



## IMAGINE...

A place for play and possibilities.

A place for experiential learning.

A place for all.

  
**Children's**  
MUSEUM

**Preliminary  
Business Plan  
2015**





Preliminary  
Business Plan  
2015



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# 1.0 Forward

The following document encompasses the Preliminary Business Plan for the London Regional Children's Museum (the "Children's Museum").

The purpose of the Preliminary Business Plan is to provide a high-level vision for and summary of the plan for the new facility. Significant effort, thought and time from the Children's Museum team has gone into the creation of the Preliminary Business Plan. It is founded upon best practice and market research and consultation with internal and external stakeholders. It summarizes the Children's Museum's initial ideas and plans for the future.

However, it's imperative to note that the Preliminary Business Plan is the initial articulation of the Children's Museum's plan. There is much more exploration and work to be done to move to the creation of a final, comprehensive business plan.

Further action must be taken prior to the development of the final business plan. This includes, first and foremost, acquiring a location for the new facility. Once a new facility has been secured, financial statements, artist renderings, detailed exhibit and programming will be incorporated to add to the core content included in the Preliminary Business Plan.



# 2.0 The Story

## 2.1 Where Children Learn and Grow

The Children's Museum is a uniquely innovative childhood development resource that fosters creative learning and the excitement of discovery through play. It has been in the community, and in Londoners' lives, for more than 35 years. It's where families go to dream and play, and where children gather to learn and grow.

Every year, the Children's Museum provides approximately 80,000 children and their families the chance to make memories that last a lifetime. Children who visit learn how the world works, who they are, and who they might become through play. Exhibits and stimulating learning experiences allow them to explore their history and heritage, investigate the complexities of science and social relationships, and celebrate the beauty in art and culture. The Children's Museum helps children indulge their curiosity and play their way to a life of innovation and creative discovery.

## 2.2 A Time for Change

The beloved building of the Children's Museum has seen a lot of play. If its walls could talk, it would tell you about the beautiful laughter, the play, and the learning. It would tell you about camps, events and imaginative crafts. It would tell you about extraordinary exhibits, staff, and families.

However, there have also been challenges and it has seen a lot of wear. The maintenance needs and costs of running the building have imposed limitations on new exhibits, programs, and activities. The current space inhibits the ability to create new, dynamic content that appeals to and aligns with the needs of today's children and families.

This transition into a new location is key to the future success of the Children's Museum and in October 2014, the Board of Directors initiated a strategy to sell the current building and develop plans for the relocation of the Children's Museum.

The vision and a bold new direction for the Children's Museum will ensure more interactive play, up-to-date exhibits, and shared spaces that foster a community of innovation where all children can learn, connect, and grow through play.



# The Dream

*Imagine a place where ...*

Children are at the centre  
of everything.

Flexible, modular design accommodates  
large scale travelling exhibits that allow  
London to host both nationally and  
internationally renowned exhibitions.

Families, community groups,  
and businesses can host their  
events against a unique and  
playful backdrop.

Curiosity and  
creativity are  
celebrated.

Local heritage and  
culture is celebrated.

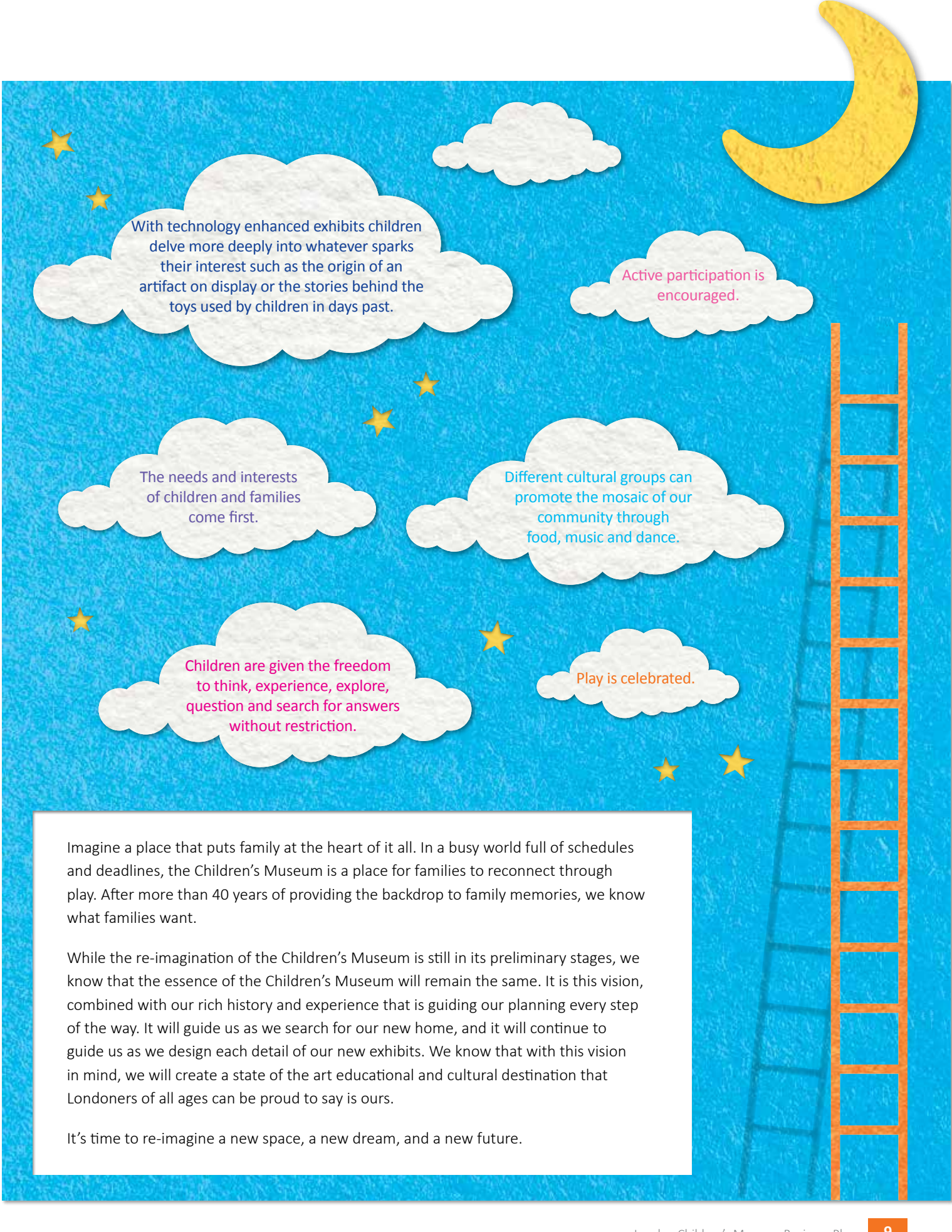
Artifacts are part of  
the experience.

