

TRAP ENGINEERS

Designing and Constructing with Purpose

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INTRODUCTION

One day, the children came up with the idea, "Let's trap Gypsy!" and they set about building a structure in the doorway. When they were finished, they called for Gypsy. She leaped over their creation, and they exclaimed, "Oh, Gypsy's a good jumper!" The children then discovered that none of them were able to step over the creation, effectively trapping themselves rather than Gypsy!



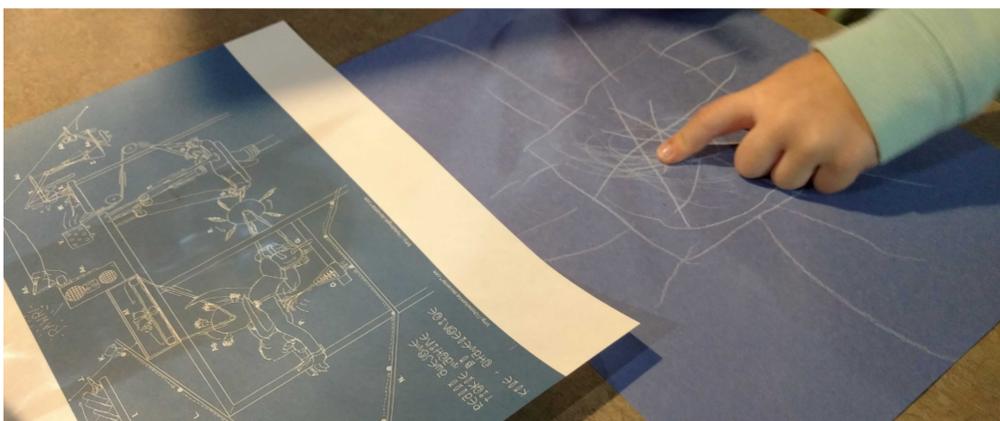
After the first trap was unsuccessful at catching Gypsy, the children began discussing making traps in other ways. This sparked quite a bit of rich conversation as they worked together to develop strategies they thought would work. They talked about various approaches such as using other materials, and building bigger traps. Ideas were suggested and built upon as a group. Ms. Steph purchased a variety of new supplies with this project in mind such as string and large, easy to use clamps. Wind-up mouse toys were also added for a more reliable subject to trap.

Developing language:

"I know, let's..." *"Maybe we should..."* *"We need bait!"*

PROJECT

To continue with the idea of planning for construction, examples of blueprints were printed for the children to investigate. Blue paper and white writing instruments were set out for making their own blueprints.



EXPANDING THE IDEA

Building off of their interest, Ms. Steph introduced the concept of Rube Goldberg machines. First, the video for "This Too Shall Pass" by OK Go was shown. The children were fascinated by the steps in video.



After the concept of cause-and-effect steps was presented, we began working with the idea in a more tangible manner. The game Mouse Trap was obtained for the children to have hands on experience. Setting up the game's trap and making it work as intended required a significant amount of teamwork and problem solving, in order to get the pieces aligned and connected correctly so that each step would be functional.



STANDARDS MET

- Develop, initiate and carry out simple plans to obtain a goal.
- Carry out tasks, activities, or projects from beginning to end.
- Use creative and flexible thinking to solve problems.