REPORT TO THE COMMUNITY 2001 - 2002

THE
CHILDREN'S
BUILDING

CONNECTICUT CHILDREN'S MUSEUM
creating kids childcare center creating curriculum
Children need a place of their own where they can experience the magic of learning at their own pace, a place full of whimsy and wisdom, a space built to their size and specifications.

Early childhood educators need a place to teach and learn with their children, a place where they can find support and inspiration.

Families need a place full of color, joy and community where they can play and learn together.

The Children's Building is designed to be such a place.

Dear friends ...

Like each carefully crafted hexagon in a bee hive, The Children's Building was built by a community. And like the hexagon, The Children's Building is multi-sided and multi-dimensional, housing many programs designed to nurture children, their families and teachers.

In the Fall of 1999, Creating Kids moved its early childhood program to the childcare space within The Children's Building. Knowing the importance of place, we created an educational environment full of sunlight and beautiful wood, nooks of books and fabulous programming, all developed by our talented staff to support the multiple intelligences of each child. We serve the families of thirty children, drawn from the many neighborhoods of the city and its suburbs. Creating Kids is the heartbeat of the building.

The new Board of Directors developed a one-year plan to re-open the Connecticut Children's Museum. Our vision was to provide children, their families and teachers with programs in a magical place, rich in resources and rooted in the community.

The process of inspiring the museum space began in the winter of 2000, when community members — parents, child care providers, artists, teachers, legislators, musicians, dancers, designers, builders, scientists, politicians, health care providers, community organizers, businesspeople and naturalists — were invited to join together for a series of Inspiration Evenings. Participants applied their expertise and became architects of the ideas and designers of the exhibit rooms. Their work, to bring dimension to the eight intelligences, is mirrored throughout the museum. They inspired a remarkable arts and literacy-based museum with rooms dedicated to the linguistic, logical-mathematical, spatial, musical, interpersonal, intrapersonal, naturalist and bodily-kinesthetic intelligences.

Building on the rich experiences of Creating Kids and the resources of the museum, we have built an array of programs for children, their families and teachers. These include childcare provider training courses, educational field trips, a field trip series for family childcare providers, family visits — all with literacy and art woven through them.

Since the fall of 1999, tens of thousands of children, their families and teachers have alighted at the doors of The Children's Building to take part in the many programs here. It is truly a place that makes magic for children.

Sandra Malmquist
Director
Creating Kids was established in 1994 to provide a breadth and depth of childcare services unique in the community. It is an independent, not-for-profit early childhood education program which is open to the community and serving families of infants, toddlers and preschoolers. Creating Kids is licensed by the State of Connecticut.

Creating Kids is an ethnically and economically diverse community of families with a majority of the families coming from the city’s many neighborhoods. It is a community enriched by children with special needs; the space and the curriculum are shaped by Universal Design. It is an approved site for the New Haven Board of Education’s School Readiness Initiative and the Care4Kids childcare assistance program which, together with the funding we receive as a United Way member agency, supports affordable, quality childcare spaces for families.

Our mission is to serve the childcare needs of area families through the development of an inclusive community and an innovative curriculum inspired by the theory of multiple intelligences.

For example, during Bee Week, children learn how to read BEE in Braille, gather pollen, do a bee dance and sign ‘bee’ in American Sign Language. They taste honey and read books about bees. Their study is complemented by a visit from our beekeeper and a morning spent studying our thousands of bees in the museum’s observation beehive.
Creating Curriculum is an innovative and experiential childcare provider training program. It uses the structure of a children’s museum and the program model of multiple intelligences to teach childcare providers how to create developmentally appropriate program based on the multiple intelligences inclusion model and using children’s picture books. It is based on a strong developmental foundation.

Creating Curriculum is a collaborative program, now in its sixth year, of the Connecticut Children’s Museum and its childcare program, Creating Kids, and the Fair Haven Community Health Center. Childcare providers from inner-city home and center-based settings gather for a fifteen-week, skills-building seminar course, taught by pediatric clinicians and the staff of Creating Kids, in a creative framework of lectures, multi-media presentations and interactive workshops. Participants demonstrate their competence in the course by designing curriculum posters using photos of the children in their childcare settings. These posters are beautiful and informative documents which are shared with colleagues and families.

