

# **MLA Yorkshire**

## **Family Learning**

### **Research Findings**



Research

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## 1. Introduction

QA Research is pleased to submit this report outlining the results of the research conducted on behalf of MLA Yorkshire to explore usage and perceived benefits of visiting museums, libraries and archives as a family.

The findings are to provide independent research findings to help support a funding bid to the Big Lottery Fund to further develop the programmes and initiatives for Family Learning in the region's museums, libraries and archives.

This document reports on the findings from the research conducted by QA.

## 2. Objectives

The overall aim of the project was to:

**'Provide primary evidence about current and potential Family Learners usage of museums and libraries in the region'**

With the specific research objectives being to:

- Explore why families do or don't currently use/visit museums or libraries in the region together in order to have a family learning experience
- Investigate the triggers and barriers to using museums and libraries for family learning
- What do families who use museums, libraries and/or archives (mlas) regularly value about the experience and what do they perceive as the unique selling points of mlas (which other families could benefit from)
- For families who use mlas regularly, to what extent do they look at them as a family learning experience (or something for adults or just for children)
- For families who don't visit mlas how do they spend time together instead
- Uncover what would increase usage of museums and libraries for family learning
- Test the appeal and likely impact of a range of possible initiatives

### 3. Method and Sample

#### Method

Given the desire to uncover the emotional, intangible issues, probe attitudes and behaviours and explore the reasons ‘why’ behind the responses given, a qualitative methodology was used.

This involved 10 x 20-30 in-depth telephone interviews with parents.

Respondents were recruited by QA who matched the agreed criteria as outlined below.

#### Sample

- 5 x Current Family Learners (i.e. parents with children split):
  - 1 x Pre-School
  - 2 x Primary School
  - 2 x Secondary School
  
- 5 x Potential Family Learners, (i.e. parents with children split):
  - 1 x Pre-School
  - 2 x Primary School
  - 2 x Secondary School

In addition for the Current Family Learners:

- All were to have visited a museum or library within the region at least twice in the last 6 months for any purpose
- To ideally to have a museum or library they regularly visit
- And to come from a mix of geographic locations across the region

And for the Potential Family Learners:

- None were to have visited a museum or library within the region in the last 12 months together for any purpose
- To come from a mix of geographic locations across the region.

Respondents were living in York, Leeds, Doncaster, Ilkley, Sheffield and Hull.

The telephone interviews were conducted w/c 20<sup>th</sup> August, with respondents taking part receiving a monetary incentive as a ‘thank you’ for their participation.

## 4. Key Findings

The findings below are based on only 10 interviews and as such should be taken as a good indication of attitudes and behaviours only rather than something completely definitive.

### 4.1 Visiting Museums as a Family

#### 4.1.1 Reasons for Visiting

For those with younger children (including pre-school) museums offer somewhere to go as a family, especially when the weather is poor curtailing possible outdoor activities (which ranged from walking or cycling in the countryside, going to the seaside, having a picnic, to playing sport).

Museums were frequently perceived as offering something for everyone, where parents as well as their children can get something out of the experience. However, this does depend on the age, age ranges and gender of one's children as some museums are perceived to be suitable for the whole family and others more applicable to some but not all the children in a family (e.g. the National Railway Museum was mentioned as a good place to take younger children and boys but not so good if a family consists of younger and older children and a mix of boys and girls).

Museums were seen as providing an opportunity for all to learn something new, for parents to reminisce with their children about what they remember about the past or how things have changed, to re-enforce what children have learnt in school and for children to tell their parents what they have been learning.

*“Cater more for children, makes things interesting” – Parent, Primary School Children*

*“It helps with school stuff and makes school stuff real” – Parent, Secondary School Children*

For those with pre-school or younger primary aged children, some museums (e.g. the NRM and Eureka) provide space for them to run around in a safe environment.

Being 'free' was a reason many families visit and return to the same museums with their children.

#### 4.1.2 Barriers to Visiting

Parents interviewed are not against the idea of visiting museums together as a family but not all go regularly. Many had last gone whilst on holiday but almost forget to think about the museums close to where they live or feel they have already been to them and have no reason to return.

Several parents (and grandparents) had not visited a museum recently with their children (and in one case grandchildren) because they felt they had already been to all the one's in the immediate vicinity and could not see a reason to return.

