

Structure for *Tinkering Together*



WHILE WE CONSIDERED THE EFFECTS OF THE PANDEMIC

on the early learning field, we also valued and sought to uplift the many ways in which the early care and learning community demonstrates resilience and resourcefulness. The Tinkering Studio made a commitment to support practitioners to tell stories of STEAM and tinkering practice in their own words as a way of connecting to the diversity, resilience, and inherent strengths of the early childhood field.

Tinkering Together was designed as a flexible, multimedia event hosted on a website. The design employs an asset-based, grassroots perspective by elevating the experiences of early care educators and providers as the primary source of insight. The website provides a prototype of how technology can invite broad participation in STEAM learning.

The event is organized around three content strands, curated to address specific outcomes and audiences. Each of the strands is centered around a guiding question. In addition, the multimedia offerings are designed to function as case studies of practice. These include edited video and audio stories as well as recorded (unedited) panel discussions and workshops. As such, the work is not scripted and educators' responses and viewpoints are representative of their personal perspective and experiences.

THE THREE CONTENT STRANDS

work to activate and broaden participation in informal science through a variety of entry points.

STRAND 1

Key Voices

How might we introduce the key ideas of tinkering and explore how the approach supports STEAM thinking, positive mindsets, and equitable learning through conversations with diverse providers?

PURPOSE

To introduce key goals of the tinkering approach and bring them to life through audio stories.

AUDIENCE

Intended for broadest distribution and designed to be accessible to those new to tinkering.

STRAND 2

Stories of Practice

How might we showcase tinkering in a wide array of real-world settings?

PURPOSE

To illustrate the relevance of tinkering in different settings (home providers, center-based, informal learning) with different ages of children, and with varied culture and language groups.

AUDIENCE

Adults who are part of the early learning and care ecosystem.

STRAND 3

Community Resources

How might we share practical knowledge with participants?

PURPOSE

Offer a compendium of resources from workshops to books that can be shared widely.

AUDIENCE

Practitioners looking for free tinkering and making resources to support their work.

MULTIMEDIA APPROACH

A three-part audio journalism series (*Tinkering Together Podcast*) hosted by author and NPR education correspondent Anya Kamenetz. Each episode focuses on a different core idea and incorporates the voices and perspectives of individuals working with young children.

BROADENS PARTICIPATION

These edited audio stories introduce tinkering and link the approach to key ideas in early childhood, such as equity, social-emotional development, and exploration, in order to support practitioners who are new to tinkering. Care is taken to highlight peers in the field reflecting on what they have learned about tinkering in their settings.

MULTIMEDIA APPROACH

A four-part video miniseries (*Tinkering Together Visual Stories*) each set in a different type of learning environment.

BROADENS PARTICIPATION

By showing educators and children engaging in tinkering in a wide variety of settings, these videos communicate that science learning opportunities surround us and are accessible to all. The videos demonstrate that early educators and providers, as they are, where they work, and with the materials they have, can competently engage in science phenomena exploration with children.

MULTIMEDIA APPROACH

Online library of resources and blogs related to making, tinkering, and STEAM in early childhood practice.

BROADENS PARTICIPATION

The resources and reflections of practice feature profiles of educators, connections to children's books, STEAM, and tinkering projects. The aim is to signal the richness of topics related to STEAM that can be explored in the early childhood field.