

Tykes Peak

Tykes Peak is an interactive discovery area for children up to age five and their caregivers. As with the rest of *Expedition Health*, Tykes Peak is designed to provide a customized experience, in this case tailored to preschoolers and their interests and abilities.

Among other things, visitors learn about the sensory world of children and how they feel, hear, see, smell, and taste the world differently from adults. Researchers once assumed that children are born with all five senses up and running. In fact, the senses evolve because they work in tandem with the brain's development. Babies may be born with 100 billion nerve cells in their brains, but it takes years to learn to use them well.

“Years of research have taught us about how the senses develop during fetal development. Now we are beginning to recognize that the five senses continue to be honed and change long after birth,” said Bridget Coughlin, PhD, deputy chief curator and curator of human health.

In Tykes Peak, children will explore and learn through full-body experiences and dramatic play. They can

- Prepare for their trek through Tykes Peak by packing a backpack with a healthy lunch, water, a map, and sunscreen
- Scramble up a mini mountain and jump on to a slide to get back down to “base camp” or crawl on their hands and knees through a log on the forest floor
- Use their eyes to look at themselves in a mirror—and see some of the bones and guts that are inside their growing bodies
- Press themselves against a giant pin-screen, to see their own bodies full-size
- Use their hands to feel their own hearts beating by using a stethoscope connected to a round pad that pulses in time with the beats
- Feel their heart rate again after jumping and playing in front of a colorful silhouette of their body
- Reach inside a touch box and use their fingers to feel some of the things found in nature, like smooth river rocks, a deer's antler, and other objects

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