Caregivers' Perceptions of Children's Programming at the Destination Archaeology Resource Center

Dr. Laura Clark\textsuperscript{a}, Mike Thomin\textsuperscript{b}
\textsuperscript{a}Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College, Tifton, USA
\textsuperscript{b}University of West Florida, Pensacola, USA
laura.clark@abac.edu, mthomin@uwf.edu

ABSTRACT

K-2 programs using experiential learning in museums provide hands-on education that demonstrate strategies archaeologists use in the field. Many of these activities involve practicing underlying concepts that help facilitate research, are rooted in science, and allow children to think critically as they go through a process of discovery.

These programs focus on activities that are appropriate for K-2 children. Interpretive information is provided in the programs at an appropriate level the age group can understand. Each program follows these criteria:

1. The books and activities take into account the developmental stages of the children.
2. The program message focuses on communicating a message of historic preservation.
3. Creating activity intensive programming that focuses on experiential learning.

The children’s programs were assessed using surveys and interviews to inform the program director on improvements. The results revealed the importance of knowledgeable staff that have a responsive nature to children and caregivers. Another important finding in the interviews revealed the great disparity of science-based programs for very young children. These findings can help other organizations focused on public archaeology or historic preservation develop and evaluate successful experiential programs modeled on the three established criteria.

TOPICS

children’s services; museums; education