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.

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**Children's Building Programs**

- Creating Kids Childcare Center
- Creating Curriculum
- Connecticut Children's Museum
- Making Murals
- Educational Field Trips
- Saturdays at 2
- Mornings at the Museum
- Creating Readers
- Museum in the Community
- ABC's of School Readiness
- Family Childcare Tool Kit Project
- PACK—Parents & Communities for Kids

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**Dear Friends**

I love to watch them, one behind the other, trailing into the building … little legs carrying them, colors bright, going as fast as they can. These are the children, a bevy of red jackets with button dots, the little lads, lasses and ladybugs arriving at our door. They explore the building, finding its many strands to scurry along, over to Creating Kids, up to Mornings at the Museum … through educational field trips and Saturdays at 2. And each of our beautiful and many-dotted ladybug kids leave with the gift of a book.

The Children's Building is setting down roots in the community. Established to provide a magical place for children, their families and teachers, we continued, this year, to do just that.

The museum hosted the first School Readiness Celebration of Early Childhood Educators. It was a glorious evening to honor the hundreds of early childhood educators working throughout the City. Creating Curriculum, a series of classes for early childhood educators, and a Gateway Community College course, Children's Literature, were both taught here. Using the museum's extensive collection of children's picture books, practitioners were inspired in their work and earned credits that allow them to remain productively employed in their chosen profession, teaching young children.

The Educational Field Trip Program schedule brimmed with requests and one hundred children each week were given picture books through the Creating Readers project. Saturdays at 2 brought children and their aunts and uncles, mamas, papas and grandparents to the museum for participative and literary performances of stories.

The Bee … a Kid Again Party celebrated our first two years of work in the community. Grown-up guests nibbled on chocolate mice from the great, green room and munched on a honey cake while listening to our beekeeper read Winnie the Pooh and Some Bees.

Creating Kids Childcare Center enjoyed another year of joyfully full enrollment. Babies studied the elements snuggled under umbrellas during Rain Week, while the toddlers spent time scientifically exploring miniatures, erupting volcanoes and experimenting with magnetism. Our preschoolers learned about soups from around the world and ladled up bowlfuls to warm us through the long winter.

As a member of the Mayor’s Early Childhood Cabinet, I had the opportunity to help create the Celebration of Early Care and Education, held at City Hall, for New Haven's families and childcare providers. Over 300 parents and providers joined us for the event. As chair of the School Readiness Council’s Community Relations Committee, I participated in designing and launching the “ABC’s of School Readiness” campaign, an initiative to highlight the important role of parents and the community in readying young children for school. Through these activities, the message at the heart of The Children's Building is reaching more people, teaching children, inspiring early childhood educators and supporting families throughout the New Haven area.

It has been a wondrous year. Please follow our little ladybugs through the pages of this report to you, our community.

Sandra Malmquist
Director

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Ladybug Walking by Jacob Scheetz
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 Love & Friendship Week, children … practice cutting paper hearts and then slip them quietly under the doors of our City neighbors, learn how to read FRIEND in Braille, count all their friends, make paperclip friendship bracelets and sign ‘friend’ in American Sign Language. They read Frog and Toad Are Friends and create family collages. To complement their week, the children spend a morning in the Interpersonal Room of the museum, writing letters to people they love and posting their missives in the mailbox.
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 seventh 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 and the Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield Foundation. Creating Curriculum has graduated over 125 providers; all earned credits toward their CDA credential.

Creating Curriculum is a strength-based curriculum that discovers the uniqueness of each child.

Viola Waldo

The class has broadened my mind in a wonderful way.

Cindy Acosta

Creating Curriculum provides me with ideas and teaches me how to use developmentally appropriate educational materials in my family daycare related to the multiple intelligences.