*“In Yorkshire we have done what there is to do, kids might feel a bit fed up” –  
Parent, Secondary School Children*

*“Done most of them in the area” – Grand parent, Primary School Children*

Time is a key factor, with many other demands on parent's time. Many who did not regularly visit museums had children who were active in ballet, music, football or drama; all of which took up their time at the weekend. In addition, working parents had many chores to complete at the weekend and especially older children had school work to complete.

*“Nothing other than time, we both work” – Parent, Primary School Children*

Parents need to know a visit to any particular museum will be an enjoyable and exciting experience, if unaware of what is on offer it can be easy for parents and children to be attracted by and choose other activities instead (e.g. a day by the coast, going camping, cycling were all mentioned).

Some parents with older aged children simply had not visited a museum recently because their children had not asked to go and had been with school on an organised trip (and they were not suggesting a visit as they thought their children might think it was a bit boring).

Some parents with a big age gap between their children or a mix of boys and girls found it harder to select a museum which was likely to appeal to everyone, often opting instead to do an activity they knew they would all enjoy (e.g. swimming, cycling, going to the seaside).

### 4.1.3 Benefits of Visiting

The benefits below include both the actual ones current family visitors believe a visit offers and the possible perceived benefits mentioned by potential family learners.

Museums were seen as providing a visit where both parents and children can have an enjoyable day out, learn new things and both get something out of a visit.

*“Our primary goal is to have a fun day out together, learning something is good but secondary” – Parent, Primary and Secondary School Children*

Museums provide a good opportunity for families to spend quality time together and sharing in the same experiences. Parents particularly of teenage children feel they increasingly do a lot of activities separate to one another and therefore visiting a museum as a family is a rare chance to all do the same thing, at the same time together. Sharing knowledge and talking about things collectively was seen as a major benefit of visiting a museum together as a family.

*“If we stay at home we are not necessarily doing things together, we are just in proximity of each other” – Pre-School Parent*

*“The kids look at things differently so it’s interesting to hear their views” - Parent, Primary School Children*

*“Actually talking as a family, communicating with each other” – Parent, Secondary School Children*

Parents, especially those visiting with older children noted that a visit provides an opportunity for parents and children to have a two way dialogue and see things from each others perspective. Respondents mentioned that even if their children do not like something or think something is boring, they will be asked why. Visiting a museum was seen to enable everyone in a family to express their views, debate things and accept that they may have differences of opinion.

*“You have family discussions when you visit museums” – Parent, Secondary School Children*

*“They’re developing their opinions” – Grand parent, Primary School Children*

When children are occupied and entertained then parents tend to be more relaxed and can enjoy a visit as well.

*“When the children are happy, we are happy” – Pre-School Parent*

Museums can be visually stimulating (especially for younger children), with interactive elements especially helping to make learning fun.

*“At a basic level it encourages curiosity and a wonder of the world [around them]” – Pre-School Parent*

*“At the moment it is about having a fun time but kids are learning to be creative and are being stimulated visually” – Pre-School Parent*

#### **4.1.4 USPs**

Museums were perceived to provide something unique and different with artefacts which can only be seen there and experiences which are difficult to recreate elsewhere. Museums can help bring what children have learnt elsewhere to life.

As an experience, compared to visiting a theme park, it is one where families appear to do things together and encourages family conversations about the information and objects on display, what they all liked, as well as raising questions amongst them.

*“At theme parks we all do different separate things [and then meet up at the end]” - Parent, Secondary School Children*

*“You are learning together” - Parent, Secondary School Children*

Visiting a museum together and discussing what they have seen was thought to provide a level of family interaction (especially with teenagers) which rarely happens at other times.

*“It is a good opportunity to bring topics up you would not usually bring up” - Parent, Secondary School Children*

Visiting a museum is seen as a good rainy day option which can be entertaining but in a different way to doing something outdoors.

#### **4.1.5 Extent Seen as a Family Learning Experience**

Visiting a museum as a family is clearly seen as a great opportunity to learn together.

*“All learn something .. interesting for all .. all enjoy spending leisure time together” – Parent, Primary and Secondary School Children*

Beyond the knowledge which can be acquired by all, there is a clear social benefit with parents who visit museums seeing this as an often rare opportunity to spent real quality time together as a family discussing things together.

*“It’s always good to have a shared experience” – Parent, Primary School Children*

A visit provides a two way discussion with questions being raised, with children discussing things with their parents that they have learnt from school and parents talking about things they recall or remember.

