

Activity Guide: February

Items in green are included in your PBL kit from CMNH

Ages 0-24 months:

- **Cardboard box sensory bin**

- Save a medium-large size cardboard box (or an extra kiddie pool?!). Put in some or all of the **plastic balls** and have children take turns sitting in the box.
 - Encourage babies to explore cause & effect by rolling the balls at the edges of the box and showing how they roll back and don't "disappear" like they might in a big open room.
 - Try the same activity with **egg shakers** inside the box instead of balls.

- **Wash the animals!**

- Give the **bath buddies** a bath with a shallow bin of soapy water and some sponges.
 - Have one bin of water and one bin of soapy water and lots of cups and sponges—or *just water* for very young children (no soap).

(For older children, have an activity that makes the animals "dirty" first before washing them—something like dirt/mud works well and washes off the animals well! There are other food items that can work (pudding, etc) so choose what you think will work best for the children at your organization—use tools like brushes, toothbrushes, pipettes, etc to clean!)



Ronan, son of Museum staffer Colie, is 11 months old.

"He was too tall to sit in any boxes we had, but a laundry basket worked great! He loved being surrounded by the balls and also really loved dumping them out of the basket!"

Ages 2-3 years:

- Mix & Match fun
 - Roll out the **farm rug** and place a few manipulatives on and around it. See how children play!
 - All kinds of **animals** are fun to add (even animals that don't live on a farm—maybe some sorting will happen!) but also things like **Duplos** and other play sets. What kind of stories will children create?
- Make a mini parachute fort!
 - Use the **parachute** and **clips** provided and create a fort by clipping it onto chairs or tables. Bring in some toys to play with or books to look at. Create an environment!
 - One of our awesome program partners mentioned that they had read the story [The Mitten](#) by Jan Brett and then acted it out using the parachute. We love this idea and hope you try it, too!



Jules, daughter of Museum staffer Meredith, is 2 years old.

"The farm rug activity was so fun to watch. She looked at the rug and then ran to get her farm playset. She placed the apples that came with the playset over where the apple tree on the rug was and then had some Duplo people drive their car over to pick apples!"

She also enjoyed the parachute cave. We read "The Mitten" and then she found Mr. Bear to bring in—just like the big bear in the story!"

Ages 4-5 years:

- Compare & contrast with **blocks**
 - Set up some different challenges using the **large cardboard blocks** before the children enter the space
 - Ex: Start some stacks that show different simple color patterns, try some stacks of only small blocks and other stacks of only large blocks, patterns with small and large blocks, etc.
 - Once children enter the space, see how they react to the different patterns/challenges and what kinds of challenges they create for themselves. Add in some manipulatives like animals or other figures and see how they get integrated into the play.
 - Share a book about patterns! We like the book [Round](#) by Jennifer Ward for talking about patterns in nature, and the book [A Pair of Socks](#) by Stuart J. Murphy for more traditional color patterns and matching.
- Chilly sensory bin
 - Freeze some of the **counting critters** in ice cube trays! Put the ice cubes in a sensory bin. Invite children to use the **sensory bin tools** and some warm water to free the critters!
 - We love [pipettes](#) for this kind of sensory fun, and they're great for fine motor skills, too!



(Example set-up for critter melting!)