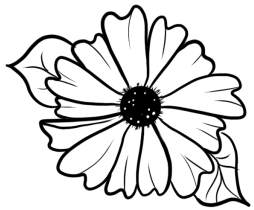
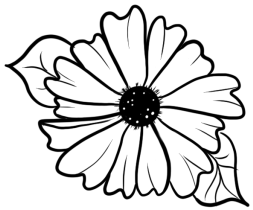
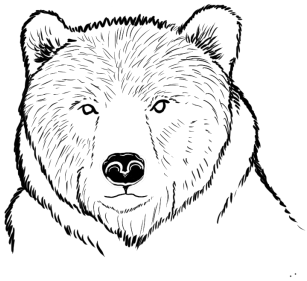
Better Together

RISD MID Thesis by Jack Dumala



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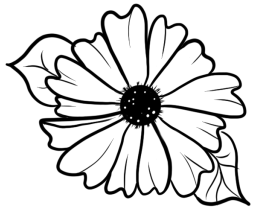
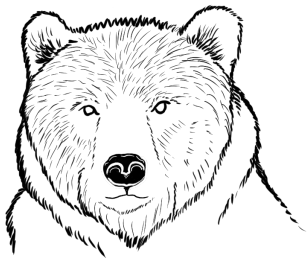

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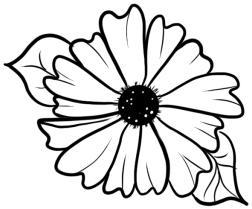


Welcome to Better Together

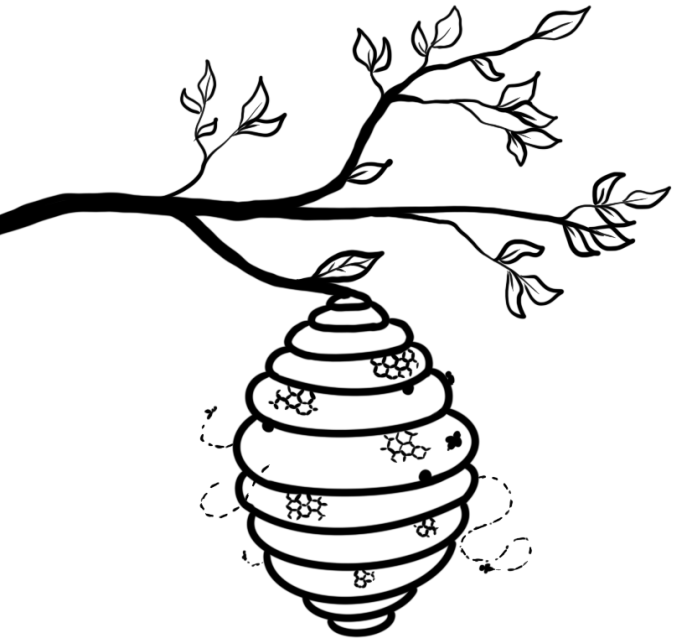
Thesis Advisory:

Chair: Jess Brown

Advisor: Brian Jablonksi

Advisor: Samantha Lawrence

Thank you to my parents for being the best in the world and for their unconditional support, to my siblings for being my best friends, and to my love, James Palmier, for our teamwork in building a future we both deserve.



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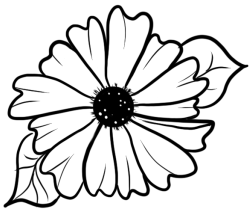

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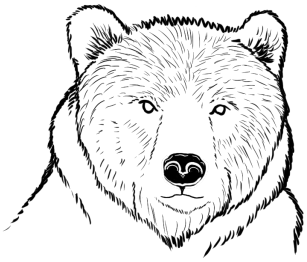
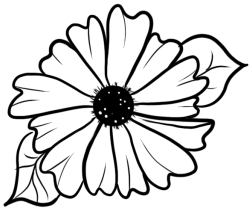

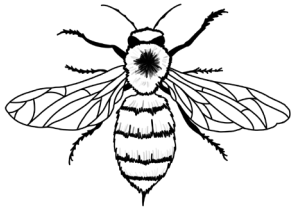

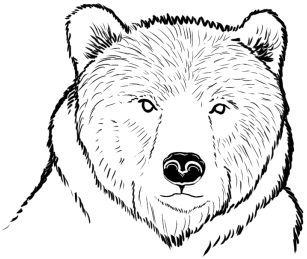

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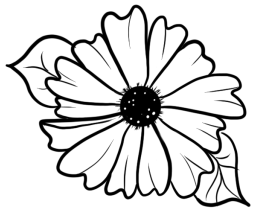
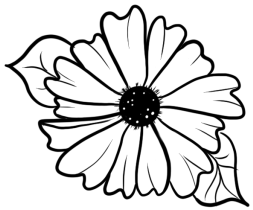
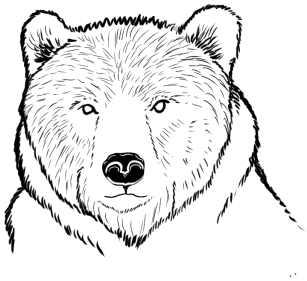
Abstract

"Better Together" comprehensively explores the spectrum of play from early childhood to adulthood, presenting how play has always been a means of connection and communication. Although the research encompasses all age groups, particular attention is given to teenagers, a community often overlooked. The artifacts and investigations portray how a combination of purposefully designed household objects and readily available items within the home environment can be leveraged to facilitate connection through gaming and various activities. The overarching goal is to offer practical tools and insights to enhance togetherness within families with teenagers.



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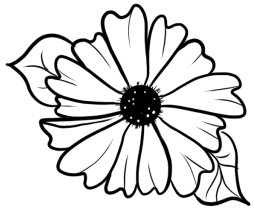
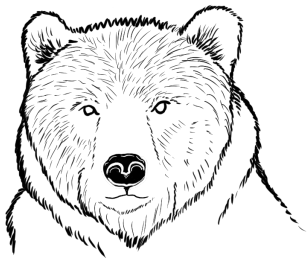

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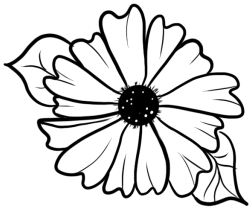

Introduction

Who am I and What am I Doing?

Welcome to my thesis book. My name is Jack David Dumala. I am a designer for the family. I have a invested interest in the relationship between parents and their children because of my own background in child development. I graduated from the University of Connecticut with a Bachelor of Science in Human Development and Family Sciences. Really what this means is I have a knowledge of biological, psychological, and social development of us humans from conception to death. I have the biggest impact as a designer by aiding parent-child relationships.

As an adult, I often think about being a child again and I am sure other adults do too. I used to play-wrestle with my dad in the living room. I used to run outside and get the neighborhood kids to play capture the flag at my house. I used to build my own forts out of couch cushions and blankets. Now I am 26 which might not seem long ago, but I recognize how often I got to play as a child, and how little I play like I used to.

Although there are many similarities but also many differences in how we play as adults compared to our childhood, our play has evolved. As an adult, my form of play is making things, which consists of designing conceptual experiences for places like universal studios using augmented reality, to designing furniture pieces out of wood, metal, and concrete. But other adults play differently than I normally do.

Building a furniture piece reminds me of using building blocks as a kid to build a tower or using legos to build a whole world. Play is synonymous throughout developmental stages but takes different forms with age and maturity. It is a great tool to use to help establish bonding and communication between parent and child. My research not only focuses on play with one specific age, but also looks at play throughout the course of childhood. Play can be a tool used between parents and their teenagers within the context of the home to facilitate togetherness and communication.

FESTOOL
STANLEY
25'

Once upon a time, in the majestic mountains of Alaska, there lived a big brown bear named Byron. Byron loved to wander through the fields, searching for delicious treats. Normally, he would head to the river for some tasty salmon, but today he had a craving for something sweet. Byron roamed through the meadow, surrounded by a beautiful array of colorful flowers. The warm weather had brought them to life, filling the air with their sweet fragrance. Byron couldn't help but stop to smell them.

But just as Byron leaned in to sniff a particularly lovely flower, he heard a tiny voice cry out. It was a little bee, nestled in the center of the bloom. "Hey!" said the bee, "Watch where you're sticking that nose of yours! It's my first day on the job, and I'm not trying to sting anyone." Byron was surprised. "Your job?" he asked. "Who takes care of all these flowers?" The little bee explained that it was their job to tend to the flowers and keep the meadow beautiful. Byron nodded in understanding.

"Can I pick some flowers to take home?" Byron asked eagerly. But the little bee shook its head. "Not so fast," it said. "First, you have to guess my name."

Byron scratched his head. He hadn't expected a game, but he was determined to play along. "Is it Danny? Ryan? Buzz? Marigold?" he guessed, but each time, the bee shook its head. Disappointed but determined, Byron continued on his journey with two flowers in his mouth. The sun was hot, and he was starting to feel hungry and tired. Just as he was about to give up hope, he spotted a bee's nest hanging in the shade of a tree. "Perfect!" thought Byron. "I could really use some honey right about now."

But as Byron reached out to grab the nest, he heard a buzzing sound. The bees inside were not happy about Byron trying to take their home. Suddenly, Byron felt a tickle on his nose, and there was the little worker bee from before.

"What are you doing here?" the bee asked. "Trying to steal our honey?" Byron shook his head. "I just wanted a snack," he said sadly.

The bee sighed. "I'll make you a deal," they said. "If you can remember my name, you can have some honey. Not all of it, but enough for a treat." Byron thought hard, trying to remember the name of his new friend. Finally, he smiled. "Is it... Daisy?" he asked hopefully.

The little bee laughed. "Close," they said. "But not quite. But close," Byron grinned. "Lily! Of course! Thank you for being so kind to me, Lily."

With a happy buzz, Lily flew up to the nest and brought back a jar of honey for Byron. As they shared a sweet treat together, Byron knew that he had made a new friend in the meadow. And from that day on, whenever he visited the flowers, he always made sure to see Lily the bee for tea with HONEY, for a good chat, and usually for a good game.

Written by Jack Dumala, edited for grammar by ChatGPT

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J. DUMALA

Shared Activities as a Means of Togetherness

Research shows that shared meals and family bonding activities create a feeling of family togetherness. This unity allows for deeper connection among family members developing a greater sense of closeness. Play offers parents and children the same benefits. Through the growth and development of children and their relationships with their parents, conflict may arise. Play can be used as a positive method to help bridge challenging conversations, mitigating conflict between parents and children. This is aided through togetherness.

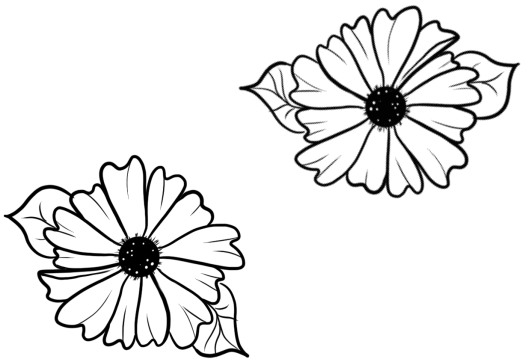
Shared play between parents and children often takes place at home or in nature. Studies show that outdoor play is the most predominant activity across 28 countries, in which parents engage with their children. It is important to note, that in more recent times, parents have reported a trend that shows a decrease in outdoor play and an increase in more sedentary indoor activities. This has informed me to look at play and activities parents and children mutually enjoy to develop an understanding of how it applies in the home.

Furniture & Home Goods: Tools of Communication

I sit at the dinner table with my family and sometimes it is quiet, but other times it is filled with discussion. I sit on the couch for family movie night or for game night with the coffee table centered for snacks or for games. I sit at the kitchen island to have prayer with my mother, or to eat casually. My siblings and I draw or do homework together at the homework table in the study. Surfaces in homes facilitate congregation.

This is a physical connection and feeling of togetherness. My undergraduate research highlighted how family meals promote family togetherness, often eating around a table or shared surface. This research stuck with me. I can't shake loose how the setting of the home and the objects within, are designed to promote relaxation and "vibes," but really togetherness. Family mealtimes are important to share with one another. It allows parents to check in on their children in a setting where they are doing a shared task. It allows children and teenagers an opportunity for discussion.

I am proposing that we further evolve objects in the home to facilitate togetherness between family members. This can be done through play.



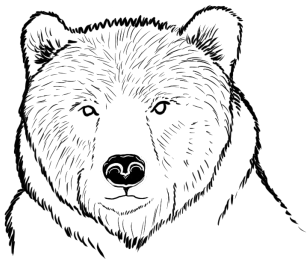
Benefits of Play Throughout Human Life

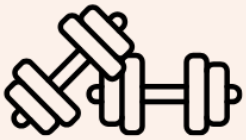
You may be wondering what the overall purpose of play throughout your lifetime is. Jean Piaget, a Swiss psychologist, known for his work in child development, defines play as relief from serious learning. Erik Erikson, an expert in human growth and development, defines play as a situation in which a child can work through experiences by creating model situations and master reality through planning and experimentation. These theories apply to all ages.

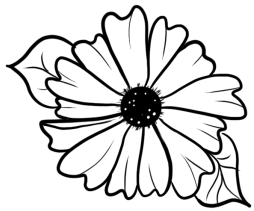
Both in childhood and adulthood, play is a form of stress relief. As an adult, play has been shown to help develop healthier coping styles such as acceptance and positive reframing. Play enhances overall well-being through its links to desirable characteristics of laughter, easing tensions, and supporting creative processes. Studies show that high playfulness scores in adults were associated with greater creativity, appreciation of beauty, and a more exciting & energetic approach to life.

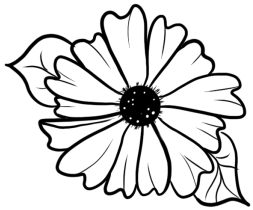
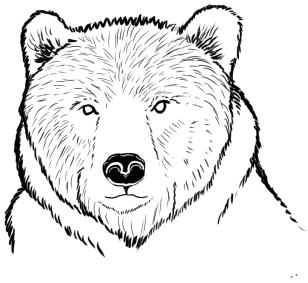
If both adults and children love to play and it supports their physical, cognitive, social, and behavioral development across their lifespans, then what are the benefits of children and adults playing together, more specifically in a parent-teenager relationship?

What sort of outcomes result from this bonding experience? When play occurs within the context of parenting in a nurturing environment, it encourages the development of agency (e.g., self-reliance, independence) and communion in the teen. (prosocial skills such as helping, sharing, etc). Parents also benefit in these situations by playing with their children, as they engage in a playful mindset and encourage themselves to reuse the tools they once used as a kid to cope with life's stressors. This shared experience and state of mind that parents have when they engage in such activities provide enjoyment and suspension of time with their children.



Child	Type of Play	Adult
Playgrounds Gross and fine motor development	**Locomotive play**	 **Kinesthetics** Release of Stress and promoting health
Imaginative Play Doll Houses, dress up, role playing	**"Lifestyle" play**	**Career Passion** Doing your job or something that you like
Construction Navigating own ideas, creation	**Creative play**	**Making and Building** Hobby with advanced tools, problem solving
	Game play Social gathering, rule following, and strategy	



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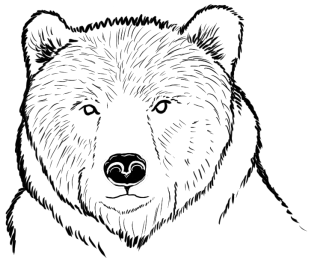

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Artifacts

Home

Honeycomb Game Table

Supele-Mahogany, Cork, Steel, Paper Stock, and Magnets

Let us bring the family closer together through an everyday object that people use or see on the daily basis. This is not just any ordinary dining table, this is a dining table made for interactive conversation by playing a game on it.

The primary focus of my research is parent-teenager relationships and how to facilitate togetherness between the two, but this is also a table for any relationship: friends, neighbors, extended family, and romantic partners.

The table includes 22 tiles, 19 of which to be arranged on its top to create a path from start to home. By using household objects as pawns, you move them by rolling the dice. This game can be competitive, sending your opponents back to start, switching with them, or moving them back spaces.

There are opportunities for discussion and proclamation in this game. Under each tile a card is placed for a player to answer a question from an intended category decided at the beginning of the game.

This table can be used for eating, gathering and gaming, but can also serve as a reminder to get to know a stranger or your own family member in a new dynamic way.

Directions:

2-4 Players:

1) Determine a question category for the cards and place a card under each tile.

2) Collaboration: tiles and coasters. Collaboratively decide the path for the game using the tabletop tiles.

3) Once a path is decided, place the coasters on different tiles where the players see fit.

Bee Coaster: switch with an opponent.

Flower Coaster: move pawn back to start.

Bear Coaster: move forward two or send opponent backward two.

4) Place Pawns on Start: 2 pawns each for a two player game, 1 pawn each for 4 player.

Roll the dice and move pawns, taking turns.

5) If you land on a tile occupied by an opposing player, send them back to start.

6) If you roll the dice and it lands on the honey jar, then flip a tile that does not have a pawn and read your category question/task. Once the question is answered, decide if you want to move your pawn forward 1 or your opponent's pawn backward 1.

7) If you land on a tile with a coaster, perform action based on the coaster's symbol.

You cannot switch with an opponent if all their pawns are in start.

P.R.L. Y.C.
HALEY-DAVIS

Marble Run Candle Stick Timer

Plywood, Acrylic, Metal Ball Bearing, a Bowl, and Paper Stock

Everyone loves a marble run and we just can't understand why that is. It's the simplest form of play - understanding gravity and directing a moving force.

The set of three candle holders has a spiral staircase for a marble to roll down.

This is a set, because the candle holders are stackable, allowing you to increase the time of your game play. This type of play enforces is a visual perception of time. Stakced together, the three candle sticks accumulate to 10 seconds of time.

Run it two times and it takes approximately 35 seconds. (allowing you to reset the 10 second timer)

Run it 5 times and I bet you can't do it in under a minute!

Want more entertainment? Run two balls at the same time in different paths. How many can your run at once?

In what other ways can these objects be used?

Directions of Use with Charades:

4+ Players:

1) Select five cards from the card deck. These will be your categories to answer.

2) Each player writes an answers on 5 individual pieces of paper.

3) Fold the pieces of paper and place into a central bowl.

4) Stack three marble ball candle stick timers on top of one another.

5) Split into two equal teams:

Team one releases the ball into the spiral two times to create an approximate 35 second timer.

Team two will select a player to pick a piece of paper from the bowl and describe to their team who/what is written without saying words on the paper.

6) Players will read aloud as many prompts as possible until time runs out.

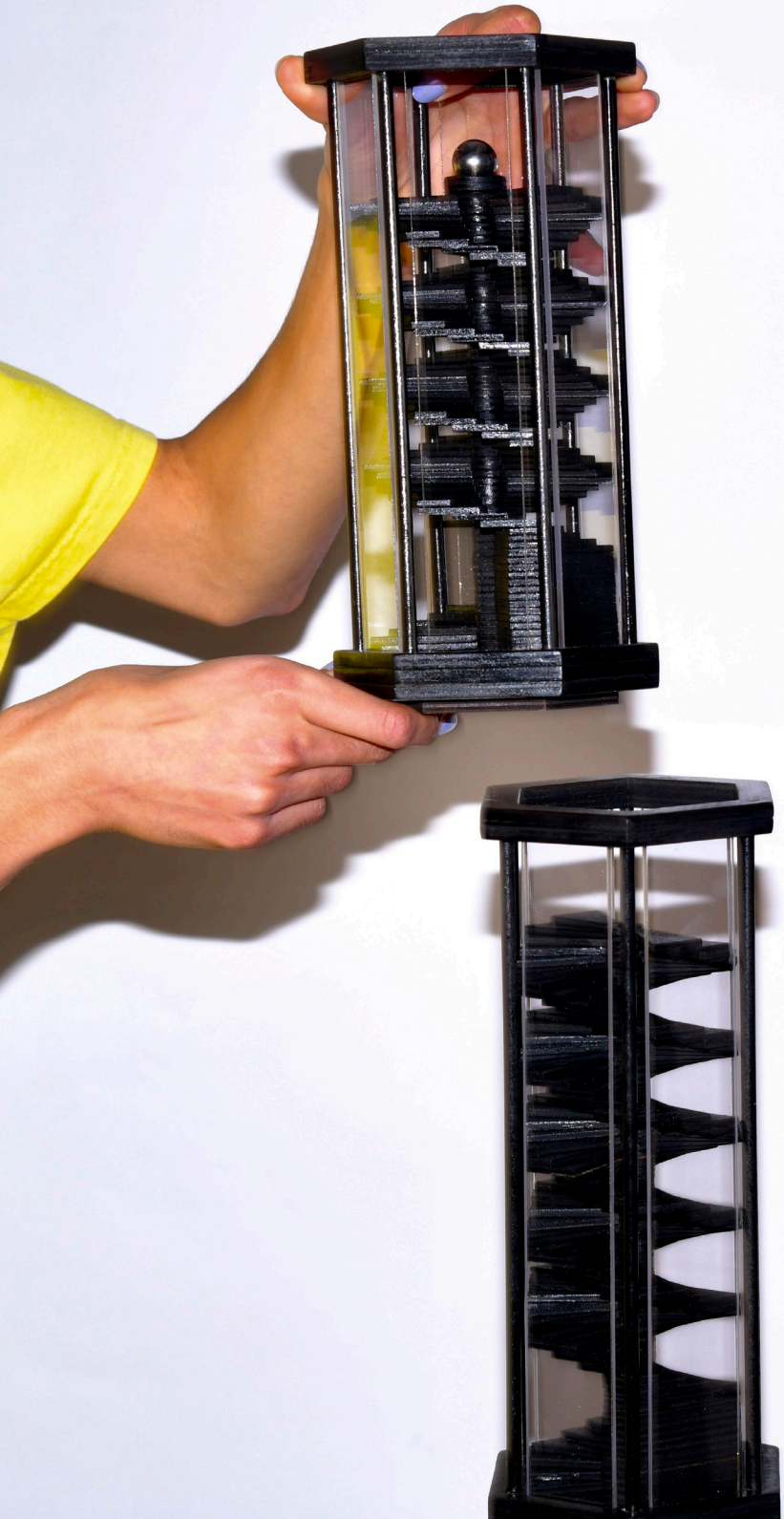
7) Place the papers you have scored to the side. Tally the points.

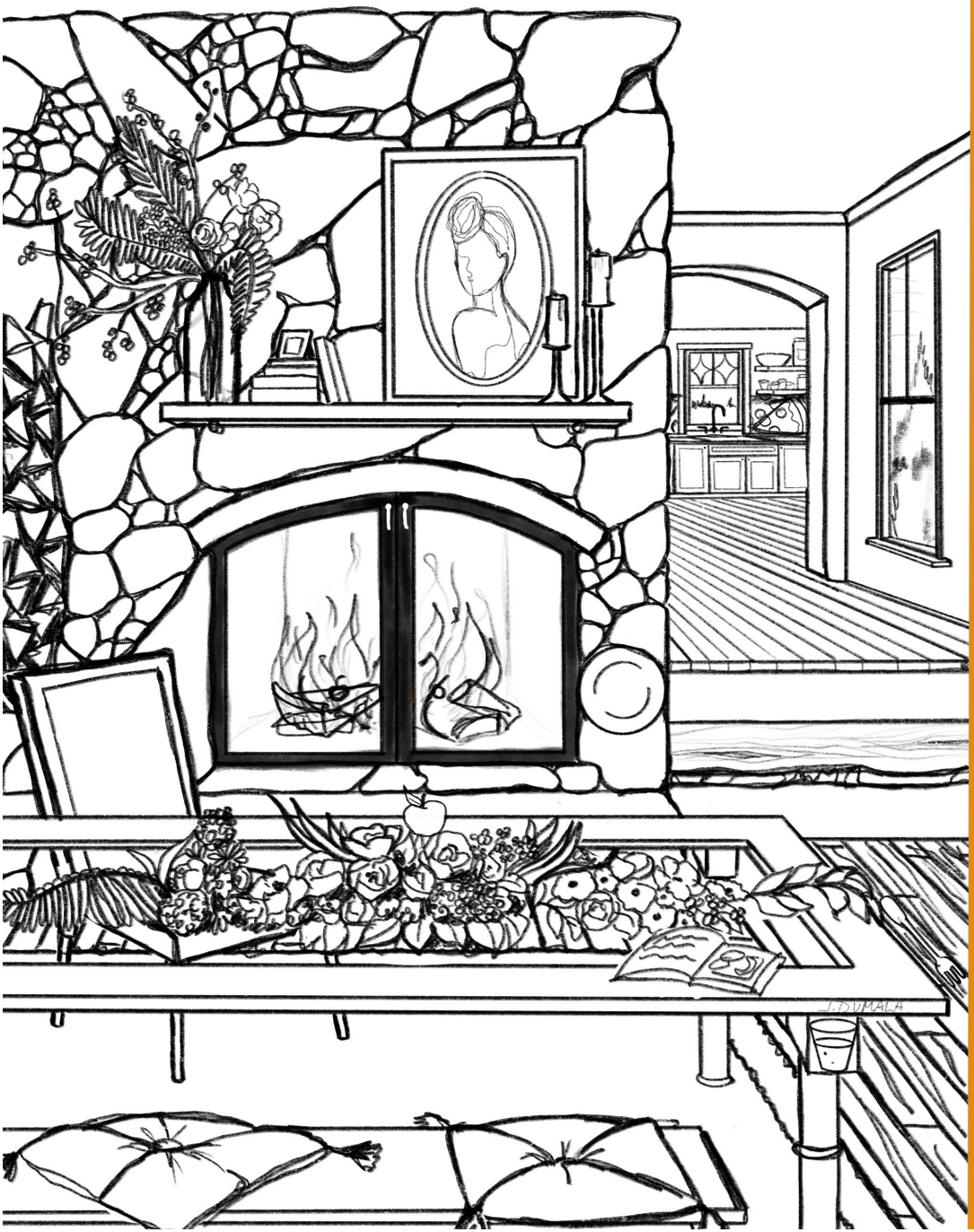
8) Pass the bowl to the opposing team and continue until bowl is empty.