Children are empowered to respect  
this past by handling real objects  
and learning about the importance  
of preserving our history.

Families can play a favourite  
board game from past or  
present or even design a new  
game of their own – together!

History comes alive and  
an appreciation of the  
past is cultivated.





With technology enhanced exhibits children delve more deeply into whatever sparks their interest such as the origin of an artifact on display or the stories behind the toys used by children in days past.

Active participation is encouraged.

The needs and interests of children and families come first.

Different cultural groups can promote the mosaic of our community through food, music and dance.

Children are given the freedom to think, experience, explore, question and search for answers without restriction.

Play is celebrated.

Imagine a place that puts family at the heart of it all. In a busy world full of schedules and deadlines, the Children's Museum is a place for families to reconnect through play. After more than 40 years of providing the backdrop to family memories, we know what families want.

While the re-imagination of the Children's Museum is still in its preliminary stages, we know that the essence of the Children's Museum will remain the same. It is this vision, combined with our rich history and experience that is guiding our planning every step of the way. It will guide us as we search for our new home, and it will continue to guide us as we design each detail of our new exhibits. We know that with this vision in mind, we will create a state of the art educational and cultural destination that Londoners of all ages can be proud to say is ours.

It's time to re-imagine a new space, a new dream, and a new future.





## 3.0 About Us

### 3.1 Vision

Igniting curiosity through the power of play.

### 3.2 Mission

The Children's Museum will provide children and their families with extraordinary hands-on learning experiences in a distinctly child centered environment.

### 3.3 Values

Our values serve as an important compass for our staff, volunteers, partners and visitors and guide how we operate as a family destination, employer of choice and strategic partner in the growth and enrichment of our community.

1. Stay Curious: We will provide an environment that encourages creativity, innovation, and exploration through diverse learning experiences for our staff, volunteers and visitors.
2. Be Awesome: We will provide an environment that encourages and celebrates excellence in everything that we do.
3. Be Helpful: We will diligently steward the visitor experience and collaborate with our community to positively impact the lives of others.
4. Dream Big: We will inspire everyone to explore and realize their full potential and that of the Children's Museum.
5. Include Everyone: We will cultivate a diverse and accessible environment
6. Have Fun: We will strive to always be passionate about what we do, be energized by our work, and inspire others to share in our excitement, interests and discoveries.

## 3.4 Our History

The Children's Museum was the first children's museum in Canada. Established in May 1975, incorporated in March 1977, the Children's Museum has been in its present location since September 1982.

Children's museums, focusing on the educational and social development of children through hands-on, interactive exploration of exhibits and artifacts, have existed in the United States for more than one hundred years. It wasn't until the mid-1970s, however, that the idea was introduced to Canada by our founder Carol Johnston.

A visit to the Boston Children's Museum in 1973 convinced Carol to establish a children's museum in London. "My children had never been in such a place before," Carol remembers. "It was a different kind of museum – one where children were welcome to touch, to interact, and to experience. My children were very excited. Watching them run and climb and play, I thought this was a wonderful way to learn."

With a wealth of grit and determination, and a large group of caring, committed volunteers, the Children's Museum became Canada's first children's museum.

The Children's Museum had the humblest of beginnings when during that first year several volunteers ran programs in 21 city playgrounds trying to build support for the concept. An interim board of directors was recruited and the Children's Museum was incorporated as a non-profit, charitable organization in 1977.

Various temporary homes housed the displays and programs of the Children's Museum until 1982 when the former Riverview Public School was purchased and renovated, supported by a \$1.5 million community and government fundraising drive.

In the first full year of operation in its new home, the Children's Museum served 60,000 visitors, ran 1,152 school programs, and conducted 200 workshops on a budget of \$200,000.

Since that time, the Children's Museum has evolved into nine exhibitions/galleries, and a wide array of targeted and general programs offered throughout the year plus selected outreach activities and other initiatives that have become widely valued by Londoners and area visitors.

Over 2,000,000 people have visited the Children's Museum since it first opened.





## 4.0 Context and Background

### 4.1 Purpose of this Business Plan

Building on its recent accomplishments and demonstrated capacity to deliver innovative exhibits, programs, and experiences that support hands-on, play-based learning for children and their families, the Children's Museum is entering a new phase in its journey.

