conference participants are encouraged and given ideas on how they can support caregivers; all-ages

Parenting, children, and childcare are visible

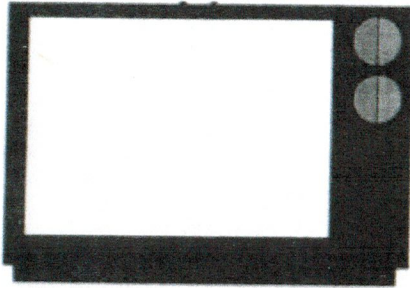
Treat each other with respect

EXAMPLE:

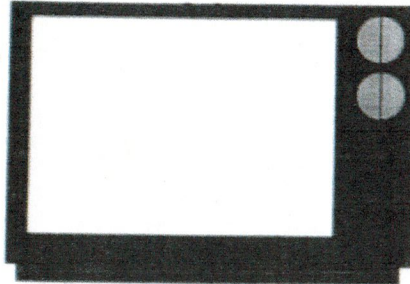
Rebranding the Urban: How Politicians Get Power Using the Media (and What People can Learn from This)

Workshop and
Rebranding the Urban:
How Politicians Get Power Using the Media (and What People Can Learn from This)

"My TV"
Draw a picture of your community as it really is.



"Fake TV"
Draw a way that some people might show your community even if it is not true.



This workshop is about how politicians use TV news, blogs and newspapers to get power. It is also about how ideas about people's race and culture are used to take power from people of color, women and the poor. What do you see on TV that you think is true about your community? Do you see things on TV that try to make people seem powerless? What can we do to make sure that TV tells the truth about how people really are?

This workshop is about how politicians use TV news, blogs and newspapers to get power. It is also about ideas about people's race and culture that are used to take power from people of color, women and the poor. What do you see on TV that you think is true about your community? Do you see things on TV that try to make people seem powerless? What can we do to make sure the TV tells the truth about how people really are?

everything you could to prepare, now it's time for the day to unfold. It's no good to control *everything* and as the parenting expression goes: pick your battles. There are some things you are going to want to be a stickler for, like signing in and out, not letting kids wander out of the space or harm each other, and other things you are going to let go of. Especially by the end. By the end of the second day of our last conference, Facing Race, many of the children had snuck off into the "quiet room" where we had saved for napping babies and also where many of the kids had enjoyed down time, laying on top of the bed and reading books, the day before. As rowdy kids invaded, made up their own rules, and played in the other room at the end, we no longer tried to hold together the mess. We all knew each other pretty much at this point. And who knows, that little bit of child controlled chaos might make up some of their happiest memories. There's always a point to let go and not fight to keep any kind of pre-existing notion. The gentle way is often the most resilient, bend without breaking.

More on Bottom-lining during the main event:

What bottom-lining means:

- look over everyone, the bigger picture, and the whole room.
- Make sure folks sign in and sign out and talk to them.

After time, people get to know each other and often come together more like a little (temporary, autonomous) family. Connections continue afterwards, seeing each other outside this space and within the gathering. It's good to get to know each other in childcare.

Growing and Unity

After spending a day or two together in a childcare space, a funny thing happens: you really start to see the results of making a little temporary family or community – and that feels good. Like in many situations, the seeds you planted, you never thought were going to sprout, flower eventually. You may notice people spontaneously taking care of each in new ways they weren't doing before or working together effortlessly, folks knowing each other and running on the same kind of frequency: shouting "hello" and "goodbye" when you see each other in other places.

Letting Go

Really letting go starts when you actually start the event all your planning has led up too. From that point on, as much as you all have planned, things are going to happen in their own way. Staying open and rolling with it are good things to do! You did

4. LEAVING THE ROOM

It's necessary to occasionally (once or twice a day) go on a walk or exploration to get out of the room and for the children to have some exercise and change of air. Put a note on the door where you are going, with the time and contact phone number. Take it down when you come back.

Try to put any nearby playground or outside/inside walk time on the schedule so everyone will know ahead of time. However sometime, you just need to outside, and it can't always be scheduled exactly. As we do not go far away we have never had any problem with this, but you should trust your own intuition and comfort level.

In certain situations (for instance, if you have a lot of children or if a group is breaking away to go to another activity) you may want a volunteer to write the names of all the children who are going somewhere together on a piece of paper to leave inside the childcare room before you leave the room.

