



SCIENCE PLAYGROUND Exhibition Highlights

The *Science Playground* at the New York Hall of Science is the largest science playground in the United States. Designed by BKSK Architects, the *Science Playground* fosters science learning through personal discovery and participation.

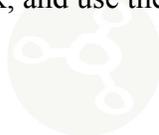
PRESCHOOL – Exploring the Natural Environment

A “Serpent Path” winds through more than 30,000 square feet of exhibitions relating to the natural world and designed for children ages 6 and younger. The preschool section opened in 2007 and, like the rest of the *Science Playground*, fun and learning are inseparable with activities that integrate playing and learning. A spectacular landscape, developed by the award-winning landscape architect Lee Weintraub, invites exploration of natural forms, with slopes to roll down, bridges to cross, and water to splash in. Elements of the natural world – soil, trees, water, light and sound – become the basis for a rich learning environment for preschool-aged children and parents. Exhibit elements are organized around five themes:

- *Bridge Path* – invites children to move along a meandering path. Hills and footbridges change the vantage points, allowing for discovery as visitors move through the landscape.
- *Music Path* – encourages children to explore sound through African, Asian and Caribbean drums. A sophisticated mechanism embedded in the ground creates a deep, water mist to shroud the path in mystery.
- *Sand Path* – building with sand using pulleys and transporters encourages young visitors to explore the materials of the natural world and engage in cooperative play.
- *Mirror Path* – entices children to explore light and color with a colored glass playhouse, a glass tunnel, and mirror walls.
- *Shelter Path* – invites visitors to explore different types of shelter including a child-sized bird’s nest, a rabbit hole, and three different playhouses.

PHYSICS – Energy and Machines

A favorite of visitors since it opened in 1997, this 30,000-square-foot area of the *Science Playground* contains slides, seesaws, a water play area, and dozens of other hands-on exhibits for visitors of all ages. Here children can steer, yank, crank, and use their own weight, reflexes and imagination to explore how things work. Exhibits include:





- *Energy Wave* – allows visitors to manipulate a 150-foot series of connected rods and balls to explore how energy is propagated in a wave.
- *Slides* – show how to convert the force of gravity into the force of motion. Visitors can race down two adjacent slides, one straight and one curved, to see which one is faster.
- *Standing Spinner* – invites the public to examine how angular momentum stores energy. A visitor stands on a rotating disk and holds a handle in the center. By leaning in, the visitor spins faster, by leaning out, the visitor spins slower.
- *Ball Run* – allows visitors to pick one of the different colored balls and follow it along its journey. Each ball is given potential energy from the mechanical energy of the conveyor belt lifting it to its greatest height. As the ball moves along the track, it gains kinetic energy. As the ball changes direction, it also changes energy.
- *Giant Seesaw* – takes the mystery out of understanding levers, allowing a whole class to conduct experiments such as how many students does it take to lift the teacher? (Answer, it depends on how close to the fulcrum they stand).
- *Giant Lever* – invites children to use leverage to lift a 200-pound weight.
- *Sound Station* – shows how size and materials can change the tone of a note. Using a mallet or the palm of their hands, visitors can strike nine different xylophones. Although all tuned to the same pentatonic scale, the different pipe widths and materials produce different tones.
- *Speaking Tubes* – examine how tubes channel the energy of sound. Visitors speak softly into one end and are heard clearly at the other end, many yards away.
- *Whisper Dishes* – demonstrate the reflection and focusing of sound.
- *Wind Pipes* – illustrate how air pressure can be converted into sound. Participants step on three wooden beams that are mounted like a seesaw on ground level. The seesaw movement forces air through musical pipes creating a variety of sounds.
- *Archimedes Screw* – allows visitors to experiment with a wheel and axle to move water up the contraption.
- *Climbing Space Net* – explores the principles of tensile structure. As children climb around the net, they can feel how the structure responds to their weight.



New York Hall of Science



- *Windmill Seat* – converts wind energy into vertical movement. A swing-like seat, attached to a small windmill, moves up and down when the wind blows. Participants can also turn the windmill with their own weight by simply sitting on the seat.
- *Sun Catchers* – allow visitors to use mirrors to direct sunbeams at targets on a kinetic sculpture. When redirected sunlight hits a photocell on the sculpture, the solar energy is converted to electrical energy that triggers propellers, whirligigs and a fog machine.

Admission to the *Science Playground* is \$5 per person, in addition to general NYSCI admission. The *Science Playground* is open March – November, weather permitting.

The New York Hall of Science – The mission of the New York Hall of Science (NYSCI) is to nurture generations of passionate learners, critical thinkers and active citizens through an approach called Design, Make, Play. Design, Make, Play emphasizes open-ended exploration, imaginative learning and personal relevance, resulting in deep engagement and delight in science, technology, engineering and mathematics. NYSCI was founded at the 1964-65 World's Fair and has evolved into New York's center for interactive science serving a half million students, teachers and families each year. NYSCI is open Monday – Friday, 9:30 am – 5 pm and weekends, 10 am – 6 pm. General admission is \$16 for adults and \$13 for children (ages 2-17), college students with valid ID, and seniors (62+). For more information, visit nysci.org or call 718-699-0005. Follow NYSCI on Twitter and Instagram: @nysci, and on Facebook at: facebook.com/nysci.

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