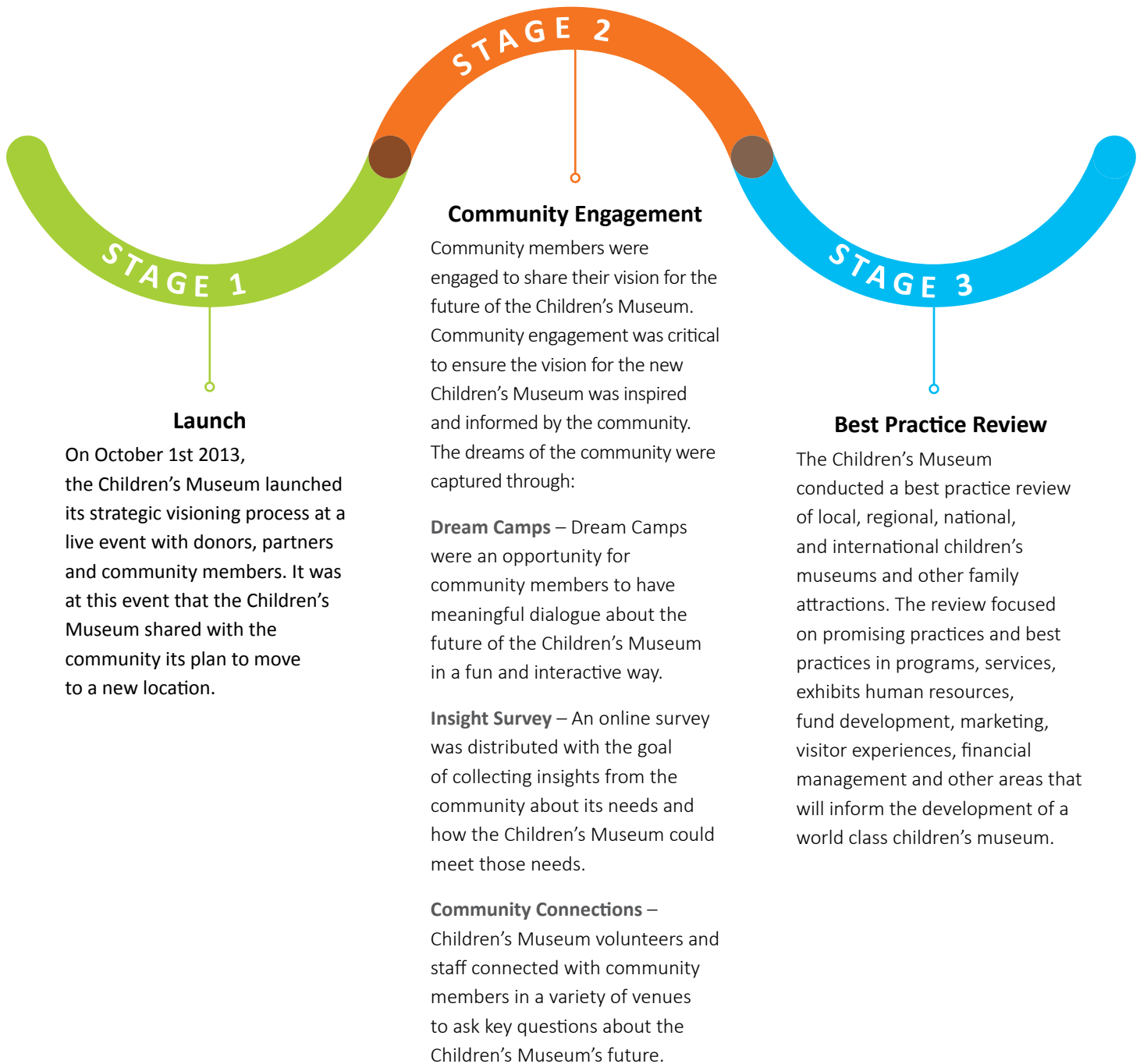
It's a time of significant change for the Children's Museum, as the organization strategically heads in a bold and exciting new direction. Through the identification of priorities and strategies for achieving an innovative and sustainable Children's Museum, this business plan articulates how the dream of a new Children's Museum will become a reality.

This plan should be considered in conjunction with the strategic plan for the Children's Museum. These two documents provide the most recent information from the Board of Directors and museum staff regarding the Children's Museum's strategy and plan for the future. The strategic plan can be found on the Children's Museum website at [www.londonchildrensmuseum.ca](http://www.londonchildrensmuseum.ca)