Count how many children you have before you go somewhere. And then, of course, make sure you have the same number coming back.

Anytime you leave the room you should use the Buddy System.

The Buddy System

The Buddy System is Great! Everyone lines up with a buddy and helps watch over and takes care of each other. Let's say your buddy falls down. You help them up or call for help if you need it. You always stick with your buddy. There should also be a Childcare volunteer leading and bringing up the rear. You may also want to divide up adults to children in small groups so that each group of kids has an adult to watch them.

Bathroom

You can all go to the restroom as a group and those who don't have to go can wait for those who do. Try, as much as possible, to visit the bathroom with three or more folks.

Anarchist Tactics in the Field

If there is a conflict of needs or wants, and some want to/need to go one way and others, another way – you may want to stop and discuss as a group. Then divide up, if there are enough volunteers for each group of children to have two childcare volunteers with, and do two separate things. Discuss issues and needs as a group. Explain why you are doing what you do. Try to come up with group

Tips for Radical Childcare Volunteers

Volunteers can help by emphasizing:

- Positive approaches/alternative method
- Creative problem solving
- Communication
- Sharing their real selves – be yourself
- Listening to each other
- Following energy. Time for kinetic outside activity? Quiet time? Clean up time? Snack time? Go on a walk? Arts and Crafts?
- Help guide energy.
- Letting go. Let folks figure it out. Don't be afraid of some chaos
- Talking about it. What should we do? Discuss
- Care
- Communicating: "I'm doing this."
- Asking for help. "I don't know what to do".
- We can always contact parents if we need more input
- We have space and time to be different. We are not a school - everyone doesn't have to do stuff. We are not your parents. We take care; have fun; be safe; and try to promote a happy time but don't have to worry as much or know all the answers.
- Live our values as well as learn from other's examples and our experiences.
- Have fun!

treated special or a rule needs to be overturned – letting one person do something special. For example once I let an older boy climb on some outdoor sculptures I had told all the smaller children not to climb on. I told the group “before we go – just so and so gets to climb on the sculpture because he has been unhappy for a long time now and has not had fun doing any of these things that we have had fun doing and he needs something special.” His whole face shined with glee! These are things that are hard to explain. Experiencing it together is invaluable. This is how we learn.

PEOPLE POWER

LEARNING SKILLS

They say that play is children’s work. Give children the space to do that work. Give everyone the space to learn. There is so much you can learn from each other when you have different ages and abilities together.

Model the change you want to see.

The power of a living example is a mighty thing.
“Monkey See, Monkey Do.”

solutions to individual problems. Suggest different options. Consult with the other volunteers and discuss option. Stop and think. Work it out. Ask everyone to raise their hand if they are happy with any new plan of action, where for example: some will go back to the room to rest and others will keep playing outside.

Sometimes it gets complicated to mobilize as a radical childcare mass but successful anarchist tactics in the field create a feeling of happiness, working it out, and working it togetherness.

Checking Out

Children have to be checked out to leave childcare. They need to be signed in and out by their caregivers or others who have permission to do so (there should be space on the form for guardians to write in the names of others who also have permission).

Remind caregivers to please always sign in and out.

TAKING CARE

Paying Attention

Help volunteers pay attention to children. This may sound basic but it is good to remind others that they cannot walk away without telling anyone and making sure it is alright, and that children can not walk away out the door on their own. Also while we may be excited to see each other, now is not the time to catch up with your (adult) friends and socialize. We can remind each other to center our conversations back to include, or at least check in on, children. Another thing that can happen is that there can be a traffic jam of folks who have walked through the door to register, and then stand around talking afterwards. Help them to move aside to continue their conversation so the doorway is open and welcoming for new members. Childcare space can, at times, be empty; and then suddenly fill up. People come and go. We need to be mindful and help each other pay attention with gentle reminders to keep the space open, ready, and centered on its goals.

There are many ways to pay attention to children. One way is to pay attention to where everyone is, and the overall climate of the room, this is the job especially of the Shift Bottom-liner, to keep their eye

else said, "then you can have the children sign a contract they will abide by these rules," but we would not do that, nor "enforce" the rules but use them as guiding principles that we could continually work on and build together. This is not to say that an authoritarian element will not enter Kidz City, as this is the norm in the society we live in. Many of those who work with children do so in authoritarian structures (like schools and camps which are over crowded, over worked, and have different goals than we do). Many adults, including parents, and children themselves, often take care of, nurture, protect, as well as sometimes bully and control younger children. We do not oppose different ways to interact but try to support each other, question, and bring up alternatives to authoritarianism.