Round 1: Use any words to describe what is written without saying the word(s) on the paper.

Round 2: Use one word describing what is written (using the same papers).

Round 3: Act it out, no word.





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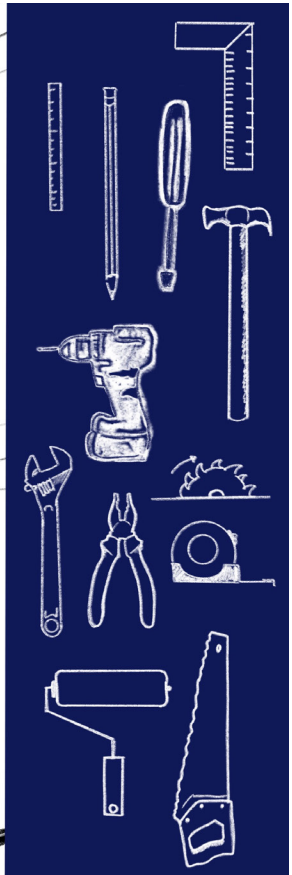

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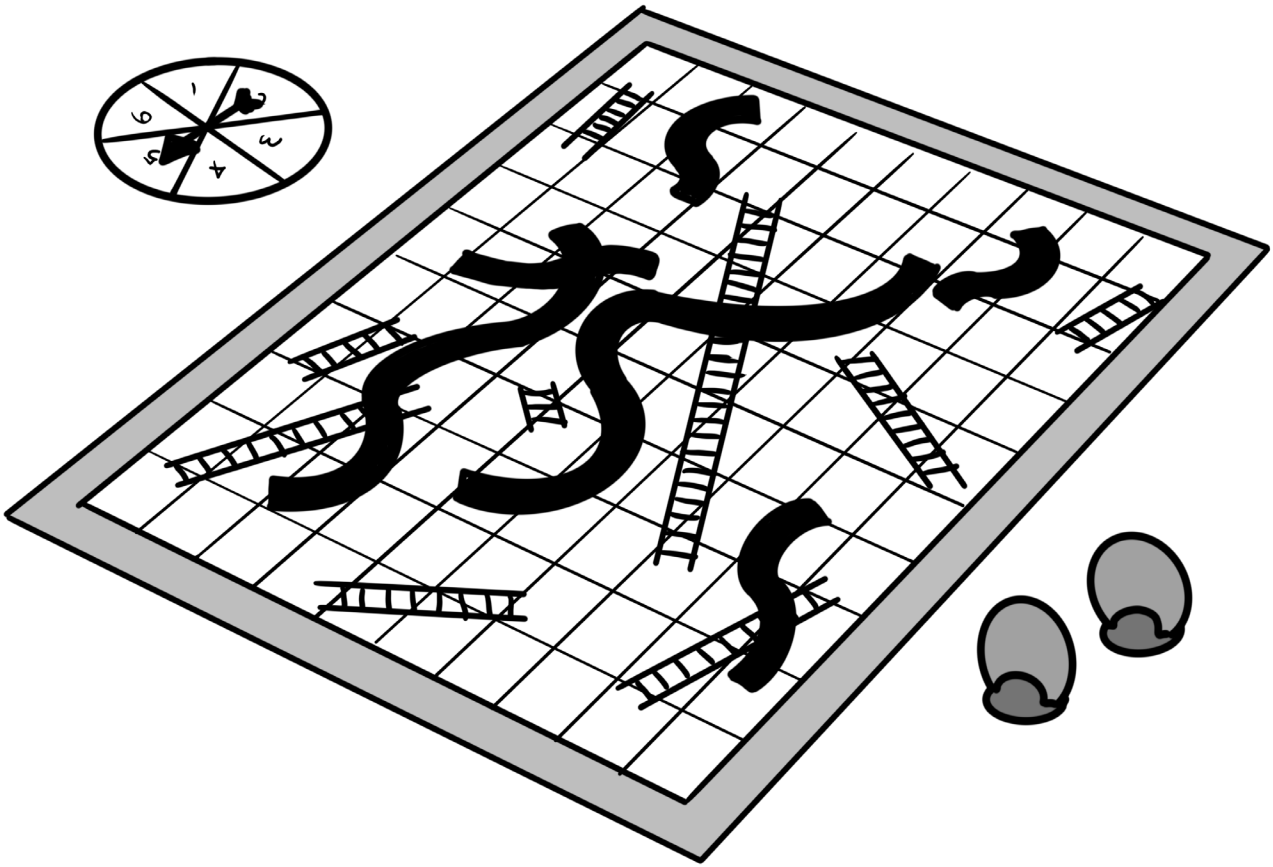


Research Process Part 1: Early Childhood

Early Childhood Milestones Summary

Bio:

Neurons continue to create synapses to connect to other neurons and are myelinated to create faster signals. The cerebral cortex, the larger part of the brain, has developed enough synapses where synaptic pruning occurs. Think of neurons as New York City roads. You can take a taxi to get from point A to point B in numerous ways. Synaptic pruning puts up road blocks on synapses to create a particular output, like a thought. There is only one direction now to take because of synaptic pruning.

The left hemisphere grows more rapidly than the right due to language development.

Motor coordination develops due to growing neurons between the cerebrum and the cerebellum (the motor control center).

Balance improves gross motor skills like running, riding a bike, etc.

ncreased control of hands and fingers exercised in self help skills around the house as well as toys.

Opportunity for physical play affects early childhood motor development

Psych:

The pre operational stage of cognitive development: make believe play develops and becomes more complex and hierarchical classification begins to be understood

Early childhood play often revolves around scaffolding. Role playing what their caregiver does in the kitchen, or only mixing the ingredients together to make muffins. It is limited but important. It is a guided participation

Scaffolding tasks and play supports gains in attention and planning.

Recognition memory is developed. Identifying similarities and differences in patterns and shapes.

Autobiographical memory becomes more organized

By preschool age, children are capable of metacognition, the ability to think about their own thoughts. Not in the same way a teenager would, but have rudimentary capabilities

By age 6, children can replace beliefs in magical creatures with pragmatic explanations

Social:

By age 3, children can understand causes and consequences while developing self concept and esteem
Gender stereotyped standards and beliefs begin at age 2

By age 4, children can describe themselves through observation. What they look like in the mirror, what they sound like

Self esteem begins to grow by understanding and recognizing school capabilities and capacities.

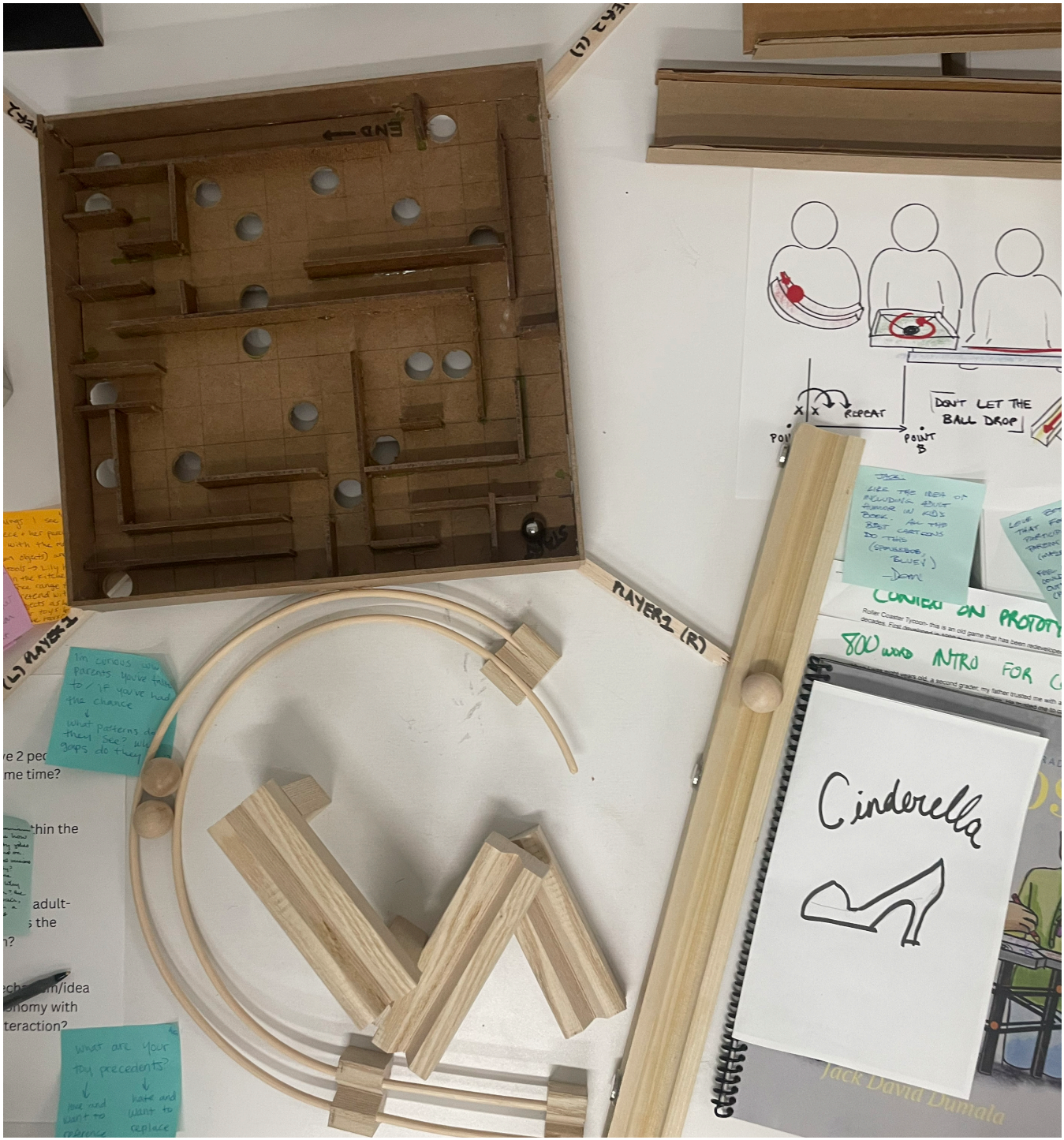
Emotional self regulation improves dramatically from 2 to 5

Parallel and cooperative play, playing with other and playing aside others playing is developed.

By age 6, children can not only emotionally understand worldly interpretations or predictions, but they also can influence others' emotional reactions

Social problem solving develops while acquiring ethical rules to follow

Same sex playmates also becomes more common as children get older


END
PLAYER 1 (R)
DON'T LET THE BALL DROP
REPEAT
POINT B
Cinderella
Jack David Dumala

My mother told me that when I was three or four, I would not stop jumping on the bed. It is still fun as an adult, but as a kid, a new bruise would appear on my forehead every few weeks from hitting my head on the edge of the nightstand.

Eventually... I learned.

Every Christmas I would get a new marble ball coaster type of toy. One year it was through K-NEX, for another it was Sky-coaster. The toy options were endless. I don't know if it was because I like to build or if it is because there is satisfaction in a ball moving from point A to point B.

Paracosm

The Paracosm is an imaginative dream, a dreamt-up world in childhood. It lives and grows across time inside the mind from childhood to adulthood. The paracosm is an amalgamation of reality and illusion. Whatever an individual experiences through their lifetime will inform their ideal world in which they would like to live. Parents and children alike, dream up a reality in which they envision their home and life to be. As a designer, I want to aid in creating these dreamt realitites people envision for themselves.

User Testing

Throughout my thesis journey, I have engaged in user testing with different age groups. Dominic Rishe and his daughter, Norah, of four years old, were great to have user testing with. I was testing the capacity at what age can someone build a marble ball coaster themselves. Initially, I created coaster pieces out of cardboard and Norah and Dominic worked together to create a marble run.

Between the ages of 4 to 5, children have the desire to expand their world around them for their use of play. What I mean is that every day objects can be used in their play for their advantage. Table legs become supports for the marble run, a blanket around the shoulders signifies the person is a queen, and pillows and couch cushions are stacked in a way to build a fort.

What is a way in which we can further encourage this type of play throughout the lifetime, using home objects to our advantage of play?

Mise en Place: Guided Play

For those who are unfamiliar, 'mise en place' is a French term employed in the culinary domain to describe the preparations chefs make before they embark on cooking. In the perspective of psychology, rather than the culinary arts, 'mise en place' signifies the manner in which one's attitude towards a given environment imposes restrictions on one's perceived capabilities within that environment. It also examines how these judgments and predispositions influence the process of preparing for action.

Guided play situations entail the involvement of parents with specific objectives for their children. They orchestrate the play setting and materials to align with these goals. It is worth noting that children often exhibit enhanced learning outcomes in guided play. This makes me think of how the home is a space constructed for the development of children, and adults (play room vs. man cave).

The concept of 'mise en place' provides a structured framework for the explicit exploration of the psychological processes involved in preparation. It delves into how these processes are molded by various factors stemming from our experiences and environmental contexts. This makes me question, how 'mise en place' relates to the home and play, for children and adults.

It's important to acknowledge that when a playful environment is thoughtfully set up, creating the right 'mise' has the potential to catalyze successful development of children and adults.

Material Ethos: Parent Sensitivity to Children Play Materials

Sometimes in my work, I almost feel like I am talking about a parenting style just as much as I am talking about design.

I want to reinvent the wheel, or that's what it feels like, and it is fucking hard. I want to change how we interact with our home spaces because we need to. Adults with children tend to lose a sense of their identity while upholding a new one, either "Mom" or "Dad". Their space, lives, and priorities revolve around their children. We live in a world where we try to make everything childproof and safe, which to me feels dumb. The world isn't safe. Play and space do not always have to be "safe" by today's standards. We learn through action and play is always actionable. There are risks cooking in the kitchen, such as burning yourself. There are risks in running on a metal playscape... don't fall! We get so nervous about children getting hurt that we decide to make rules, rules that restrict children, but also restrict parents as well.

A baby starts to learn how to walk. Now parents have to adapt their house to cover sharp corners... how ugly!

I grew up with my father owning a concrete manufacturing company. It was inevitable that I would begin my research beginning what I knew how to do best, working with the material of concrete. I worked in his manufacturing plant starting at age 15 so mixing concrete is in my blood. I also learned from my dad how to weld metal, working alongside him.

I created this coffee table (picture to the left) because it felt like an amalgamation of all my ideas. I wanted to build a furniture piece that had an element of play for children, but pushed materiality suitable for children, and something that adults could find appreciation existing in their homes. There are simple joys of drawing on the sidewalk or being the force of a ball completing its circuit on the track.

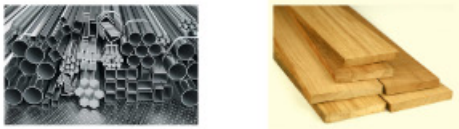
Concrete has its opponents and critics. "It is not child-safe. A child can hit their head on that." Metal is the same. Sometimes with even sharper corners.

The thing is, we let our children interact with these materials all the time. I surely did as a kid. Children run and flop around on metal playgrounds. They run and play on the blacktop at recess. So it's apparent to me, that we find these materials to be rambunctiously interacted with only when they are outside. Hmm...

While I include concrete as a component of my thesis, it is important to note that my work maintains a narrative that children should have access to some "guarded" materials in play.

Primary Materials Use

Concrete | Steel/Metal | Wood | M



“Dangerous”

AI Generated Images

Metal and concrete used in infrastructure for playground, why is it so less likely to be used in indoor play toys

Jack Dumala

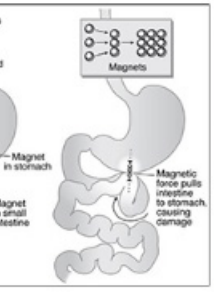
Use a sterilized pin and tweezers to remove the splinter

internal and external injury

d in Children Toys/Objects

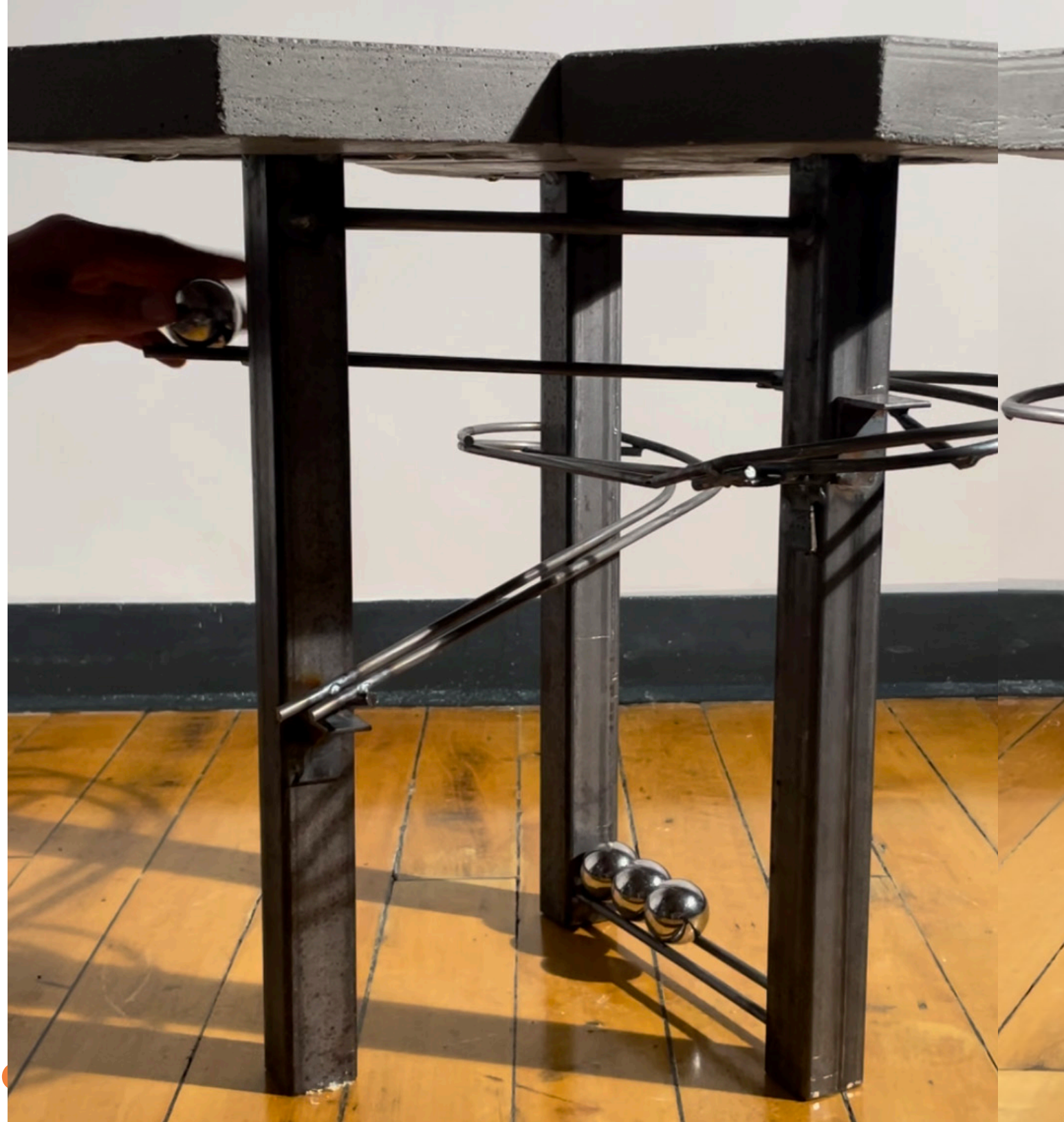
Magnets	Plastic	Silicone	Textile

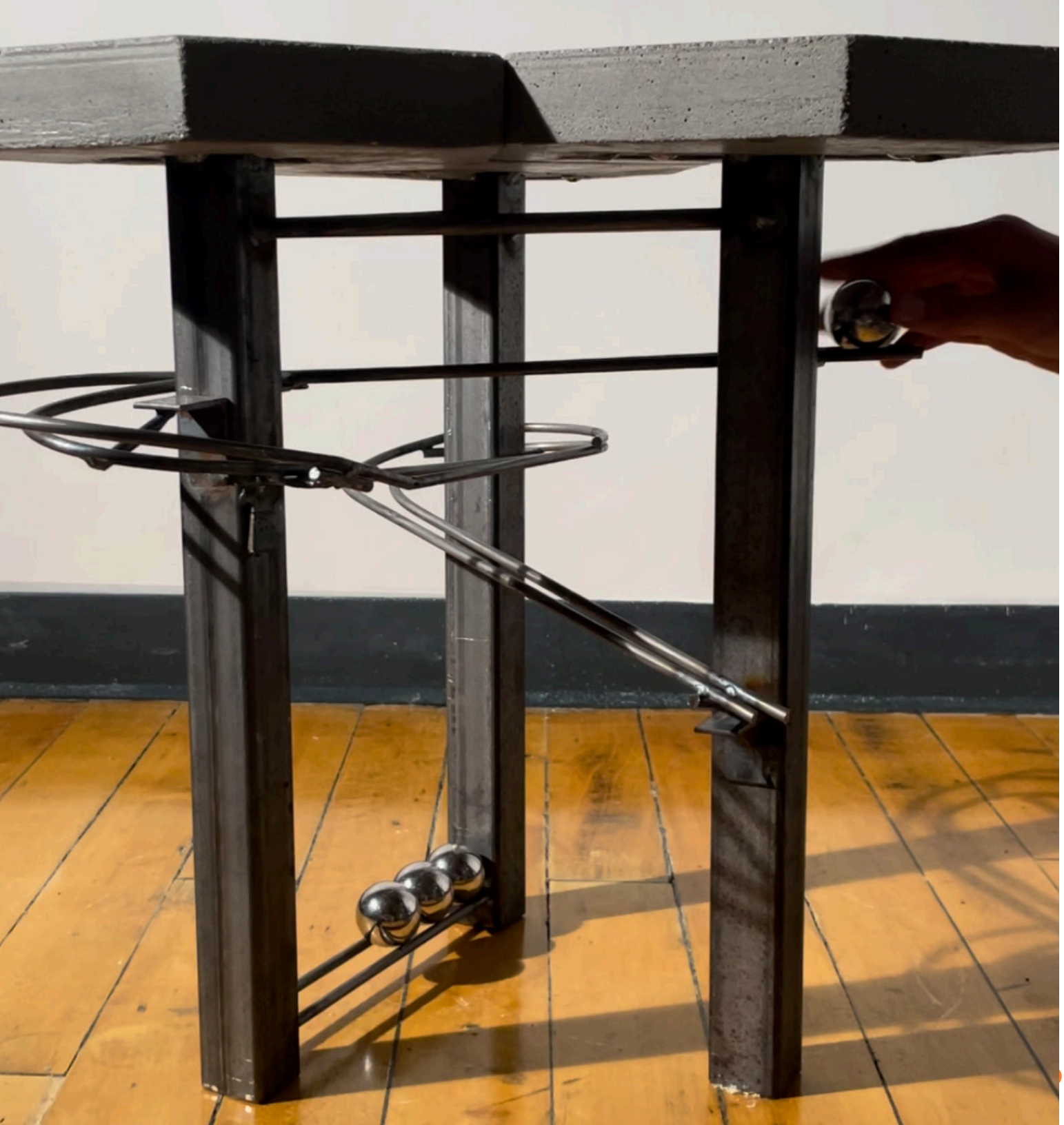
“Safe”

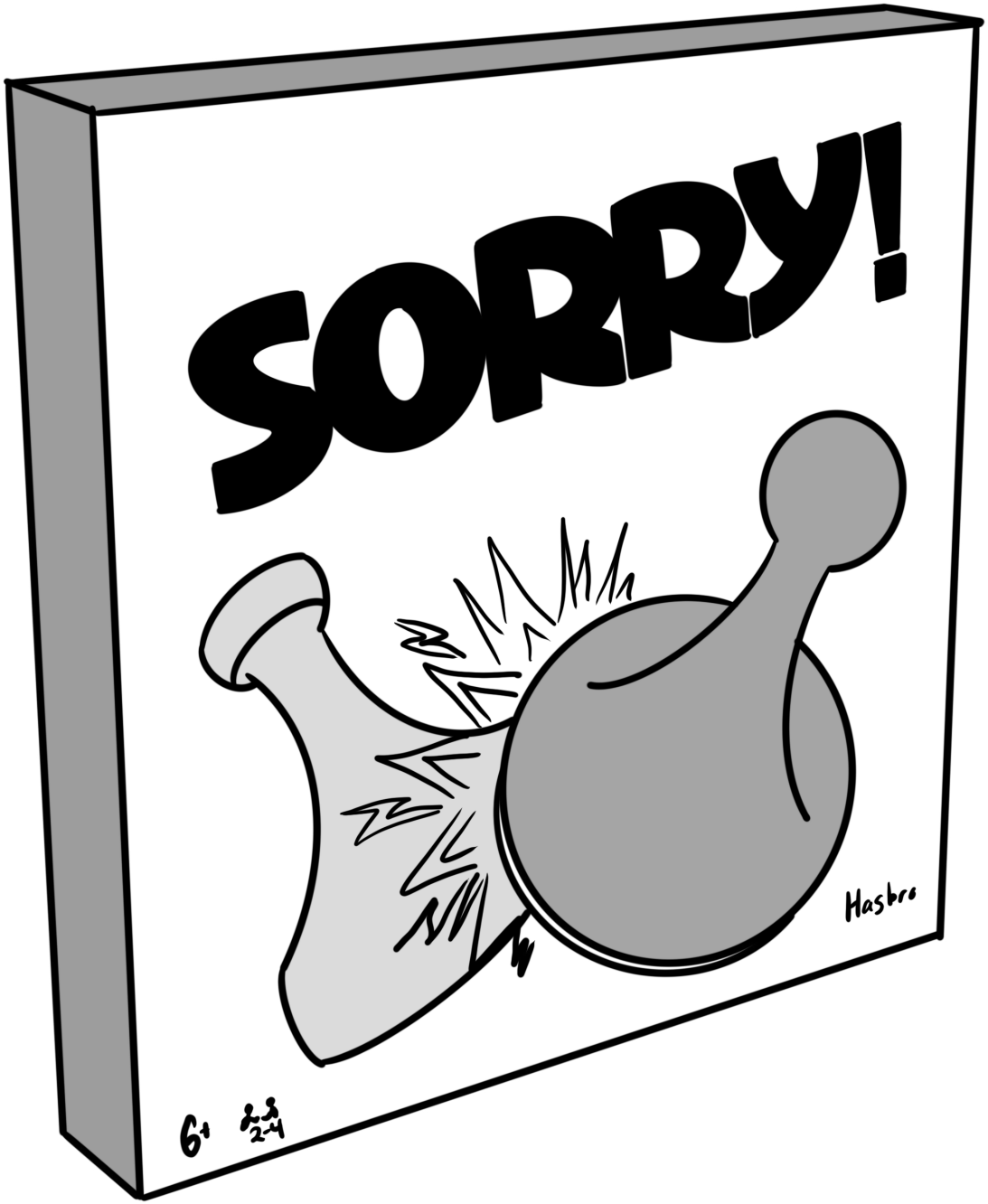


Choking hazards

Toxins






SORRY!
Hasbro
6+

Research Process Part 2: Middle Childhood

Middle Childhood Milestones Summary

Bio:

Secular trends in physical development have occurred in industrialized nations due to improved nutrition. Children are growing at faster rates than before

Permanent teeth replace primary teeth. Tooth decay risk is high without proper nutrition

Myelination in brain rises steadily, creating more effective brain circuits of information processing, especially in executive functioning

Obesity has increased dramatically in industrialized and developing nations due to parental feeding habits, reduced sleep, lack of exercise, and western diet influences

Unintentional injuries increase over middle childhood especially for boys due to the rise of aggressive play.

