

The experiences in the formative years of a child's life can greatly impact their lives as adults. It is becoming more and more evident that children learn and adapt best when they are in an interactive learning environment. There needs to be an emphasis placed on imagination and play rather than an emphasis placed on "meeting the requirements" through testing and memorization.

This thesis will examine the issues at hand involving development in young children and how an exploration of a more interactive learning environment through architecture can benefit children in their early stages of life. To achieve this, research will be conducted on what type of design promotes interactive behavior and how to design spaces that convey a learning environment and/or a connection to nature. This research will then be applied to the design of a children's museum that will serve the Fargo/Moorhead community.

I have always believed in the importance of a good education. When first entering college, I thought an education/teaching degree might be in my future. Many people in my life I really respect and look up to are educators. I'm certainly thankful for the many great teachers and professors I have had in all stages of my academic career. It is for this reason that I deeply care about the quality and thoughtfulness behind the design of learning spaces.

Architects have a responsibility to the students and teachers we design for. There has to be an emphasis on creating pleasurable spaces for students to exist in. Unfortunately, this has not always been the case in the past. Classrooms should be accessible and flexible for any learning opportunity. Natural daylight in classroom spaces should be a top priority for students of any age. Simple design considerations such as these can go a long way in creating a healthier learning environment.

Early education is especially impactful for children. It's not just about learning the alphabet or how to do basic math. The younger years in school are when children develop socially as well. Parents are always searching for ways to give their children extra opportunities for learning outside of the traditional school system. Some parents or guardians have sent children to Montessori schools as a way of promoting a more interactive learning experience. This type of learning can be very beneficial to children, and is often seen in the design and use of a Children's Museum

It is my belief that every city should emphasize the development of children through the use of a Children's Museum. Children this century have slowly had their opportunity for hands on play diminish with the advances in technology. Its much easier as a parent to keep a child occupied with screens, and although there are certainly learning opportunities through the use of technology, it deprives kids of learning through collaboration with others. Children in the Fargo/Moorhead area need this added opportunity for growth and development in the form of exploratory play. An all-inclusive Children's Museum can promote this form of play between kids of all ages. My hope is to show the need for an emphasis on this form of interactive learning for kids in the Fargo/Moorhead community.



INTERACTIVE LEARNING ARCHITECTURE

FIRST FLOOR PLAN KEY:

- 1. RECIEVING 2. MECHANICAL
- 6. KITCHEN/SERVICE 7. CAFETERIA
- 3. RESTROOMS
- 8. ELEVATORS/STAIRS 9. EXHIBIT SPACE
- 4. EMPLOYEE
- 10. RAMP 5. MAIN ENTRY (FIRST TO SECOND FLOOR)

SECOND FLOOR PLAN KEY

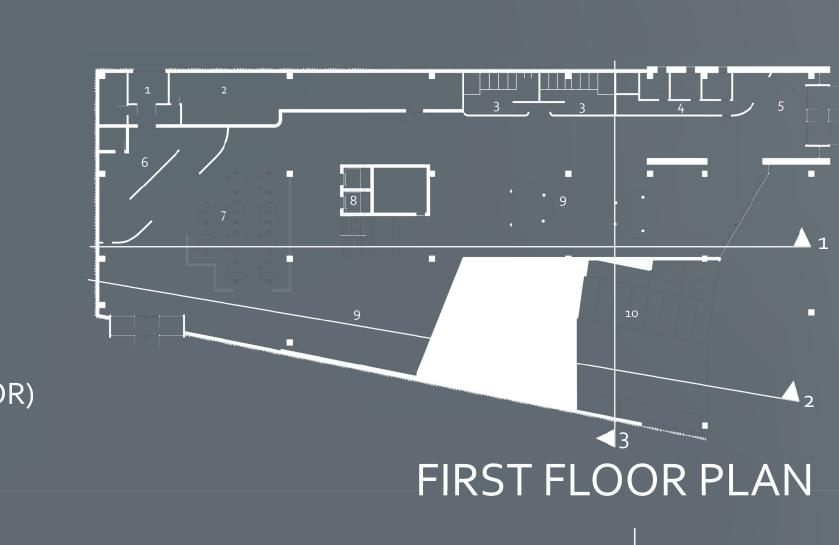
- 1. GREENHOUSE
- 2. DECK
- 3. SECOND FLOOR LOBBY
- 4. ELEVATORS/STAIRS
- 5. RAMP (SECOND TO THIRD FLOOR)

