

Building a Brighter Future Through Play: How Discovery Gateway Children's Museum Supports Early Childhood Development

Salt Lake City, UT — Sept. 16, 2025 — At Utah's longest-running children's museum, [Discovery Gateway Children's Museum](#), play is more than fun—it's the foundation of learning. With exhibits carefully crafted in-house, the museum offers parents and caregivers a vital resource to support their children's growth during the most critical years of brain development.

Research shows that 90% of a child's brain develops before age five, and more than 1 million new neural connections form every second during those early years. Additionally, the brain's architecture is built through meaningful back-and-forth interactions during these years.

"Our exhibits are built to inspire discovery at every stage of childhood," said Kathleen Bodenlos, CEO of Discovery Gateway Children's Museum. "Parents can feel confident that when they bring their kids here, they're not only making memories, they're also strengthening essential developmental skills."

As children grow up in an increasingly digital world, where screens and online content dominate much of their attention, hands-on, interactive learning experiences like those offered by the museum remain essential for developing critical thinking, creativity, and social-emotional skills that cannot be cultivated solely through passive screen time. At the children's museum, kids engage all of their senses, experiment, problem-solve, and collaborate with peers, gaining skills that help them better navigate real-world challenges they face now and in the future.

Beyond entertainment, Discovery Gateway Children's Museum is dedicated to helping families have uniquely impactful experiences that support the early years of their children's lives. Some of the many exhibits & programs offered within the 60,000 square foot space include the following:

- **Kids' Eye View Exhibits** - This child-sized town allows kids to practice real-world skills such as communication, cooperation, and critical thinking through role-playing, helping to build confidence, resilience, and a deeper understanding of the world they are growing up in.
- **Stillson River Railroad** - The largest model train exhibit in the Intermountain West, this experience fosters historical & cultural awareness through its 1950s theme, promotes systems thinking as trains connect towns throughout the landscape, and invites storytelling and language development as kids and parents discover the intricate details woven throughout the exhibit.
- **Hands-on Science & Art** - The STEAM Lab offers hands-on science experiments that encourage curiosity while helping kids understand cause and effect. The Art Studio offers daily art projects that promote creativity and self-expression, while also helping kids develop fine motor skills.

For families across Utah—including thousands reached through the museum’s school programs and community initiatives—as well as the millions of people from around the world who visit Salt Lake City every year, Discovery Gateway Children’s Museum is more than a place to play; it’s a place to learn and grow that has long-lasting impact far beyond its walls.

About Discovery Gateway Children’s Museum

Located in the heart of downtown Salt Lake City at 444 West 100 South, Discovery Gateway Children’s Museum is a premier destination for hands-on learning and imaginative play. A staple in the community for almost 50 years, it features 60,000 square feet of interactive exhibits designed to spark curiosity and creativity in children of all ages. Additionally, it is Utah’s only museum with a dedicated focus on STEM education, offering immersive experiences in science, technology, engineering, and math, alongside exhibits that highlight art, health, and community. Welcoming 177,000 visitors annually, Discovery Gateway Children’s Museum is committed to educational experiences that inspire lifelong learning and foster the next generation of innovators and leaders.

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