

# Madison Children's Museum

Connecting children with their families, their communities, and the world beyond through discovery learning and creative play

A recent 20-year study shows a direct correlation between social skills present at a young age and success in later life. Play is a critical activity to gain those skills and more. That's why the Access for Everyone programs at Madison Children's Museum allow all children and their families to explore everything that the museum offers, regardless of financial hardship or cognitive and physical abilities.

"The museum is all about play, but play is so much more than what we think about as adults," says Debbie Gilpin, president and chief executive officer of the Madison Children's Museum. "We set the stage with hands-on experiences that encourage kids to interact with the environment and each other in different ways. Each kid brings different

skills, and when they work together, everyone contributes and is valued. That's important for them to know as they become adults."

Staff members at the museum — which consistently ranks in the top 15 among the 350 children's museums in the United States and serves as a model for facilities in several other cities — help children make connections, whether playing in the Possibleopolis™ sprawling "city" made of 90 percent recycled materials and filled with challenging puzzles, interactive games, and loads of exploration opportunities; climbing the two-story Hodge-Podge Mahal; or meeting live animals on the Rooftop Ramble.

"Whether kids are from affluent or low-income environments affects which strategies they choose to address problems," Gilpin says. "Putting them together to solve a chal-

lenge at the museum is productive. What we're really doing is helping create thinkers and innovators who know how to cooperate in life and work."

When considered in that light, funding the Access for Everyone programs becomes even more vital.

Museum attendance by Access members increased 215 percent in the past year, and roughly one-fifth of the museum's membership



**madison children's museum**

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**LEADERSHIP**  
**PRESIDENT & CEO**  
**Debbie Gilpin**



Madison Children's Museum helps children develop the social skills needed for success later in life.

base (more than 750 families) is composed of Access members.

Yearly Access memberships are available for \$10 to those who qualify. For context, a family membership for four regularly costs \$125. Individual Access admission for non-members is \$1, compared with the regular \$7.95 admission fee.

The museum wrapped up a month-long fund drive in the spring, but funds are collected year-round to ensure, as the program name states, access for everyone.

"We don't turn anyone away for not being able to afford it," Gilpin says. ■

## HOW TO GIVE:

The Access for Everyone programs ensure that no children are turned away due to inability to pay admission.

**INDIVIDUALS:** Gifts help ensure that all children and their caregivers have access to the National Medal-winning museum. Madison Children's Museum accepts outright gifts and pledges, planned gifts, and in-kind gifts. Numerous volunteer opportunities are available, as well.

**CORPORATIONS:** Madison Children's Museum has a variety of event sponsorship and underwriting opportunities available for corporate partners. Annual events include the American Girl Benefit Sale, Wonder Ball Gala, Spring Scramble, and Tea & Trains. Corporate sponsorships begin at the \$1,000 level and are tailored to fit sponsors' marketing and investment goals.

Contact Dani Luckett at [dluckett@madisonchildrensmuseum.org](mailto:dluckett@madisonchildrensmuseum.org) for details, or make a gift online at [madisonchildrensmuseum.org](http://madisonchildrensmuseum.org).