With children it can be fairly easy to learn how to read behavior in some cases. Instead of telling them not to do what they are doing, learn to read them. Rubbing eyes? Means a baby is sleepy. Sometimes destruction means a child is bored, needs a change in environment - to be physical - or needs a hug or is hungry! It's not bad to try out a few of these things. Children need rest, food, quiet time, rowdy and physical time, time together and time to themselves. Also give room for there to be an exception. Sometimes making the exception can also be a great thing. Not all children and situations are the same and sometimes someone needs to be

who did not know what to do talked to others and a father volunteer felt equipped to take the little boy aside and explained to him the issue and suggested playing a game of "Adventurers" instead.

By supporting each other, we can create a different environment where oppression is actively resisted and it is also OK to express yourself (like with gender identity, for example) creatively or go against different norms in society. "This is the way we do it in Kidz City", I sometimes explain, "I am sharing food because we believe in sharing." Seeing what everyone is bringing to the table, working it out together. We tend towards positive problem solving. We can be firm with boundaries when needed but in general we are not disciplinarians. We are basically concerned with no one getting hurt and working together to support everyone's rights. If we have an issue we are not sure of or cannot solve together we contact the parent and ask them what we should do.

We do really believe in creative problem solving and once set up a problem solving station where everyone could write a problem and then ways that it could be solved. One other person saw this as a creative way to have a time-out, but we do not believe in this; we sincerely did want this to be a problem solving station. Equally once we tried to have a tree to draw with values on it. Then someone

on the over all climate and not just where the action is, to notice who is on the edges and if there are any problems, making sure that no children go off on their own. However all volunteers and participants can help with this when it feels appropriate/needed.

Another way is to pay attention to who is not being included. For example when small children speak up and are not listened to, help amplify their voices as well as to take them seriously.

We can all pay attention to each other and consult with each other when we are not sure what to do.

Take Care of Yourself and Each Other

Do you need a drink? A snack? To rest or sit a moment. To be listened to. To hold a baby and ground yourself.

Offer support to others as well. When your comrade tells you that they get overwhelmed and need to leave in 5 hours, remind them of what they said and that it's a good time to leave.

Also, maybe make sure before the childcare is open that everyone's needs are taken care of. Like if a volunteer arrives & says that they didn't have time to eat, prioritize having them get food into them before childcare opens & kids arrive.



← like at the end of the day, or after lunch.

Clean Up

Don't forget to clean and tidy up periodically.

Holding Space: We hold babies, We hold Space!

If we let adults (not associated with the children's programming) come in and do other activities, even when the room is temporally empty, they tend to take over and not make space for the children, even when the children come. It is a very unwelcoming climate for a caretaker and child to first experience as beginning impressions. Feel empowered to tell those looking for free space to prepare for their workshop, etc. that this is not the space for that. Many adults tend to not want to give you space, and then try to take it away when you get it.

Non-judgmental Support

Kidz City has agreed upon providing non-judgmental support and that if there comes a time we have an issue with this, we will discuss it as a group. We are not trying to replace being the parent of the children that we are watching and so we do not have to assume these responsibilities. We realize there are many different ways to do things as many different pressures upon parents and children. We think the best way we can support their options is to respect parents and children knowing best for their

own lives and to support their options. We do not have to agree with others and we can share the values we believe in by creating living examples of and options to show our values.

Guidance

Distraction is your friend. If you don't want a little kid to do something, offer a different option.

Direct and divert attention. For example: "I don't know if jumping on the balcony is such a great idea. Can you show me how high you can jump here on the grass?"

Depending on the age and situation you can offer a short explanation as well as alternative choices. You can also ask others—including children— what they think they should do instead and work on it as a group, trying to come to an agreement.

However, it is also important to address some subjects directly, offering guidance and structure to actively resist oppression. We need to address racism, sexism, homophobia, xenophobia, and more in all phases of our organizing and to talk about these issues with all ages. These subjects should not be shied away from. For instance once 2 children were noticed to be uncomfortable with their friend's insistence on playing "Cowboys and Indians." Those