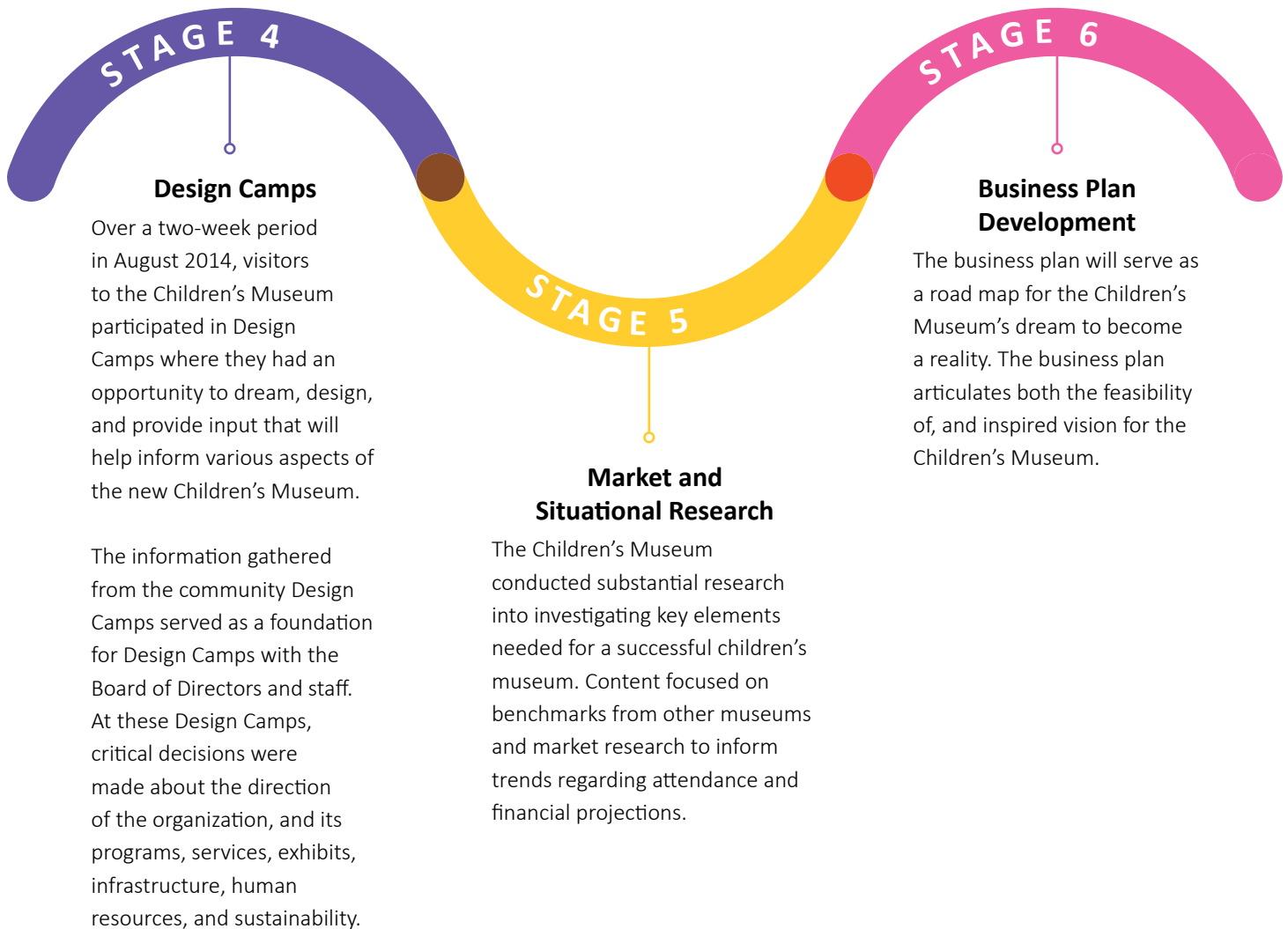
## Context and Background

### 4.2 Scope of Work And Methodology

The Children's Museum conducted an extensive six-stage process to design its bold new vision:







# 5.0 The Case for Children's Museums

## 5.1 The Value Of Children's Museums

Children's museums are cultural institutions committed to serving the needs and interests of children by providing exhibits and programs that stimulate curiosity, inspire imagination and motivate learning. At children's museums, children learn through play. Everything is hands-on and interactive, and children can explore at their own pace and in their own way alongside caregivers.

There are approximately 350 children's museums around the world, with nine currently operating in Canada.

According to the Association of Children's Museums (ACM), children's museums positively impact children, families and communities in the following ways:

**Children's museums light a creative spark for discovery and lifelong learning.**

At children's museums, children become excited about what they are learning while they are playing. As multidisciplinary institutions, children's museums are defining how to teach the arts, humanities, sciences, mathematics and human relations across generations.

**Children's museums are environments where families connect in meaningful ways.**

With today's workplace demands, adults have less time to spend with children. Children's museums are places away from work and household distractions, where parents and caregivers can spend quality time with children, learn something new themselves and experience the luxury of becoming lost in the present moment as they play.

**Children's museums are uniquely positioned to help reverse stigma and discrimination.**

Children's museums are popular, yet neutral, sources of information, attract a diverse cross-section of people and provide shared experiences through interpretative and interactive exhibits. By exposing adults and children to unfamiliar concepts in a non-threatening, fun, hands-on approach, and ensuring that the museum experience is accessible to those of differing abilities and backgrounds, children's museums create bridges of understanding.

**Children's museums strengthen community resources that educate and care for children.**

Children's museum art, science, math, music, literacy and other exhibits and programs for children are valuable resources, especially in communities where such programs have been reduced or completely eliminated from schools and libraries due to budget constraints.



### **Children's museums contribute to local economies and reduce economic barriers.**

More than 30% of children's museums are part of a downtown revitalization project. According to ACM data, the total economic activity of its children's museum members is \$448 million. Children's museums are sought-after local and travel destinations. More than 30 million individuals annually visit children's museums around the world. One in two children's museums offer discounted/free admission for low-income individuals.

**Children's museums encourage learning through play.** Play is essential to a child's development. When children are born, they are immediately seeking ways in which to explore and learn from the world around them. Play contributes to the cognitive, social and emotional well-being of children. For a child to construct knowledge of the world, they need to explore and experiment for themselves. Both learning and thinking involve the active participation of the learner, and this primarily happens through play. Research is providing concrete evidence that play is the vital activity that children use to learn about the world and gain the mental, physical and social skills necessary to succeed in their adult lives. Ultimately, play builds a foundation for a lifetime love of learning.

There are several types of play, each of which has significant value in the development of fundamental skills and abilities both children and adults rely on every day. The following is an overview of the 4 types of play. Further information can be found in Dr. Rachel White's research summary, "The Power of Play."

**Object Play** – Object play is the active, playful manipulation of objects such as a toy car, block, or doll. Children use object play to test hypotheses about how objects operate which in turn lays the foundation for high-order thinking. Skills and abilities developed through object play include problem-solving, creativity, learning about the nature of objects and science, technology, engineering and math.

**Imaginative Play** – Imaginative play takes the form of enacting different people, places or times and creating alternative realities to the real world. Early imaginative play is also related to later literacy outcomes including reading comprehension and the ability to communicate clearly through speech and writing. Becoming a character and imagining what the character would say, do or feel helps children to develop an understanding of other people. Language and literacy, executive function, social understanding and interactions, problem solving and creative thinking are skills linked to imaginative play.

**Physical Play** – Physical play includes active play such as running, jumping, and climbing. Physical play has decreased among young children by 50% in the last forty years. Physical play can boost physical development, promote healthy lifestyles and even help children perform better in school. Physical play impacts muscle growth, coordination, endurance and self-regulation.

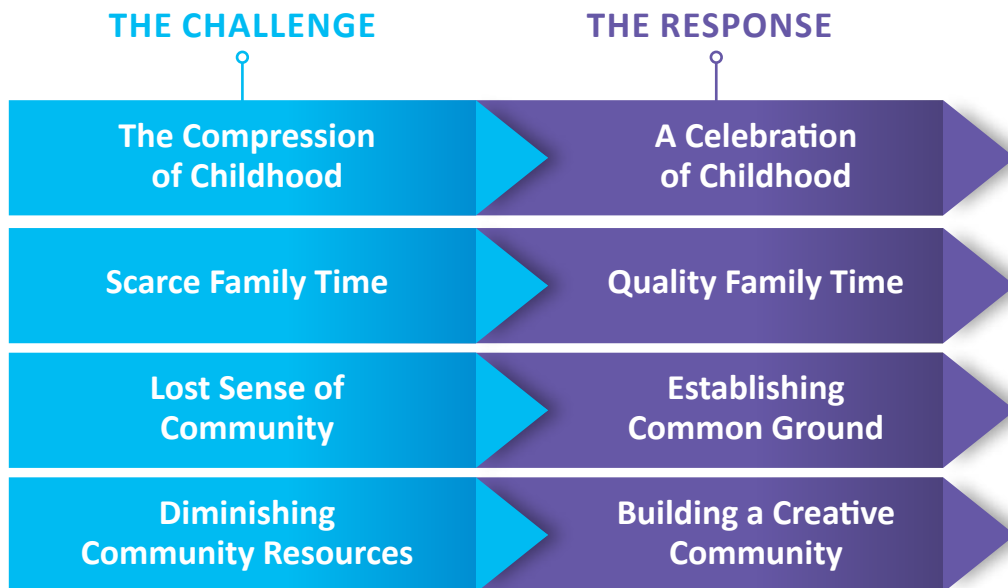
**Social Play** – Social play occurs in the interaction of children with adults or other children. Social play with parents sets the stage for children's ability to play successfully with peers. Social play can help children to regulate their emotions by providing an outlet to deal with stress in the moment. Social play is linked to enhanced cooperation, negotiation and planning skills, and conflict resolution abilities.

