

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## Imagine Children's Museum Awarded Prestigious Grant to Expand *Little Science Lab* Program

\$250,000 Awarded Over Three Years

Everett, WA (August 16, 2024) – [Imagine Children's Museum](#) is delighted to announce it has received a prestigious Museums for America grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS). The total grant award is \$250,000 over three years. This significant funding will enhance our successful *Little Science Lab* program, a pivotal initiative designed to ignite young minds through playful learning and hands-on science and math experiences.

The [Little Science Lab](#) program, which is offered in free, weekly 30-minute interactive sessions, has become a cornerstone in our commitment to early childhood education. Facilitated by Imagine educators, these sessions take place at public libraries, community centers and preschools, providing children with engaging, hands-on activities that promote foundational science and math skills. To further support our diverse community, sessions may be bilingual, incorporating Spanish-language resources and the assistance of community partner translators.

"We are thrilled to be able to expand the *Little Science Lab* program to more communities," said Elizabeth (Elee) Wood, PhD, Chief Executive Officer at Imagine Children's Museum. "Research has shown that young children have a high capacity to learn science concepts and principles. The earlier we get them interested in science and support their ability to explore and discover, the more successful they will be."

This grant will enable a dedicated staff member to focus on advancing community partnerships, expanding the number of program delivery sites throughout the region, and deepening the impact of early science and math learning. The staff member will work closely with partners to identify and meet the specific needs of underserved communities, ensuring that access to quality early learning opportunities is more equitable.

The need for this expansion is evident. Recent data reveals that children entering kindergarten in Washington State often lack sufficient math and science skills. Only 66% of Washington kindergarteners enter school with the skills in math expected for their age, according to the 2022-23 Washington Kindergarten Inventory of Developing Skills (WaKIDS). In one local school district, Everett Public Schools, only 49% of kindergarteners were ready in all six developmental areas assessed, including math. Moreover, the challenges persist as students progress in school, with only 55.9% of all students in the district meeting science standards and 51.7% of all students in the district meeting math standards.

Our program also addresses the critical need for teacher and parent support. Many early childhood teachers and families feel unprepared to teach preschool math and science due to a lack of accessible, engaging

resources and training. Our expanded program will include professional development workshops and family engagement activities to bridge this gap and foster a positive, supportive learning environment.

*Little Science Lab's* expansion will also feature monthly Family Math Nights at Imagine Children's Museum and other community locations. These events are designed to engage families in fun, educational activities, further supporting the development of early math and science skills.

Imagine Museum is dedicated to leveraging this grant to enhance our community impact, providing children, families and teachers with the tools they need to succeed. Together with our partners, we look forward to making significant strides in early childhood education and building a stronger foundation for future learning.

**Museums for America** (MFA) is the largest grant funding opportunity of the **IMLS**, which is the primary source of federal support for the nation's libraries and museums. Imagine Children's Museum is one of 115 museums of diverse sizes, disciplines and geographies across the United States selected to be MFA grant recipients this fiscal year, and one of only two institutions in Washington state. Nationwide, recipient institutions will receive \$23,361,915 in federal funding to support strategic, project-based initiatives to serve the public through exhibitions, educational programs, professional development, research and collections management.

"As pillars of our communities, libraries and museums bring people together by providing important programs, services, and collections. These institutions are trusted spaces where people can learn, explore and grow," said IMLS Director Crosby Kemper. "IMLS is proud to support their initiatives through our grants as they educate and enhance their communities."

For more information about this IMLS grant (MA-255664-OMS-24), the Little Science Lab program and our ongoing initiatives, please visit [ImagineCM.org](http://ImagineCM.org) or contact:

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**About Imagine Children's Museum**

Nestled in the heart of downtown Everett, WA, Imagine Children's Museum has been a cherished destination for creative exploration for over 30 years. Our mission is to enrich the lives of children through playful learning by offering interactive exhibits, educational programs, and family-friendly activities. As the largest children's museum on the West Coast, Imagine is the ultimate play and learning destination for children ages 12 and under and their families. Discover where play inspires imaginations! Plan your next visit today at [ImagineCM.org](http://ImagineCM.org) and follow us on [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#).

**About Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS)**

The Institute of Museum and Library Services is the primary source of federal support for the nation's libraries and museums. We advance, support, and empower America's museums, libraries, and related organizations through grantmaking, research, and policy development. IMLS envisions a nation where individuals and communities have access to museums and libraries to learn from and be inspired by the trusted information, ideas, and stories they contain about our diverse natural and cultural heritage. To learn more, visit [www.imls.gov](http://www.imls.gov) and follow us on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).