The Global Cardboard Challenge is an opportunity for kids and their parents to design, build, and play cardboard arcade games. Inspired by nine-year-old Caine Monroy, who created his own cardboard arcade at his father’s used car parts store in east Los Angeles, filmmaker Nirvan Mullick created an 11-minute documentary in 2012 that went viral. The Global Cardboard Challenge was issued to spread the joy of cardboard arcade building to kids all over the world. At the annual ICAT Global Cardboard Challenge event parents and children collaborate to brainstorm, design, build, cut, paint, prototype, test, and play – the entire design process in one half day. The final arcades have sported a rich diversity of games and ingenuity in cardboard engineering. There were ball bounce games, paddle games, slingshot games, bowling games, pulleys, pin setters, a “Get the Bad Guys” game, and “Jonah and the whale.” The games used cardboard tubes, yogurt cups, magnets, soil sample tubes, rubber bands, surveying tape, adding machine tape rollers, paint, markers, and tape. There were elaborate point systems. Ico Bukvic, an ICAT faculty member and the father of a Cardboard Challenge participant, reported, “My entire family was blown away by the fun and creative games that came out of the Cardboard Challenge.”

Participants: Community families

Staff: Phyllis Newbill, Liesl Baum, Mason Walker, Ben Knapp, Sam Leary, Ico Bukvic, Sam Blanchard, Evelien Schilder, Clara Hintermeister, Luke Demarest, Colin Ruhbright, and Jason Forsyth, Kari Zacharias

Type: Design-based curriculum

Date: 2012-present