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‘CRITTER CROSSING’ SPECIAL TODDLER ROOM OPENS AT THE CHILDREN MUSEUM

West Hartford, CT (April 30, 2007)...The Children’s Museum (formerly Science Center of Connecticut) has announced the opening of its new space dedicated to toddlers and youngsters aged four and under. Entitled “Critter Crossing” to reflect its animal and nature-themed environment, the area provides a safe and toddler-friendly atmosphere for exploration and hands-on discovery. Made possible by grants from the H. A. Vance Foundation as well as The Gackstatter Foundation, the space includes a cabin play house, texture table, live animals, a “mountain” slide and more.

“Play is an important part of learning”, noted Hank Gruner, Acting Museum Director, who is responsible for the Museum’s programs and exhibits. “Children are naturally curious and love watching animals. We also recognize the importance of the first five years of life in the cognitive development of children. ‘Critter Crossing’ addresses the needs of this young age group and combines the best of the Museum’s core elements- the preschool, animals and hands-on exhibits,” Gruner went on to comment.

The room, designed by Kymrie Zaslow, The Children’s Museum’s Preschool Outreach Coordinator, is decoratively painted with nature murals, donated by artist Suzanne Muzechuck. A special animal-themed toddler morning program, *Tales & Tails*, will be an ongoing feature of the room, sponsored in part by Borders. Designed for toddlers and their accompanying caregiver, the six week program will include arts and crafts activities, up-close animal demonstrations, related storytelling, music and movement. The next series will be offered in September; the program debuted at the end of April and the initial sessions are fully enrolled.

The Children’s Museum is committed to igniting the curiosity of young people through science and nature. In addition to the museum, the organization includes the United Technologies Wildlife Sanctuary, the Gengras Planetarium, Roaring Brook Nature Center in Canton, and The Children’s Museum Preschool, one of the oldest preschools in the country. The Children’s Museum serves over 200,000 people annually, and is the fifth oldest children’s museum in the country, and serves more people than any other Connecticut museum. For more information visit the Museum’s website at www.TheChildrensMuseumCT.org .

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