Increased ability of flexibility, balance, agility and force

Environment and hereditary factors influence children's capacities in fine and gross motor development

Psych:

Concrete operational thought: thought processes become more logical, flexible, and organized.

Spatial reasoning improves by understanding their own cognitive maps, forming accurate views of large scale spaces and grasping the meaning of scale

Tasks that involve working memory, inhibitory control, and flexible thinking

Increased speed in thinking supports working memory of middle childhood

ADHD is most prominently noticeable here

Increased understanding of vocabulary words that can mean two different things depending on the context of the work

Gifted and talented students showcase their abilities beginning in middle childhood, including high IQ, creativity, and divergent thinking

Social:

Mastery oriented attributions hold importance in ability - believing that if you fail, you can only try harder to be better and failure is insufficient

Learned helplessness is present in children who believe everything is based on external factors like luck and their abilities cannot be modified

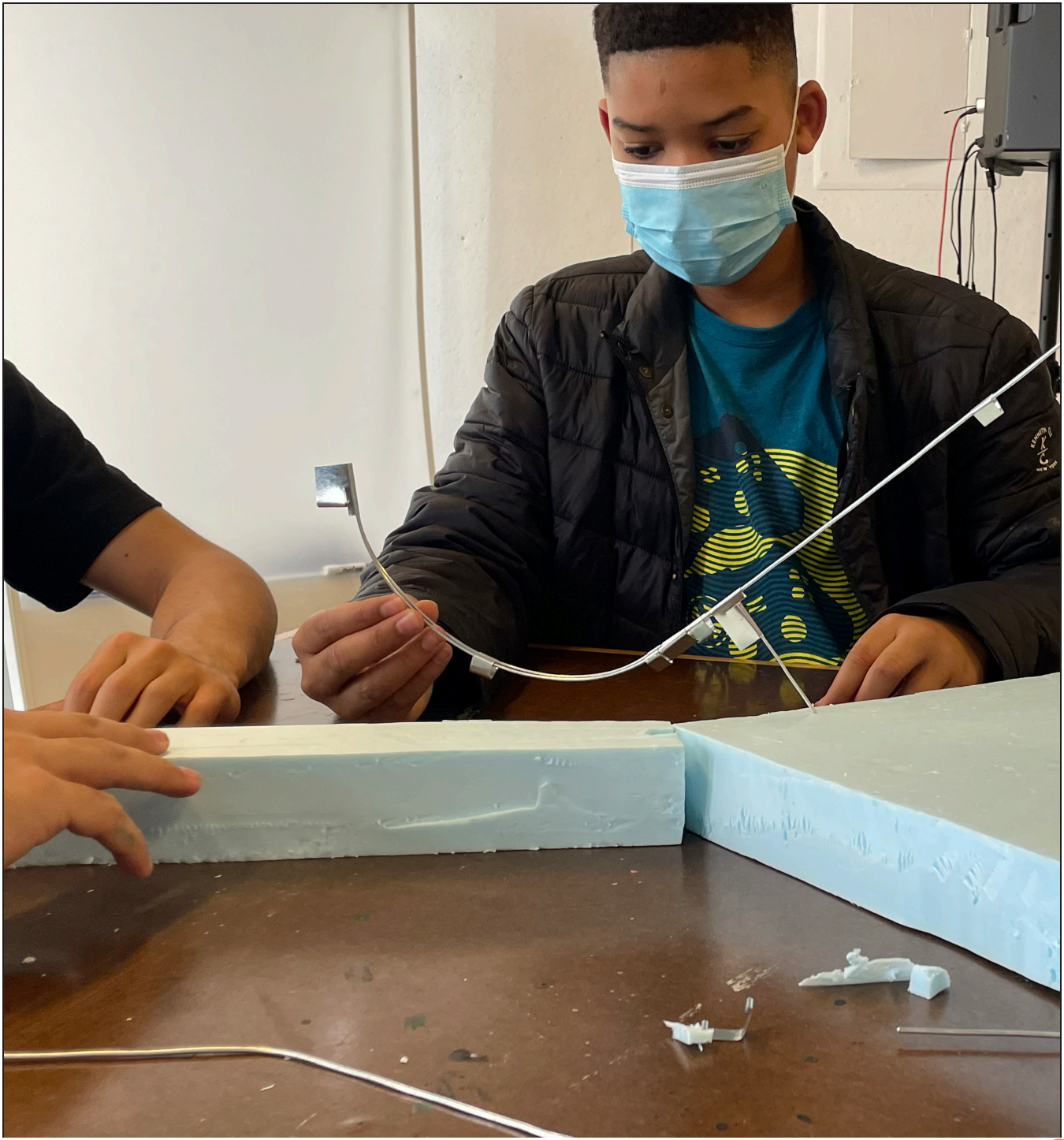
Experience more than one emotion at a time is learned

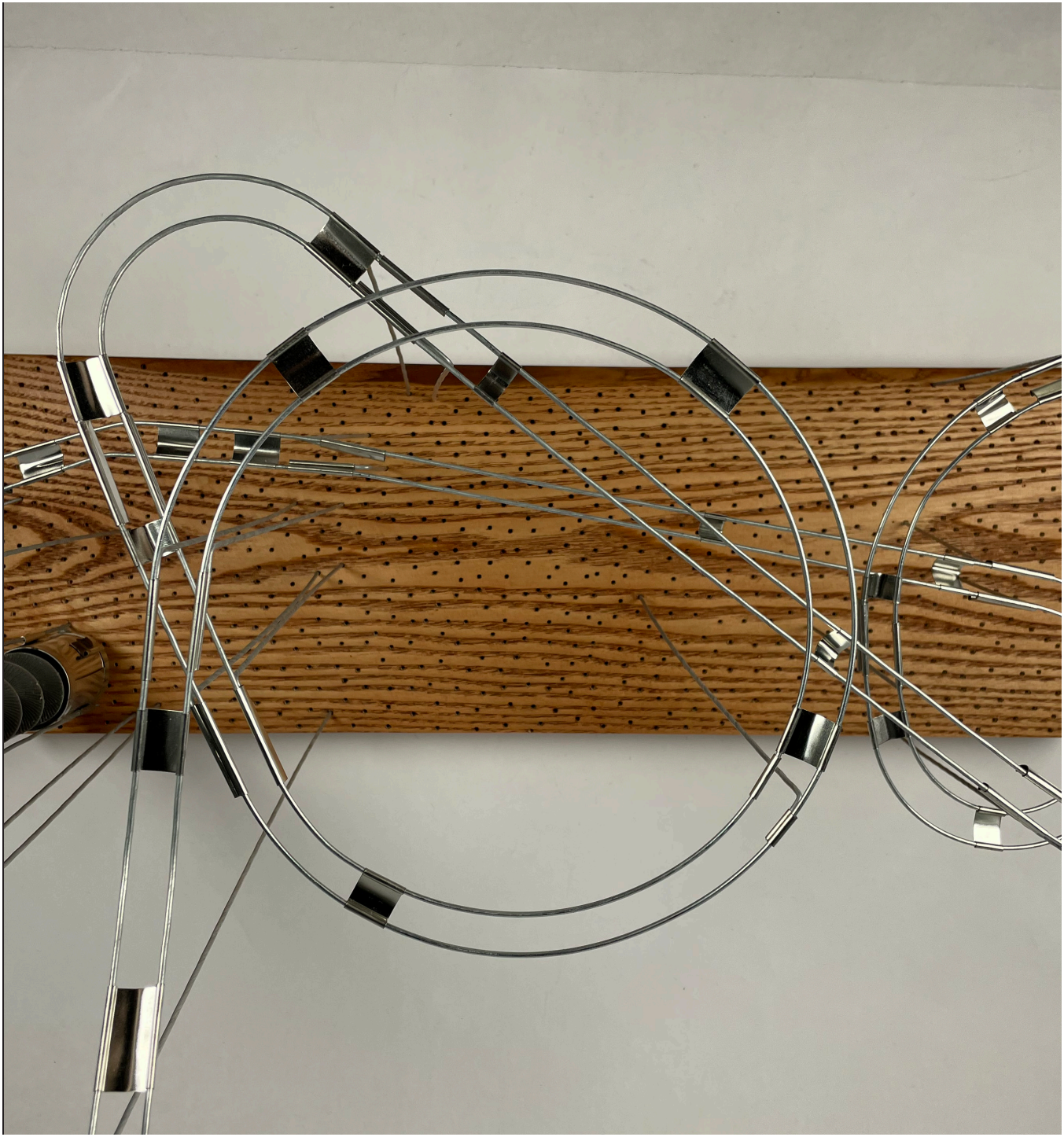
Prejudices become more apparent and understood at this age

Friendships develop based on trust and friendships become more selective

Extension in awareness in gender stereotypes but have more flexibility in these stereotypes than other developmental stages

Sibling rivalry increases, yet there is greater participation in diverse activities. By differentiating self between other family members, rivalry can decrease





I was seven years old when I first encountered the joy and love for building a marble coaster. Hours upon hours of time were spent in the living room of my parents home, I used the toy Skyrail to build and design my own coaster out of bendable pieces of plastic rails that attached to pillared infrastructures. The pieces of plastic attached together with ease, being able to bend the rails into loop de loops and sharp curves. The thing about this toy was that you never knew if your marble would be able to survive these bends and curves with such velocity. I would begin from the starting point of my marble coaster, and then work down to its undefined end - usually when I didn't have any pieces left to use. Beginning from the top, I would attach three to four pieces together, create a bend, fasten it to a pillar to create stability, and release the marble to test. Damn it! It doesn't work. The marble would roll off the coaster the second it got too much speed on the turn. Maybe if I decreased the slope of the marble's track to decrease its initial acceleration it would move past the curve with ease? Another try. Fuck! It still didnt work. Through trial and error, I realized that on the curves, I had to angle the rails inward for the accelerating marble to stay on its track, a success for the first four pieces that I added. Now I was on to adding more pieces. I did more testing by adding my marble back to the beginning of the rail to see if it would make it to the end.

The wonder of these ball machines does not escape you with age, it rather stays with you as you get older. I always wondered, why is that?

Space and Play

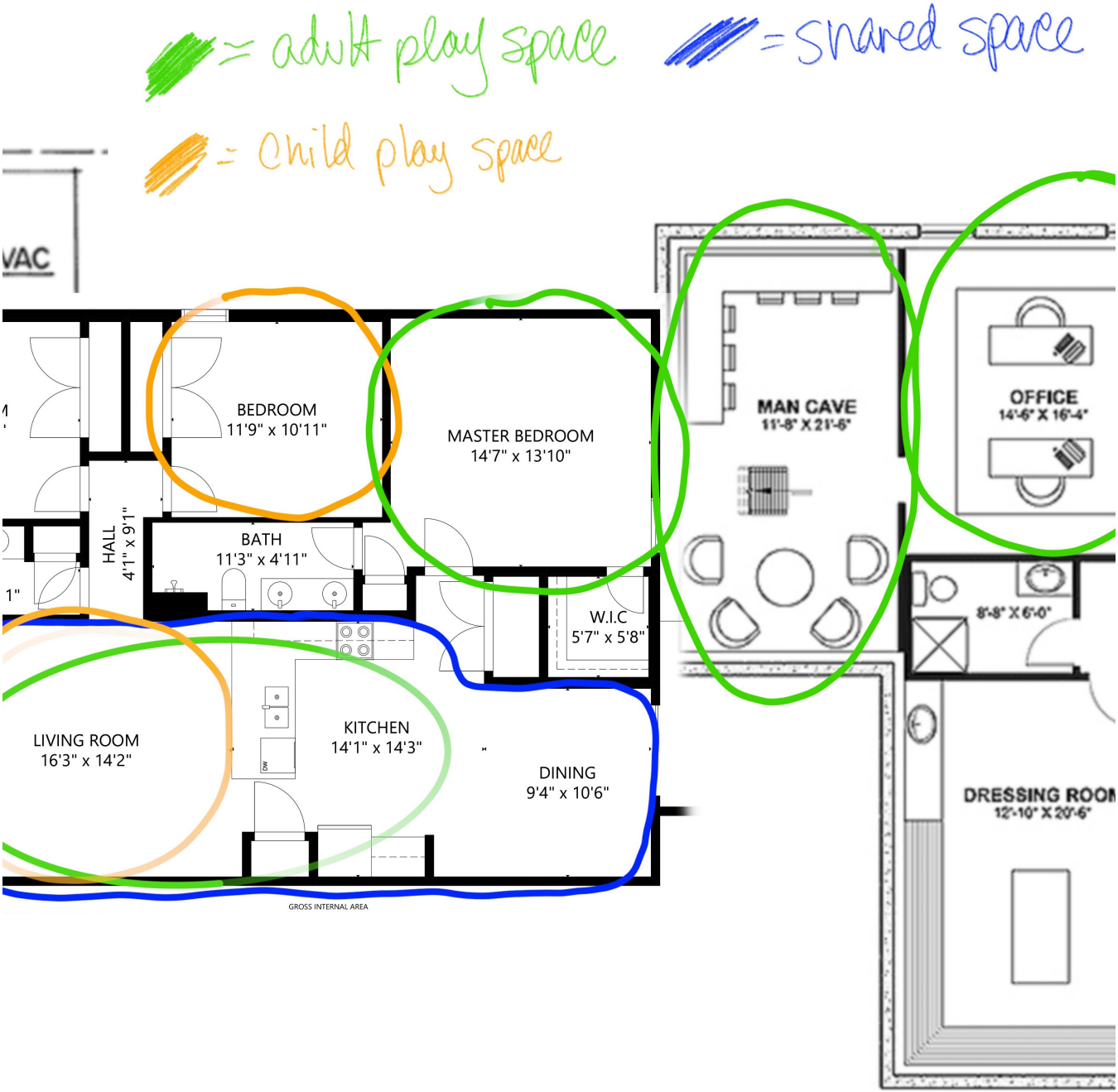
Historically, play has been divided and its space in the home has been divided. Children have playrooms for their own toys, while adults have caves and rooms of their own. Even in shared spaces, Children's toys are put into bins that clutter the living room. Parents want to rid themselves of the mess toys make within a shared space. It can be difficult for adults to share space with children because it should be a space for adult enjoyment too. I am just as concerned about the needs of an adult to play and enjoy space as I am for children. That is a focal point in my thesis because parents and children alike need to mutually enjoy the space and play I have designed.

Often in designing furniture, objects, and play toys for the home, the audience of adults or children are considered: the material choices, the scale, the cognitive and physical stimulation, intention, and the ergonomics of age. The home is for all ages.

The home has furniture suited or modified for all ages. Play is for all ages. Yet in the past, there has been a lack of consideration for shared space and play within the home.

Sure, kitchens, dining rooms, and living rooms are shared spaces between all age demographics within the family, but the design and arrangement gives limited opportunity for adult and child play. The home's shared space should be welcoming with forms of play that encourage parents and children to stay engaged.

Intergenerational play is important because it offers an opportunity for parents and children to feel togetherness through playing with the same objects. It also offers adults the opportunity to be more playful, which has its own benefits, while children work towards developmental growth. But homes now are not arranged to provide child and adult play simultaneously within shared space and interaction. My aim is to revolutionize this arrangement and system. The Design of Childhood by Alexandra Lange, can help us better understand why play is considered age-specific today and understand the evolution of the home as a space for children and adults. This has helped guide my research on how to design the home's arrangement and its play objects for intergenerational enjoyment that promotes togetherness. Pre-industrial revolution homes often consisted of only two rooms, the hall and the parlor. In the hall, a family engaged in most of their daily life tasks within this space such as cooking and eating. The parlor was a space designated for only adults and their enjoyment, "holding the families finest things, including the best bed for the head of the household" (Lange, 82). Within the parlor, there wasn't room for children to play. With a lack of space and resources for handcrafted toys, children did not have room to explore, engage with imagination, or have a margin of error within the home. In fact, kids often rummaged through the house in the hopes they would be able to find something to play with.


= adult play space
= shared space
= child play space
VAC
BEDROOM
11'9" x 10'11"
MASTER BEDROOM
14'7" x 13'10"
HALL
4'1" x 9'1"
BATH
11'3" x 4'11"
W.I.C
5'7" x 5'8"
LIVING ROOM
16'3" x 14'2"
KITCHEN
14'1" x 14'3"
DINING
9'4" x 10'6"
DW
GROSS INTERNAL AREA
MAN CAVE
11'-8" X 21'-6"
OFFICE
14'-6" X 16'-4"
8'-8" X 6'-0"
DRESSING ROOM
12'-10" X 20'-6"

Shared Space Influencing Shared Play

Beginning in the early 1900's, incorporating playrooms in the home became a popular trend. These playrooms were strategically placed in a central location within the home so that parents could have easy access to monitor their children. These rooms are outfitted with toys that were once metal and wood, and have now evolved into more common material such as plastic (being more child-friendly).

Play has become divided in form and space. However, play between adults and children can be a shared experience in a designated space within the home. A parent's intention is to provide a safe, inspirational, and educational space for their children. In providing that, it can clutter space for parents to play and enjoy as well. This is why playrooms were designed. Some families do not have space for a playroom. My intention is to design the shared home environment to be mutually engaging in play for parents and children in a centralized space. Shared spaces help establish a feeling of togetherness. By designing play items that adults and children mutually enjoy, I can strategically contextualize them within the shared space of a home environment.

It wasn't until the mid 1950's where children and adults had an unexpected shared play space within the home. This came with the industrialization of the basement. Although the development of the basement was to extend storage and living space, it also became a space fitted to be a workshop. A home workshop offered the "creative powers of the boy to be developed while a true bond of comradeship between father and son grows" (Lange, 96). While acknowledging the aged bias of gender within this text, it is important to note that a workshop provided space for a parent and a child to bond through creative tasks. These tasks involved a child using tools and materials more suitable for adults in play.

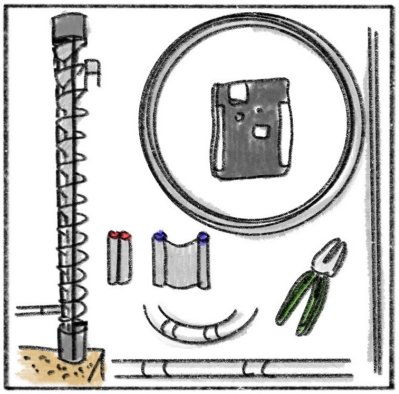
The development of home workshops has challenged the perception of what items and space were suitable for children and adults to play with. It provided a median space for children and adults to explore and engage in play with the same tools and same parts. As DIY has gained popularity, the workshop has become a common space for parent and child to play together.

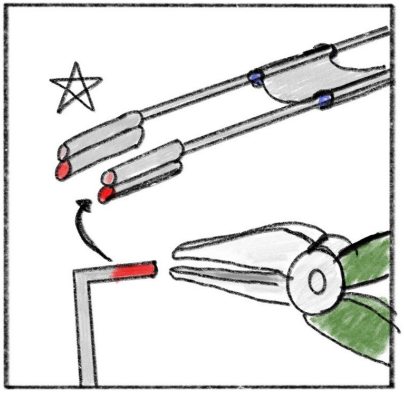
MET Students: Field Trip Workshop

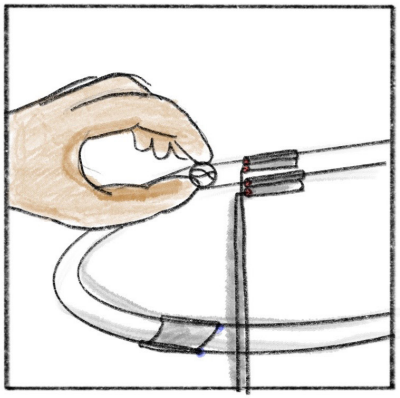
In Spring of 2022, I had the opportunity to design a field trip for a group of middle schoolers. Right at the very end of middle childhood before adolescence.

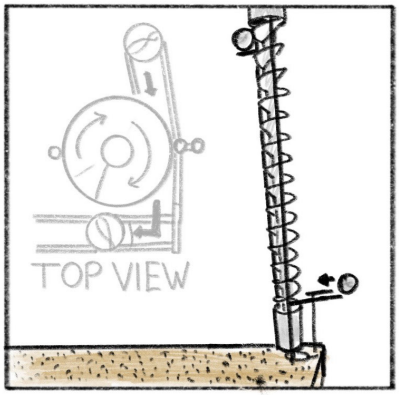
My codesigner, FeiFei Shein, and I designed this workshop to teach prototyping skills utilizing hand tools, wire, and an arduino circuit board. Not every person is interested in making or feels comfortable with a making process, but we recognized that many kids will find any reasons not to do their school work.

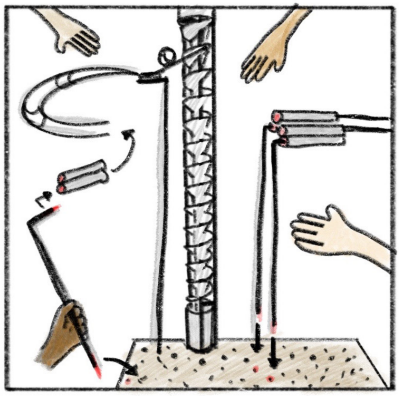
This user testing was a success in determining physical and mental capabilities of pre-teenagers. To my suprise, there was a strong interest in building these marble ball machines with this age demographic.



