



## Pre- and Post-Visit Activity Guide

The Crazy for Trains Pre-K discovery bags complement a unit on trains or transportation. Use any of the following four activities before or after your field trip to the Chicago History Museum.

### Activity 1: Cardboard Box Train

#### INSTRUCTIONS

1. Read one of the suggested books aloud and use it to start a class discussion on all the different things trains can carry.
2. Use whatever art supplies you have on hand to decorate boxes to look like train cars. Each child can decorate a box individually, or this activity can be an ongoing project that everyone adds to over time. Use yarn to connect all the train cars together.
3. As children work on their train cars, circulate around the room and ask: *What does your train car hold? Where could our train be going?* Encourage them to recall information from the story or offer suggestions: passengers traveling somewhere; wood for building homes; animals in a circus. Children can use materials from other areas in the classroom, such as plastic food, blocks, or dolls to represent their cargo. Once the train is completed, the class can move it along tracks they have drawn on butcher paper.

#### SUGGESTED BOOKS

Available at Chicago Public Libraries

- *Inside Freight Train* by Donald Crews (HarperFestival 2001)
- *I Love Trains!* by Philemon Sturges and Shari Halpern (HarperCollins 2003)

#### MATERIALS

- boxes (depending on the scale of the train you want to make, you could use tissue boxes, cereal boxes, or large appliance boxes, etc.)
- construction paper
- glue
- scissors
- yarn
- markers or crayons
- butcher paper

## Activity 2: Parts of a Whole

### INSTRUCTIONS

This activity was adapted from “Improvisation for Creative Pedagogy” by the Second City Training Center (2004).

1. Use the pictures in the book or the photos of ‘L’ Car No. 1 and the Pioneer locomotive to have a conversation with children about the different parts of a train. As children point out various components, ask questions, such as: *What is that? What do you think this part of the train does?*

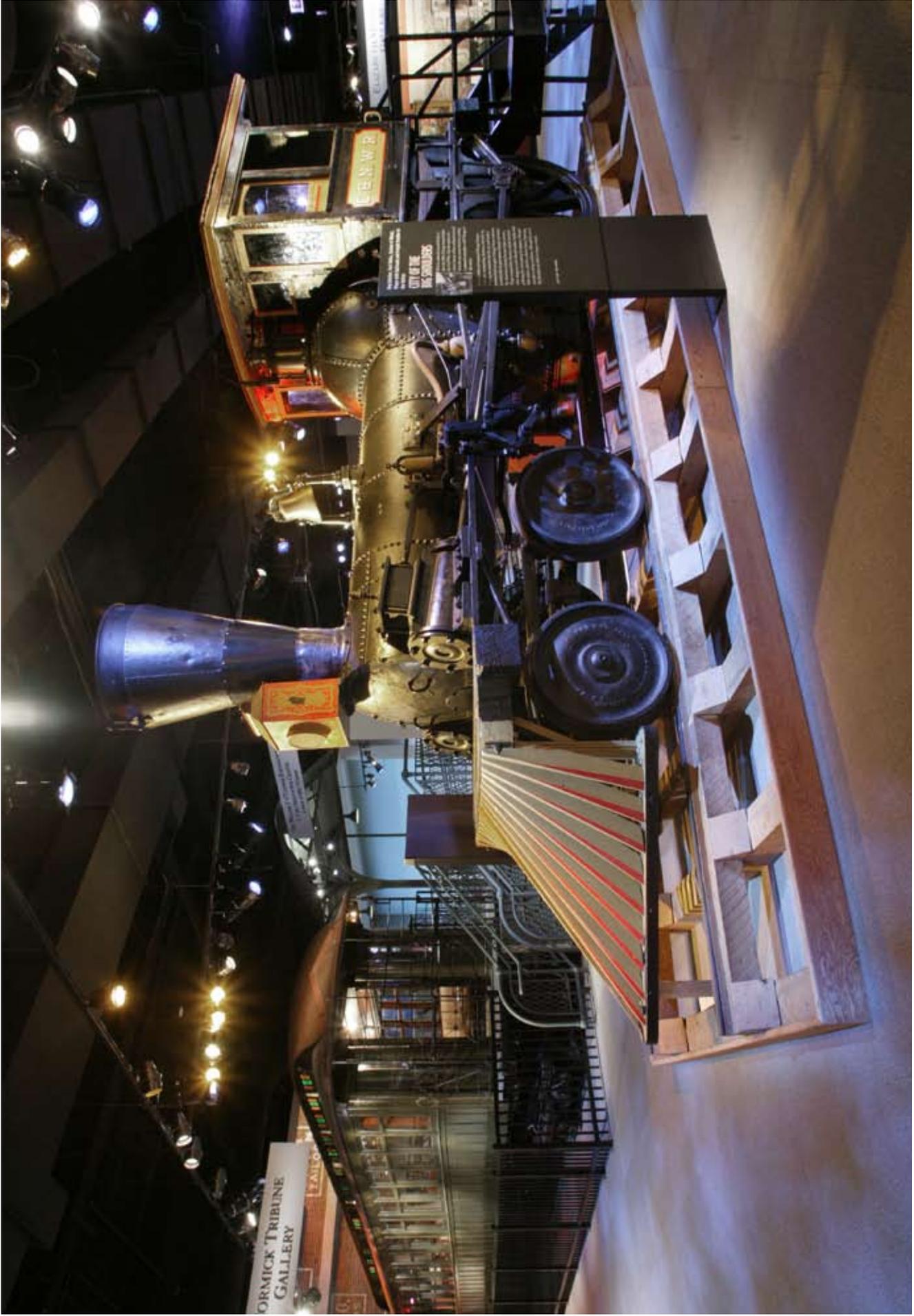
Help children by naming parts of the train they may not be able to identify.