Creating Curriculum increases the quality of childcare and therefore contributes to school readiness for New Haven’s children through staff development with a focus on literacy. It is an early childhood education Quality Enhancement training project supported by the NH Board of Education’s School Readiness Initiative. Creating Curriculum has graduated over 100 providers; all earned credits toward their CDA credential.

The class showed me the many ways we teach, and the many children we reach, through the multiple intelligences.

Vanessa Lloyd

Creating Curriculum has helped me to look at our children’s learning styles differently … and given me a new spark when planning activities.

Jessica Demorest

Thank you for inspiring our teachers to embrace the children’s and their own talents!

Betty Baisden
The Connecticut Children's Museum provides experiences for children in a multiple intelligences-based museum that honors the culture of children. When the doors open, children begin their journey through the museum's eight rooms, immersing themselves in the exhibits which reflect their passions. Knowing that children acquire knowledge in many different ways, each exhibit is designed to provide a kaleidoscope of experiences. The museum uses Howard Gardner's Theory of Multiple Intelligences as the inspiration and template for its design. This theory honors the myriad ways in which children are competent and creative in the world and provides families and teachers with a way to discover their young children's passions and support their learning patterns. The eight intelligences are mirrored throughout the museum rooms: linguistic, logical-mathematical, spatial, musical, interpersonal, intrapersonal, naturalist and bodily-kinesthetic.

The museum provides a place rich in resources and unstructured time for children, parents and teachers and is open five days a week for visitors throughout greater New Haven. Since opening in January of 2001, the Connecticut Children's Museum has been a destination for thousands of children through the educational field trip program and family visits. With museum visits ranging from two to four hours, children wander into the exhibits they find most compelling. Nascent naturalists can spend focused time looking for the queen bee in the Naturalist Room beehive while tomorrow's builders and architects practice navigating the bulldozer through the Spatial Room construction site or chalking people and potted plants on the chalkboard house. Book lovers pretend to be the bunny in the bed of the great, green room from Goodnight Moon and future mail carriers practice their trade in the pint-sized post office. Children step into an imaginative and engaging experience in each room.
The Connecticut Children’s Museum is a place made beautiful with the art of the community. In addition to the choice of a rich and playful color palette used inside the building, the museum is decorated with a unique set of murals which emerged from the arts community. Art students, professional muralists and 117 school children designed, planned and painted murals in the exhibit spaces of our eight community-inspired, thematic rooms.

Using the very tall walls of the museum as their canvas, artists painted bees above a meadow in silhouette, a full-color construction site, giant trees from around the world, optical illusions, city park scenes, a New Haven cityscape “dollhouse” in detail, musicians and a huge globe, all including children's art.

The museum walls became a canvas for a broad community of artists:

artists
Kwadea Ade
Joellen Ahmed
Jennifer Crane
Cynthia Davis
Eduardo de Saayte
Tarja Ciel
Leslie Knob
Janet Lehnemann
Terry Lennon
Cathleen Roesch Michael
Hailey Peamell
Rolina Rosas-Cervantes
Eve Selles
Daniel Stieple
Gar Walker
Heather Whitehouse
Linda Hall Zucker

making murals kids
Claudette Ahumada
Hannah al Fair
Andrew Babbidge
Lucy Bahr
Miley Balokoz
Evan Bar
Rat Barrade
Shahin Banade
Yaslin Ben-Avie
Rachel Berekowitch
Zack Bresnider
Brian Blake
Jared Blake
Willie Beall
Miles Branch
Miles Burbank
Avenah Burnett
Alysa Burnight
Charlie Chamberlain
Ella Chen
Christian Coates
Max Cosentino
Jacobs Cottrell
Cory Collins
Harrison Congdon
Chelsea Cordova