THIRD FLOOR PLAN KEY

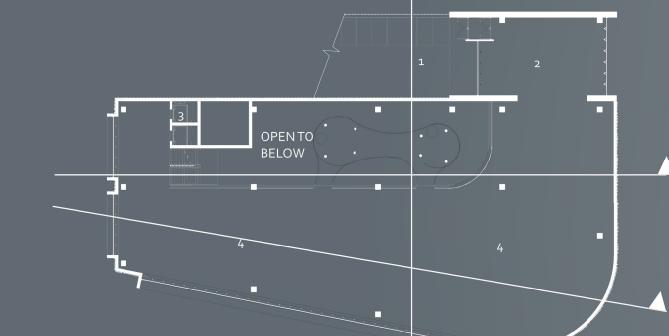
- 1. RAMP (SECOND TO THIRD FLOOR)
- 2. THIRD FLOOR ENTRY
- 3. ELEVATORS/STAIRS 4. EXHIBIT SPACE

FOURTH FLOOR PLAN KEY

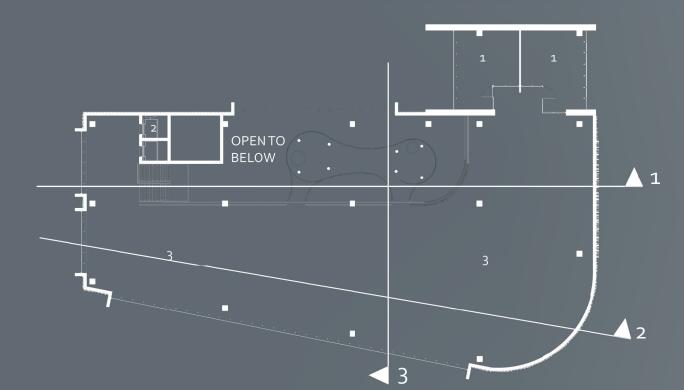
- 1. RAMP (SECOND TO THIRD FLOOR)
- 2. THIRD FLOOR ENTRY
- 3. ELEVATORS/STAIRS
- 4. EXHIBIT SPACE



SECOND FLOOR PLAN



THIRD FLOOR PLAN



FOURTH FLOOR PLAN





THE RAMP STRUCTURE OF THE BUILDING IS THE PRIMARY CONNECTION BETWEEN THE OUTDOOR AND INDOOR ENVIRONMENTS. IT ALSO GRANTS AN ALTERNATIVE MEANS OF ACCESS FOR THE FIRST, SECOND, AND THIRD FLOORS OF THE BUILDING. THE RAMP CAN BE USED ALL FOUR SEASONS, WITH OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES SUCH AS SLEDDING OCCUPYING THE SPACE DURING THE WINTER MONTHS.



THE EXHIBIT SPACES ARE FILLED WITH STRUCTURES AND GAMES THAT PROMOTE INTERACTIVITY BETWEEN CHILDREN. SOME EXHIBITS WILL BE GEARED TOWARD PROGRESSING THE MOTOR FUNCTION SKILLS IN CHILDREN, WHILE OTHERS WILL BE AIMED MORE TOWARD DEVELOPING THE CRITICAL THINKING AND PROBLEM SOLVING SKILLS IN CHILDREN.

WHILE WALKING AROUND THE SITE, VISITORS WILL FIND MULTIPLE AREAS WITH EXHIBITS TO CLIMB ON, SIT ON, OR INTERACT WITH. THE SITE IS INTEGRATED WITH THE EXITING RED RIVER BIKE PATH TO CONNECT THE PROJECT TO THE REST OF THE CITY THROUGH A HEALTHIER, MORE SUSTAINABLE METHOD OF TRANSPORTATION. NATIVE AND NATURAL GRASSES AND PLANTS ARE USED TO GIVE CHILDREN A SENSE OF WHAT THE SURROUNDING ENVIRONMENT FEELS LIKE OUTSIDE URBAN AREAS.

RED RIVER DISCOVERY CENTER

OUTDOOR EXHIBIT SPACE

BARRIER FENCE

BICYCLE SHELTER

LANDSCAPE GARDEN

LANDSCAPE GARDEN

VISITOR PARKING

