



Self-directed resources for families with children under 5

We offer a range of resources for families with children under five to use independently while exploring our galleries. Our aims for these self-directed resources are that families with children under five:

- feel welcome and catered for
- feel comfortable and supported when exploring our galleries independently, especially if they first-time visitors
- are offered an alternative activity to a pre-booked session.

All our self-directed resources are free to borrow and are available every day from 10am to 5.30pm from the information desk.

EXPLORER BAGS

Suggested age: 2-5

Families can pick up a child's size backpack to help them explore the galleries at both our museums. We have three types of bags on offer, and there are two bags of each type. The contents of each bag draws on themes from the museum's collection and the stories our galleries tell. At the Museum of London our themes are: 'Getting Around' and 'Clothing and Toys'. At the Museum of London Docklands, our themes are 'Buildings and Transport' and 'Under the Sea'. Each bag contains a selection of puzzles, games, toys, puppets, dressing up items and fabric swatches. They also have resources such as magnifying glasses and torches, to encourage families to look more closely at the objects they can see in the galleries. There are also some simple activities printed in-house, such as 'Can you find it?' cards and matching pairs games where families match images of objects to those on display.

Explorer bags are available for a £5 refundable deposit. This is co-ordinated by our Visitor Experience team.

Budget: £50 for materials per backpack, plus £25 per year replenishment

UNDER 5S GALLERY TRAILS

Suggested age: 2-5

We offer three trails specially designed to guide under 5s and their families around our galleries.

Peter the Pigeon trail

The premise of this trail is that Peter the Pigeon has come to visit the museum but unfortunately he forgot his camera! The task for families is to search for particular objects in the gallery and take photographs of Peter next to the objects. Families are provided with an illustration of Peter the Pigeon and a sheet with pictures of Peter's favourite objects to find.

2D shapes trail

Visitors become shape detectives and search for objects of a particular shape. Families are provided with shape finders (a sheet of A4 with holes of different shapes), to help them spot the different shapes. See an example of this trail [here](#).

Both trails are always available to borrow free of charge from our Visitor Experience team at the information desk.

Mudlarks children's gallery trail

Our children's gallery attracts a high number of repeat visitors. Many families re-visit their favourite areas of the gallery time and time again so we wanted to encourage families to explore the gallery in more depth. The trail directs families to each area and provides prompts, such as songs and discussion points, and highlights photo opportunities as well. See an example of this trail [here](#).

This trail is available inside the Mudlarks children's gallery.

Budget: Minimal cost – all trails are printed and laminated in-house. Staff time to research, develop, create and trial each resource: approximately two weeks. Replenishment staff time: approximately 3 days per year

BABY TIPS SHEET FOR MUDLARKS CHILDREN'S GALLERY

Suggested age: Parents and carers visiting with babies 6-12 months

This sheet provides families who are visiting with babies, particularly those who are new to the museum, with suggestions of activities to do with their baby in this gallery. It also has songs and information about their child's development in relation to the Early Years Foundation Stage. See an example of this tips sheet [here](#).

Budget: Minimal cost – sheets are printed and laminated in-house. Staff time to research, develop, create and trial the resource: approximately two weeks. Replenishment staff time: approximately 5 days per year

BABY SENSORY MATS

Suggested age: 0-2

For our youngest visitors, we have produced bespoke baby play mats for each of our museums. Each design is inspired by the themes in the museum. At the Museum of London, we drew on the theme of our Playtime gallery and the mat is based on the character Spot the Dog. At the Museum of London Docklands, the mat is inspired by our Docklands at War gallery and includes a range of equipment for growing your own vegetables.

The mats include a range of textures, objects and sounds. Although they have been designed for specific galleries, they can be used anywhere in the museum. The mats can be borrowed by families for a refundable deposit and fold in to a handy bag using sticky tabs for ease of carrying.



Budget: £160. Replenishment costs: approximately £25 per year

ACTIVITY STATIONS

Suggested age: 1-5

At the Museum of London Docklands, we have created a number of interactive activity stations aimed at children between 1-5 years old. The aim of these interactive exhibits is to make our permanent galleries more child-friendly and accessible for under 5s and their families. Activities include a grocery shop, a bakery and train play table, all linking to the stories in the museum's permanent displays. The stations are a great way for families to spend some time playing together and ensure we provide opportunities for open-ended play. You can find out more about the activity stations in [this case study](#).

Budget: £4,000 for five stations. Replenishment costs: approximately £100 per year