ANN ARBOR—During a recent visit to the Ann Arbor Hands-On Museum, Liz Hill and her daughter found themselves unexpectedly participating in a University of Michigan child development research study.

Liz watched intently as her daughter Natalee looked at pictures and answered the researcher’s questions.

“You always wonder how much they know,” Liz says of her daughter.

When the study concludes, Natalee picks out her thank you toy from a plastic box, and lab manager Merranda McLaughlin explains the study and answers questions for Liz.

The Living Lab is a program in which U-M faculty bring research projects to public spaces so that parents and children can partake in real child development experiments. Currently, Living Lab hosts studies during the week and on weekends at the Ann Arbor Hands-On Museum, the U-M Natural History Museum and the downtown branch of the Ann Arbor District Library.