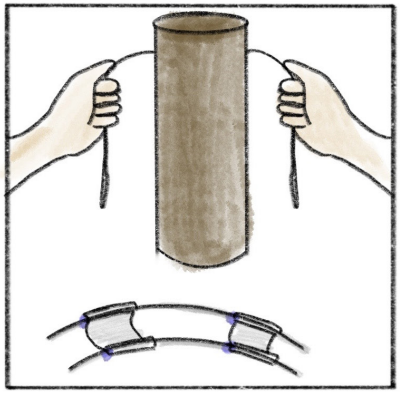


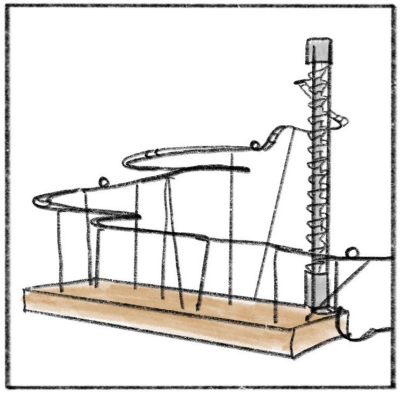


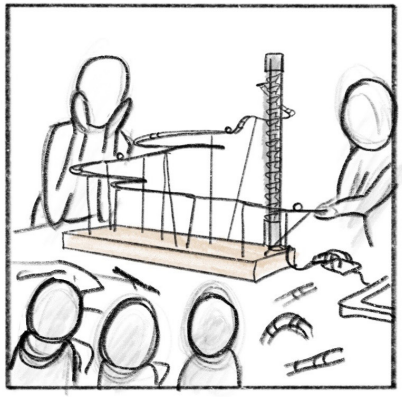

TOP VIEW



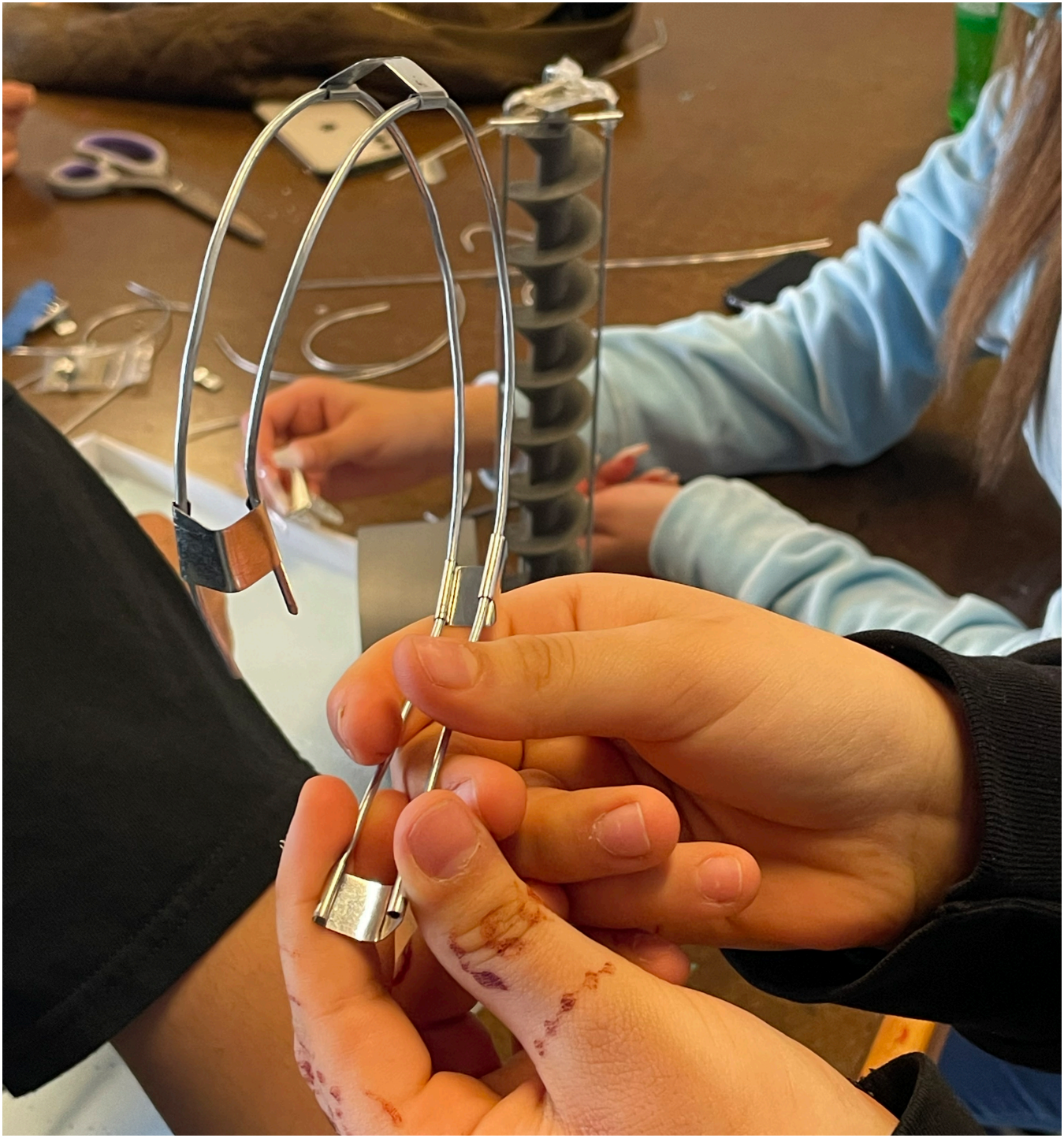
ARDUINO
UNO

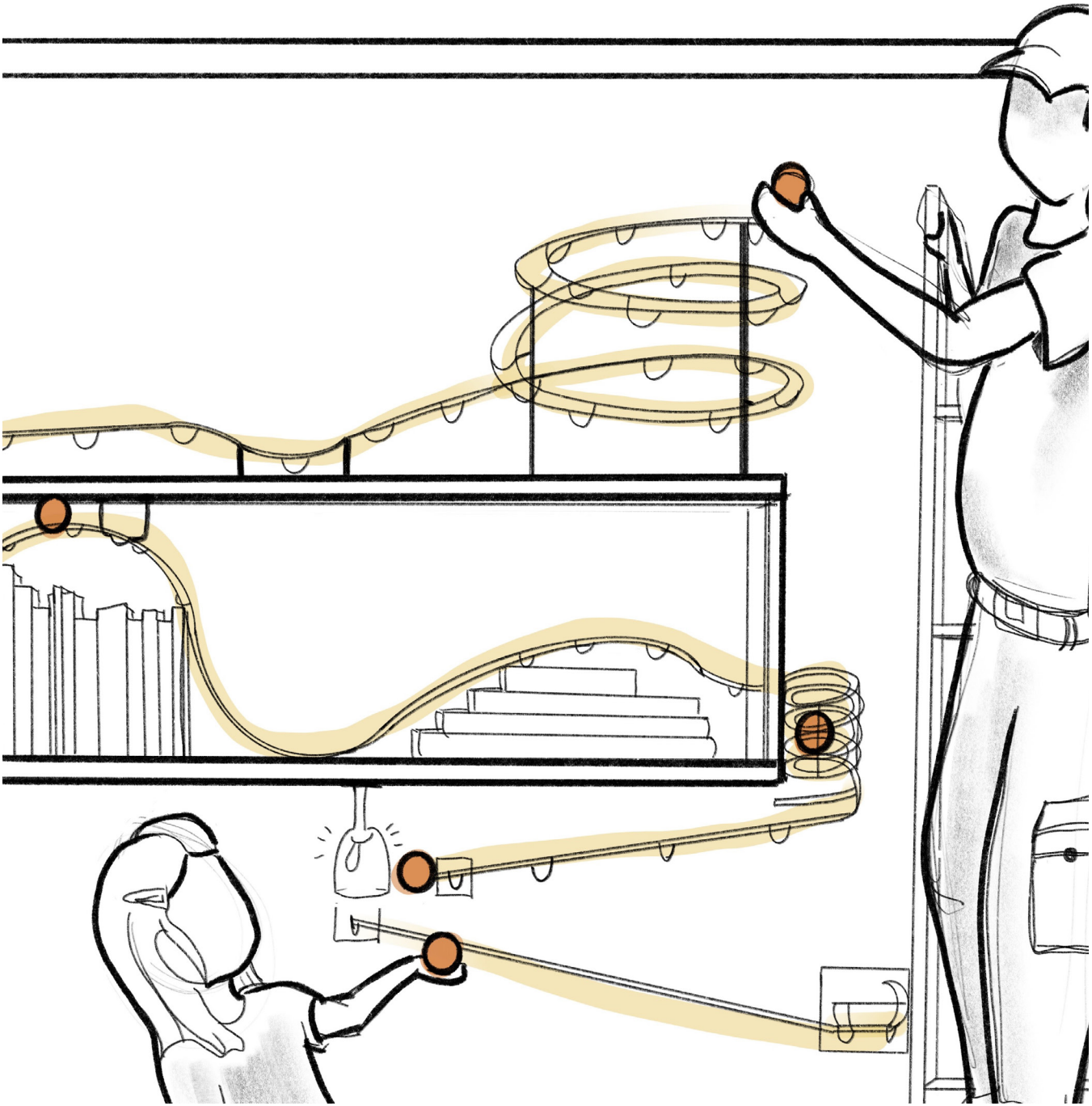


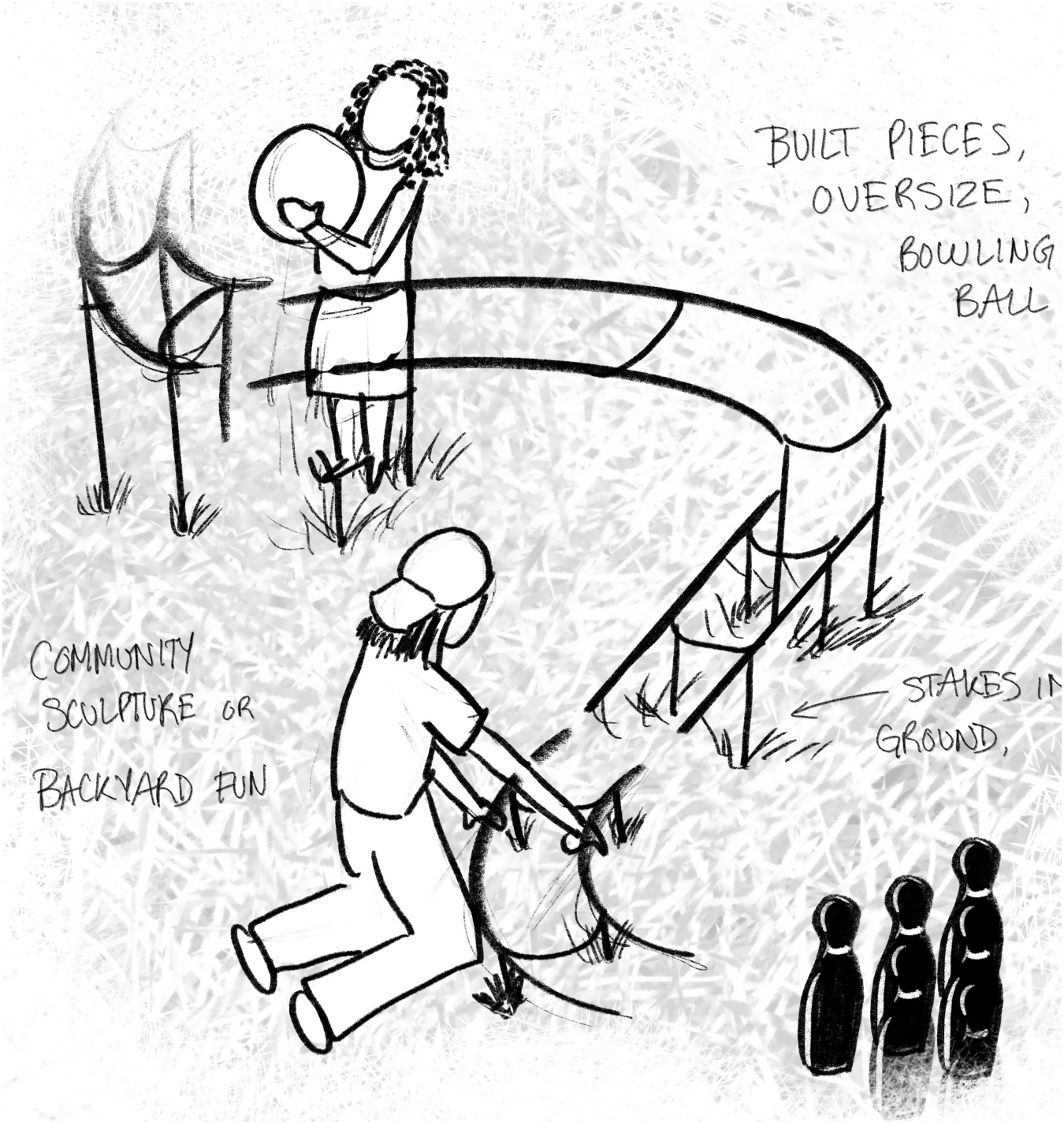




AEROPOSTALE
New York
1987



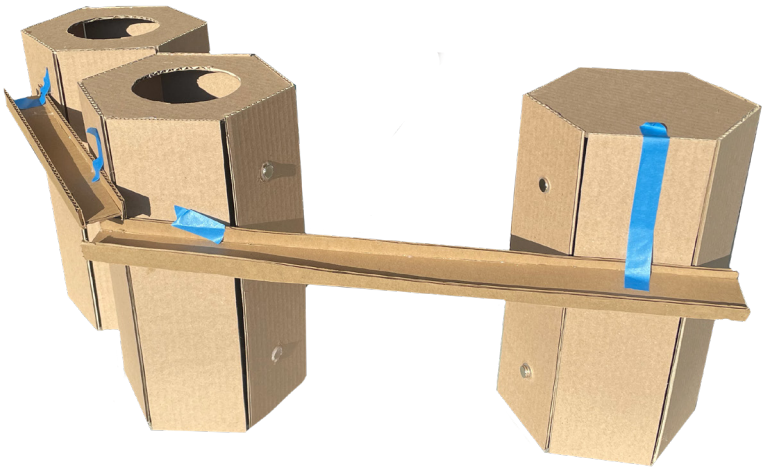



BUILT PIECES,
OVERSIZE,
BOWLING
BALL
COMMUNITY
SCULPTURE OR
BACKYARD FUN
STAKES IN
GROUND,

Furniture Adaptability and Play

I developed a pillared infrastructure for the marble coaster that is modular. This unique design involves play within a 3D space that manipulates the furniture of the living room.

By using this level of construction with modularity in furniture assemblage, a product can be used in many ways by those of all ages.



Construction as a form of play

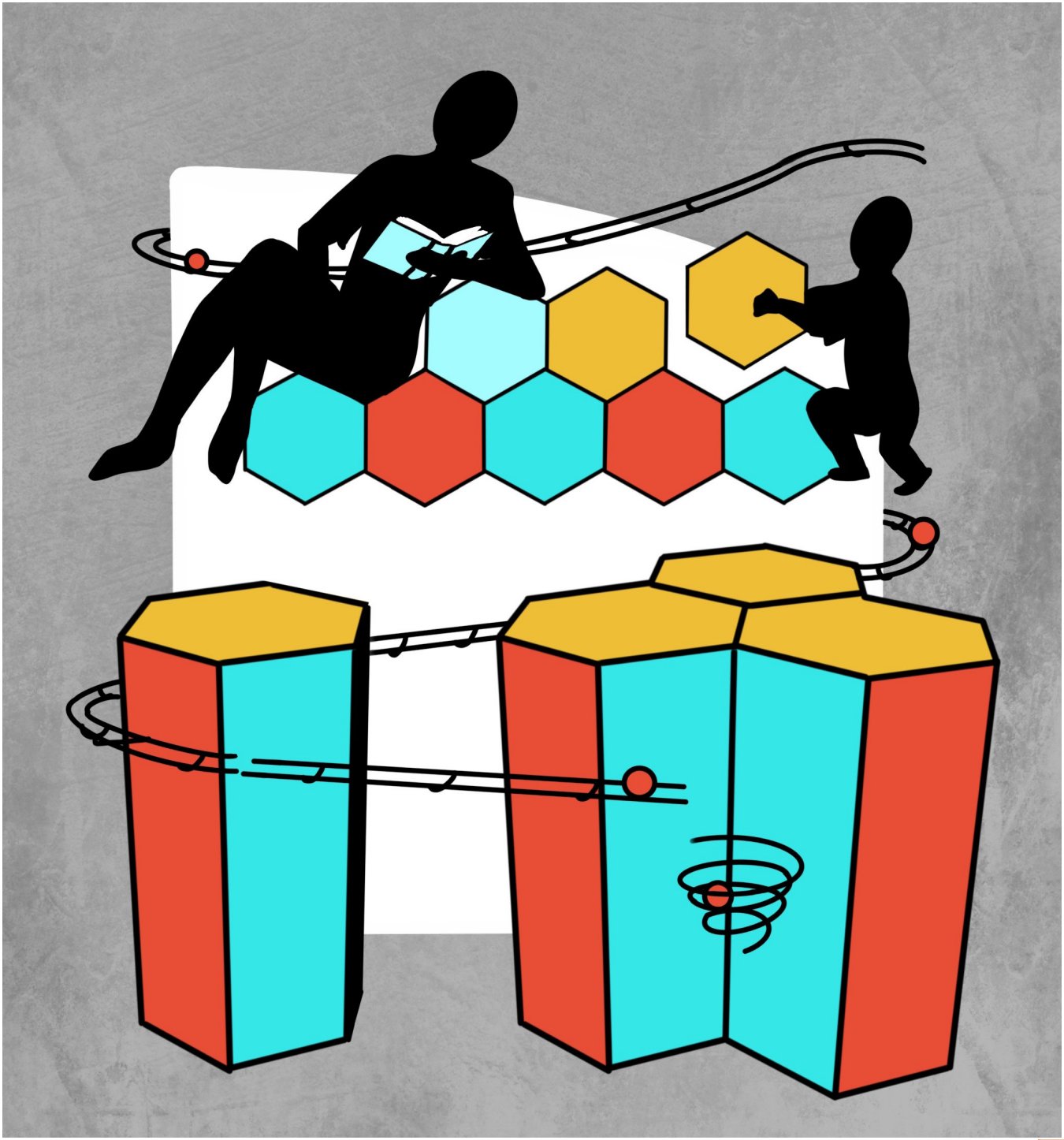
Rearrange to make a seat or coffee table as a form of play

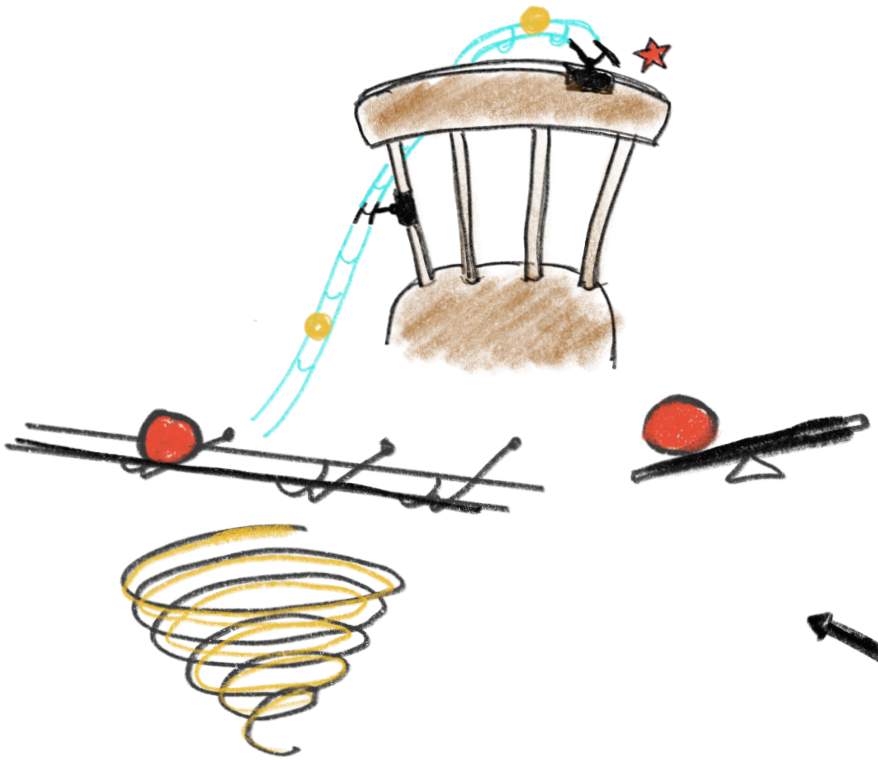
Climb on indoor obstacles for fun

Use for lounging or reading

Use for a marble coaster

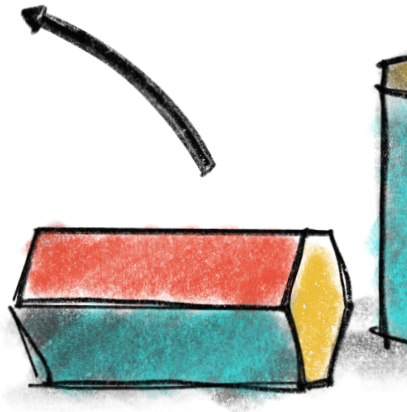
Use to store your blankets for movie night or children's toys