# The Case for Children's Museums

## 5.2 Why A Children's Museum For London

Parents and caregivers want the best for their children. In today's culture, childhood is compressed and families have less time to spend together. Resources and time are stretched thin by demands to do more with less, leaving parents and caregivers trying to navigate the best course for their children.

The Children's Museum responds directly to these challenges by celebrating childhood, creating opportunities for quality family time, establishing common ground within the community and setting the foundation to build a creative community.





## THE CHALLENGE

### The Compression of Childhood

In an effort to raise academic achievement in later years, children are expected to learn earlier. However, while children are growing up faster cognitively and physically, research has shown that they are maturing at the same rate emotionally as they have in earlier years.



## THE RESPONSE

### A Celebration of Childhood

Countering the compression of childhood, the Children's Museum is a place that doesn't impose a strict agenda or schedule. It is a place where children can spend time playing.

Peek inside an early childhood development exhibit and you will see babies and toddlers touching a variety of textures, stacking blocks, crawling through tunnels, or blowing bubbles. These simple play interactions are stimulating connections in the brain. The Children's Museum encourages children to think for themselves, expand their problem-solving repertoire through creative exploration and exercise both their bodies and their minds.

The landmark study "Learning in Children's Museums: Is It Really Happening?" confirms that while children play in a children's museum, observable and quantifiable learning takes place. From simple cause and effect, to small motor skills, to informational and procedural learning, to conceptual cause and effect, the study documented changes in children's mental representations due to experiences at children's museums.

# The Case for Children's Museums

## THE CHALLENGE

### Scarce Family Time

Jobs have become less secure and more demanding—making it increasingly difficult to achieve a balance between work and personal life. The pooled time available for family interaction is decreasing for parents. For single parents the time demands are even greater.



## THE RESPONSE

### Quality Family Time

Countering the challenge of scarce family time, the Children's Museum is a place away from distractions, where parents and caregivers have the chance to build memories and strengthen the relationships with their children.

Look inside the Children's Museum and watch a family enter a space station. The youngest, a child of 7, tries his hand at piloting the shuttle; his older sister then shows him the planets, stars and constellations. Afterwards, the father guides the children in exploring the International Space Station. Sparked by the exhibit, the grandmother shares a memory about seeing the first moon landing on television in 1969.

The Children's Museum – part educational, part cultural, part social and all interactive and child-centred – is an ideal place for the family learning unit. Through family support such as verbal coaching, modeling behaviour, physical assistance and dialogue, children are able to make developmental leaps.

While parents understand that their children's earliest years powerfully shape later development and learning, they are often unsure about what they should be doing to promote healthy emotional, social and intellectual development. The Children's Museum translates research findings into clear, practical messages that teach families how to learn together through play. Children's museums provide families a rich social and leisure time experience.



## THE CHALLENGE

### Lost Sense of Community

As a community we are increasingly connected through technology, yet many community members have heightened feelings of isolation and perceived loss of community.



## THE RESPONSE

### Establishing A Common Ground

Countering a lost sense of community, the Children's Museum builds social capital and engages community members to meet and share information. A sense of belonging to one's community is at the heart of social capital. For children and families, the Children's Museum has emerged as the community institution providing a unique, interactive environment where children and adults connect.

Look inside the Atrium at the Children's Museum and hear representatives from the local Animal Rescue Foundation talk about what it takes to adopt and care for pets. In the Street Where You Live gallery a local firefighter talks to children about fire safety. Down the hall a local librarian engages children and parents in literacy learning.

The Children's Museum is a neutral source of information and has the unique position to make a real difference towards reversing feelings of stigma and discrimination for those often on the "outside." The Children's Museum intentionally and thoughtfully welcomes community participation in the museum experience. Local citizens are invited to demonstrate talents and to share from their cultural backgrounds. Through all these actions, the Children's Museum helps to build a strong community.

# The Case for Children's Museums

## THE CHALLENGE

### Diminishing Community Resources

Schools, libraries, non-profit organizations and charities are often required to do more with less to serve the often increasing needs of the community.



## THE RESPONSE

### Building a Creative Community

Countering the reality of diminishing community resources, the Children's Museum strengthens the community by leveraging the power of community. Through collaborative efforts the Children's Museum brings play-based learning expertise to complement or enrich existing community-based programs.

Follow the noise down the hall to the group of third graders digging up dinosaur bones. A special demonstration occurs where the children and teachers get a close look at a real dinosaur fossil. The teachers leave with a list of activities that will blend with the class curriculum and the students leave with activities designed to bring the concept of museum learning home.

Through community-based partnerships, innovative ideas, such as bringing the Children's Museum into the classroom, become a reality. Through the museum experience children are exposed to a rich environment that cultivates creative thinking.

The Children's Museum supports a creative community and economy by providing unique informal learning experiences for families and children, working with community organizations to expand opportunities for all people.



# 6.0 The Impact of the Children's Museum

The Children's Museum is an essential thread in London's economic, cultural, and community fabric. Tourism, spending, jobs, culture, and community partnerships all see measurable, positive impact from the Children's Museum, for all Londoners. And with a sustainable future, the Children's Museum will be able to continue to build upon all of these things as an innovative and integral part of the community.

