madison children's museum

July 2026

We join our community in mourning the loss of Corey Durell Ruiz and wishing for peace, safety, and transformation for our community in the days and weeks ahead. We share our deepest condolences with Mr. Ruiz's family, his friends, and our greater community in this tragic loss of life, and along with it, loss of feelings of trust, belonging, and safety. As a community and museum, we have major work in front of us to create the world we want to see, where all citizens, especially our Black and Brown citizens who are living with structural and systemic oppression, can thrive and belong.

When tragedy and grief shake our community to the core as they have this week, they also affect our youngest citizens, even though they may not express it. We're reminded every day that the best thing we can do for young children in the midst of a community crisis is to be present, to answer their questions, to be honest—and when possible, to shield them from unsettling headlines and the news cycle altogether.

While this might seem counterintuitive when we're rattled and facing despair, repeated images of violence, reminders of tragic events, or overheard news coverage can frighten young children, who are developmentally unable to process frightening events the way adults can, and often do not have the agency, experience or coping skills that most adults possess. (See "How do we talk to children in times of crisis?" for more.)

Ultimately, we all want what is best for our children. And oftentimes, the best thing we can do for young children is to remind them that they are loved and provide opportunities to play out their emotions, live in the moment, and not be burdened by their grownups' fears and sadness.

We are a learning organization, and we pledge to continue working with and learning from our community partners to become better listeners, stronger advocates, and more effective agents of change. We encourage you to learn from and support organizations doing crucial social justice work in our community. As one example of this work, our neighbors at YWCA Madison will hold their 25th annual Racial Justice Summit October 7–8. We hope to see you there.

In community,

Brenda Baker & Kia Karlen, Co-CEOs