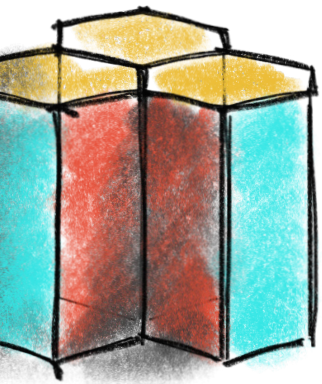
ACCESSORIES

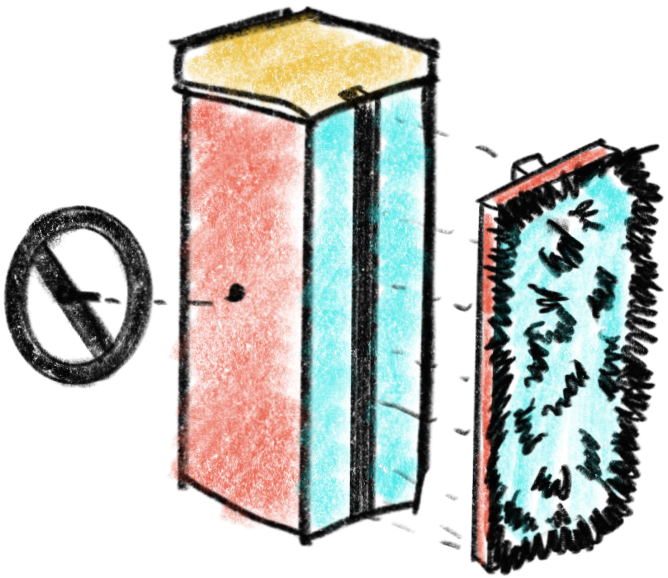
- MARBLE RUN ADD ON
- CLAMPS TO APPLY MARBLE RUN ON ADDITIONAL OBJECTS



BLOCK

- PLAY IN
- SURFACE,
- STORAG



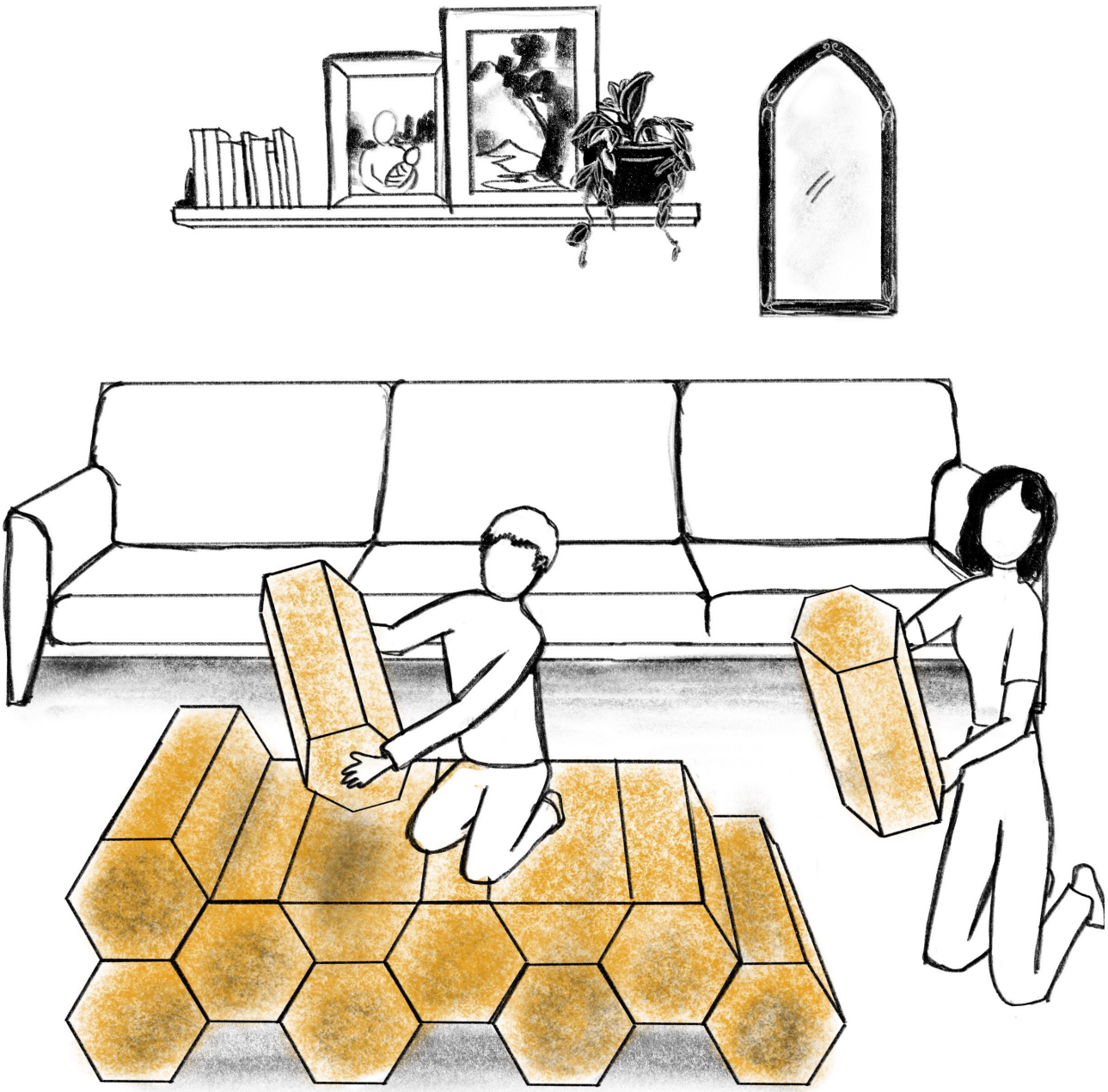


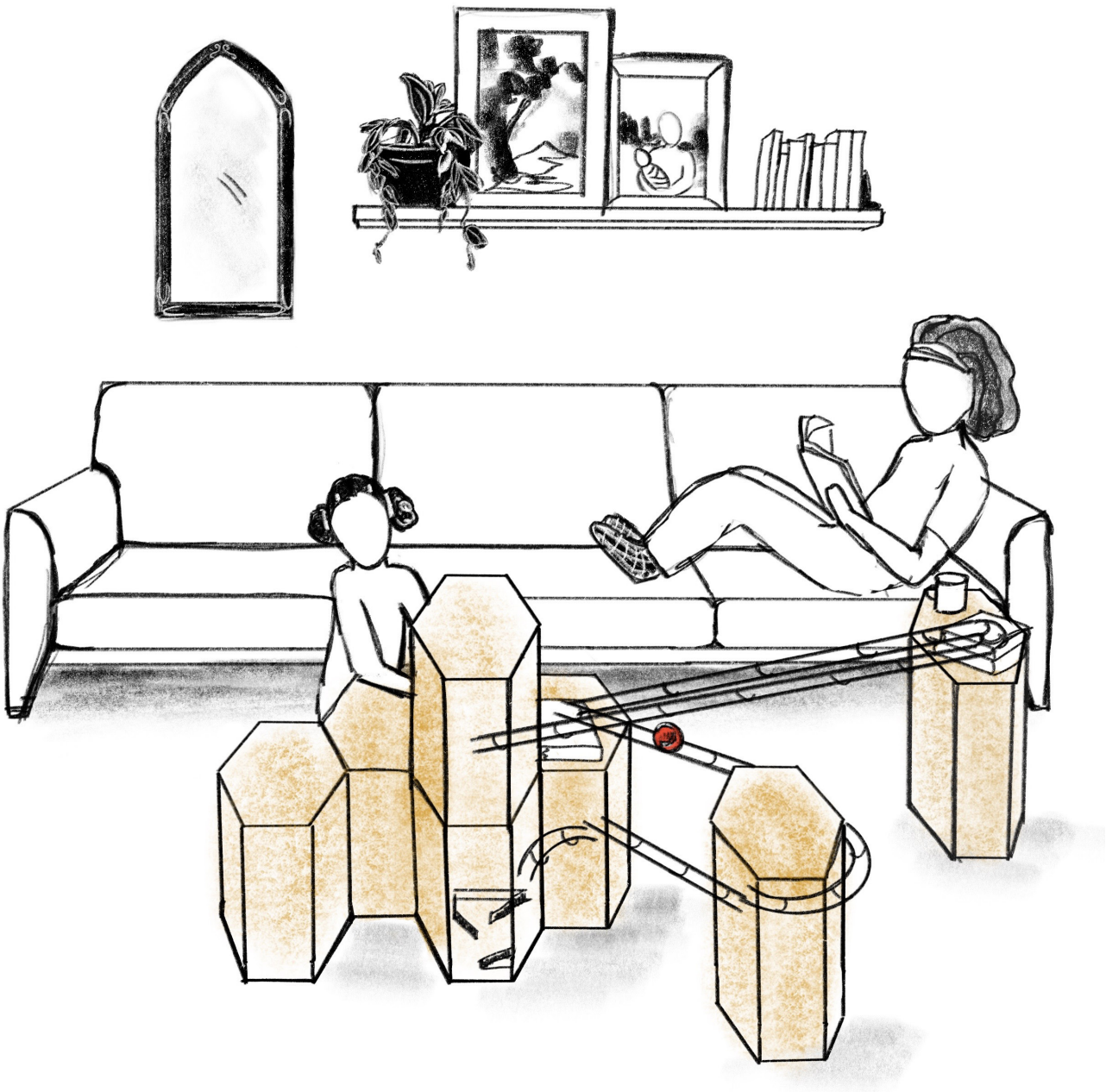
KS

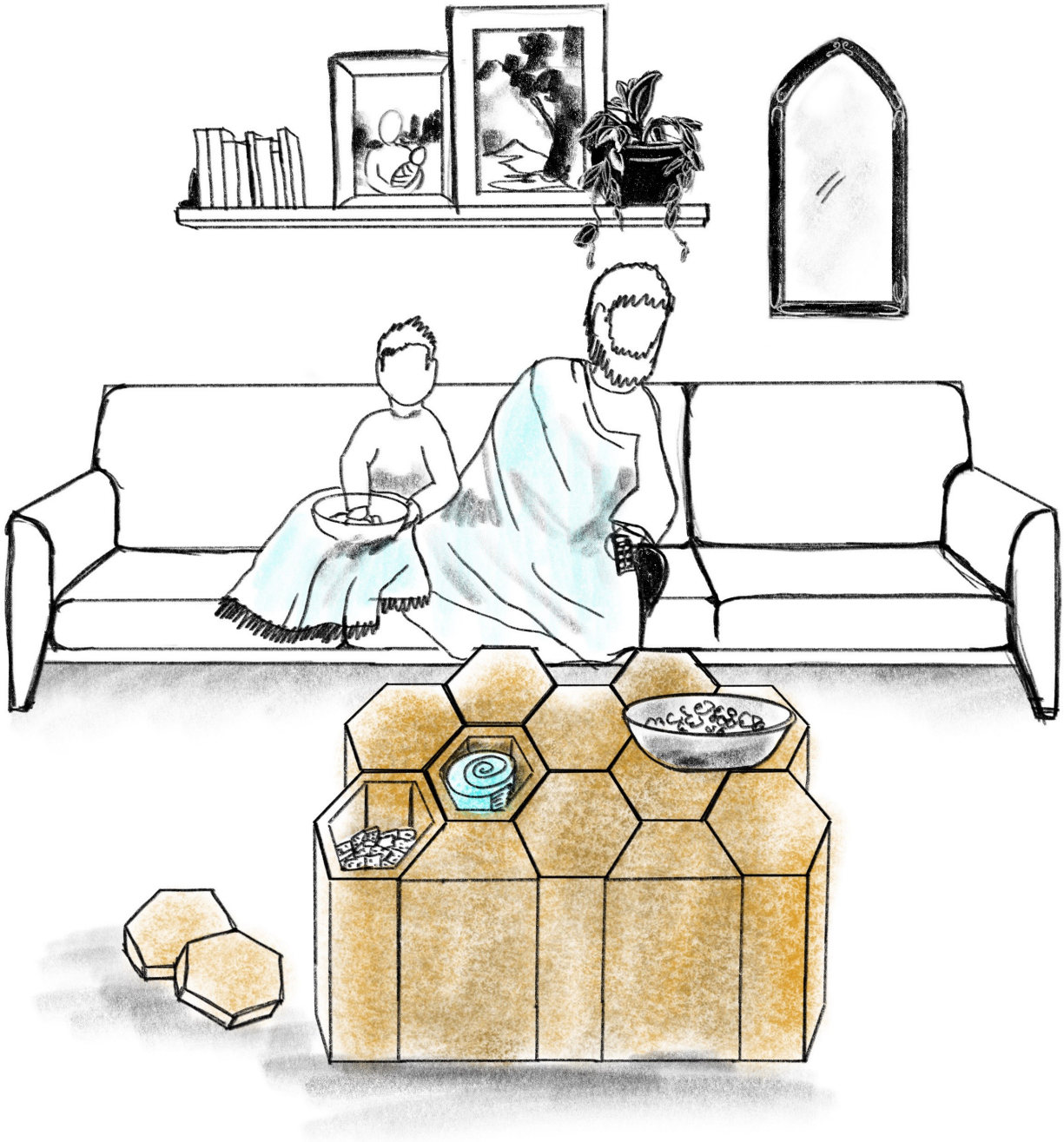
3D BUILDING
OBSTACLES
E OF PLAY OBJECTS

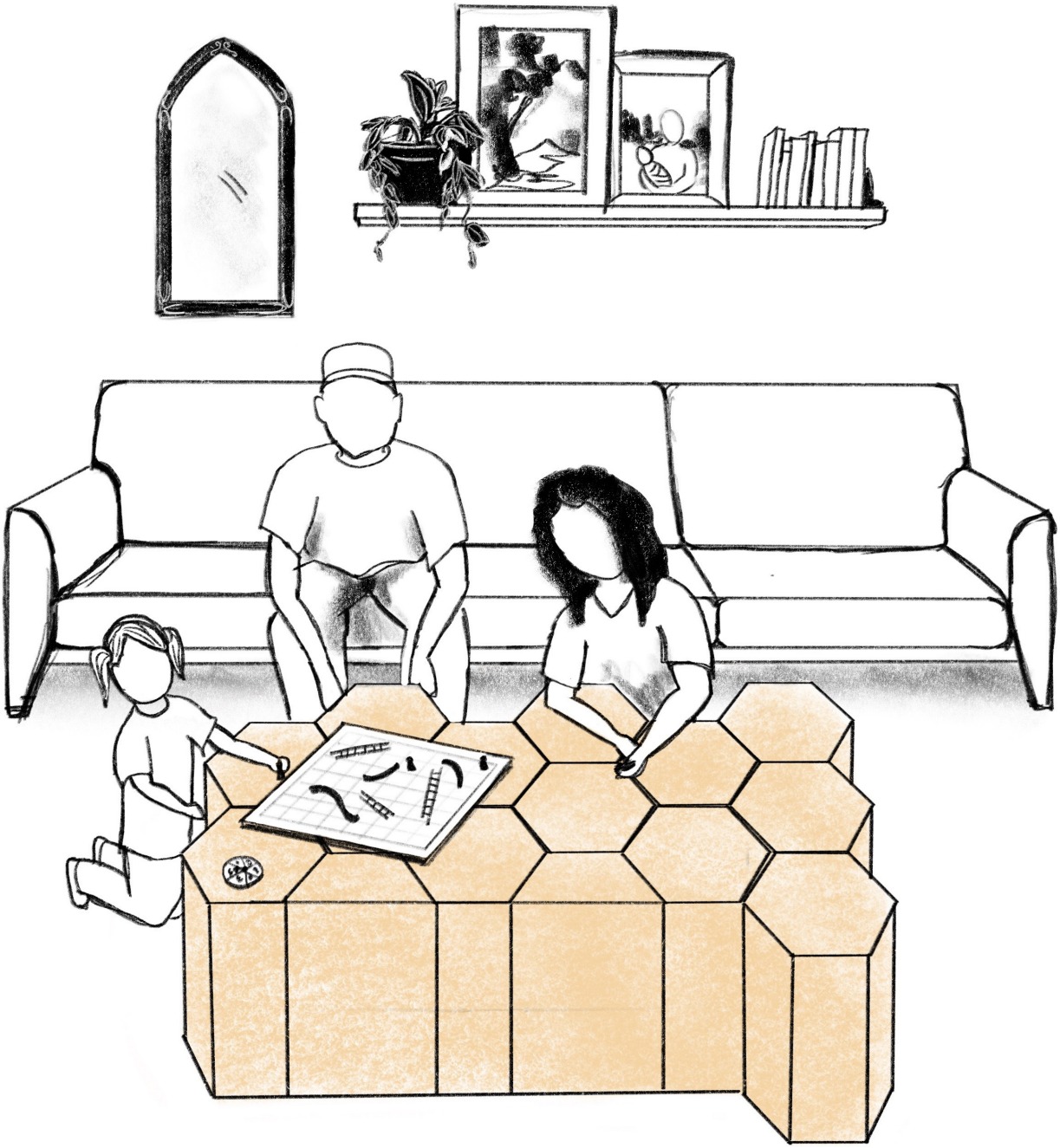
ACCESSORIES

- CUSHION APPLICATION FOR COMFORT
- DRIVING WHEEL + OTHER ACCESSORIES









Cards Against Humanity
Honey, Mommy and Daddy love you very much But apparently Mommy loves
more than she
oves Daddy
This groovy new thing called LSD

Research Process Part 3: Adolescence

Adolescent Milestone Summary

Bio:

Puberty: girls tend to develop at an earlier rate than boys do.

Development of primary and secondary sex organs and characteristics.

Pubic hair develops, muscles and fat build up in the body, and menstruation/ejaculation abilities begin.

Prefrontal cortex continues to develop, associating to personality, likes and dislikes, as well as decision making.

Female growth spurts peak by 14 years old, while male growth spurt peaks by age 17.

Motor performance increases within activities and group sports.

Psych:

Mood swings are common due to hormonal changes in the body.

Deductive reasoning and propositional thoughts grow.

Scientific reasoning becomes more apparent in opinion formation.

Self conscious and self focused: adolescents have an egocentric mentality that the world is always looking at them.

Idealism and criticism of self and others increases.

Abstract thought and vocabulary develops further.

Figurative language is used more frequently.

Decision making is influenced by biology and external factors like peers, family, and education.

Ability to read and interpret adult literature more effectively and analytically.

Social:

Parent-child conflict increases.

Less time spent with parents and siblings and more time with peers.

Dating and sexual intercourse may occur.

Peer pressure declines and experimentation in risky behaviors increases.

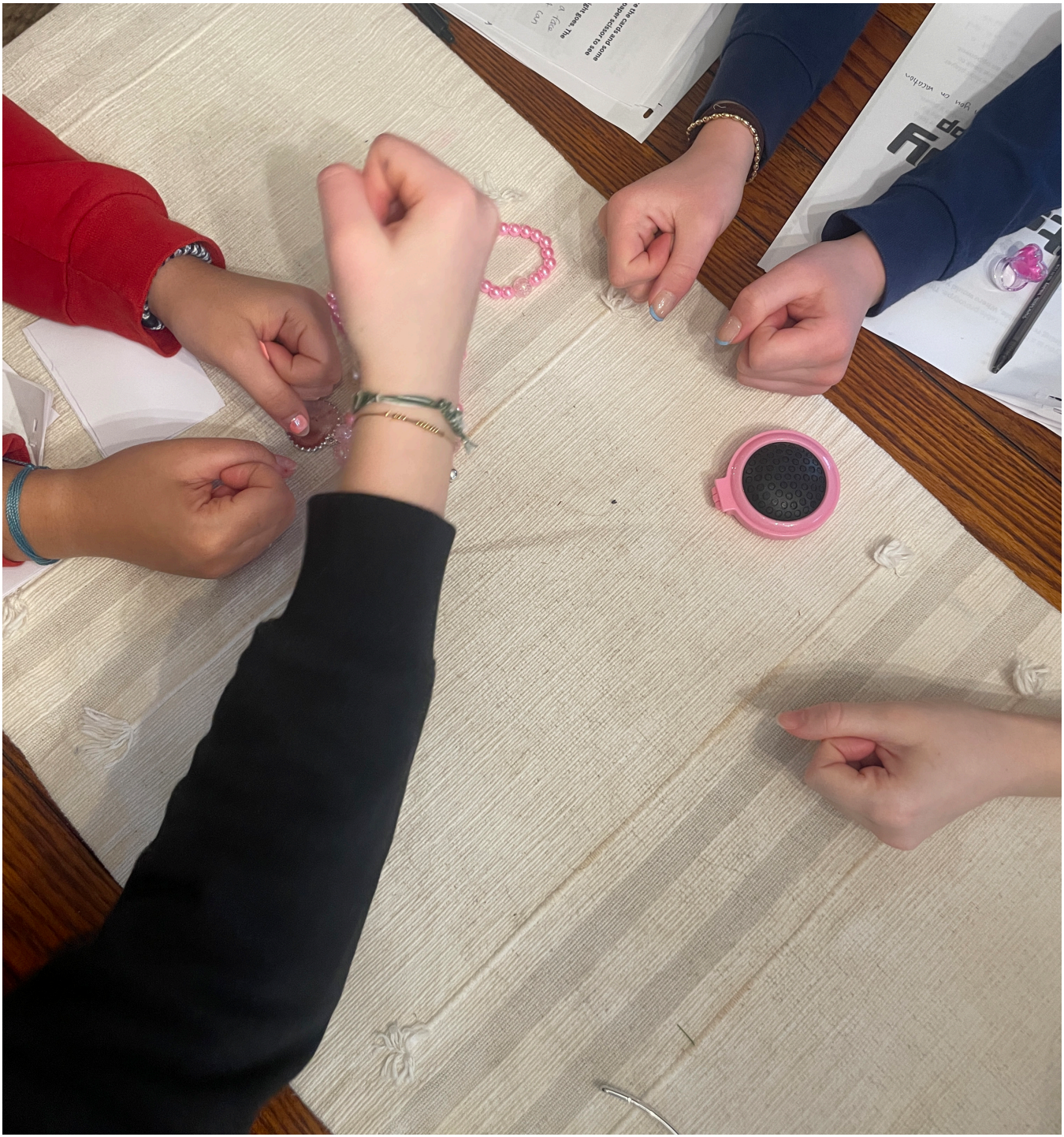
Changes in self esteem, identity, and status.

Mixed sex cliques become more common.

Self discovery influences personal and moral standards.

Increased harmonious interaction with parents in shared activities.

Psychological intimacy increases.



Teenage years are some tough ones. I am not talking about being 13, whoop-de-doo, you can watch PG-13 movies and shows. I am talking about the age of being 16 years or older. The time where you are more trusted to be able to go to the movies on your own. The time where maybe you are more likely to have your first boyfriend or girlfriend. The time where you finally understand what it is like to be on the road behind the wheel and you can technically go wherever you want as long as you have enough gas money or bus money. Teenage years are the time to try new things outside of the house, beginning to distinguish who you are in relation to the world rather than just your family. I have interviewed and discussed with many teenagers on what it is like to be a teen in this day and age. Although times have changed since I was a teenager, and the access to technology is quite different, it seems that there is always a struggle for autonomy during teenage years. It's a constant struggle during this time. You are old enough to drive, but not old enough to drive past midnight. You are old enough to be responsible for your work, yet your parents still check that you have your homework done. Every parent child-rears their teenagers differently. Some parents want to have control over their teenagers, while others could care less what their teenagers actually do.

I have learned a lot about my parents through confrontations that I had with them. I was the 17 year old son with a suspicious bottle hidden in his closet - them waiting until after vacation to address the issue and then grounding me. Thank you for that vacation, but I knew something was up. I told them I got it from a friend when in reality it was within the family. I had a boyfriend senior year. And my mom always was telling me to "be safe" which really meant, I should not be having sex. Even before my teenage years, my mother described how a baby was made so anatomically, being a nurse. Sperm meeting the egg. Cells multiplying... She's a smart cookie. I always appreciated that she talked to me about it scientifically as well as emotionally. "When two people love each other..." The sex talk is exhausting, and there was a time when I talked to my mom about how I contracted a bacterial STI in college. Not fun, use a condom. And that led to odd conversation. My dad and I were often good together, but confrontation was inevitable and yelling was only involved when I was honestly being stupid. My dad and mom gave me a lot of grace and trusted me. Sometimes overly trusted as a teen. Because I could be stupid. Like losing the neighbor's key while house sitting and not telling anyone. As a teenager, I always thought I was able to do everything on my own and that I could and should be considered an adult by now. I felt that deeply, being a Leo. But the truth is, I wasn't quite ready, and my parents knew that when I was 17. As a teenager, we handled life problems through the lens of school, our home towns or cities, and our abstract minds growing with the possibilities of what is beyond high school. But initially, we were introduced to this world with the family we were raised by, and the place in which we lived. My mom and dad cared for each of their kids individually and collectively. Which is hard having 5 kids. Looking back now, I feel like they did a great job parenting each of us. Did I feel like my parents treated my siblings differently than I, especially during high school years? Yes absolutely! That is because each of us reacted to the rules they set differently. It's easy to compare as a kid with four siblings. You recognize the differences of what your older siblings had as teenagers that you do or don't, but you also recognize how you were treated differently as a teenager compared to your younger sibling. But as parents know, there are different challenges with every child of theirs. Teenage years were the epitome of my defining mistakes that helped build a foundation for the world. Some with consequences from my parents, some from the world. I flashed a cop with my high beams and got pulled over with a warning. Scared the living shit out of me. I went to parties to fit in and said I was sleeping over at a friend's house. (Limited

technology those days, no location sharing). I told a girl I didn't like her in return because she was too judgemental, when in reality I was the judgemental, closeted, gay ass BITCH. I got angry and annoyed by even being in my parents' presence. Maybe not all the time, but enough of the time. A driver's license in a country suburb meant I felt like I could go anywhere. Often telling my mom I'd be going somewhere completely opposite of where I was actually going, and then my dad catching me drive in the "wrong" direction on his way home from work. You get away with some things unscathed by your parents' authority (of sorts), but you do learn something after all those experiences. I was on my way to becoming independent and my parents were there to help me do just that. If they found out about those moments though, I would be dead. Let's see if they read this.

I grew up going to church every Sunday. Sitting and standing on and off to sing hymns and listen to sermons. Not many of the sermons stuck with me enough to remember any of them, but here I am a lover of Christ and so they stuck enough. We used to sing Happy Birthday to Jesus, "encouraged" by our mother on Christmas morning. We had a manger set up on the table of our study. My dad made the manger out of wood and the figurines were from Pottery Barn. Every year a family member would hide baby Jesus somewhere in the house and on Christmas morning they would grab him and place him in the manger. We sang to Jesus using a pancake with a lit candle.

Although I went to church on Sundays, I also went to youth group on Wednesday nights throughout childhood and adolescence. I was surrounded by other sons and daughters of Christ without the knowledge of the gender spectrum. When you are going to a youth group as a child, you don't think anything of other children's families because they all feel the same, conservative values and beliefs. We were taught in youth groups that when a man and woman are married, that's when sex is allowed. As if the church should have permission over my body. And they surely talked a lot about how wrong it is to be gay. Before I hit puberty, I didn't fully know I was gay. The only knowledge of what gay meant was that it was a sin and that it was wrong. It wasn't until adolescence that I fully had an understanding of what gay was because it was me. And how do I even talk about my sexuality, sex, or puberty with the family I have or the friends I have at church? I knew church life wasn't good to be surrounded by while I was trying to determine my own identity. I later find out that many families in the church do not have conversations revolving around sex and other topics because the church did it for them. My family talked about it, but not always in the ways I would want to talk about it. And looking back, that is okay because my parents always did the best they could in the ways they lived through life. Thank you.

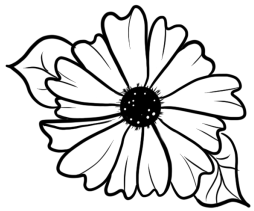
I came out to my parents as a gay christian at age 18. The day after Christmas because I assumed it would ruin their holiday. I told all of my siblings the past Thanksgiving. I remember that Christmas was a dreadful, heavy-hearted day. I needed to have these discussions with my parents but it felt so difficult because it would "ruin" their lives. But I needed to make the step. The day after Christmas I wrote letters to my parents. I then asked all my siblings to join me because they had my back. The fortunate or unfortunate part of having more than 2 kids is that the kids outnumber the parents, in my case it was 5 against 2. I sat my parents down in the study and told them. They made me cry, I made them cry or go silent, and it was some tough discussions. (To preserve my parents' integrity and growth, I will not be discussing much more of those initial few months of coming out in depth. My parents love me in a way like no one else and they support me whole heartedly and fully. They have grown so much and I have too. I have made mistakes on how I handled some situations. We always forgive in this house, and grow). I created a change in the family dynamic that needed to be adapted to.