2. After your initial discussion, tell the class that they are all going to act like a train together, and each person will pretend to be a different part. Their parts can be on the outside of the train (smokestack, wheels) or the inside (seats, passengers). One at a time, children should announce what part they are acting out and add themselves to the scene. Encourage the children to use their bodies to resemble the part they are acting out, for example, to crouch down into a ball if they are portraying a wheel.
3. As children add themselves to the scene, they may need help thinking of parts to act out or figuring out where they should stand. Coach them by asking such questions as: *This boxcar only has one wheel—can someone else pretend to be a wheel? If the engine is up here, then where does the caboose go?*
4. Once every child is part of the scene, have the class make the sounds of a train moving to conclude the dramatic play.

### SUGGESTED BOOK

Available at [Chicago Public Libraries](#)

- *Big Book of Trains* by DK Publishing (DK Children 1998)



**Pioneer Locomotive**



'L' Car No. 1

# Activity 3: Transportation Graph

## INSTRUCTIONS

1. Read one of the suggested books aloud. When you have finished, ask children to recall all of the different ways the characters traveled. Keep a list of these different methods of transportation on the board or on a piece of chart paper. You may want to draw a simple picture next to each method on the list.
2. Ask children if they can think of any other ways to get from place to place and add them to the list.
3. On the board or on a separate sheet of paper, create a column for each method. Ask children to raise their hands for each form of transportation they have used. Make a tally mark for each child in the appropriate column. You could also use a die-cut machine to make paper shapes representing the different forms of transportation for children to tape or glue to the graph.
4. When the graph is finished, go over your conclusions together. Which form of transportation has the most tally marks? Which has the least? What do the results mean?

Other transportation-related topics you could chart as a class:

- How everyone got to school today
- Components of a vehicle, like a train or bus (how many wheels, windows, or doors). If your school has its own van or bus, take a trip outside to count its features.
- Types of vehicles that go past your school

## SUGGESTED BOOKS

Available at Chicago Public Libraries

- *Bunnies on the Go: Getting From Place to Place* by Rick Walton and Paige Miglio (HarperCollins 2003)
- *Abuela* by Arthur Dorros and Elisa Kleven (Puffin 1997)

## MATERIALS

- chart paper or a whiteboard
- markers

# Activity 4: Be a Conductor

## INSTRUCTIONS

1. Read one of the suggested books aloud or choose an excerpt from one of the stories that focuses on the conductor or engineer. Ask the class: *Who works on a train? What does that person do? Do you think you would like to do that job? Why or why not?*
2. Give each student a conductor hat template to cut out, or pre-cut them for children. Each child will glue the template to a piece of heavy construction paper or cardstock. You could also use empty cereal boxes or other thin cardboard.
3. Have children decorate their hats with crayons or markers. Help them fold the hat and punch holes at the edges. Tie a piece of yarn or elastic string to each hole to hold the hat in place.
4. Children can wear their hats home, use them for dramatic play, or wear them on a field trip to the Chicago History Museum.