The Children's Museum is a unique place that brings children, families and communities together for quality interaction. Offering lifelong learning opportunities for audiences as young as newborns, the Children's Museum is a vital community institution. The Children's Museum brings a world of possibilities to families who want the best for their children.

## 6.1 Economic Impact

**Current:** Londoners often choose to visit the Children's Museum instead of attractions in other cities, retaining their spending in our city. The Children's Museum is also a gateway to London for children and families who don't live here. In fact, 46% of Children's Museum general admission visitors<sup>1</sup> are from outside of the City of London. These tourists have a direct impact on local businesses thanks to their visits to local restaurants, hotels, stores, and other venues. The Children's Museum offers meaningful employment, internships, co-operative education placements, and volunteer opportunities for many skill sets. With eight full-time staff, 19 part-time and seasonal staff, the Museum is also supported by more than 150 active volunteers. Just under \$1,000,000 is annually contributed to the local economy through direct operational expenditures.<sup>1</sup>

**Future:** The new Children's Museum will increase all of these economic outcomes because the number of visitors will grow (locally, regionally, and beyond), there will be more opportunity for employment and volunteer roles, and there will be an increase in direct operational expenditures.

For example, according to statistics from other children's museums, an average Children's Museum visitor from outside of London spends \$25 a day in the community on accommodation, transportation, food and beverage and shopping. The Children's Museum expects that the total number of visitors will increase from 80,000 to 120,000. The percentage of visitors from outside of London is expected to increase from 46% to 50% or 60,000 visitors. For the London community this translates into \$1.5 million<sup>2</sup> a year for the local economy.

<sup>1</sup> General admission visitors refers to visitors who pay admission. This does not include members, birthday party attendants, or day camp participants.

<sup>2</sup> Based on 120,000 visitors each year, of which 50% (60,000) are from outside of London.

# The Impact of the Children's Museum

## 6.2 A Cultural Cornerstone

**Current:** The London Children's Museum was the first in Canada and is one of only nine across Canada today. It is a testament to London-born creativity, innovation, and perseverance. The Children's Museum is a vibrant cultural attraction that adds value to our community, helping to make London a great place to live, work and play, and is key to attracting and retaining 25–44 year olds and their children to London.

**Future:** The re-imagined Children's Museum will be at the heart of the arts, cultural, and education community continuing to build a foundation for creativity and play; nurturing and inspiring children. Through the hands-on exploration of our exhibits and galleries, educational programs and self-guided visits, children learn, connect, grow, play, and develop a deeper understanding of their world. This will be a cornerstone in attracting and retaining families in London, contributing to the creation of a vibrant and diverse community.

## 6.3 An Education For All

**Current:** The first years of life are essential to future learning and when children visit the Children's Museum, they are excited to learn. The Children's Museum nurtures creativity in a supportive environment. The informal learning environment of science, math, heritage, culture, arts, and humanities transcend age, intelligence, and experience and empower children to set their own pace.

By engaging children and adults using a hands-on approach, and ensuring that the museum experience is accessible to those of differing abilities and backgrounds, the Children's Museum creates bridges of understanding.

**Future:** The new Children's Museum is committed to and focused on impact for all children in London and the surrounding area. Children will learn and grow through play, through various programs, and through an expected increase in museum-based programming in the community. Childhood is universal and highlighting the similarities rather than differences through programs and exhibits creates acceptance and appreciation of all people. As a leader in child centred experiences, the Children's Museum will combine theory, evidence and practice resulting in exhibits, programs and experiences that contribute to the cognitive, social and emotional development of children, while lighting a creative spark for discovery, exploration and learning.



## 6.4 Bringing People Together

**Current:** The Children's Museum is open and accessible to all families in London and the surrounding areas. For those families in difficult financial situations, access to free and subsidized memberships are available through partnerships with Ontario Works, the Salvation Army, and women's and family shelters. Further, any resident of London can apply for a subsidized membership and can visit free of charge every Friday evening.

By eliminating the financial barrier to participation, children from all across London and surrounding areas have the freedom to explore their interests and skills and are inspired to pursue their education and to set goals for their future - ultimately helping to break the cycle of poverty.

**Future:** As a place for children and families, the new Children's Museum will serve even deeper as a community hub, engaging families and the community to share their talents and points-of-view, further supporting and advancing London.

Becoming a community where play and learning connect will require relationships beyond the walls of the Children's Museum. In strengthening current partnerships and building others, the Children's Museum will extend its reach and share its practices of playful learning with families.

Being responsive to the community also means community engagement. This includes seeking their input early and often, as well as ensuring effective stewardship of their investment in the Children's Museum's future through ongoing communication and transparent reporting.



# The Impact of the Children's Museum

## Partnering With Schools And Community Organizations

**Current:** Navigating the leap from the intimate learning experiences of family, friends, and neighbours to the focused curriculum of the school can be challenging for children. Through partnerships, the Children's Museum creates a bridge between these two environments by designing programs rooted in current pedagogy.

Collaborations with schools and community organizations that support and provide services for children and families are key to this success. In partnership with local schools, the Children's Museum designs classroom and museum activities that align with provincial curriculum. The Children's Museum also partners with educators to complement lesson plans and support childhood learning. This symbiotic relationship means educators bring museum resources to the classroom or they can bring students to the Children's Museum.

Collaborations with community organizations such as the Child and Youth Network, The Boys and Girls Club of London, the Children's Aid Society of London and Middlesex, Ontario Early Years Centres, London Public Libraries, Merrymount Children's Centre, Women's Community House, Cross Cultural Learners Centre, Childreach, The Grand Theatre, The Salvation Army, Neighbourhood Family Centres and many more are part of the Children's Museum.

**Future:** The Children's Museum will continue to actively seek new partnerships that will strengthen the ability to serve children and families. Organizations interested in location, service or programming partnerships are always invited to connect with the Children's Museum to explore opportunities. In strengthening current partnerships and building others, the Children's Museum will extend its reach and share its practices of playful learning. The Children's Museum will continue to strengthen its current partnerships and explore new partnership opportunities. Through community-based partnerships, innovative collaborative experiences for children and families will be implemented. The Children's Museum will continue to be open and accessible to all London families. The Children's Museum will intentionally and thoughtfully welcome community participation in the museum experience.