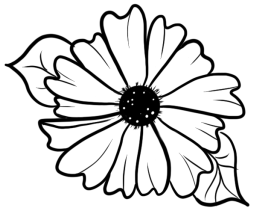
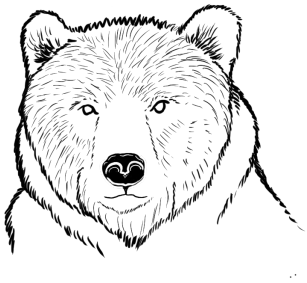
But I often think about other families from the church that I grew up with and wonder if other children have difficulty and fear of having these tough conversations with their parents. The reason why I am sharing this information is because I grew up in communities where parents trusted the knowledge of their religion or community beliefs to educate about these heavier topics. This isn't right or wrong, its is just an observation. But these topics need to be encouraged within the home, even when it can be difficult because it helps establish intimacy and common understanding.

The complexity of being a gay christian felt simple to me but to others they didn't understand. How can I be a believer of Christ when churches are most often not welcoming at all to the LGBTQIA+ community? And of all the sexuality spectrum, to me it felt like being gay was the simplest to understand to the world that found it so complex. I just like men. (People believe what they want to believe. And let me just say, Genesis 19 has more depth to it than face value.)During my teenage years I didn't know what romance or sexual chemistry was supposed to be like with a girl. I grew up believing that it was "right" to love a girl, and I have loved many girls. But it was confusing because I only loved who they were emotionally. It's not my cup of tea sexually. But that was hard figuring that out for myself so I also can see how difficult it would be for an outsider to understand, especially with the communities I grew up in.

You know I went to church as a kid, but what you don't know is that I haven't really been back. I do not feel like I need to go to church to be a Christian. I talk to Jesus everyday. He is my friend through all of these hard times. He has helped me have these difficult conversations with my parents, my siblings, my best friends, and others. But I don't see Jesus the same as you do. To me He is a model on how I want to live my life. And how he lived his life was without sexual connection with the world. Now I am not saying I don't want to have sex, because I love my man James. But I think why Jesus didn't have sexual relations in this world is because Jesus was the new begining, the new model to the world. It wasn't about who you are married to or fucking, it wasn't about how much money you gave to the church. Jesus is just about love. He is about kindness, forgiveness and care.

I want to have that same kindness and care around my thesis work. I want to have that same forgiveness to others, whether that's friends or family or even people I don't like. I want to have that same kindness and care for myself. I care about helping families.



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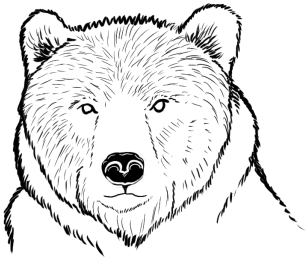


HON

Comfortable talking about a range of topics honestly, respecting individual autonomy and perspective

Strong importance of empathy toward family members

Prioritizes accurate information and education on sensitive topics.

Adaptable and flexible in community norms, embraces diversity

Shared activities a experience lead to Togetherne

Progressive

nd
es

ess

More protective parenting style

Cultural norms of modesty, hierarchy and societal roles

Modest

Certain conversations are considered taboo in the family

Personal beliefs are prioritized in education

Toddlerhood and Early Childhood

Most reliant on parental involvement in life

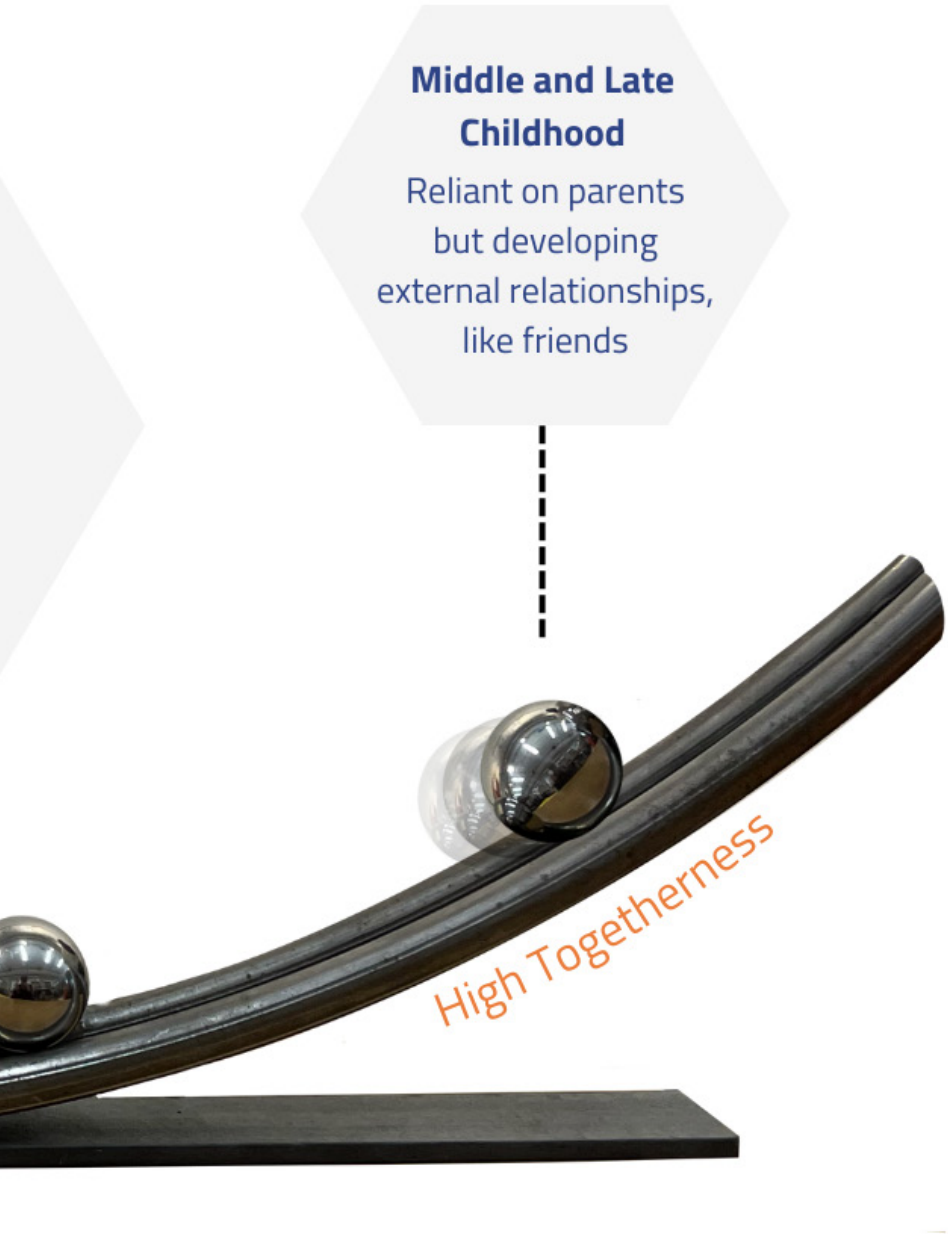
Adolescence

Minimal parental involvement

Self Exploration: determining individual beliefs

Experimentation: decision making

Social Prioritization: emphasis on relationships like friends and community groups



Both progressive and modest families have togetherness. In modest families, togetherness is based on shared activities and experiences rather than self disclosure of beliefs on topics that are considered taboo.

Family connection and togetherness changes as children develop into adults. Children are solely reliant on their parents for daily activities and life tasks, making it easier to feel togetherness within the family. As children become adolescents, teenagers have a lot more autonomy and independence in their daily lives, often diminishing opportunities of togetherness. Teenage years are the time when parents feel the need to be more intentional about the level of family togetherness because their teens are about to head into the real world.

I am focusing on late adolescence: a time of self discovery, experimentation, and prioritization of relationships outside of the family.

Parents feel there is still a need for preparation and learning to transition their teens into adulthood. Conversations about sex, individuality, drug and alcohol use, current events, bullying, family rules, and life skills can be introduced in settings such as schools, cultural groups, media, and friendships. Ultimately it is up to family members to introduce these topics within the home. In more progressive families, these conversations are more commonly held, yet modest families often rely on a trusted external community to bridge these conversations outside of the home.

The goal of my thesis is to facilitate these conversations between parents and teenagers with more traditional viewpoints.

Topics Teenagers Can Learn Before Heading into the Real World:

Sex, Relationships and Identity

Individuality and Independence

Drug and Alcohol Usage

Conflict Resolution

Friendship Building

Current Events

Family Rules and Dynamics

Humanizing Parents

Life Skills

“Availability is important for support. That is physical and emotional availability”

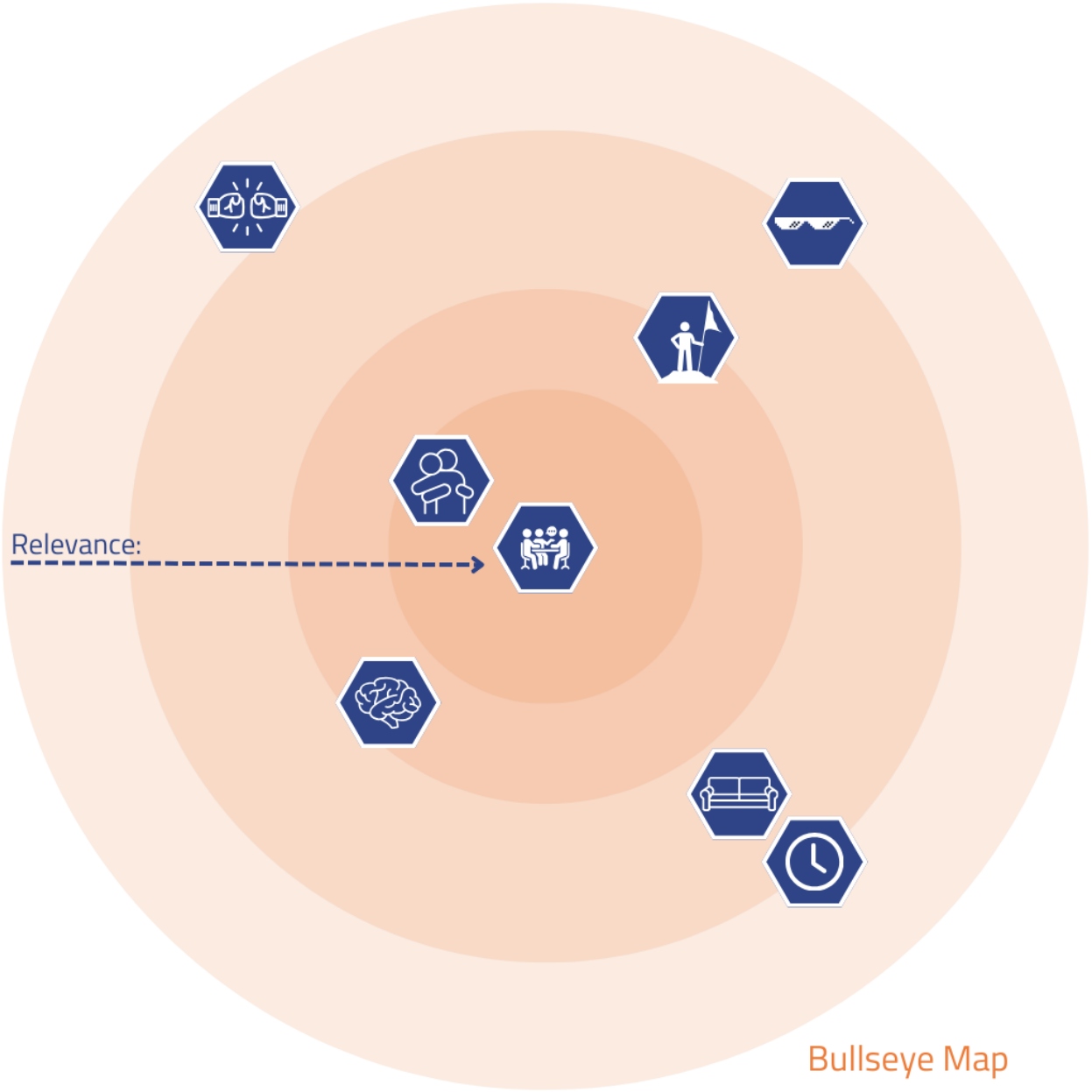
“You have to meet each teen where they are at”

“There are conversations that the teenager doesn't want to have but needs to be talked about. While other conversations need to be had but the teenager has to initiate like sexual orientation exploration.”

“It can be just as awkward for us parents to have these conversations”

“When you have teenagers you trust them but you’re watching what moves they’ll make”

“Be careful with friendships. Friends have a lot of influence on them.”



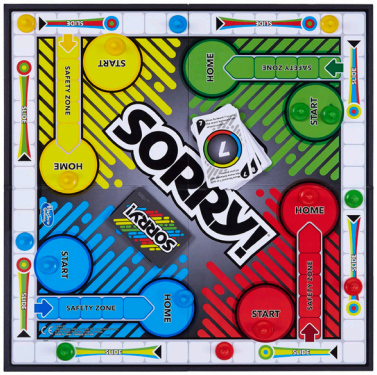
Bullseye Map

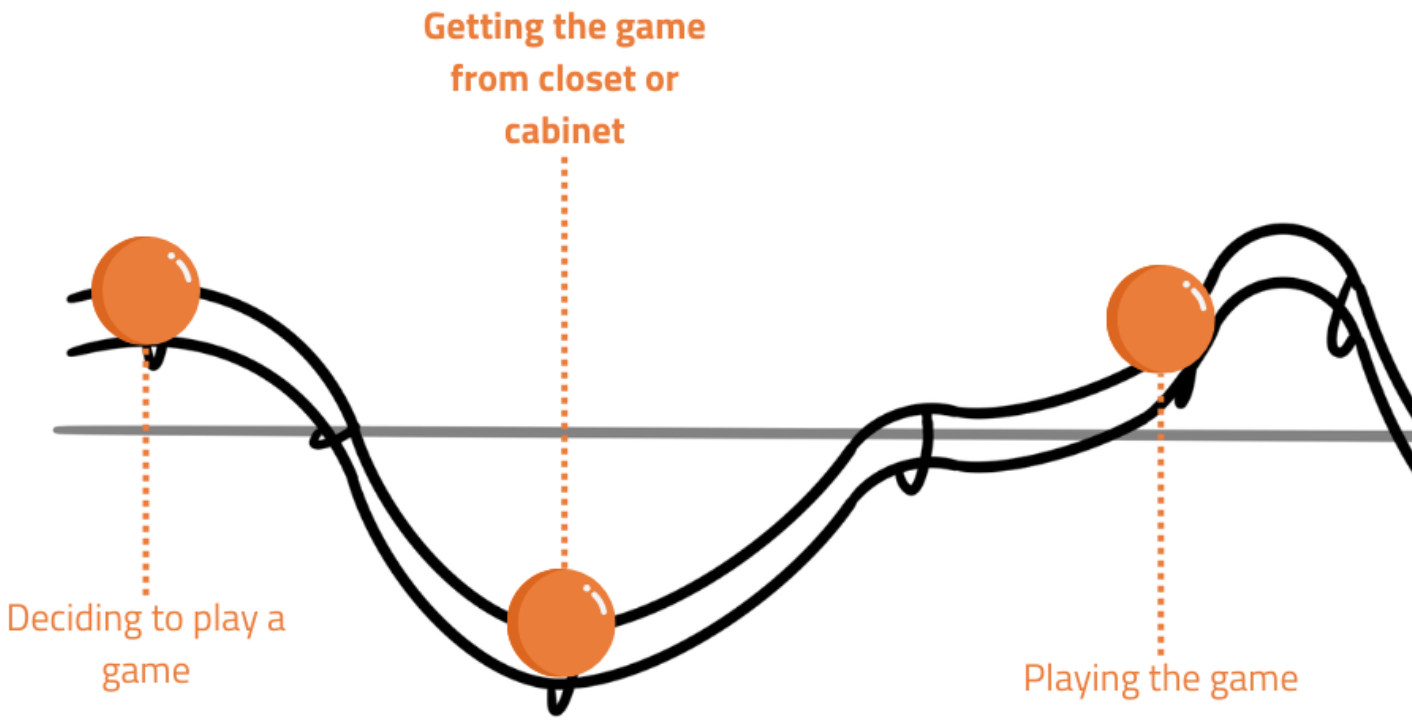
Why Games?

- Chat and Relax
- Distraction
- Compete and Triumph
- Gather and Discuss
- Enrich and Learn
- Unite and Convene
- Rivalry and Retaliation
- Immersion and Experience

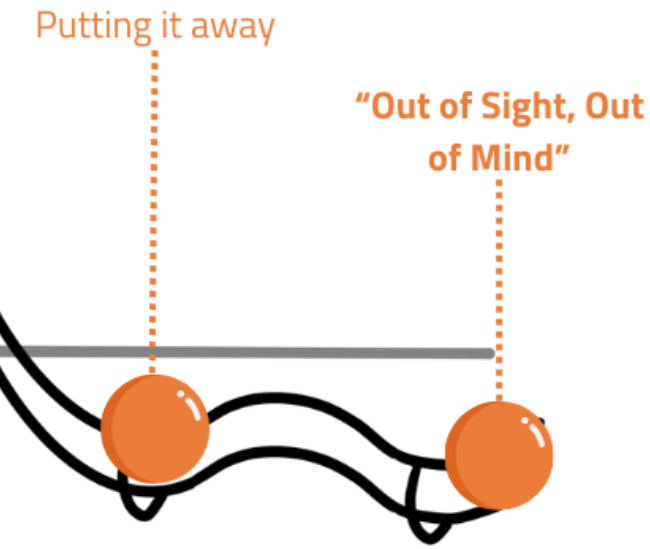
The contrast of adult and child play helps inform my decisions necessary for adolescent play. Adolescents still have a need to learn. It is not only about relaxation and gathering, but it is also about having an enjoyable experience. I am bridging a gap between learning and leisure by utilizing games as a learning tool for parents and teenagers.

Games like Sorry! offer a sense of healthy competition. In what ways can we introduce discussion into this game?

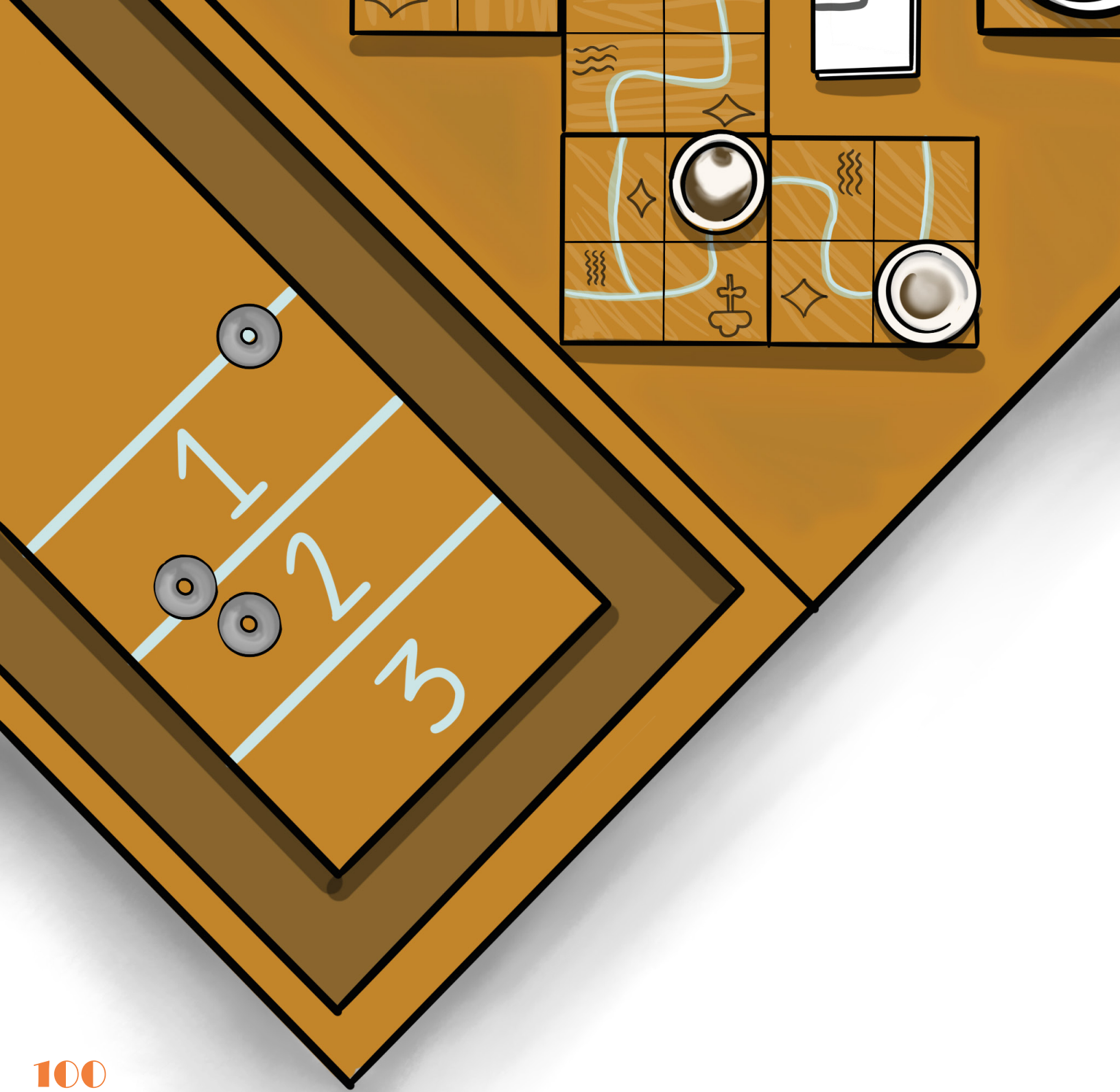



Getting the game from closet or cabinet
Deciding to play a game
Playing the game

Why Furniture?



I am integrating these games into the home infrastructure, by incorporating them into furniture. Having games integrated into furniture can serve as a reminder in the home to have these conversations and promote a level of togetherness. When you play a boardgame, you take it out and set it up on top of a table or surface to play. When it is no longer in use, it usually lives in a cabinet or closet, out of sight, out of mind. Who knows when you'll play that game again, right? By integrating games into furniture or household objects, they become a visual reminder every time you interact with them. Who doesn't want the convenience of a game in front of them? Furniture is part of the home landscape, but it's those objects that can be moved around and brought with you. A key element is that furniture can hold sentimental value and my intention is to design pieces that are of heirloom quality. These pieces will be passed on generationally rather than ending up in a landfill.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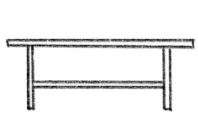

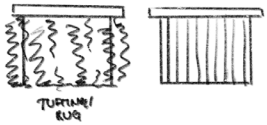

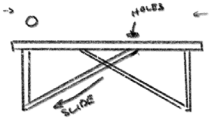

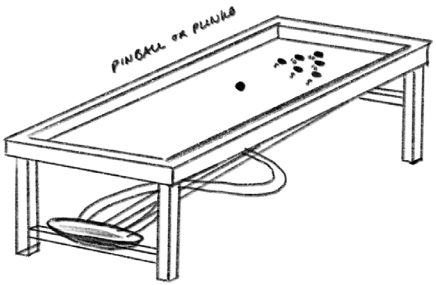

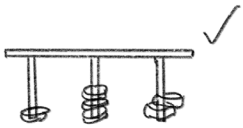

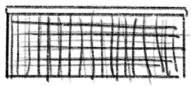

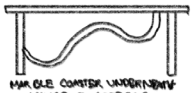

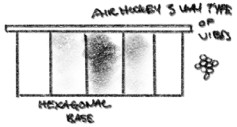

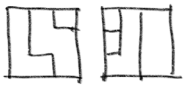

THE
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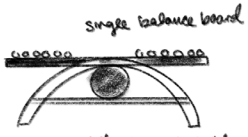
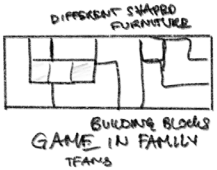
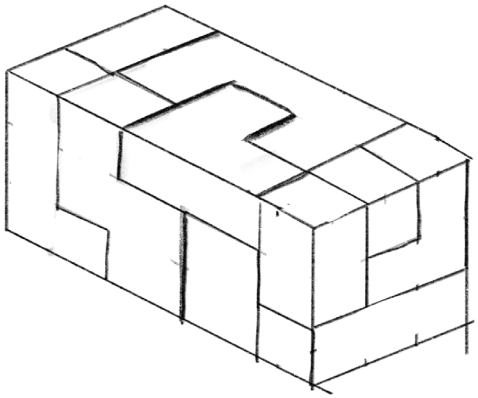
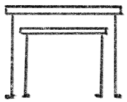
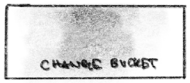






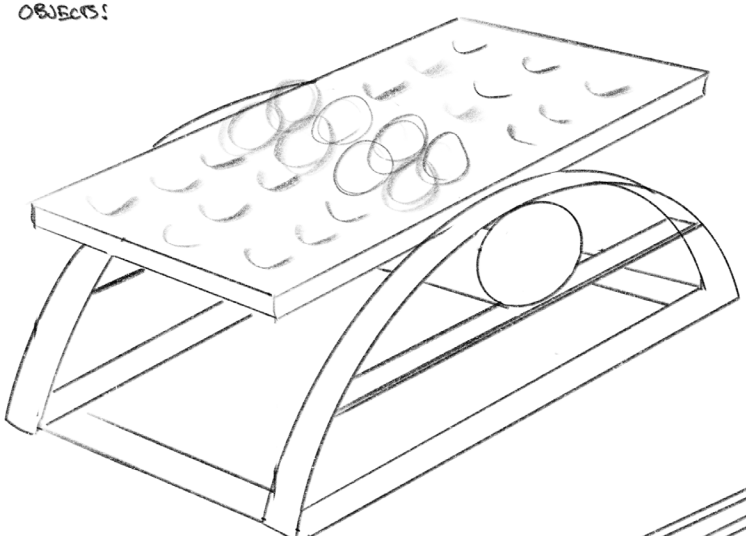


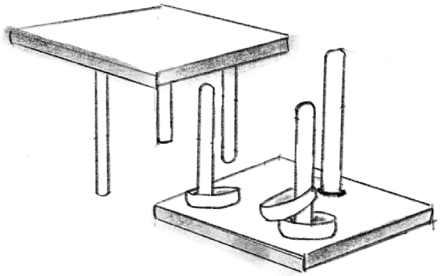


: USING QUARTERS IN A GAME

: HARDWARE STORE

LIST OF GAMES ASSOCIATED TO OBJECTS!