Telbor Coward
Shakilous Crosby
Stephanie Davis
Anthony Day
Ben Delta-
Reese
Anna Deming
Shanite Dinhuto
Elza Doutte
Aliyah Drisan Rustry
Samm Judd
Jacqueline Duik
Shaylin Dornan
Hayden Dunham
Robert Durand III
Cowan Evans
Nina Ferril
Rehlin Forster
Hannah Friedman
Yolanda Gardner
Charles Garrit
Samantha Garris
Ana Galav
Gianni Gray
Maggie Hohar
Will Hohar
Emily Hung
Katie Hong
Sarah Hong
James Howard
Victor Hu
Ruby Hunter
Christopher Hurte-Dunn
Max Hurte
Kris Interim
Anneh Joppo
Miles Johnson
Sarah Jonathan
Chas Jones
Phyl Jones
Madeleine Kern
Matthew Kramer
Victor Kul
Aleandra Larson
Matthew Larson
Alex Lawrence

Nysa Loudon
Sara Loudon
Brian Lowery
Susanna Liebner
Molly Mahoquio-Wessel
Dylan McGuinness
Sean McGuinness
Taylor McGuinness
Kyra Middletor
Chanelle Moses
Sophia O'Brien-Ully
Alex Omer
Tyler Oulam
Denny Pau
Bryanna Pino
Miguel Pitman Jr
Nicky Ramsey
Kirit Ravikoth
Chelli Reddy
Gennie Regan-Moehle
James Regan-Moehle
Michael Richmond
Nash Richmond
Brutus Rish
Blute Rubins-Sohem-Cohen
Jovanni Santiago
Logan Scanlon
Jacob Scheer
Bryan Schmitt
Charlie Shadid
Alic Shuh
Thomas Simon
Rane Sullivan
Tajmah Sullivan
Jaslynn Sykes
Nicky Talbot
Nina Thompson
Jack Terran
Candido Torres
Taliesa Trijullo
Trent Voelker
Iris Wade
Taysha Warchalski
Ariel Weiser
Jermaine Young
Michelle Zeckin
educational field trips

The Connecticut Children's Museum provides a unique educational destination for children's programs where both teachers and students can be inspired by the exhibits and return to their programs prepared to deepen their work. Field trips are organized so that visiting early childhood programs, family childcare homes and schools have exclusive use of the museum. In preparation for the trip, teachers receive written information about the museum and its exhibits and they are introduced to the Creating Readers program. Staff can participate in a pre-visit tour of the museum which includes an overview of the multiple intelligences approach to learning and a hands-on workshop on teaching using the exhibits.

The museum's educational field trips are part of our affirmative attendance program. By designating days when the museum is reserved specifically for experiential and educational field trips, thousands of children from the region’s early childhood and elementary education communities visit. Through the field trip program, educators come to the museum with children from their settings to explore the exhibits and engage in educational activities. Each field trip group participates in the Creating Readers literacy program.

The museum partners with the Connecticut Board of Education and Services for the Blind to organize field trips for children who are blind and have visual disabilities. They explore the museum, finding Braille factoids to complement the hands-on exhibits. The Creating Readers program provides books which are in English, Spanish and Braille accompanied by a set of authentic props to tell the tale in a unique and textured way.

Central to the field trip program, and an integral part of our mission, is outreach to families. Families of children who visit learn about the museum in four related ways: (1) Parents often accompany their child's early childhood education program to the museum and participate in the field trip experience firsthand. (2) Each child receives a book for his or her home library through the Creating Readers literacy program. (3) All families receive written information about the Connecticut Children's Museum directly through a bi-lingual brochure. (4) Teachers encourage families to visit with their children and participate in the weekly Creating Readers Saturdays at 2 program.
To enrich family visits, the museum organizes the Saturdays at 2, arts-based, Creating Readers program. This program offers an opportunity for children to listen to a story be read, danced, dramatized or presented in American Sign Language. Local artists and educators are invited to come to the museum to read a children’s book aloud and use the book as a base for an entertaining rendition using their particular artistic expertise.

Each week, a book is chosen which integrates reading with the museum’s exhibits. The reader invites the children to gather around as they read aloud descriptively and interactively, techniques shown to increase interest and retention. After listening to the story, each child receives a Spanish, English or Braille copy of the book-of-the-week to hold and to have; an addition to their library. For example...