## 6.6 Sustainability

**Current:** Building sustainability is a core focus of the Children's Museum. The current building limits opportunities for growth in many ways. The profits from the sale of the current building will be invested in the new Children's Museum. A capital fundraising campaign will be launched, while private, community and family foundations, all levels of government support, and corporate and individual giving will also be explored. Finally, in-kind donations, grant funding, and exhibit sponsorships will round out the comprehensive fund development strategy.

**Future:** The new Children's Museum will be sustained through expanded and diverse revenue streams: admissions, memberships, special events, donations, sponsorships, endowments, social enterprise initiatives, program fees, facility rentals, third-party fundraising, and gift shop sales. The new facility will have expanded capacity for programs and events, which will grow the number and diversity of people engaging with the Children's Museum. A new space allows for the capacity of programs to expand, both from an increase in the number of people through the door, but also as a result of the corporate appeal. In addition to financial sustainability, the Children's Museum will also make a commitment to environmental sustainability.



# 7.0 Market Analysis

## 7.1 Target Market Analysis

The target audience for the Children's Museum is children 12 and under and their parents, caregivers and teachers. The Children's Museum is a popular community attraction, appealing to both residents and tourists.

All sources of market potential data suggest a robust market for visitors to the Children's Museum. As with any museum or cultural attraction, effective programming, marketing and operations will have substantial influence on overall attendance and capitalizing on the market potential.

### 7.1.1 Children

Children are in a continual process of developing and refining their cognitive and physical skills they use to explore, understand and affect their environment. The Children's Museum environment supports children in their cognitive, physical and social development. Programs and exhibits focus on the development of the whole child in the following areas:

Learning and problem solving:

- Develop critical thinking skills
- Organize and interpret information
- Observe and make discoveries
- Find multiple solutions to a problem
- Apply information and experience to a new context
- Develop creativity and imagination

Logical thinking:

- Classify information - compare and contrast, graph
- Arrange objects and events in a series (e.g., smallest to largest)
- Recognize and create patterns
- Increase awareness of cause and effect relationships
- Analyze and synthesize information

Make-believe play:

- See the world from another's point of view
- Play out solutions to problems
- Act upon and engage in various experiences
- Dramatize story events and different character roles
- Interact with other children

Verbal communication skills:

- Interpret and communicate ideas
- Use language to describe ideas, feelings, and experiences
- Use language to share ideas with other children during play activities
- Ask questions and find ways to respond to them
- Recognize, identify, and respond to environmental sounds
- Listen and respond to storytelling

Emergent reading skills:

- Acquire a love of reading and written language
- Recall events from related experiences, as well as imaginary experiences
- Demonstrate a knowledge of how to use books
- Recognize content in pictures and environmental print
- Recognize how content relates to personal experiences
- Recognize pictorial images in relation to text
- Develop and build new vocabulary

Beginning writing skills:

- Develop symbolic drawings
- Invent ways to express language
- Form recognizable letters to create simple words
- Demonstrate an interest in using writing for a purpose (e.g., making signs, letters)

Gross and fine motor skills:

- Use gross motor skills with confidence
- Move in space in relation to the environment, examples: climb, crawl
- Understand and master physical challenges through trial and error
- Demonstrate skills in discriminating sensory stimulation
- Develop spatial awareness and relationships
- Coordinate eye and hand movements
- Use small muscles to complete tasks
- Use small muscles for self-help tasks
- Use writing and drawing tools with increasing control and intention



## 7.0 Market Analysis

### 7.1.2 Caregivers and Educators

At the Children's Museum caregivers and educators are invited to identify and focus on the gifts children bring to the world. Adults are supported to create rich opportunities for meaningful, playful learning.

Children's Museum staff serve as models for how caregivers and educators facilitate learning through play and add value to the museum experiences. Adults are encouraged to participate in a variety of ways from active engagement to quiet observation.

Quality is an increasing concern of caregivers and educators. They seek value for their money and for the time they spend. Quality is not only for the child but also for the caregiver or educator. Their comfort in what their children are learning and the value a visit to the Children's Museum adds to their lives is a determining factor in taking the time and spending the funds to visit. It has to be interesting, worthwhile, and valued.

Caregivers and educators who access the Children's Museum believe play is beneficial to positive and meaningful development worthy of their time and funds. They also believe societal values are instilled through individual and group play in terms of positive social development and interaction, learning, respect and to be supportive of one another.

The Children's Museum seeks to be a place where people tell their friends it's "a place you have to go."



## 7.2 Local Resident Market

It is expected that 50% of visitors will be from London and surrounding communities. This is consistent with findings from the majority of museums interviewed and the current experience of the Children's Museum.

The local resident market is important for the following reasons:

- The resident market is readily accessible and available on a year-round basis.
- Residents can be made aware of the museum and its exhibits and programs more easily and cost-effectively.
- Residents are more likely to be repeat visitors.
- Residents are more likely to become volunteers, members, and donors.
- Residents often advise and accompany visiting friends and relatives to area attractions, including the London Children's Museum.

In 2011, the number of census families in London was 132,285, which represents a change of +3.5% from 2006. The younger London child population, specifically zero to four years olds, has shown growth between the 2006 and 2011 censuses, and much of this is associated with the new Canadian population. These growth trends are positive indicators for Children's Museum total market size and attendance rates.

The Children's Museum total annual attendance in 2013 – 2014 was approximately 80,000 visitors. This is expected to increase by 50% to 120,000, in the new facility as a result of the new exhibits and the fresh experiences that will come from large scale travelling exhibits that will temporarily fill the space. This is a conservative estimate, given the experience of similar museums and the increase in the number of families with children in London.

## 7.3 Tourist Market

It is expected that 50% of Children's Museum visitors will be from outside of the City of London. This will translate to approximately 60,000 visitors.

A robust marketing plan will be developed to engage visitors from outside of the City of London.

## 7.0 Market Analysis

### 7.4 School Market

There are two English language school boards, two French language school boards and a host of private schools in London.