This is a game that is similar to Hasbro's Sorry!, but includes a table top shuffle board surface.

Arrange the coasters in a linear path that you will move through with a pawn.

Slide two pucks to the other end of the board to land on 1, 2, or 3.

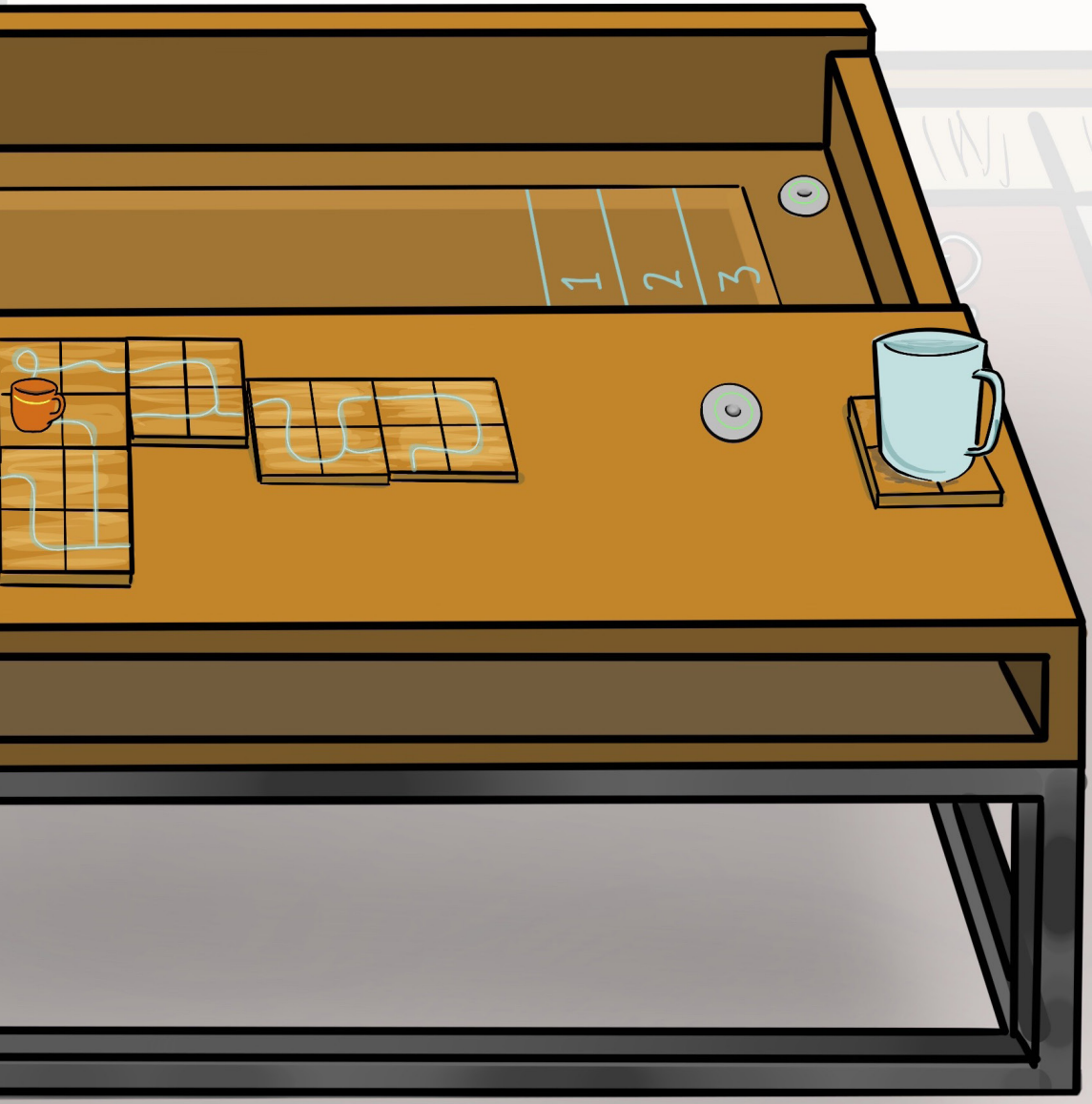
Count the points and move your pawn (a mug) that many spaces on the coasters.

If you land on an emblem, flip a card and answer the question.

Next player goes.

First one to the end wins.

Get From Point A to Point B With Your Pawn



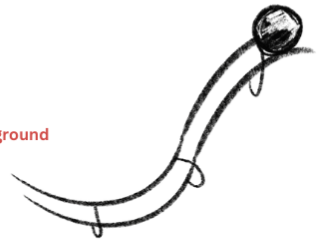
BETTER TOGETHER

Jack Dumala

Finding more household objects to integrate into additional gaming experiences

Creating a suite of household objects that work together in unison as pieces to a game

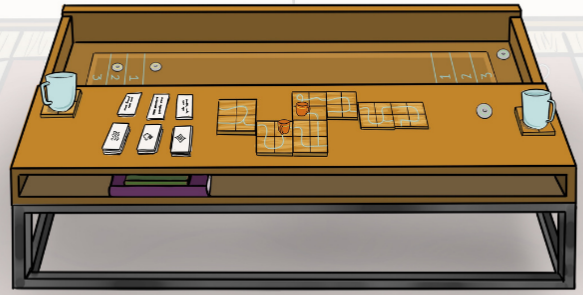
Using my painting background



Wall art in association with games

Coasters... way to integrate marble coaster into exhibition show

Better Together focuses on the challenges of **fostering a sense of togetherness within our families.** Despite our familial connections, it can be a struggle to establish a meaningful bond. This exploration centers around the idea that **play can serve as a crucial avenue for connection among family members.** While the significance of play diminishes as we mature, there is an opportunity to reintegrate it into our lives using familiar household objects. **Better Together offers tools of play as a solution through a suite of household objects specifically designed to form an integrated game**.



PLAY A GAME, DRINK SOME WINE, HAVE A TEA, AND USE A COASTER

Game Contents

Shuffleboard Coffee Table | Shuffle Pucks | Coasters | Household Cups/ Espresso Glass Pawns | 80 cards | Dice

Objective

There are more than 3 games to play within this suite of objects. On the following pages, you will find multiple game rules with additional components added.

Introduce the weekly chores into the game. List out the chores of the week, and whoever gets first place in the shuffleboard tournament chooses the chore of preference. Repeat the game the following week

Teenage Years are Tough

Teenage years are the beginning of identity formation existing outside of the family. With an autonomous mindset, parents find it difficult to have conversations with their teens about day-to-day activities, friends, puberty, sex, what is intended for the future, etc.

Playing a game while talking with your teenagers is a way to break the ice. It can offer the experience of a casual connection while facilitating meaningful conversation. Shuffleboard prompts a game that anyone can enjoy together, while the additional add-ons of coasters and question cards prompt higher competition and more conversation.

Teenagers, clue your parents in on your life. Parents, show some empathy. You were young once too.

discussion

Coaster Race-Extension (14+)

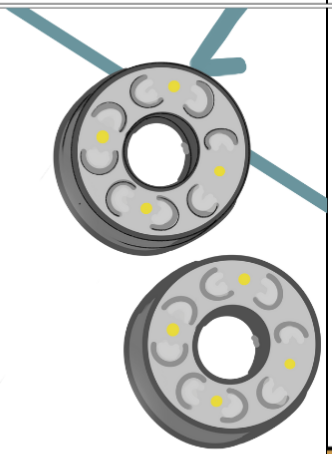
2 players

Gameplay: the oldest player goe player goes firsts first

- The first player slides two weighted pucks one at a time to land in the scoring zone. Based on the number of points acquired, move your pawn.
- If you land on a space with an emblem, pick up a designated card from the emblem's deck. Ask the question to the group, answer, and play the card
- Next player goes
- First pawn to the end wins

Classic Shuffle Board: (7+)

2-4 players



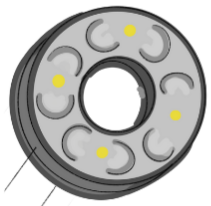
Equipment:
Shuffleboard Table, Weighted Pucks

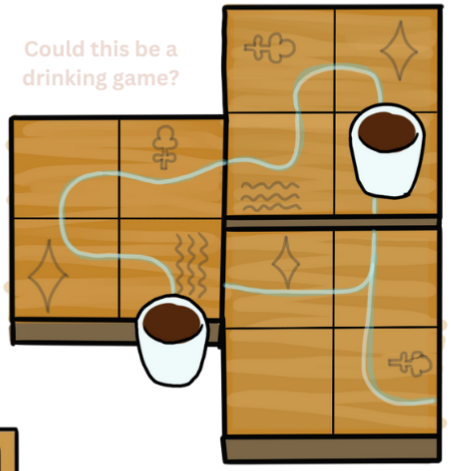
Set up:

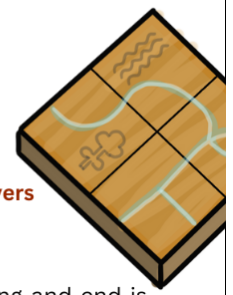
- Divide players into two teams or individuals.
- Each player or team stands at one end of the shuffleboard table with three weighted pucks of one color

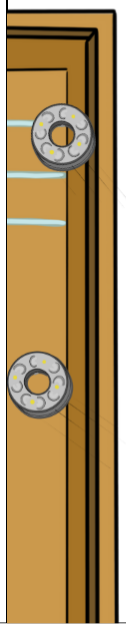
Gameplay:

- Players take turns sliding their pucks alternately, trying to land them within the scoring zones at the opposite end of the table.
- Take turns between players after sliding one puck. After all pucks have slid, total the points accumulated
- Pucks that hang off the edge of the table without falling off are called "hangers" and may earn extra points. The first player to 21 wins









Coaster Race (8+) 2 players

SetUp

- Self arrange 4+ coasters in a trail/path
- Decide as a group where the beginning and end is of the race
- Place espresso shots, or any said small enough object at the beginning off the coaster as your pawn
- Shuffle the cards portrayed up above

Gameplay: the youngest player goes first

- The first player slides two weighted pucks one at a time to land in the scoring zone. Based on the number of points acquired, move your pawn.
- After each move, pick up a card, play it, and the next player goes
- The first pawn to the end wins

SEAN COLLINS

FATHER

41 YEARS OLD

BIO

Sean Collins is a Software Engineer at Spotify. He and his family live in the suburban town of West Hartford, Connecticut.

PERSONALITY

Introvert to Extrovert

Family Oriented

Type A to Type B

> Find something you love and do it!

SKILLS

Anything Sports

Communication- Conflict Res.

FAVORITES

LIFESTYLE

- run and workout in his home gym
- cooking and grilling for his family dinners
- at night he prefers to sit in the living room to read a book or watch some tv.

SKILLS

Communication- Conflict Res.

Academic Intelligence

FAVORITES

LIFESTYLE

- 2 close friends from school, Alex and Ryan
- swim practice every Thursday
- loves watching movies with his Dads
- doodles/draws in class

WORKSHOP: THE COLLINS-SANTOS FAMI
MEET THE COLLINS-SANTOS
Sharpie
Sharpie

Hexagon Table Testing with Teenagers

Originally, I thought of designing a game table for the living room. From my workshops with teenagers, I determined that the kitchen table was often where teenagers and parents had more meaningful discussions. These conversations revolved addressing concerns or catching up about their day.

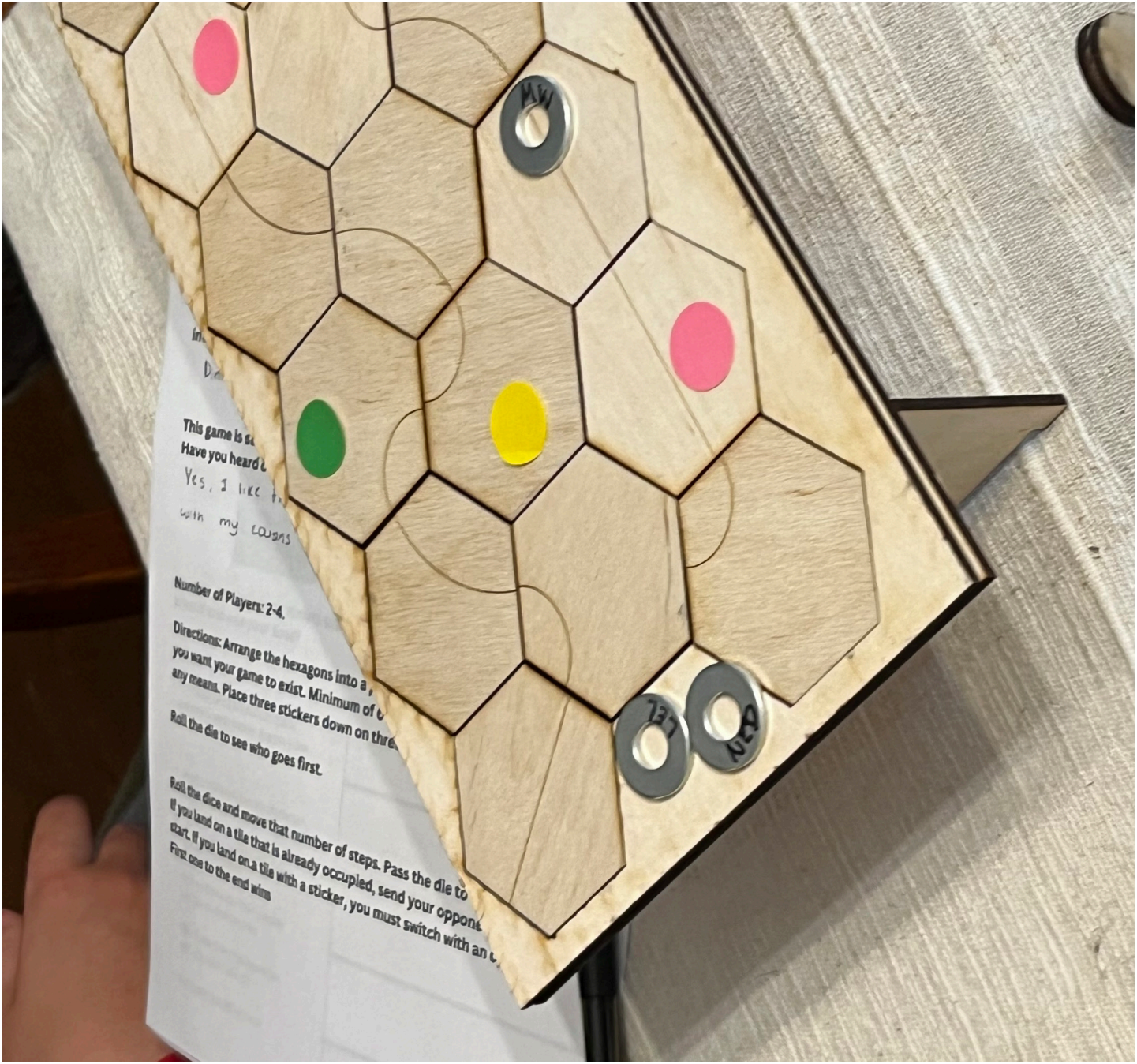
This informed me to design a casual *third table* for the home, one that can be used for gaming, conversation, or eating.

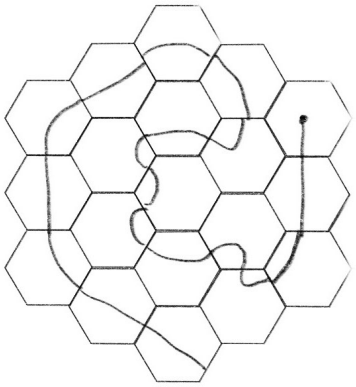
The honeycomb pattern in my table design intentionally diminishes hierarchy that is typically found in rectangular tables.

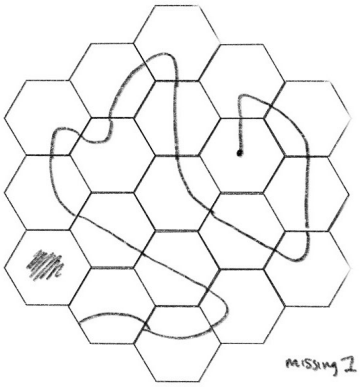
In 7 days, God created the world and said it was Good. The surrounding beauty that nature has to share is important to incorporate in the home, to embrace His good creation.

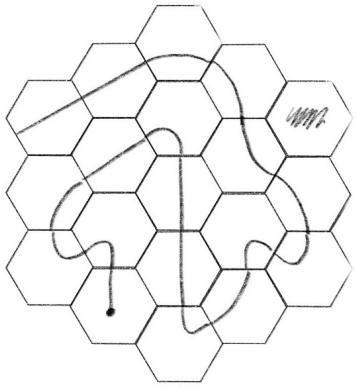
There is power in the shape of a hexagon. To be honest, I find it astounding that in a world of irregular shapes created by nature, there is room for linear elements.

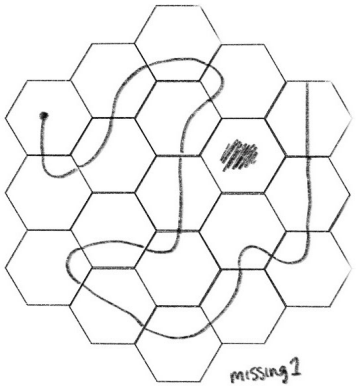
Bees are some of the most powerful communicators. They work together as a unit, following the lead of the queen bee (no, not Beyonce). This is a great motif and inspiration to draw into my research. The family should aim to be like bees, communicating with one another to achieve a shared goal. I utilize the hexagonal shapes in my work to emulate nature's forms and bring visual interest to the home.

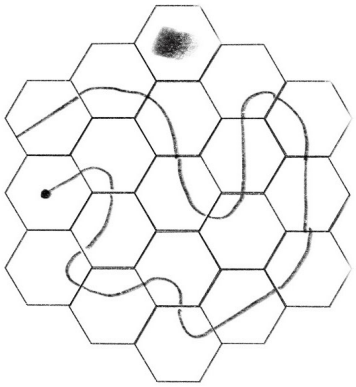

This game is
Have you heard
Yes, I like
with my cousins
Number of Players: 2-4.
Directions: Arrange the hexagons into a
you want your game to exist. Minimum of
any means. Place three stickers down on thr
Roll the die to see who goes first.
Roll the dice and move that number of steps. Pass the die to
If you land on a tile that is already occupied, send your oppon
start. If you land on a tile with a sticker, you must switch with an
First one to the end wins

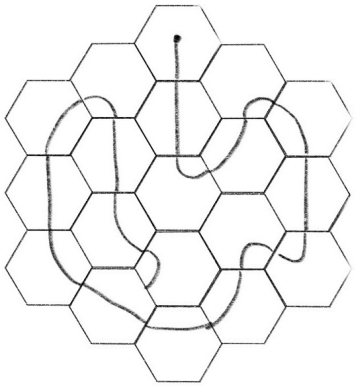












5

7

6

START
IF YOU HAD A ROBOT SERVANT FOR A DAY, WHAT TASK WOULD YOU MAKE IT DO?
What is the most random object you have found in your back pack/bag?
Do you have a favorite song or movie right now?
Whats a nick name you have had? Was it a weird one?
Favorite animal: give your best impression!
IF YOU HAD A MAGICAL REMOTE THAT COULD DRIVE, FAST FORWARD OR REWIND, HOW WOULD YOU USE IT?

Testing with Teenagers

Bringing the table to full-scale was quite impactful to understand how parents and their teenagers handle the tiles.

This is a collaborative game where players decide how they want to generate their path, and decide which tokens go on each tile.

When rolling the dice, it mayprompt the player to overturn a tile. Behind each tile is a question to answer. Players must move their pawn forward one or backward one.

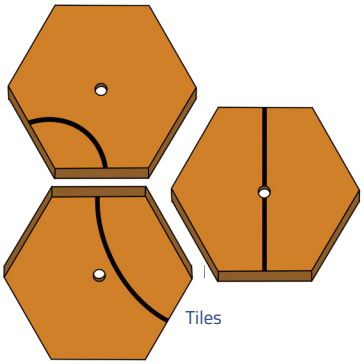
Participants in my user testing learned more about each other than they expected. That is what this game is meant to do.

My goal is to offer question topics that are both silly and vulnerable to discuss.

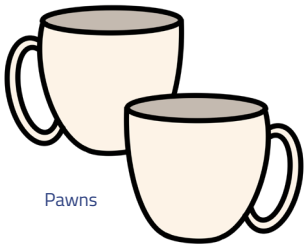
Flower Token: switch with an opponent

Queen Bee Token: go back to start

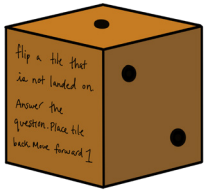
Leaf Stalk Token: move forward two or send opponent backward two



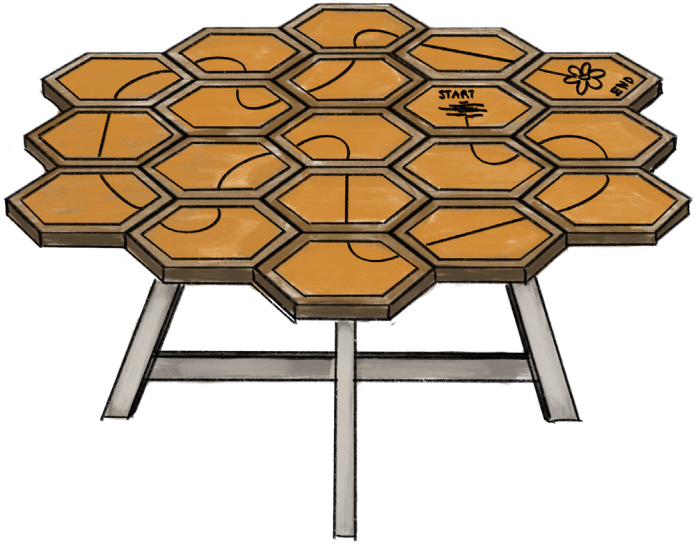
Tiles



Pawns



Game Die



Sex, Relationships, and identity

Funny Questions

Alcohol and Illegal Substances

House Rules

Funny Task, ice breaker

Family Dynamics

What is the difference between gender and sex?

If you had your face but an animal's body, what animal would you choose?

What do you know about the risks and effects of alcohol and marijuana?

How can we balance individual privacy with family rules?

Find a rubber band and a tissue box, put the rubber band around the tissue box. Strum it like a guitar and sing a chorus to a favorite song

How would you describe our family dynamic in three words?

Instructions (In Progress)

1) Determine a Question Category for the cards and place a card behind each tile.

2) Collaboration: Tiles and Game chips. Collaboratively decide the path for the game using the tabletop tiles.

3) Once a path is decided, place the game chips where the group sees fit.

4) Place Pawns on Start: 2 pawns each for a two player game, 1 pawn each for 4 player

Roll the Dice and Move Pawns by taking turns.

5) If you land on a tile of the opposing player, send them back to start.

6) If you roll on "flip a tile that does not have pawn and read your category question/task" do as such, then decide if you want to move yourself forward 1 or your opponent backward 1

7) If you land on a tile with a game chip, perform action based on game chip type

You cannot switch with an opponent if all their pawns are in start

First one to get their pawns to the end wins!