*“It’s a chance to talk about things” – Parent, Secondary School Children*

A visit to a museum is seen by parents who go as a good way to share a family history, as well as having a positive experience being out together.

#### **4.1.6 Suggestions to Increase Usage**

Having even more elements (e.g. even better interactives) is likely to appeal to children and encourage them to want to return. If children have had a fun experience it certainly makes it easier for parents to suggest a return visit.

Many parents currently not regularly visiting museums thought they would be more likely to suggest going to their children if they felt reassured (and were aware) that a visit would provide an interesting and enjoyable day out, have something which would appeal or capture their children’s interest and have lots of hands-on and interactives elements for them to use.

For potential visitors, a greater awareness of local museums to visit and making them more top of mind as an option for a family day out may increase usage.

*“If I had more information” – Parent, Primary School Children*

Awareness of and having appealing special events and activities is likely to provide a trigger for families to return to a museum which they have already visited and for which they need a reason to consider returning.

*“Something different to do in a museum [you’ve] been to before” - Parent, Primary School Children*

*“If I thought they were missing out I’d make more effort to go” – Parent, Primary School Children*

One parent suggested having a mailing list so parents could receive details of events and activities being offered in the holidays by local museums.

And for some museums, being cheaper may have an impact on a decision to visit rather than doing something else as a family.

*“Cost can be a factor with a family of four” – Parent, Primary and Secondary School Children*

## 4.2 Visiting Libraries as a Family

### 4.2.1 Reasons for Visiting

Visiting a library at all ages tends to be an activity children will do with one rather than both parents, either at pre-school age because it is usually done during the week or at primary school age as it is done in the school holidays or at the weekend whilst out and one parent is doing another chore.

The primary reason for visiting libraries is to take out books; although at pre-school visiting can be to join in a story time session or just to take children somewhere, out of the house, which is easy to get to.

For pre-school parents a visit can provide a range of short but different experiences in one room including sitting down and reading together, attending a story time session, having a nice room to crawl around in and choosing books together.

A few parents mentioned that they are more likely to visit a library in the winter when there is less opportunity to do other things outside.

Children appear more likely to continue visiting a library as they get older if one of their parents regularly goes to take out books themselves.

### 4.2.2 Barriers to Visiting

Those irregularly using libraries are still very pro-reading but do not see the need to get books from the library.

*“I don’t think of it. We read all the time but there are books at home” – Parent, Primary School Children*

For all ages this appears to be because they feel they have plenty of books for their children at home. Books are perceived to be inexpensive to purchase (both at book shops on the high street and in supermarkets) which reduces the need to borrow them.

*“Books are a good thing, educationally and emotionally .. [but] we have loads at home” – Pre-School Parent*

*“We read books but we tend to buy them” – Parent, Primary School Children*

At the pre-school age, some parents are concerned that their children may damage or lose any books borrowed (and would therefore rather not take the risk but buy a copy themselves).

Parents with primary school aged children mentioned that their children often like to read and re-read books and hence choose to buy them rather than borrowing them.

Parents, particularly those with teenagers, mentioned that their children like to collect series of books and are keen to own the latest ones. They did not perceive that libraries have either very up to date collections or a good range of contemporary teenage literature.

*“Choice is not good” - Parent, Secondary School Children*

As children get older they appear to be borrowing books from school libraries or using the internet at home to source information for school projects – again reducing the need to visit a public library.

Children appear to be allowed to visit libraries by themselves (or with friends and/or cousins) once they reach 8-9 years old, with parents being happy to give them a degree of independence to go and make their own choices. This in itself brings to an end any family learning as parents and children are no longer visiting together.

A couple of children visited the library each week with their school, as it was close by, negating the need for a parent to take them.

Some parents have just got out of the habit of going to libraries with their children around the age of 4 or 5. It is not often an activity which is top of mind to do.

*“There is limited time at the weekend and I don’t think about the library as an option” - Parent, Primary School Children*

*“You just get out the habit of going” - Parent, Primary and Secondary School Children*

#### **4.2.3 Benefits of Visiting**

The benefits below include both the actual ones current family visitors believe a visit offers and the possible perceived benefits mentioned by potential family learners.

For those with younger children, visiting libraries provide a focus to encourage reading and getting their children involved with books from an early stage.

Amongst the more educationally focussed parents (i.e. those who are consciously engaging in activities to develop their children’s education) books, reading and story telling are seen as important to encourage creative thinking.

