

Position statements about museums and play

The following position statements were devised for a development day about play and well-being in December 2014. They are deliberately thought provoking and used alongside the concepts in the rulebook – particularly around ideas about how adults can often control space and potentially close down space for children, these statements can be particularly useful for initiating conversation about staff and therefore institutional values. For more information please contact Charlotte and Stuart via

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<p>Gallery assistants must always give clear and accurate information about the exhibits on display</p>	<p>In a time of austerity, scarce public funding should not be given to cultural institutions but targeted to those most in need</p>
<p>The primary purpose of a museum is to be a repository of artefacts from history (recent and ancient) to provide information about past times.</p>	<p>Economic well-being must be the central focus in policy making – without this, the potential for improving well-being is seriously diminished</p>
<p>Children should be discouraged from playing in a museum as it disturbs adults enjoyment</p>	<p>General definitions and measures of well-being and happiness largely gloss over the cultural context of people's lives</p>
<p>Children's well-being is invariably tied to that of their parents</p>	<p>Current applications and measurements of well-being adopt a deficit approach i.e. well-being is measured by a 'lack of' money, health, education and so on. This suggests a highly normalising account of what it is to be well</p>
<p>Playing is frivolous and irrational and as such should be discouraged in museums unless it clearly has educational purpose</p>	<p>As public funded institutions, or spaces that exist for the public good, museums have a vital role in contributing to government policy objectives and outcomes.</p>
<p>In a time of austerity it becomes even more vital for cultural institutions to enhance opportunities to experience joy, pleasure and laughter</p>	<p>Museums are themselves relics of a bygone age and in an age of rapidly changing cultural forms and technologies have limited appeal</p>
<p>The purpose of evaluation is to prove to external agencies (funders, policy makers etc.) that you have met the required outcomes</p>	<p>Adults prefer a calm and contemplative environment in order to fully appreciate the cultural artefacts on display</p>