Claudette Kidd-Scott
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 2001, the Connecticut Children’s Museum has been a destination for tens of thousands of children through the educational field trip program and family visits. Over half of the family visitors each week are returning to the museum, having come through the educational field trip program or visited on a previous weekend. With museum visits ranging from two to four hours, children wander into the exhibits they find most compelling. In the Logical-Mathematical Room, little ‘bean counters’ adjust their green visors and gather at a kidney bean-shaped table, adding, subtracting and carefully counting the room’s collections on the antique calculator. In the Musical Room, children create their own rhythms on the authentic steel drum or play invented melodies on the museum’s rosewood xylophone. Children walk with wonder into the great, green room and, ensconced in the little bed like the bunny in Goodnight Moon, whisper “good night” to the light, the balloon and the cow jumping over the moon. Children step into an imaginative and engaging experience in each museum 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, painting 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

Kwadwo Adae
Joefl Amend
Jenniffer Crane
Cynthia Davis
Eduardo de Soignie
Tanja Geis
Leslie Kwok
Janet Lehmann
Terry Lennox
Cathie-Rose Michaud
Hailey Parnell
Polina Porras-Cervantes
Rita Sellers
Daniel Stegos
Gar Waterman
Heather Whitehouse
Linda Hali Zucker

making murals kids

Claudette Ahumada
Hofit al-Bakh
Andrew Babbidge
Lucy Balaskak
Mikey Balokoz
Eve Barkin
Inci Baran
Samir Baran
Peydarya Ben-Ari
Rachel Berkowitz
Zack Bernstein
Brian Blake
Mat Blake
Willi Blumen
Miles Branch
Mickey Borkan
Anah Gewertz
Alysa Burnough
Charlie Chamberlain
Olive Chen
Christian Coassin
Max Coassin
Jacobi Coghlan
Cory Collins
Harrison Cogdon
Chelsea Cordova

Tailor Covenant
Shatoreen Crosby
Stephanie Davis
Anthony Day
Ben Dela Rocca
Anna Deming
Shannon Devin
Eli氮 Duffell
Alayah Driver
Sanej Duduk
Jacqueline Duhl
Shaydan Duncan
Hayden Dunham
Robert Durant III
Owen Evans
Nina Fellen
Rahim Foster
Hannah Friedman
Yolanda Gardner
Chauvel Garris
Samantha Girra
Ari Gissler
Gian Gray
Maggie Hohweiler
Wild Hohweiler
Emily Hong
Kate Hong
Sarah Hong
James Howard
Victor Hu
Ruby Hunter
Christopher Hurley
Mila Hurley
Nick Intramaggio
Amashia Jones
Miles Johnson
Sarah Jonathan
Chay Rice
Prika Jones
Maddie Kern
Matthew Kramer
Vicor Koe
Alexandra Larson
Matthew Larson
Alex Lawrence
Niyah Loudon

Saw Loudon
Brian Lowery
Susanne Lubelski
Molly Malamquino-Weasel
Dylan McGuinness
Sean McGuinness
Taylor McGuinness
Kym McDowell
Chanelle Mobley
Sophia O’Brien-Villery
Alex Omar
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Nora Thompson
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Trent Valdez
Iris Wilde
Travis Waston
Arnel Weise
Jermaine Young
Michelle Zeckin
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 and supported, in part, through a City of New Haven Community Development Block Grant. On weekday mornings, the museum is reserved specifically for educational field trips, bringing thousands of children from New Haven and the region’s early childhood education programs and elementary schools to visit. 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 in English, Spanish and Braille accompanied by a set of authentic props to tell the tale in a unique and textured way. The children follow the story line in Ruth Krauss’ classic, The Carrot Seed, tending to the seeds they plant and proudly filling their wheelbarrows with the carrots that came up, “just as the little children had known they would.”

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 or school group 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 literacy 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 Naturalist Room, the children gather to listen to A Walk in the Rainforest or Un Paseo por el Bosque Lluvioso, a bi-lingual story of a little ant who travels alphabetically through the beautifully illustrated rain forest pages of this book. The children reach for the matching finger puppet as the reader turns the page to “D … a dazzling Dragonfly”. Next is “E … an elegant Emerald Tree Boa” and the children form a long line to support a visiting boa constrictor for a unique and hands-on literacy experience.

