

# parent guide.

How to help your kids get the most out of art!



**Mattress Factory**

500 Sampsonia Way, Pittsburgh, PA 15212 | 412.231.3169

Check out [www.mattress.org](http://www.mattress.org) for more education programs or events.



This project supported in part by the Spark Fund for Early Learning at The Sprout Fund.



**Mattress Factory**

# HELLO!

We are so happy you are here today and that you brought your children to enjoy the Mattress Factory.

We know that this is a different sort of museum and hopefully this guide can help you talk with your child, do some activities and have a deeper experience with our installations.

## Here are a few tips to get started:

1. **The Mattress Factory has room-sized pieces of art made by artists.** We don't have guards and some of the artwork is delicate - so we just ask that you treat it like you want someone to treat the artwork you might make at home. We don't recommend jiggling, jumping or jostling the artwork.

2. Ask the **front desk** about a **Family Guide** for your child.

3. **DO look around the corner** - there is art everywhere at the Mattress Factory. Ask the front desk what is / is not appropriate for your children, but we don't want you to miss anything either.

4. **There is NO RIGHT ANSWER.** Think about it. Have a conversation about it.

5. **There is a lot to see at the Mattress Factory**, it is okay if you don't see it all today - just come back and visit another day! We recommend the first and third Saturday of every month. From 1-4pm we have **ArtLab** - hands-on, drop-in art activities for the whole family. Check [mattress.org](http://mattress.org) to see what is coming up.

6. **If you get hungry** our Boxspring Cafe is open Tuesday-Saturday, 11:30am-3pm.

7. **Restrooms** are located on the lower level of 500 Sampsonia and the first floor of 516 Sampsonia and 1414 Monterey.



## THINGS TO ASK + DO IN ANY INSTALLATION:

### ASK:

What **surprises** you in this piece?

What **in your own life** does this piece remind you of?

**Make up a title** for this piece.

What are **ten descriptive words** about this room?

What do you think **the artist was feeling** when they created this room?

What questions would you **ask the artist** about this piece?

**How do you feel** when you are in this room?

### DO:

Spend time looking around – take some time with your child to **NOTICE** everything about the room. Look closely at the shapes, colors and talk about what you see.

**Look at the space from different perspectives.** It is okay to move around in the room. Sit down, look up, go to every corner – how the different perspectives that change the room?

**Go through all the senses** – list how each sense feels, what does the room smell like, what does it sound like? Etc.

**Imagine how the artist made the installation** – what materials did they use?

**Imagine if you were the artist,** what sort of installation would you create?

**TITLE:**

*Garden Installation*

**ARTIST:**

Winifred Lutz

**YEAR CREATED:**

1993

**MATERIALS:**

Stones, concrete, rebar, wood, planting materials

**LOCATION**

**AT MF:**

Outside of 500 Sampsonia near front entrance



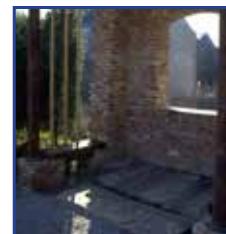
**Can you find a place to hide in plain sight in this garden?**

The **Private Prairie** changes with the seasons. Sometimes you can sit down and imagine you are in a vast sea of grass. **Imagine the garden in all the different seasons.**



**How do you imagine this garden has changed? How will it continue to change?**

There was a building here, the Stewart Paper Company. It was destroyed in a fire in 1963 and the basement of the building creates the amphitheater.



The window (see photo to the left) is inspired by the window in the original building.

The plantings in the garden reflect the field / forest ecology of Pennsylvania.

The water trough was built to connects the upper and lower levels. Nature is always changing – this is not a finished piece of art.



**Can you find two viewfinders that look out on to Sampsonia Way?**

The cone-shaped viewfinder is an abstraction of the shape of the wild morning glories that grow all over the fields in this neighborhood.

The viewfinder made up of intersecting circles – Look through this viewfinder from Sampsonia Street – your gaze is directed along the water trough, through the brick window and up the hill – connecting interior and exterior spaces near and far.

**ASK:**

What is a garden? What do you use a garden for? How is this garden similar / different from other gardens you have seen or visited? If you were designing a garden, what would it look like?

