

NEWSLETTER

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THE FIRST CHILDREN'S MUSEUM OPENED IN 1899

By Bruce Libonn

The first children's museum in the world opened in Brooklyn, New York in 1899. As the largest cultural institution in New York City designed especially for families, the Brooklyn Children's Museum [BCM] welcomes more than 400,000 visitors each year. The staff estimates that 20 million children and caregivers have experienced the museum in the course of its rich history.

An article in the New York Times, November 12, 1905 reflects the understanding of the mission and vision common to all children's museums: "...we are trying here to establish through the channel of a child's curiosity an interest in the ethical meaning of the world around it. The child mind is what we bend every effort to appeal to here, not at the sacrifice, however, of accurate... information." The opportunity for engagement with the wider world, especially for children who might otherwise not have that chance, is fundamental to the mission of every children's museum.

Exhibits at the BCM include:

Totally Tots, is geared to children from 0-6 with nine different sensory play areas, including water, sand, music, dress-up, blocks, and more.

The NEST, is an interactive playscape on the museum's rooftop terrace, inspired by the baya weaver bird's unique nests and built of reclaimed NYC water tower cedar.

Neighborhood Nature presents the ecology of an urban environment and allows children to explore the intersection of the natural and human worlds.

World Brooklyn, where kids play in child-sized shops based on those found in the neighborhoods across Brooklyn. They take on the various roles of those who provide goods and services to gain an understanding and appreciation of the cooperative roles that allow communities to thrive.

The BCM offers a free after-school program, summer camps, school visits, activity kits for families to take home, and internship opportunities for teens.

As the Brooklyn Children's Museum prepares to celebrate its 125th year, it continues to thrive through the support of state and local government, corporations, foundations, and individuals.

We would love to help celebrate the oldest children's museum next year by breaking ground here in Nashville for the newest, state-of-the-art children's museum. Though technology has changed through the years, our missions remain the same – engagement with the community and the wider world for all the children of our cities so that they can bring their gifts and talents into the future as confident adults.



Thank you for stopping by to say Hi! We had a great time making rainsticks and enjoyed working with The Little Art House. Make your own! [Instructions](#)