... on a day in the Interpersonal Room, the children listen to the story of The Tortilla Factory or La Tortillería, read in both English and Spanish. The book follows the tortilla from its beginning as green corn gathered by farmers, to the yellow kernels on the grinding stone and its transformation into a round tortilla ready for dinner. It inspires an exhibit where children shuck the corn, grind the kernels and knead the tortilla dough in preparation for making an authentic tortilla to take home with their book.

... or a day in the Musical Room, the children listen to the rhythmic prose of Max Found Two Sticks. This picture book depicts Max, a child with abounding musical intelligence, who creatively uses two twigs as drumsticks to make rhythms on the flower pots of his city stoop and trash cans by the curb ... as he imagines himself in a marching band. Read aloud to the children, it inspires a workshop making rhythm sticks, learning African drumming patterns, exploring drums from around the world, making drums from recyclables and recording the rhythmic adventures of the children.

Readers are drawn from the many talented people in the city: artists, naturalists, local college students, dancers, actors, educators and grandparents. All model a love of reading; Creating Readers gives them a place to put this passion to work in the lives of children.
Mornings at the Museum is an ongoing project which brings inner-city, center-based childcare programs, family childcare programs and informal childcare providers to the Connecticut Children’s Museum. The program provides access for childcare providers to the resources they need to support early childcare and education and to help the children in their care acquire the skills and knowledge they need to be ready for school.

The Crown Street YMCA was invited to participate in the first Mornings at the Museum series. This center was within walking distance and had established a relationship with the museum and its programs. Importantly, the director and staff of the YMCA program had demonstrated initiative in pursuing professional development opportunities.

Through this pilot of Mornings at the Museum, 30 children spent eight mornings over the course of four months immersed in the exhibit rooms, learning. Sixty percent of the families sent parents and grandparents to participate in the field trip experience and picture books were provided to children for their home libraries. A professional relationship was built between the YMCA staff and the museum through the distribution of curriculum boxes to support their teaching. This center has since achieved accreditation from the National Association for the Education of Young Children.

Following this success, Mornings at the Museum programs hosted families, teachers and children from the following New Haven-based programs: The Consultation Center’s Family Education & Support Program, Amethyst House Child & Parent Development Program, Crossroads Parent & Child Program, All Our Kin, and the Elizabeth Celotto Childcare Center.

Mornings at the Museum is an ongoing program currently serving School Readiness early childhood programs and family childcare providers. It provides high-quality, bi-lingual, children’s picture books and literacy props that complement the stories to participating providers and their children.

A collage of funding has been assembled from the United Way of Greater New Haven, the William Caspar Graustein Memorial Fund, the Anthem Foundation, the Early Learning Opportunities Act grant and the School Readiness Quality Enhancement grant to continue bringing hundreds of children, their families and teachers to the museum.

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I enjoyed helping them learn through incorporating the different multiple intelligences … these trips had a great impact on our children.  
Ernestine Miller, teacher
The museum’s distinct footprint is Creating Readers, its literacy program. Children need strong literacy learning skills to succeed in school. Children ages three through ten form the core visitor group to the Connecticut Children’s Museum, all poised to become, with support, accomplished readers. Within the museum’s walls, children acquire vibrant language through literacy experiences where books are read aloud and where they discover books tucked into every corner of the museum that provide information and a deeper engagement with the exhibits.

As children study the observation beehive, they notice the book Are You a Bee? displayed beside it. It beckons them to look inside for the answers to their questions.

Monkey tails and peddler caps encourage children to ask that Caps For Sale be read aloud as they transform the room, with their antics, into a theater. And children of all ages are enchanted when they enter the great, green room from Goodnight Moon, finding and touching the telephone, the two little kittens and the pair of mittens, the toy house and the young mouse ... and they call out, with perfect recall, each and every word of the book ... and then tuck themselves, just like the bunny from the beloved book, into bed.