... or a day in the Intrapersonal Room where the children are perched expectantly by the museum’s bear sculpture awaiting the talented actors from the Yale Children’s Theater Stage & Story Troupe. The children listen to a ‘funk’ version of Goldilocks and the Three Bears or Ricitos de Oro y los Tres Osos and then tap and clap their way through the story bringing new meaning, rhythm and rhyme to the lament of the mama bear!

Our readers are rooted in the community; the Saturdays at 2 program draws talented artists, actors and musicians, storytellers and educators to tell the tales and read the books. 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 childhood education and to help the children in their care acquire the skills and knowledge they need to be ready for school.

Family childcare providers from the City, and the children they care for, participate in a series of bi-weekly field trips as part of Mornings at the Museum. Providers, and the children, are given bi-lingual children’s picture books and literacy props to complement the stories and enhance their programs. Mornings at the Museum was featured on WTNH News Channel 8 as an innovative program supporting the essential childcare services provided by family childcare homes. This year, the program was funded by an Early Learning Opportunities Act grant, Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield and the School Readiness Quality Enhancement grant.

The Museum Multiple Intelligences Project, a new mornings’ initiative in 2003, was supported by the William Caspar Graustein Memorial Fund. Classrooms from School Readiness program sites, representing 175 children and 28 teachers, participated in this pilot project designed to strengthen the partnership of teachers and families in the education of young children. Using the Connecticut Children’s Museum as the learning site, we organized a series of family/teacher workshops, monthly educational field trips and matching family visits. The Museum Multiple Intelligences Project offered teachers and parents a more complete view of learning and a broader definition of intelligence so that they could continue to build on those ‘teachable moments’ of childhood as empowered teaching partners. To support their work, classrooms were provided with literacy-based curriculum boxes and children received a set of high-quality picture books for their home libraries.

Mornings at the Museum is supported by multiple funding streams and provides hundreds of children, their families and teachers with the opportunity to spend quality time learning at the Connecticut Children’s Museum.
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 trail the live ladybugs climbing up and down the twigs in the Naturalist Room terrarium, they see the book, Are You a Ladybug?, sitting beside the display. Opening it, they see illustrations and find an explanation for just how that little red beetle walks upside down!

Hopping from lily pad to lily pad, replete with little green frog boots, children ask that Jump, Frog, Jump be read aloud to accompany their ‘leaps’ into literacy. And with construction hats on their heads and measuring tapes in their hands, children are well-prepared to ‘read’ the Spatial Room blueprints. 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, children’s home libraries, and the book collections in their early childhood programs, increase and reading opportunities are broadened by the program’s gift of over 5,400 picture books annually. This program is funded through a grant from the Community Foundation for Greater New Haven and the City of New Haven Community Development Block Grant, community supporters and the museum’s operating budget.

Giving children books increases their imagination and lets them visit places that they may never get to visit otherwise ... which can bring them to a higher level of learning.  

Kim Landry family childcare provider
universal design

The Children’s Building, and all of its programs, are guided by the tenets of Universal Design. Ramps abound to make exhibits accessible. The Museum’s factoids are in Braille and picture books are Brailled for children who are blind through the Creating Readers program. Children learn to communicate artfully in American Sign Language.

board of directors 2003

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


*Sigal Barsade Chair*
Jennifer Carla
Katharine Goodbody
Ruth Koizim
Vanetta Lloyd
Sandra Malmquist

*Marsha McCoy*
Elizabeth McArthur
Cindy Reed-Brown
Paul Wessell

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Paul Wessell

Creating Kids teacher
Sandra Malmquist
head teacher
Filomena Zarra
teachers
Michelle Bencivengo
Carol Elkins
Kelly Fenton
Jessica Kligera
Nicholas Kouvelias
Erica Tanney
Aimee Wyn

*associate teachers*
Jefferine Barnes
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The staff of The Children’s Building inspire its programs and nurture the creativity and the spirits of the children around them. They use their knowledge of child development to weave innovation and interest together into a developmentally sound curriculum. Teachers apply their astute observational skills to the rigorous self-study process for Creating Kids to achieve and maintain National Association for the Education of Young Children accreditation. As teachers of teachers, the Creating Kids staff share their expertise with the participants of Creating Curriculum. We honor their dedication to making early childhood education a magical and meaningful experience.

