

GUIDELINES FOR CREATING DOCUMENTATION PANELS

How Do I Make a Documentation Panel?

1. Collect documents.
 - Collect related work samples—collages, drawings, photographs of children using movement to describe water.
 - Collect dialogue. Record science-related conversations with and among children, jot down a conversation that can be typed up later, or ask children to tell you about their work or a photo.
 - Pull together notes and data that have been collected during the exploration—science inquiry charts, a list of predictions, descriptive observations, new questions, and so on.
 - If you have access to a camera, take photos of children using materials to make drops, streams, and to control water flow. Or photograph them observing the results of their sink and float tests or the ways drops move on different surfaces. Capture images of children in the act of moving, controlling, or observing water. Enlarge 3 by 5-inch and 4 by 6-inch photos on a photocopier, or print digital photos on letter-size paper (the photos should be large enough for a group of children to view together).
2. Decide the panel's focus.
 - Discovery—Children discover bubbles in their rigid tubes.
 - Exploration—Children explore, asking “What rises in water? What sinks?”
 - Data collection—Children measure how high a baster can squirt water, or they sequence containers by volume—from which holds the least water to which holds the most.
 - Comparison—Children compare and contrast their local fountain to the streams they make using bottles with holes.
 - Tool use—Children use hand lenses to look more closely at drops and pumps to move water through tubing.

How Do I Put Together the Panel?

1. Arrange your documents in chronological order, from left to right, across the board in a single, straight line. Adhere your photos with a glue stick, rubber cement, or two-sided tape. (White glue wrinkles paper.)
2. Add text to your panel. Suggestions include the following:
 - Interview the children whose work is featured on the panel and use some of their words as captions under their work samples.
 - Add the question or challenge that guided the children's focused exploration.
3. Add a title that focuses your reading audience on the panel's key message. For example:
 - Max decides which material would make the best raincoat.
 - Making a juice machine.

How Can I Display the Panels and Share Them with Families?

- Post the panels at children's eye level. When you run out of wall space, move the ones that aren't currently being used into the hall or to some other location where families and colleagues might enjoy them.
- Invite children to share panels with family members. Post a couple of questions next to the panel to prompt conversation and help focus it on the aspect of science inquiry featured on the panel.
- Share panels during parent conferences. Use them to reflect on specific aspects of children's science experiences and their growth and development.

Figure 8.2