

# New Curiosity Playground at Sciencenter fosters learning, fun

AMY GAULKE 2:09 a.m. EDT August 3, 2016

## New feature opens Saturday



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Did you know that more than 80 percent of your child's brain growth is completed by age 3? Help your little ones get a jumpstart with a visit to the Sciencenter's new Curiosity Playground, opening on Saturday.

To complement our indoor Curiosity Corner, this new outdoor play space provides little ones, ages 0 to 4, with the developmental tools and educational foundation for a successful childhood. Each exhibit in this new space is fully hands-on and encourages exploration using the scientific process — such as making observations, making predictions, asking questions and building communication skills. With specified areas that focus on different learning goals, exhibits highlight each early childhood developmental stage so that toddlers continue to learn in the space at every visit.

The Curiosity Playground's designated infant area contains exhibits that encourage your little ones to take on new challenges like standing and crawling. Your itty-bitty scientists will learn how to climb up and through soft, brightly colored blocks and tunnels while gaining confidence in their own abilities. On the contrast mat, infants can investigate and observe enticing shapes, patterns and textures while developing the crucial spatial and cognitive skills for later in childhood. In this space, infants are given the room to safely identify and approach new experiences and develop their creativity as they explore.



To help toddlers develop gross motor skills, the new space offers several exhibit elements where children can increase their strength, balance and body coordination. Toddlers will utilize their major muscle groups and enhance their spatial skills as they climb up, over and through giant logs or experiment with a scaled-down version of the Big Blue Blocks — a Sciencenter guest favorite. On colorful, insect-themed wheeled scooters, kids will improve their balance and learn new ways to move their muscles as they travel backwards, forwards, sideways, and round and round. And on the animal bouncers, your little ones will discover physical coordination while also getting a fun workout!

The Curiosity Playground also includes a sand play area to encourage fine motor-skill development. In this

exhibit space, children are able to explore through open-ended activities and immerse themselves in a sensory setting. Toddlers will investigate concepts such as measuring, volume and movement as they experiment with different tools like cups, funnels and sifters. At the nearby exploration tables, kids can use scales to further their investigation of measurement and approach topics such as balance and problem-solving as they weigh different materials and build structures of their own design.

With all of these exhibits and more, the Curiosity Playground is sure to offer hours of science fun for your little ones. Come explore the new space when it opens on Saturday and watch for even more exhibit additions in the months to come.



To learn more about Sciencenter programs, planning your visit, or purchasing a membership, visit [www.sciencenter.org](http://www.sciencenter.org), call 607-272-0600, or stop by our front desk. Sciencenter hours are 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Saturday; 12 to 5 p.m. Sunday in July and August.

Sciencenter mini-golf is open during museum hours through Nov. 30, weather permitting. Mini-golf pricing does not include nor require museum admission and is fully wheelchair accessible with ADA-approved clubs.

Museum admission is \$8 for adults, \$7 for seniors, \$6 for children 2 to 17 years old, and free to members and children under 2 years old. The Sciencenter is a proud member of the Discovery Trail.

*Gaulke is the public and media relations manager for the Sciencenter.*CONNECT