**TITLE:**

*Music for a Garden*

**ARTIST:**

Rolf Julius

**YEAR CREATED:**

1996

**MATERIALS:**

Speakers,  
amplifier, CD

**LOCATION**

**AT MF:**

Outside of  
500 Sampsonia near  
front entrance



**1. What do you hear? What does it sound like?**

This is a site-specific sound installation. It is a mix of natural, industrial and electronic sounds that are broadcasted from speakers facing the Garden Installation.

**2. Does it sound different depending on where you are standing?**

The speakers are angled in such a way that visitors hear **different sounds from different places.**

**ASK:**

Are those sounds a piece of art? Is it music?

How do different sounds impact how you feel?

What sounds make you feel good? Bad? Sad? Scared? Excited?





**TITLE:** 610-3356 **ARTIST:** Sarah Oppenheimer  
**YEAR CREATED:** 2008 **MATERIALS:** aircraft grade plywood, framing structure, view into neighboring yard across the street.  
**LOCATION AT MF:** 4th Floor, may need a key to enter unless there is an attendant. Can also be seen from the 3rd Floor and from Sampsonia Street.

**Safety Note:**

**This piece of art is behind a locked door**, because it is a hole from the 4th floor out of the 3rd floor window. **If you enter this piece, talk with your child before you enter and hold their hand.** If you are very worried, look through the glass door and then also view the piece from the 3rd floor to see where the piece exits out the window.

What do you see when you look through this piece of art?

Where does the artist want you to look?

**Look around**, the windows are frosted and the artist really wants to direct your view through this piece of art and outside.

Do you feel like you are on the 4th floor?

**Look at this piece from many different perspectives** – move around the room carefully, look at it from the 3rd floor, walk down Sampsonia Way and look up to see where the piece comes out the window – how does all of this change how you view the piece?



**TITLE:**

*Infinity Dots (Mirrored Room) and Repetitive Vision*

**ARTIST:**

Yayoi Kusama

**YEAR CREATED:**

1996

**MATERIALS:**

glass, formica,  
black light, decals,  
mannequins

**LOCATION**

**AT MF:**

3rd Floor



**Does this space feel big or small?**

Both rooms are actually the **same exact size**.

Yayoi Kusama is an artist from Japan. She is very interested in how a viewer can get lost in a work of art and become part of the artwork.

**Can you get lost in this piece of art?**

Find a corner and stand, sit or lay down. Look up. **Pretend you are part of a kaleidoscope.**

**ASK:**

How do you feel in this room?

What do you see in this room?

**How does the viewer (you!) change what is in this room?**

How do the lights change how you feel?



**TITLE:***Danae and Catso, Red***ARTIST:**

James Turrell

**YEAR CREATED:**

1983

**MATERIALS:***Danae:* Drywall,  
paint, ultraviolet and  
incandescent light*Catso, Red:* Drywall,  
paint, xenon  
projector**LOCATION****AT MF:**

2nd Floor

**Safety Note:**

James Turrell makes work with light, this means that **the whole floor is dark. Prepare your child before you exit the elevator and hold their hand.** There is nothing on the floor for you to trip over and nothing will jump out at you – but take it slow and hang on to the walls where necessary. **Try to not use flash lights or your phone** as your eyes will eventually adjust. There are three installations on this floor – **we do not recommend seeing Pleiades with your small child**, it is very dark, it built for only two people at a time and it will take your eyes about 20 minutes to adjust. **Work with your child to read the map on the wall and understand how the rooms are situated.**



**What do you see? What do you think you see?**

**To best experience these pieces, stand back and look at what you are seeing** – ask your child to describe what they see.

Then **move slowly toward the piece** until you can touch it and it reveals itself to you. Then move back to the original spot in the back of the room and look at it again. **Now that you know what you are looking at, what do you see?**

James Turrell **sculpts with light**, in the same way other artists might use clay or metal to build something. Can you sculpt with light? What else can you make art with? Anything! **Look around and see what other unusual materials artists use to make art.**

**Thanks for exploring with us!**

Check in with the front desk if you have any other questions. Look at [mattress.org](http://mattress.org) for information about upcoming family programs.