## SUGGESTED BOOKS

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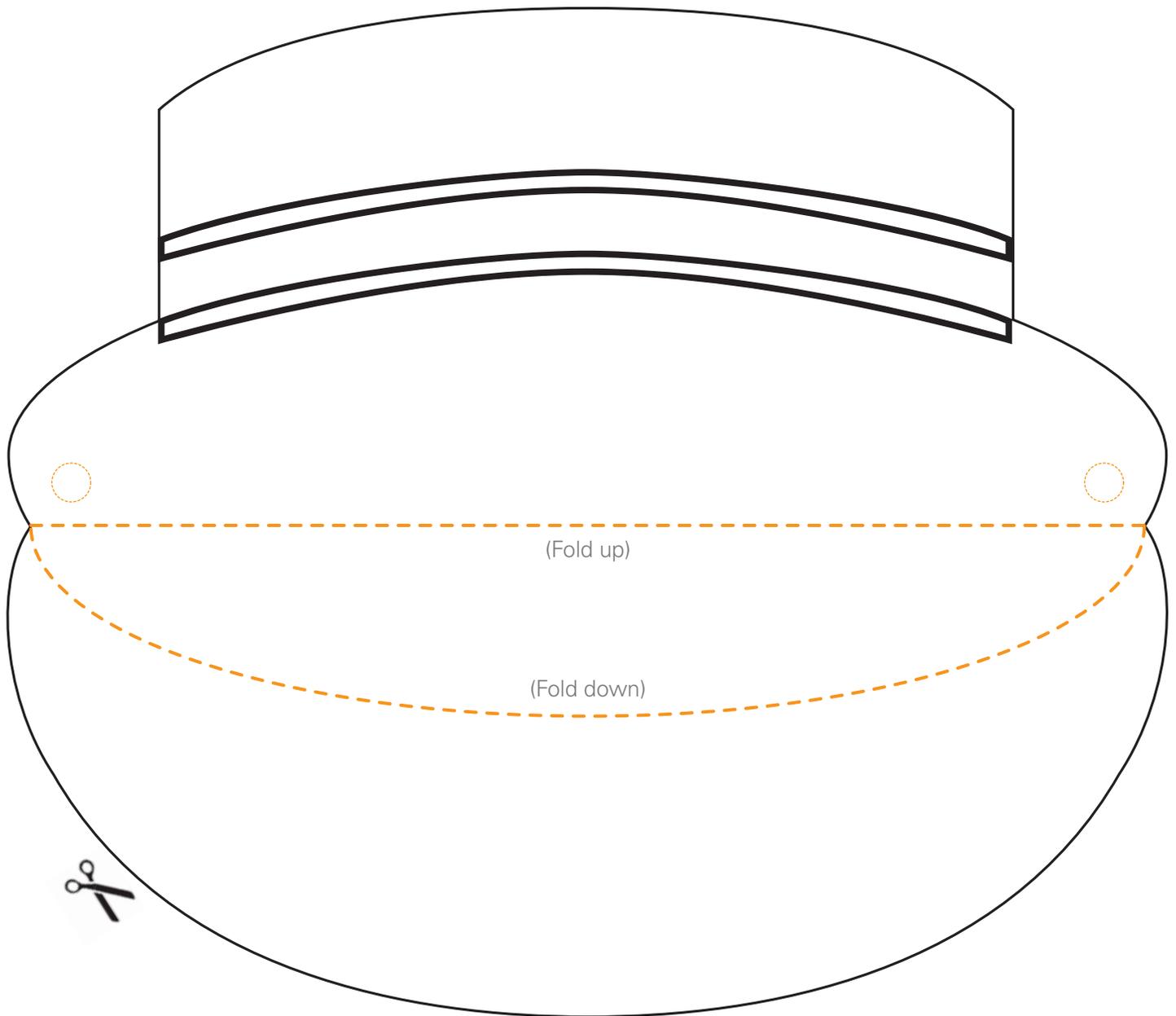
- *Terrific Trains* by Tony Mitton and Ant Parker (Kingfisher 2000)
- *The Little Train* by Lois Lenski (Random House Books for Young Readers 2002)
- *Train Rides* by Pamela Walker (Children's Press 2000)

## MATERIALS

- copies of the conductor hat template
- heavy paper or cardstock
- scissors
- drawing supplies
- hole punch
- string or yarn

## CONDUCTOR HAT TEMPLATE

- Cut out entire shape
- Fold on dotted lines
- Punch holes through circles



## **CRAZY FOR TRAINS PRE- AND POST-VISIT ACTIVITIES MEET THE FOLLOWING ILLINOIS EARLY LEARNING STANDARDS**

### **Language Arts**

- 1.A.ECa Understand that pictures and symbols have meaning and that print carries a message.
- 1.A.ECb Understand that reading progresses from left to right and top to bottom.
- 1.A.ECd Identify some letters, including those in own name.
- 1.A.ECe Make some letter-sound matches.
- 1.B.ECb Begin to develop phonological awareness by participating in rhyming activities.
- 1.C.ECb Respond to simple questions about reading material.
- 4.A.EC Listen with understanding and respond to directions and conversations.
- 4.B.EC Communicate needs, ideas, and thoughts.
- 5.A.EC Seek answers to questions through active exploration.
- 5.B.EC Relate prior knowledge to new information.
- 5.C.EC Communicate information with others.

### **Mathematics**

- 10.A.ECa Represent data using concrete objects, pictures, and graphs.
- 10.B.EC Gather data about themselves and their surroundings.

### **Science**

- 13.B.ECa Express wonder and ask questions about their world.
- 13.B.ECb Begin to be aware of technology and how it affects their lives.

### **Social Science**

- 15.A.EC Identify community workers and the services they provide.
- 16.A.EC Recall information about the immediate past.

### **Fine Arts**

- 26.A.ECb Drama: participate in drama activities.
- 26.A.ECd Visual Arts: participate in the visual arts.
- 26.B.EC Use creative arts as an avenue for self-expression.