Library opens mock kindergarten classroom at Linden Branch

COLUMBUS—Columbus Metropolitan Library (CML) has opened a dedicated space at its Linden Branch where preschoolers and their families can familiarize themselves with what it’s like in a kindergarten classroom.

Called a Ready for Kindergarten Area, the space includes an interactive whiteboard equipped with learning apps, a magnetic word wall, a miniature school bus, toys that assist with motor and cognitive development and more. The concept is reflective of CML’s strategy to impact Young Minds by improving kindergarten readiness, third grade reading proficiency and high school graduation rates.

“Kindergarten readiness is such a critical need in the Linden area and throughout our community,” said CML CEO Patrick Losinski. “While this is a fun and attractive space, it’s not a play area. Everything is intentional and instructive.”

New environments can be intimidating, especially to children. Kindergarten can be overwhelming for some. CML hopes that familiarizing children with the kindergarten environment with this innovative area before they enter school will help alleviate uncertainty, giving these new students better opportunities for success from the beginning.

Access to the space will be limited to children who will soon enter kindergarten. The library will offer Ready for Kindergarten programming, a variety of learning stations and tips for parents on ways to prepare children for kindergarten. CML hopes local preschools will take advantage of the space and there are also plans for targeted volunteer opportunities.
The Linden Branch’s *Ready for Kindergarten Area* was supported by a gift from PNC Bank. “PNC recognizes that kindergarten readiness is the foundation of the health of our children, their families and ultimately our local economy,” said Michael Gonsiorowski, PNC regional president for Columbus. “Preparing our young children for their first day of school helps them learn and grow up to be our future leaders, innovators and employers.”

The first *Ready for Kindergarten Area* was piloted at CML’s Karl Road Branch in spring 2013 and continues to see a lot of activity. CML’s new Driving Park Branch, which opened this summer, also has a busy *Ready for Kindergarten Area*. CML plans to implement these spaces in each of its new or renovated branches, as well as throughout the system within the next several years.

---

*Columbus Metropolitan Library has served the people of Franklin County, Ohio for 141 years. With its Main Library and 21 branches, CML is well known for signature services and programs like Homework Help Centers, Reading Buddies, Summer Reading Club and the Ready to Read Corps. The library’s Strategic Plan supports the vision of “a thriving community where wisdom prevails,” which positions CML to respond to areas of urgent need: kids unprepared for kindergarten, third grade reading proficiency, high school graduation, college readiness and employment resources.*

*CML was named a 2011 National Medal Winner by the Institute for Museum and Library Services for work in community service, the highest honor for libraries and museums. In 2013, Columbus Metropolitan Library became the only large public library in the country to be rated a 5-Star Library for all seven years of Library Journal’s industry standards rating program.*

---