#### 4.2.4 USPs

As physically going to a library was viewed as a functional and practical activity to borrow a book, respondents found it difficult to cite, in terms of family learning experiences, any ways in which visiting a library provided a unique learning experience.

The learning was seen to come from acquiring knowledge from the books borrowed themselves (at home).

Very few families, beyond the younger years when parents are reading to their children directly, appear to be talking with each other in any depth and detail about the books they have taken out.

#### 4.2.5 Extent Seen as a Family Learning Experience

Except for Pre-School parents who might be reading to their children at the library or participating in a story time activity, few parents perceived visiting a library with their children as a learning experience. Instead, it was seen as a functional activity, with any potential learning taking place at home, although often solitary rather than as a shared activity.

*“Go get books, go home, that’s it” – Parent, Secondary School Children*

If parents are going to a library with children over 8 or 9 years old they tend to be going to separate sections of the library to choose books for themselves, before meeting back up to go home again.

Visiting a library tends to be a rather quick and functional, rather than one where families are going for learning experience together.

*“More of a short, quick thing” – Parent, Primary and Secondary School Children*

#### 4.2.6 Suggestions to Increase Usage

Many found it difficult to suggest anything which was likely to encourage them to visit a library more with their children.

Libraries are not always top of mind as a place to go and have a fun family learning experience, nor do many want them to do more than be a place to borrow a book, which impacted on suggestions to increase usage.

*“A library is a library. It doesn’t need to be all singing and dancing. It is calm and quiet and if not would lose some of its appeal” – Pre-School Parent*

However, an increased awareness of the activities and events on offer, especially during school holidays was suggested by many as a way to

encourage them to visit (assuming the activities were interesting and relevant).

*“I think it is just getting into the habit” – Parent, Primary School Children*

### 4.3 Reactions to Potential Initiatives

Respondents were read out a series of potential ideas and asked whether they would appeal to themselves and their families along with their likelihood in participating in such things.

Some ideas clearly aimed at older or younger children were only tested amongst respondents with children of relevant ages.

Following an analysis of the reactions we have grouped the ideas accordingly and included in blue italics the wording for each idea read out.

#### 4.3.1 Most Popular Ideas

*Adults and children handle archaeological objects at the museum, before taking part in an archaeological dig together over the summer holidays. They use their finds and photographs from the dig to make a small exhibition, displayed at school next term.*

This was the most popular idea with parents of both primary and secondary school aged children (and those with children at both) because it offered something unique and different which seems to have appeal for both adults and children.

*“Love to do it with them” – Parent, Primary School Children*

Being an outdoors activity also appealed. The idea was seen to be one with a real purpose to the activity with a real possibility of discovery and one which had the potential to trigger their children’s imagination and be of interest to themselves.

*“Real project with a purpose” – Parent, Secondary School Children*

Physically getting hands-on and touching objects, which in museums are often behind glass in cabinets, excited those parents who liked this idea.

*“Great idea, it is hands-on learning and something completely new” - Parent, Primary School Children*

This activity was seen as one in which a family could all work together for a positive end result and share in the excitement of one of them finding something (and learn more about it together).

The actual time commitment may impact on the actual appeal as some parents thought a weekend or a couple of days would suffice and questioned whether their children would then want to do any additional follow-up display work.

Some (with Secondary School aged children) suggested this could be offered as a holiday activity for children with an option for parents/families to join if also have time.

Some parents (of teenage girls) thought their children would be interested but are of the age where they are self conscious and therefore would not like to have an exhibition at school of the things they had done in their holiday time.

*“I think they would find it interesting but would not have anybody know that they had done it. Again it is peer pressure” - Parent, Secondary School Children*

Much is likely to depend on the actual execution and the quality of those running the sessions to show families what to do and bring the subject (and any objects found) to life.

### 4.3.2 Ideas With Mixed Appeal

*Parents and children work together to create a scale model of an interesting historic building near their homes. They receive a tour of the building from the staff, and use numeracy and creative craft skills to make the model. The model is used by teachers at the children's school in class the following term.*

This idea had mixed reactions and is very dependant if parents themselves like to be creative and how competent they feel in their artistic abilities, alongside if their children like to do artistic things.

*“Can't think of anything worse ... we're not a crafty family” – Parent, Primary School Children*

*“I don't do Blue Peter, I'm not a stick and lick grandma” – Grand parent, Primary School Children*

Those who liked the idea, across all age bands of children, did so because they thought it was different, with a nice opportunity to work together making something as a family, whilst giving parents in particular an opportunity to learn a lot more about an iconic/interesting local building.

