

Text Feature Analysis

Griffin Discovery Room

← Heading

Subheading →

A hands-on activity center for children

Monticello visitors—especially those ages 6 to 12—can literally get in touch with American history in the Griffin Discovery Room through hands-on activities.



This educational environment provides a variety of ways for young people to connect with Thomas Jefferson, the members of the larger Monticello community, and learn what life was like for children in the early 1800s.

A boy operates a large-scale model of Jefferson's Wheel Cipher

← Caption

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FUN FACT

Thomas Jefferson organized races for his grandchildren outside on the West Lawn. The winner received dried fruit as a prize.



Children operating a working model based on Jefferson's Polygraph copying machine

The space features reproduction elements from both the Monticello house, such as Jefferson's alcove bed and Houdon's bust of Jefferson, and the plantation, including the nail-making shop and a slave dwelling.

Children and their family members can write on a polygraph machine based on the one Jefferson owned, try on replicas of 18th-century clothes, learn how to weave, touch a mastodon's jawbone, create secret codes on a wheel cipher based on Jefferson's design, play games popular in Jefferson's era, and engage in other self-directed activities.

Located on the lower level of the Smith Education Center,

Caption →