



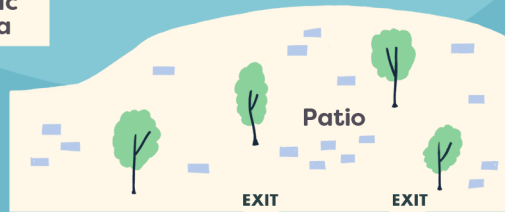
Exploration Station[®] ...a children's museum



Picnic Area



Explorlot Castle



Patio



Paleontology



Fire Department



My House

Temporary Exhibit



Train Table



Up Up and Away



Take Flight



Police Station



Information

Illumination



Creative Flight

STEAM Learning Lab



Shop-a-lot Market

Entrance

EXIT

Activity Room



Pet Clinic



Wreck Resort



Lickety Split Soda Shop

KEY

Areas that might be loud

Restrooms

EXIT Emergency Exit

EXIT

Rules

1. Please use your walking feet.
2. Children and their parents or guardians need to stick together.
3. Please pick up after yourself when done exploring in an area.
4. We do not allow outside food or drinks in the museum.
5. Please respect all of our museum visitors and staff.
6. Please do not climb on exhibits.
7. We are so pleased you have come to visit. Enjoy your time exploring with us.



Bourbonnais Township
PARK DISTRICT

Exploration Station®
...a children's museum

Museum History

Exploration Station...a children's museum opened its doors on July 28, 1990 through the efforts of a core of dedicated and inspired volunteers. Late in 1987, Marilyn O'Flaherty, a retired Bradley art teacher, presented the concept of a hands-on exploration and discovery museum for children to the Bourbonnais Township Park District. The Park District adopted the concept and soon began work on developing a children's museum under the leadership of Mrs. O'Flaherty.

A Board of Trustees was created from civic, business, municipal and educational leadership that would consult and assist in the creation of a mini-museum. Through the combined efforts of trustees and other area volunteers, a small traveling gallery was created. The traveling gallery brought hands-on, interactive museum experiences to schools and libraries where such opportunities were not affordable or available.

The popularity of the traveling gallery was overwhelming upon its introduction to the community. It was time to find an affordable home for the children's museum. Goals and objectives were updated and redefined, exhibit specifics determined and the Park District hired the first full-time museum employee, Mrs. O'Flaherty. A search began for a facility. A small, older building that needed a lot of work was found to be promising. With the community volunteer help, a lot of donated materials and months of hard labor, the 2300 square foot building was made suitable and the doors were opened to the public on a 90-degree day in late July. Featured was one exhibit – a two-story, six-room model of a medieval castle. Then throughout the facility visitors found hands-on items such as tools, musical instruments and wooden shoes. There were also optical instruments from the Netherlands, clothing jewelry from the Maasai of Kenya, part of a heat shield from a NASA space vehicle; and many natural science offerings, such as rocks, fossils, skulls, and skins. More than 1400 people visited the children's museum that weekend, even without a working air conditioning unit in the building. And they returned. Twenty-two thousand persons crossed the threshold the first year.

In October 1997, a 10,000 square foot facility to serve as a permanent home for the Exploration Station was opened on the Perry Farm Park. Since the opening of the children's museum in 1990, over 400,000 visitors have crossed the threshold. While the children's museum serves a 65-mile radius, visitors from more than 45 states and 25 foreign countries have registered in the guest book.