*“Different thing to do, especially if learning about the building” – Parent, Primary and Secondary School Children*

Having any work displayed or used by local schools was thought to be potentially off-putting for some children, who would not necessarily want to have any outputs made so public.

Some parents of older Primary and early Secondary school aged children liked the idea of having a guided tour around a few interesting buildings in the local area, but were not so keen on then having to create a model due to their perception of their own and their children's artistic abilities.

*Families take part in a summer reading challenge together – where they read 6 books together, and keep a reading diary which they complete together saying what they thought of each book. Book chat groups once a week offer a social outlet for this, and a chance to discuss and receive help of what to put in the reading diary. The aim is to encourage adults to read to their children on a regular basis, using books from the library.*

Most thought this a good idea providing a focus and purpose to reading but one better achieved as a school based term time activity. Indeed parents of children at Primary school felt this was already happening.

A potential benefit was seen as meeting other parents and children through a discussion on the books read. However, parents felt it would be difficult persuading their children to participate in an activity, especially during the summer holidays which was so akin to school work.

There were some concerns that this might make reading feel like a chore, rather than something to be done for pleasure in one's own time, with the need to keep a reading diary.

Parents with Secondary school aged children felt it would be difficult to encourage their children to do this, unless they already enjoyed reading, in which case why would they need to take part in such a challenge.

*“Not sure it would work for us” – Parent, Primary and Secondary School Children*

*“Ivy [13] is too old for that. I think it is more for Primary school children” - Parent, Secondary School Children*

On a practical level, even the more receptive parents thought it would be difficult for both themselves and their children to commit to six books and/or six weeks given the other activities they do in the school holidays. Some thought they might try it out but would stop if the commitment proved too much.

*“Too many other things to give up for six books ... one book [would be] ample”– Parent, Primary School Children*

This activity might be better suited to an autumn or February half term activity, when the weather is more conducive to staying inside and be better received if it only involved reading a single book.

*By exploring the old photograph collections in the local archives, families choose their favourite images to create a display in their local community centre.*

The majority of respondents did not find this idea particularly exciting or motivating unless they had children who were really into history or they themselves were interested in local history.

*“View it as a school-y activity” – Parent, Secondary School Children*

Although it would help give children a sense of the history of their local community, the activity was considered to again be too much like a school project and static to excite themselves or their children.

A few suggested they might be more likely to go with their children to an exhibition of old photographs of the local area rather than create one themselves, which is likely to get them to discuss and talk together about how the local area has changed.

Those families most likely to take participate in an activity of this nature did recognise that it would get them to discuss things as a family and hence learn from each other.

It was perceived to be a short activity (i.e. involving a few hours or half a day rather than a bigger time commitment).

*Young people record interviews with their grandparents and other older members of the community, using digital equipment, and use these recordings to make a DVD.*

Some parents with Secondary school aged children felt their children might like the opportunity to use different types of technology but doubted how appealing their children would find interviewing older people (if they had not already done this themselves and asked their grandparents lots of questions).

Those keen on this idea thought it might be more appealing if the recordings were held in a museums archive or used by a museum, adding an additional level of gravitas to the task for children.

Others questioned whether their children had the emotional maturity to create something of interest to others and the confidence to conduct such a task if interviewing people they did not know very well.

*That would take more of a confident child to do this kind of thing” – Parent,  
Secondary School Children*

*Parents explore the family portrait and photograph collections at a stately home, before learning digital photography techniques to take and edit their own photos and captions, to create a family memories album. Children help facilitate the photos of their family, and design covers for the album.*

This might have appeal amongst parents with older children but only if both can take part in learning about digital photography and editing images. The idea of just parents going on a course (even if only for a half day) is unlikely to attract many.

*“We’d do this as a family, their dad is really into photography ... [we’d] all have a go” – Parent, Primary and Secondary School Children*

Any course needs to be self-contained and involve a single session lasting approximately half a day.

Parents thought their children would enjoy using technology as long as they were being shown how to do things they did not know how to do.

However, given that many parents feel they already have a good grasp of digital photography any course would clearly have to teach them something

new. Perhaps a day for beginners and a day for those with more advanced skills could be offered.

The learning about and using digital technology, rather than creating a family photograph album, was the element of this potential idea which had the most appeal.