Through Creating Readers, the literacy resources in children’s homes and in their early childhood environments are increased and reading opportunities broadened by the program’s gift of 11,000 picture books. This program is funded through a grant from the Community Foundation for Greater New Haven, community supporters and the museum’s operating budget.
Based on an annual budget of $596,299 for the fiscal year ending August 31, 2002 as reflected in audited financial statement.
universal design

The Children’s Building is guided by the tenets of Universal Design. Ramps abound to make exhibits accessible. Braille books are given to children who are blind through the Creating Readers program. Stories are told in American Sign Language.

the board of directors

The Board of Directors of The Children’s Building is a working board. They are:

- Budget designers
- Financial officers
- Fundraisers
- Policysetters
- Museum developers

Sieg Baracade Chair
Ruth Kozim
Sandra Malmquist
Marsha McCoy
Elizabeth McArthur
Paul Wessel
Creating Kids Teacher

the staff

The dedicated staff of The Children’s Building nurture and build the programs here. Each member contributes talent and time to shepherd Creating Kids through the rigorous process to achieve and maintain National Association for the Education of Young Children accreditation. Their knowledge of child development brilliantly shapes the exhibits and programs of the Connecticut Children’s Museum. As teachers of teachers, the staff share their expertise with the participants of Creating Curriculum. Above all, they infuse The Children’s Building with the sweet sounds of children, playing and learning in its many programs.

director
Sandra Malmquist

head teacher
Filomena Zarra

teachers
Michelle Bencivengo
Carol Ellis
Kelly Fenton
Nicholas Koululias
Erica Tasney
Aimee Wyn

associate teachers
Lissette Castro-Lopez
Keysha Leveis

museum staff
Anna Braithwaite
Kelly Fenton
Kerry Finnegan
Virginia Mendoza
Danielle Vitelli

museum beekeeper
David Blocher

building superintendent
Hector Arroyo

webmaster
Terry Nolan

dwight hall fellow
Lauren Gelmann
Like each carefully crafted hexagon in a bee hive, The Children’s Building was built by a community. The donations of individuals and corporations and the generous support of local funding institutions have made the renovation of this majestic building possible. Thank you for your support.
... the gift of time ...

museum renaissance committee

Chairs
Sandra Malmquist
Sigal Barsade
Ruth Koizim
Sharon Adams
Tracy Babidge
Katie Weyman Barnett
Lori Gregory
Colleen Hurwitz-Dunn
Marsha McCoy
Kelly McGuinness
Shane O’Herli
A.J. Scheetz
Sandy Scheetz
Jeffrey Shannon

museum makers

Sharon Adams
Melinda Agatian
Hector Arroyo
Babidge Family
Bahar Family
Bruce Barnett
Katie Weyman Barnett
Barnes Family
Sivan Barad
Michelle & Michael Bencivengo
Shannon Capasso & Matt
Marsha McCoy
Chamberlain-Stockholder
Family
Francis Clark
Jennifer Edwards
Francis Field
Rebecca Finch
Kerry Finnegan
George and Ann Ghiroli
Nili & Yaacov Gollan
Hurwitz Family

inspiration evening attendees

Promis Ahern
Lonnie Arndt
Hector Arroyo
Tracy Babidge
Thayer Baldwin
Maria Barinklä
Michelle Bencivengo
Gailit Ben Shahar
Shannon Capasso
Anna Casey
Karen Chapman
Robert DeMayo
Susan Devine
Tara Downes
Jennifer Edwards
Jonathan Feinberg
Rebecca Finch
Kerry Finnegan
Marie Francois
Don Gibson
Kathleen Gibson
Lisa Greenleaf
Caroline Haider
Heidi Hamilton
Susan Hutchinson
Jeff Jonathan
Howard Kahn
Jessie Kirchner
Karen Klein
Ruth Koizim
Kate Larson
Pam Larson
Vanetta Lloyd
Dorcas Lopez
Max Malmquist
Adam Mannon
Amy Mason-Mann
Stacy Mason-Mann
Darlene Mihalakos
Lorenz Nisbet
Leslie Prodis
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Mary Ann Rabic
Maria Ramos
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Kathie Reilly
Denise Rao
Joan Robinson
Natasha Smith
Melanie Swenson
Tracey-Carlo Family
Maria Tecocoatzi
Checker Tyler
Danielle Vitelli
Xue Zhuang Family
Filomena Zarra

It takes a community ... thank you to ours.