



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

July 28, 2026

Contact:

Nicole Orlando, Director of Marketing and Communications, Betty Brinn Children's Museum
norlando@bbcmkids.org | 414-310-9178

Liz Senerchia, External Communications, Children's Wisconsin
esenerchia@childrenswi.org | 202-321-3353

BETTY BRINN CHILDREN'S MUSEUM PARTNERS WITH CHILDREN'S WISCONSIN TO LAUNCH "PLAY TOGETHER, GROW TOGETHER"

This caregiver engagement series will take place during the Museum's Free Community Access Days through November 2026

MILWAUKEE, WI (July 28, 2026) – In an effort to expand access to preventative mental and behavioral health resources for Milwaukee families, the Betty Brinn Children's Museum has partnered with Children's Wisconsin to launch *Play Together, Grow Together*. This six-month caregiver engagement series will be hosted at the Museum on the third Thursday of each month through November, and it will be led by Children's Wisconsin therapists and behavioral health professionals.

According to the Wisconsin Office of Children's Mental Health, about 80% of brain development occurs between birth and age three. By age five, the brain has grown to 90% of its full size. During these crucial early developmental years, babies and toddlers are rapidly developing brain connections that are formed through positive experiences and engagement with their caregivers. These early interactions with adults lay the foundation for healthy relationships and emotional well-being and can set children up for better success in school and classroom settings. Play is an essential part of this development.

"Supporting children's mental and behavioral health begins long before a family walks into a clinic," said Amy Herbst, Vice President of Mental and Behavioral Health at Children's Wisconsin. "Through *Play Together, Grow Together*, our therapists are meeting caregivers where they are, using play to model simple, evidence-based strategies that foster healthy relationships, build resilience and support children's social-emotional development from the very beginning."

During each *Play Together, Grow Together* program, licensed therapists and behavioral health professionals from Children's Wisconsin will lead short, interactive caregiver learning sessions. Families will be invited to participate in play-based activities together while therapists model techniques that can easily be used at home. Caregivers will leave with simple, research-backed tools, tip sheets and information about additional Children's Wisconsin resources, if they would like further support.

"Play is far more than fun. It's fundamental to early childhood development, providing a safe space for children to explore emotions, build confidence and strengthen relationships with peers and

caregivers,” said Tina Quealy, CEO at Betty Brinn Children’s Museum. “Our goal is to reduce barriers to mental and behavioral resources for families, ensuring that all caregivers have access to licensed mental and behavioral health professionals who can help build caregiver confidence and strengthen everyday moments of connection.”

Play Together, Grow Together launched in June and will continue monthly through November as part of the Museum’s free Community Access Day, taking place on August 20, September 17, October 15 and November 19 from 1:30-3:30 p.m. While designed primarily for caregivers of children ages one to three, the sessions welcome families with children from birth through age eight. Learn more at bbcmkids.org.

About Betty Brinn Children’s Museum

Through the power of play, the Betty Brinn Children’s Museum (BBCM) fosters joy, confidence and curiosity in children and families, inspiring a journey of lifelong learning. BBCM is dedicated to ensuring that all children have access to its immersive, educational exhibits and programs designed to promote the social, emotional and intellectual growth of children from birth through age eight. The Museum opened in 1995 and serves nearly 175,000 visitors each year at its downtown Milwaukee location.

The Betty Brinn Children’s Museum is open Wednesday-Monday from 9 a.m.-4:30 p.m. It is closed to the public on Tuesdays and select holidays. Learn more and purchase admission online at bbcmkids.org.

About Children’s Wisconsin

Children’s Wisconsin is the region’s only independent health care system dedicated solely to the health and well-being of children. The hospital, with locations in Milwaukee and Neenah, Wisconsin, is recognized as one of the leading pediatric health care centers in the United States. It is ranked among the top pediatric hospitals in the country by U.S. News & World Report’s 2025-26 Best Children’s Hospitals report. Children’s Wisconsin provides primary care, specialty care, urgent care, emergency care, mental and behavioral health care, community health services, foster and adoption services, child and family counseling, child advocacy services and family resource centers. Children’s Wisconsin achieves its mission in part through donations from individuals, corporations and foundations and is proud to be a member of the Children’s Miracle Network.

###