*Families learn how to use microfiche readers in the archives, and together look at old newspapers and find an interesting news story from each of the years they were born. Use this activity as a springboard to collect interesting stories from the local area to make a community newsletter, which can be stored in the archives for future generations.*

Only a minority of parents with older children thought this activity might be appealing as they themselves were interested in local history and their children liked history in general. The idea had most appeal to those with late Primary and early Secondary school aged children, who were old enough to be starting to have a sense of their own personal history, with a concept of the local community around them.

Some did not know what a microfiche reader was and were therefore put off by the reference to what they assumed would be a difficult piece of technology to use. Others who did know felt the technology was a bit old fashioned to be exciting to use with their children.

Again, many felt it was rather too much like a school project and as such more suited to a term time school based activity, one they would be interested in seeing what their children produced, rather than parents having to produce some tangible pages themselves.

*“Like a school project, I’d have to pressure them to do it” – Parent, Secondary School Children*

### 4.3.3 Least Popular Ideas

*Inspired by the museum's stuffed animals collection, young parents make up stories based on animal characters. As a group, parents and children select their favourite of these stories together, to turn into children's books with accompanying story sacks, which can be made available at the local library.*

Parents with pre-school or primary school aged children, who enjoy reading to them, liked the idea of a story sack which could make reading together even more of a fun activity and a reason to visit the library to use there or borrow and take home. These parents were open to the idea of helping put the sacks together or suggest what they should contain.

However, the idea of parents themselves making up stories was not appealing. Parent either doubted their own abilities and/or felt there were already a good range of excellent kids books which are much better than anything they could do themselves.

*"We make up stories at bedtime about what we have done during the day but to be honest they are a bit crap" – Pre-School Parent*

Parents of younger children also doubted they had the time to compose stories given the pressures on their time already.

*"Interesting if had time, I have made up stories in the past [but] if I'd actually do it is a different matter" – Parent, Primary and Secondary School Children*

*"It would take up too much time. We work and we are doing the house up" - Parent, Primary School Children*

Some who thought they might have the intellectual ability (if not the time or will) to do it perceived the activity as being quite exclusive rather than inclusive; open only to those parents with a high degree of confidence in their own creative and literary abilities.

One parent also disliked the idea of and couldn't see the need to view a museums collection of stuffed animals to make up stories about living active creatures.

*Parents and children receive a tour of their local library, and learn how to choose, discuss and review books together. As an introductory activity, children create a trail around the library, with clues hidden in books on the shelves. Parents have to follow the trail and solve the clues.*

This was poorly received and largely un-necessary as most parents with younger children felt they already knew how to use the local library, could show their children themselves or that their children would do this at school. For those with older children, the need for this had passed.

Many parents questioned the need for this; not seeing why they would need to go, nor believing that parents who did not know how to use a library would be interested enough to take up such an offer.

Some parents felt this was a better activity to offer Primary school classes, with an option to invite parents to come along and join in if they wanted.

## 5. Conclusions

- Museums were clearly seen as somewhere for the whole family not only to acquire knowledge (or re-acquire in the case of many parents) but somewhere to spend quality time together (in itself a rarity for many families), to be stimulates and discuss together what they have seen and experienced. Families expect and want to have formal and informal learning experiences together whilst visiting.
- Libraries are perceived as a functional visit; somewhere to borrow books and as such not in themselves as a venue where families (beyond possibly pre-school) will have a learning experience together, although the books borrowed might facilitate this later on.
- Families need a clear reason to visit or return to a museum (or library). Special events and activities are likely to prompt a visit they are considered to be sufficiently appealing. For museums being aware of new developments may also act as a trigger to return.
- Museums are more clearly viewed as being able to offer the chance for all to learn whilst having fun, especially those with hands-on and interactive experiences to capture the interests of children. Parents generally expect to have a family learning experience involving them and their children when visiting.
- Museums are a more obvious place to have a family learning activity and therefore may be better suited to hosting and providing formal family learning events and workshops than libraries.
- Any family learning activity needs to be seen as a fun and enjoyable event, one which is different from what children can do elsewhere and definitely not feel like school-work.
- Any family learning activity needs to have a real purpose to it and one which both parents and children can see they will enjoy and learn something from.
- Activities need to be self-contained and relatively short (i.e. a couple of hours to a half or in some cases a full day). Having to do any follow-up work starts to diminish the appeal of many of the potential ideas.