

Children's Museum of the East End Prospective Story Ideas

Solutions to the National Obesity Epidemic

Child obesity in America has tripled in the last 20 years. One-third of American children are either overweight or obese, and with African American and Latino children, the figure increases to one-half. Weight-related diseases such as high blood pressure and diabetes are rising dramatically as a result. The Children's Museum of the East End is addressing the obesity epidemic through a range of programs, including exhibit components that encourage active play and exercise. It's especially vital for CMEE to offer these opportunities because local schools have reduced the time children have for recess. Currently, East End children typically get only 20 minutes of recess per day. By helping to reduce childhood obesity and the diseases associated with it, CMEE can have a long-term positive effect on America's health care costs.

Literacy Matters

One out of seven Eastern Long Island residents is functionally illiterate. It is an invisible epidemic with far reaching, crippling impact. Children of illiterate parents are twice as likely to be illiterate themselves. To help resolve this crisis, CMEE partnered with Sandpiper Music Together on a new, free Family Literacy Initiative "Cantemos Juntos" – an eight week semester of classes that enhance the parenting, literacy and language skills of Spanish speaking parents and their children. Currently, the program is over enrolled and CMEE is seeking ways to expand it.

The Need for Expanding Pre-School Options for Parents

Only 38% of 4 year olds in New York State are currently enrolled in Pre-K programs. On the East End there are extensive wait lists for Pre-K, which most schools do not have the resources to provide. Because studies show how vital the Pre-K year is to long-term success in school, the Children's Museum of the East End has partnered with Head Start to make a pre-school accessible to the neediest children in our communities. CMEE is a "Pre-K wonderland" according to one local educator and it's the perfect environment to assist with the cognitive and emotional development of three and four-year-olds, giving them a "head start" on their educational attainment.

Businesses that Benefit from Bad Weather in the Hamptons

A prediction for rain may dampen the spirits of many local businesses on the East End that thrive and even depend, on sunny skies. But for some, including the Children's Museum of the East End, a cloudy, wet forecast is a prediction for sky-high attendance. On a rainy day, CMEE offers one of the few destinations where families can get out of the house and children are free to run around and play. Other businesses including movie theaters and retailers confirm that they too see more foot traffic and better business on overcast days.

The Power of Play

"All work and no play" begins the proverb. According to specialists in early childhood education, it makes for very unhealthy children. While many define play as the opposite of work, play is serious business and is vital to childhood development. Why is play so important? Researchers have found that play improves "verbalization, vocabulary, language comprehension, attention span, imagination, concentration, impulse control, curiosity, cooperation, empathy, and group participation." Without play, our children would be very dull indeed. Unfortunately, children are spending far less time playing. According to a recent study by the University of Michigan, children spend half the time outside than they did just 20 years ago. Instead, they're spending 6 ½ hours each day with electronic media. Parents, policymakers, and educators have begun to acknowledge the power of play and have led the effort to construct playgrounds and children's museums like CMEE to unlock the power of play.