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Sandra Malmquist

*Head Teacher*
Filomena Zarra

*Teachers*
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Aimee Wyn

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Jefferine Barnes
Lissette Castro-Lopez

*American Sign Language Teacher*
Beverly Angeles

*museum beekeeper*
David Blocher

*building superintendent*
Hector Arroyo

*webmaster*
Terry Nolan

*dwight hall fellow*
Lauren Gelmann
Based on an annual budget of $572,773 for the fiscal year ending August 31, 2003 as reflected in the audited financial statement.
A family childcare coordinator distributes the Tool Kit Boxes and provides staff support to family childcare providers seeking licensure.

The implementation of the Family Childcare Tool Kit Project is a partnership of All Our Kin and the Connecticut Children’s Museum and is funded by the New Haven School Readiness Council and Empower New Haven.

**Family Childcare Tool Kit Project**

The Family Childcare Tool Kit project is designed to advance the work of the New Haven School Readiness Council in supporting the development of licensed, quality, home-based childcare. The Connecticut Children’s Museum produces the Tool Kit boxes.

The Tool Kit project is a set of four boxes, each with a notebook outlining, step-by-step, the process to achieve State of Connecticut licensing as a family childcare home. The boxes contain all the paperwork needed for licensure and supporting materials to complete those requirements. The boxes include a collection of high-quality children’s picture books and curriculum materials.

**D … is for DRAW**

“Did you know that when children scribble this is their first lesson in writing?”

- Drawing helps children illustrate their ideas.
- Drawing helps children express their feelings.
- Drawing helps children get ready to write.

---

**The Community Relations Committee of the Council, chaired by the Museum’s Director, Sandra Malmquist, designed the ABC’s of School Readiness campaign.**

It is a collaborative effort of the New Haven School Readiness Council, WTNH News Channel 8, the Community Foundation for Greater New Haven, CT Voices for Children and the Connecticut Children’s Museum.

The mission of the New Haven School Readiness Council, which is appointed by the Mayor and the Superintendent of Schools, is to ensure that every child in the City of New Haven has access to quality, affordable early care and education and arrives at school with the skills, knowledge, and support that prepare him or her to succeed.

**The ABC’s of School Readiness**

The ABC’s of School Readiness is a campaign designed to help get children ready for school and to be confident and competent learners. Using the alphabet as a framework, the ABC’s of School Readiness highlights twenty-six important ideas that support children’s development. It makes an innovative contribution to early childhood care and education by blending child development and policy issues and by providing an alphabetical action plan for school readiness.

---

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- Drawing helps children get ready to write.
PACK
parents and communities for kids

PACK, Parents and Communities for Kids, is an initiative to promote learning in family and community settings.

The Museum’s PACK Project is a partnership with the Welch Annex School in the Hill neighborhood of New Haven, a school that has a strong bi-lingual education program. The project begins with a school-based field trip to the museum. Each of the 100 kindergarten children is given a bi-lingual children’s picture book and a literacy ‘prop’ that is coordinated with the book to encourage him or her to read and enact the story at home. For example, the children each receive a cactus plant to care for with the book, Listen to the Desert or Oye Al Desier by Pat Mora. They also receive a series of passes to return to the museum with their family.

During the subsequent family visits, the children, as experienced museum visitors, lead their families through the different rooms, sharing knowledge of the museum exhibits and inviting their families to play with them. Parents, as they become familiar with the museum and the theory of multiple intelligences, take their place as empowered teaching partners, both at home and at the Connecticut Children’s Museum.

PACK is supported by a partnership of The Community Foundation for Greater New Haven, the Wallace Foundation and the Community Foundation for Greater New Haven.

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Community Foundation for Greater New Haven
Early Learning Opportunities Act Grant
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