PAMELA ANDERSON
Donald duck
Cleopatra

Charades Instructions (In Progress)

Number of Players: 4+
Setup:

Divide players into two teams.

Have a designated person, called the "actor," from each team come up to act out the word or phrase.

Word/Phrase Selection:

Use a pre-prepared list of words or phrases to act out. These can be written on slips of paper and placed in a container for random selection.

Words or phrases should be appropriate for all players and should vary in difficulty.

Time Limit: Set a timer for 30 seconds for each round. You can use a stopwatch, a timer app, or a phone timer.

Acting Out:

The actor silently acts out the word or phrase without speaking or making any sounds.

The actor can use gestures, facial expressions, and body movements to convey the meaning of the word or phrase to their team.

Guessing:

While the actor is performing, their team members try to guess the word or phrase.

Team members can shout out their guesses during the 30-second time limit.

If the team guesses correctly within the time limit, they earn a point.

Scoring:

Keep track of each team's score. A point is awarded to a team for each correct guess.

After each round, rotate to the next team, and continue playing until all players have had a chance to act out a word or phrase.

Winning:

The game can be played for a set number of rounds or until a predetermined score is reached.

The team with the most points at the end of the game wins.

What if Charades was a facilitator of communicating between parents and their teenagers?

What if I designed cards that prompted what to write in the game of Charades?

What if the timer was visual?

How can I integrate a marble ball timer?

This will remain anonymous:

.Can you help me on wording how a teenager would ask these or provide a way of asking or stating these that isnt as uncomfortable. **Circle the ones that are uncomfortable and write how you would rephrase it. Star four questions you could ask your parents.**

These would be used in a game that facilitate conversation between parents and teens that makes it easier to talk about these topics.

if there wasn't a law, how old is it appropriate to drink socially?	if you could swap lives with any family member for a day who would it be and why?	what do you believe happens when we die?	Have you experienced bullying? At school at home or both?	is sex and romance the same?
What is one thing you look forward to in the future and one thing you aren't?	is marijuana okay or not okay?	If we had a family theme song, what would it be?	Are you accountable for your actions while drunk?	what is one house rule you would like to change and why?
What do you think is the best contraceptive method for safe sex?	when conflict arises what do you do?	do you think people should have complete agency over their own bodies?	What is one thing you want to accomplish in the next year?	Are we an LGBTQIA+ friendly home?
when are you most likely to ask for help?	why do people do drugs?	When is it okay to be selfish?	if money wasnt an object what is one thing you would buy?	If you had your human body, but the head of an animal, what animal would you pick?

Its a worthwhile conversations to have but could be worded like: What's distinction between sex and romance ?

game 2 :

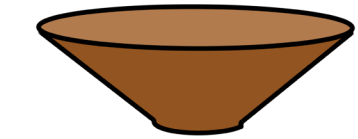
First I do not need us to play a game but to understand one thing: **Do you like Marble Coasters?**

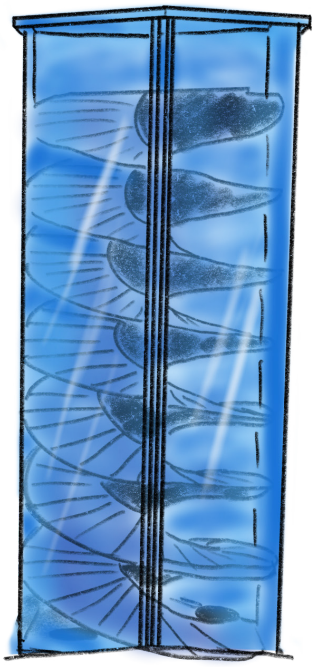
YES OR NO

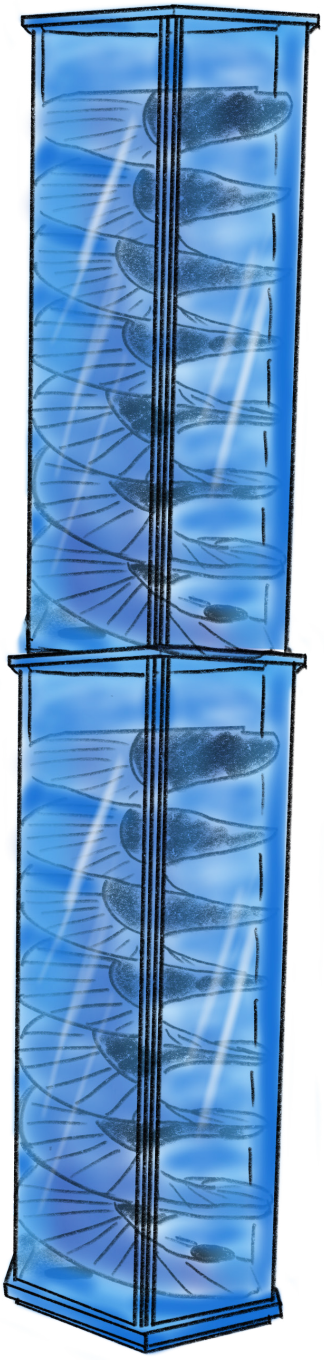
So many games include timers that run for a certain duration of the game. What if this was your timer?

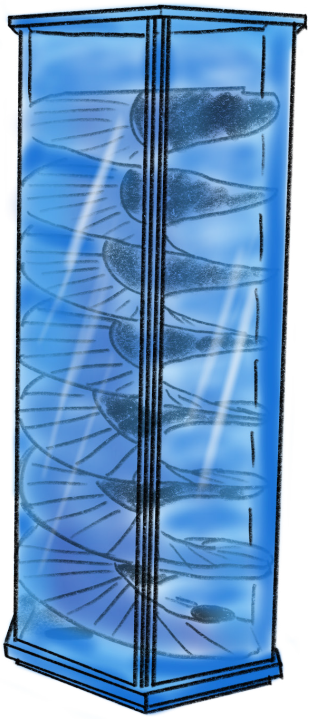
Please write answers to these questions: each answer goes in a box

- What childhood cartoon character did you have a crush on as a kid?
- Who is someone right now that is causing you stress?
- Name a character from a movie you like or actor/actress
- Who is one historical figure you wish you could talk to?
- Name your favorite animal









Stackable Ball Timers

Household Sculpture

5 Seconds Each

If there are 3 in a household, then the team not guessing runs the ball 2 times to complete 30 seconds.

What if these were candle holders?

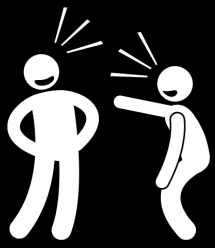
Name someone that deserves forgiveness

Charades

Name your favorite cartoon character

Charades

Name someone that is causing you stress right now.



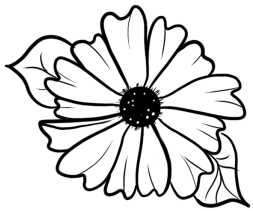
Charades

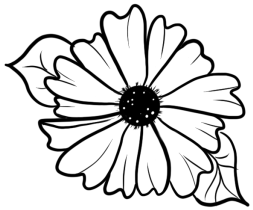
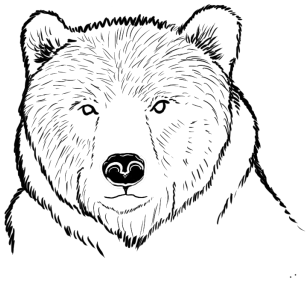
Name a character from a movie that has qualities you like in a friend.

Charades

Name any person you want to have dinner with (past, present, or future)

Charades



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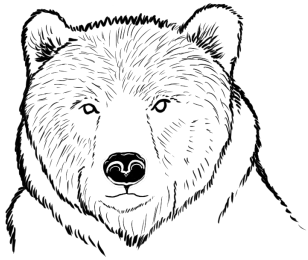


HON

Final Making Process

Mahogany
Heirloom
Furniture

PANTHER
SERIES
PANTHER ATC
CAMaster
WARNING
OPERATOR MUST BE PRESENT AT THE MACHINE THE ENTIRE TIME THE MACHINE IS RUNNING
CAUTION

DEWALT
DEWALT

NESCOP
THE LEVEL BEST IN HOME REMO

What is the difference between gender and sex?

What is one thing you would never want to spend money on again?

Reflecting on the Making Process

Fabricating a table is intimidating. I can design on paper, and prototype the living hell out of my designs from cardboard, but the second I begin working with the final material, I want to shit my pants. Thank you expensive mahogany. I love to make, and I don't want this to be indicative of my fear, but rather my courage. Designing on paper and with cardboard is easy, but when making the final prototype, I often find that my designs evolve in the process. This is what makes it scary for me, knowing there is room for error when changing plans on my design.

My original design included an outer lip on the table for all of the tiles to register into like a puzzle. But after testing the mahogany material, I realized that a lip on the top part of the table would have short grain problems in particular locations. I was problem solving this while my boards were gluing up to one another.

Thesis is a time crunch to make your artifacts. With that said, you have to be quick on your feet and be willing to make calculated decisions.

I focused on spending money rather than time by investing in quality materials, determining the registration of the tiles on the table top, and how the legs would be made. Before I put my boards on the CNC machine, I tested how magnets would be a playful and interesting way for the game tiles to register to the table. I knew I could make the table legs myself, but time is money and I didn't have much time to make these in 2 weeks. I bought these table legs from Flowyline Design, an artist out in California.

When it came to making the game cards, I designed them myself, but I had a local print shop print them out for me on proper card stock. More money. And finally I decided on using cork for the game components like the tiles, coasters, and dice, because it is a softer material that still offers a high end quality to gaming.

Charades:

What are you most afraid of in life?

Charades:

If you committed a crime, what crime would you want to be known for?

CASH
CHECK
CHARGE
TAX 7%
TOTAL
YOUR
OPPONENTS BACKWARD
•SWITCH W/ OPPONENT
•SEND YOUR OPPON
BACK TO START
•MOVE F

Closing Commentary; Heading into the Future

Thesis has been difficult. RISD MID is not for the weak. You have to be decisive, creative, informed, and willing to experiment. This has been a difficult journey because I have felt the extra need to prove myself. I came from an atypical design background and had to take an extra semester to be prepared for this education. I have learned a lot and for my educators, I thank you.

Not everyone is going to like your ideas, and I had to learn to be okay with that. It's a rarity for everyone at RISD, or the world for that matter, to like your ideas, proof of concepts, prototypes, etc. How are you going to defend your work? Where is the research? And when it comes to children's toys and associated objects, I found my research in the literature that I once studied in undergrad. I discovered that type of research wasn't valued. Design research is different. You can't soley rely on textual evidence to support a claim. How will you test those claims through user testing and your own data? In some ways, I had to find a way to legitimize what I already knew but in a design methodology. This felt like drawing with my left hand, requiring patience with myself and others.

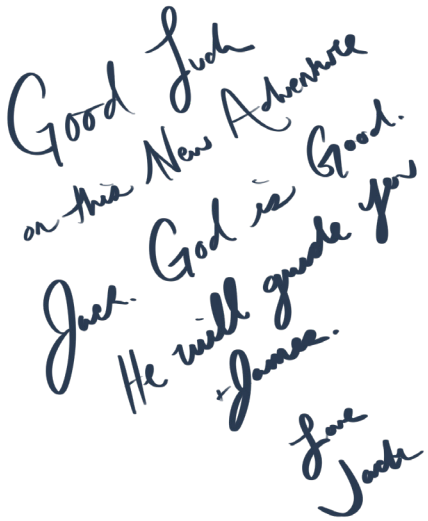
I have had to learn how to stand on my own two feet in the design world and for that I am proud. I know what I am good at; building furniture, bringing people together, and having fun. I knew I could design objects with those three elements in mind. As I look to the future, it's been my dream to start my own business that incorporates designing interiors that bring people together. Although, I wondered how play could be introduced into this dream.

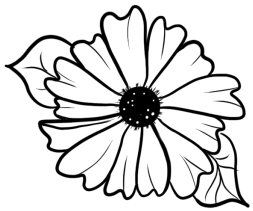
During my first semester at RISD, I took a business class that taught me how to develope and grow a business through a designer's perspective. This past fall, I designed my own course where I learned to create a business plan for concrete table manufacturing. A material choice that has received backlash in the design community. I have always wanted to start a business, but didn't know where to begin. I didn't have the confidence to aspire toward that dream until I met James, a partner that I knew I could do it with because he wanted to do something like that himself. We both come from entrepreneurial families and I think it is in our blood. At first I was considering doing it with James as a side hustle. We both have steady jobs, he's an accountant, I'll likely be a draftsman.

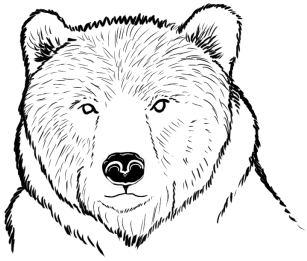
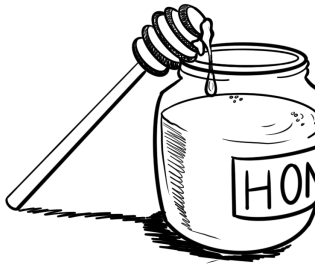
I received an offer for a position on March 30th, 2024 to be a drafter at an architectural manufacturing company, a dream job coming out of school. I would work in a millhouse with wood fabricators to design doors and windows for historic buildings and new homes. This company did work on the Metropolitan Museum of Art for crying out loud! Great pay, great benefits. This was the financial security that I hoped to graduate with. I had 48 hours to give my answer and I thought I already knew.

For months, James and I had been working on our business plan together to show our families and ask for their support. Our dads are both self employed and a wealth of knowledge and resources that would help us succeed. We found a niche in our area, Hadley Mass., where we would be able to create a reclaimed furniture shop for people to buy from. So far, we have been scavenging pallets and second-hand furniture to reimagine together. We recently anchored a client to have us rebuild their deck and redesign their interior space. We felt inspired! Within this short window, we both felt this would be our chance to start something of our own. From what we know, if you want to do something ambitious, you have to put 100% of yourself into it and knew we could do it.

I humbly denied the job offer, not because I didn't want it, but because I knew I could do something designed for me. I knew I could do this with James and that we were ready. There is no one I rather do this with. I am leaving RISD with the love of my life and a plan that God will help guide us through.



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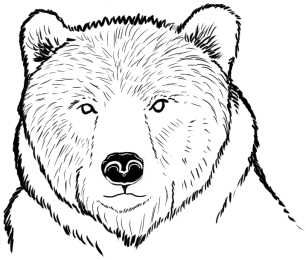

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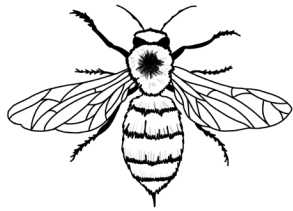


Appendix

Robinson EL, StGeorge J, Freeman EE. (2021). A Systematic Review of Father-Child Play Interactions and the Impacts on Child Development. Children. 13;8(5):389

From birth, children engage in playful social interactions with their caregivers [1]. Play interactions are typically reciprocal in nature and are based on the idea that parents and their children can work together to seek shared goals [2]. These interactions allow parents to positively foster their children's cultural learning [3] and provide an avenue for young children to gain a variety of cognitive, emotional, social and behavioral skills

Proyer, R.T., Ruch, W. The virtuousness of adult playfulness: the relation of playfulness with strengths of character. Psych Well-Being 1, 4 (2011).

There is empirical evidence on the relations of playfulness in adults with enhanced quality of life, job satisfaction and work-life balance, innovative behavior, and perceptions of academic achievement. To play and to be playful can facilitate the experience of joy which can broaden a person's action-thought-repertoire and facilitate the growth and development of coping mechanisms for stress

Weisberg, D.S., K. Hirsh-Pasek, R.M. Golinkoff, & B.D. McCandliss. 2014. "Mise En Place: Setting the Stage for Thought and Action." Trends in Cognitive Sciences 18 (6): 276–78

Mise en place refers to how one's stance towards a given environment places constraints on what one feels able to do within that environment, and how these assessments and predispositions impact the process of preparing to act. Guided play situations involve adults with specific pedagogical goals who structure the play environment and materials in service of these goals.

L ange, A. (2020). The design of childhood: how the material world shapes independent kids. New York, Bloomsbury Publishing.

I want to understand how the home has transformed from parent/adult centric to child centric, understanding how toys and play has transformed in terms of materiality. There is a history of transitioning play from an adult designed activity to child designed while uncovering middle ground of adult & child spaces in the home.

Roopnarine, J.L. & Davidson, K.L. (2015) Parent-Child Play across Cultures: Advancing Play Research, American Journal of Play. 7(2), p228-252.

In the United States, parents/adults acted as playmates to children 47 percent of the time. A fathers' relative time investment in play with infants was 23 percent compared with emotional care giving (e.g., displaying affection), 27 percent; soothing, 18 percent; and physical care (cleaning), 15 percent. Fathers are most invested in play when it comes to child rearing. Parental reports seem to confirm a trend toward decreased outdoor play and increased sedentary indoor activities across cultures. Acquiring skills through play is embraced as a ladder to obtaining the behavioral and intellectual development necessary for high levels of success in formal schooling

Magnuson, C. & Barnett, L. (2013). The Playful Advantage: How Playfulness Enhances Coping with Stress. Leisure Sciences. 35. 129-144.

Playful adults reported having lower stress levels and helped with using healthier coping styles like acceptance and positive reframing. Playful adults use coping mechanisms more effectively, regardless if non playful adults are equipped

Marais, S. D., & Wade, D. (2022). The importance of play for adults, PsychCentral.

Play enhances overall wellbeing through its links to desirable characteristics of laughter, easing tensions, and supporting creative processes. In research, high playfulness scores in adults were associated with higher creativity, appreciating beauty, approaching life with excitement and energy.

Brown, S et al. (2010) Play: How it shapes the brain, opens imagination and invigoartes the soul, Avery; Reprint edition.

I want to use this research to inform that my work is about introducing a playful mindset to adults to enable stress relief and to indulge in more playful activities

Dadaism, Dada Art, Dadaist-Artland Magazine

"dada" is the first word of a child that has meaning and nonsense, also thought to have meaning in many different languages and cultures. I think this relates because both children and adults find meaning in the word "dada". In a child, it is related to their relationship with their father. In adulthood, dada is just a sound, something that sounds related to the word dad but technically isn't. Dada is recognized by many cultures which is also what intrigues me. My goal may seem off the beaten path like the Dada movement is. Dada is recognized for its spontaneity, and childish excitement for adults and I want those themes to translate in my work.

The Game of Life Hasbro

Perfect for a family game night. It is a game where at least two people are needed to be able to play. You cannot play it alone. It involves money exchanges and the goal of the game is to accumulate the most cash. The thing about this game, is that all you are doing is moving a car. But this game does help facilitate people in the family joining together because of it being a 2+person game. Some games are self directed, this is a great example of rules and conversations about possible life changes. What if this game had more opportunity to have more options in a path. Marriage vs no marriage, job vs lack of job.

Riga Ma Jig-Cas Holman

Cas Holman has developed a playset for children to construct their projects leaving it open-ended enough. The materials are not fully what I want and I want this to be more adult-like than it is. But rigamajig is used with pretty hefty weighted materials which is what I do like. It offers children the chance to hold heavy toys. This is part of the enjoyment. This helps prove the point that a hardier material of wood or metal could be used when done appropriately. Additionally, I see a concern here. Cas Holman's toys are upwards of $3,000. That's the price of a well-crafted dining room table. Rather than adults spending that much money on a toy for play, why not invest that money in furnishing your space with items that can be used as furniture and can be used for play?

The Sims Franchise-Maxis

Perfect for a family game night. It is a game where at least two people are needed to be able to play. You cannot play it alone. It involves money exchanges and the goal of the game is to accumulate the most cash. The thing about this game, is that all you are doing is moving a car. But this game does help facilitate people in the family joining together because of it being a 2+person game. Some games are self directed, this is a great example of rules and conversations about possible life changes. What if this game had more opportunity to have more options in a path. Marriage vs no marriage, job vs lack of job.

Survivor Game Show

Survivor is a game show that represents competition but also works with others to accomplish a challenge/task at hand to win money. This is a great example of one challenge. Although the individual is challenged to maintain the motion of the ball machine/coaster, you cannot let a ball drop. You have to keep adding them to the top and consistently let them run. This is a great example of how I can turn the marble coaster into a game in which people can compete against. What is a way in which I can implement this within the home? If children and adults alike appreciate this concept, then how can I apply this type of game within the home where there is competition? How can I inform the parent and child...This is a great example of teamwork. Is team work something i want to accomplish in this level of play?

Glossary

Family - people that you live with, often includes children and parent/guardian, but may look different in every household.

Home - the physical space in which families live.

Parent - caregiver to a child or teenager, someone who is a guardian.

Teenager/Adolescence - 13-18 year old.

Children - under 13 years old.

Games - an activity shared between 2+ people that has an outcome.

Tool - a object that facilitates a particular outcome.

Play - enjoyment through interacting with an object for recreation, can be with others or alone.

Jess Brown,

It has been an honor to learn from you and learn with you on this thesis. Thank you for being my rock in times of need, but also a mentor in which I can banter with. I will forever remember your uplifting advice and laughter over our queen bee, Beyonce. You have taught me how to be fearless in my design and for that I thank you. I see you to be fearless in your work and essence and I look up to you.

Brian Jablonski,

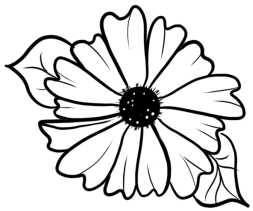
Thank you for being the calm in the storm of thesis. Being able to discuss my ideas with you made me feel that everything was going to work itself out even when I was thinking it wasn't. You helped me see the light after the tunnel at RISD but also beyond. Thank you.

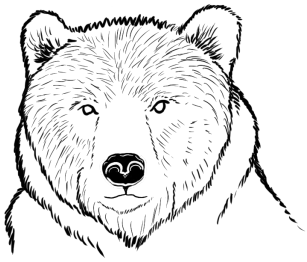
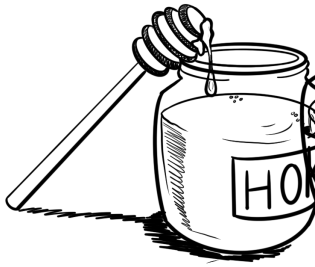
Ayako Takase,

I have always wanted to take a class from you and it has been a blessing to have you in my final semester of thesis making. Thank you for communicating your critique directly and honesty, but also with empathy. I highly look up to you and your work.

Mark Johnson and Asher Dunn,

You are both designers that I inspire to work like. You are role models to me on how I want to be in the professional world but also the everyday. Mark ,you show me dedication to career and family and that is really all what my thesis is about. You are a wizard in the wood shop, thank you for your continuous advice. Asher, I have dreams and ambitions to have a design studio like you and I see your work ethic and your demeaner as an educator and I want to be like you. You are such a great role model to me, and your kid is quite lucky to have a dad like you. Same goes to you Mark. Thank you both.

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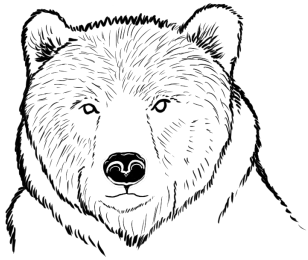

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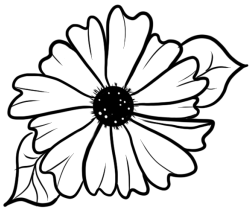

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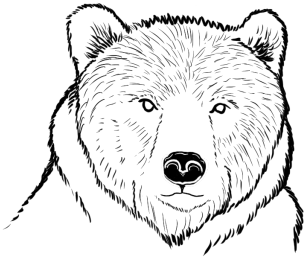

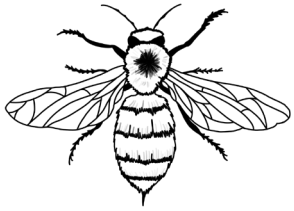
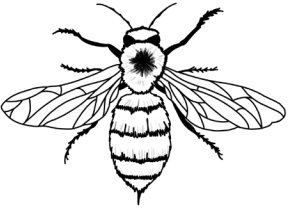
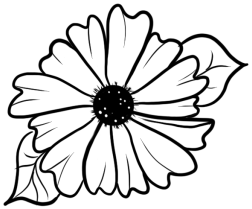
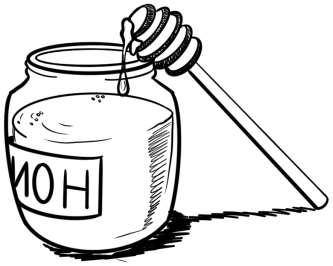
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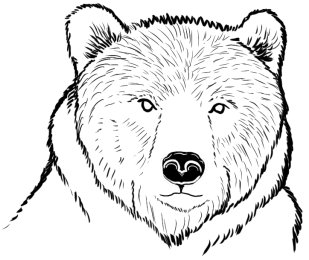

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