Field trips are often selected to the extent to which they provide hands-on or interactive participation. There is an emphasis on selecting field trip destinations that are curriculum connected and developmentally appropriate in relation to both content and activities, but also “fun” and interactive, thus offering students higher levels of learning enjoyment.

All education programs are directly connected to school board curriculum and come with a free teacher support package that helps teachers maximize student involvement and learning before, during, and after the field trip. They are designed to support student learning in ways that are challenging to do with limited classroom resources.

The Children’s Museum also offers in-class programs. With bussing costs increasing, resulting higher field trip costs and budgets for field trips decreasing, interest for in-class programs have increased and are expected to increase significantly in the next few years.





## 7.5 Similar Facilities

There are approximately 350 children's museums around the world and nine currently operating in Canada with a permanent space. Attendance at existing facilities has remained steady or increased over the years; this is one of the reasons cities like Winnipeg and Calgary have chosen to expand their children's museums in recent years.

A list of Canadian children's museums is provided below along with population data and square footage of exhibits.

Name	Location	Population	Exhibit Size (Sq Ft)
London Regional Children's Museum	London, ON	366,000	12,000
Children's Discovery Museum	Saskatoon, SK	261,000	2,000
Hamilton Children's Museum	Hamilton, ON	721,000	1,500
Kidspark (with Ontario Science Centre)	Toronto, ON	2,615,000	n/a
Manitoba Children's Museum	Winnipeg, MN	730,000	19,572
Musee Pour Enfant De Laval	Laval, QC	402,000	13,000
Niagara Children's Museum	Niagara Falls, ON	83,000	4,000
Telus Spark	Calgary, AB	1,215,000	34,200
THE MUSEUM	Kitchener, ON	219,000	30,000

## 7.0 Market Analysis

### 7.6 Alternative Experience Analysis

Family audiences in London and surrounding areas have many choices for family entertainment and activities. Families must divide their spending on such activities as the ones listed in the table below.

The following is a list of attractions that families in London and surrounding areas visit. Please note that this is a not an exhaustive list of options of all attractions available.

In the description next to each attraction, it has been indicated whether the attraction offers activity, play and programming, has educational and cultural components, and whether it is open year-round. While many attractions offer some of these elements, the Children's Museum is the only facility that provides the unique combination of all of these important elements.

While the London Children's Museum competes with these attractions for families' disposable income, these attractions should not be viewed exclusively as competition. Rather, it is important to view these attractions as opportunities for partnerships, joint promotions and enhancing packages or programs.



Name/ Location	Vision, Mission and/or Summary Statements	Active Play	Programming	Educational	Cultural	Year Round
<b>London Children's Museum</b> London, ON	Igniting curiosity through the power of play.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>Adventures on Wonderland</b> London, ON	Adventures On Wonderland is open for drop-in play, group trips, birthday parties & all the Adventure you can handle.	✓	✓	✗	✗	✓
<b>Boler Mountain</b> London, ON	Provide for the physical and social improvement and development of children, young adults, adults and seniors through outdoor recreational programs and facilities.	✓	✓	✗	✗	✓
<b>East Park</b> London, ON	Whether they are rocketing a little white ball down a fairway or throwing themselves down a waterslide, East Park makes "playtime" a priority.	✓	✓	✗	✗	✓
<b>Fanshawe Pioneer Village</b> London, ON	Fanshawe Pioneer Village will partner with the community to educate about the past, collect and preserve local history and accurately interpret one century of time from 1820 – 1920.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗
<b>Fleetway Bowling</b> London, ON	To make sure every guest has fun through bowling, golf, rock climbing and billiards activities.	✓	✓	✗	✗	✓
<b>Kidscape</b> London, ON	Kidscape provides the perfect place for parents to relax; meet friends and catch up on emails while children play or take part in one of our many workshops and activities.	✓	✓	✗	✗	✓
<b>LEGOLAND</b> Toronto, ON	The LEGOLAND Discovery Centre is a world of entertainment, colour and creativity for families with children aged 3-10.	✓	✗	✗	✗	✓
<b>Museum London</b> London, ON	We inspire and educate our community by preserving and sharing our art and history.	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>Playdium</b> Toronto, ON	The ultimate interactive, virtual and physical entertainment centre for energetic families.	✓	✗	✗	✗	✓
<b>Ripley's Aquarium of Canada</b> Toronto, ON	To provide a world class experience that will foster education, conservation, and research, while providing fun and entertainment for locals and tourists of all ages	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓
<b>Storybook Gardens</b> London, ON	Moving Londoners towards a healthier lifestyle through amazing experiences.	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓



# 8.0 Collections

## 8.1 Collection Overview

The London Children's Museum is one of the few children's museums in the world that maintains a collection. Artifacts are incorporated into the various exhibits to enhance the Children's Museum experience. Learning through artifacts brings exhibits to life, gives new insights into the world, encourages children to exercise their curiosity and inspires them to ask questions.

Artifacts from the past aren't just something to admire. They carry a story that stimulates learning through real experiences. For example, when children learn about dinosaurs at the Children's Museum they are surrounded by artifacts. They can see, touch and investigate a real fossil that enriches the learning experience, inspires imagination and connects children with the world.

## 8.2 The Children's Museum Collection

There are an estimated 7,000 artifacts in the Children's Museum's collection, ranging from toys and other cultural objects relating to childhood across various time periods, everyday items from the Victorian era specific to the London region, dolls from around the world, to ethnographic items specific to Canada's Arctic region.

All items in the collections support permanent galleries, are directly related to the interpretation of gallery themes, related to childhood past, present and future, and pertain to subjects of interest to the local community. Artifacts from the Children's Museum's collection enrich the galleries by providing additional information and unique experiences about arts, heritage, culture and the sciences.

Included in the collection are artifacts for educational use that support the delivery of education and public programs and the development of outreach programs, educational kits and other hands-on activities. With a new space, these items will be able to be displayed more predominately, organized more effectively and better utilized as a resource within the community.

# 9.0 Exhibits

## 9.1 Current Exhibits

The Children's Museum currently has 3 floors to explore and discover. There are 8 permanent exhibits filled with hands-on activities that engage children from infancy to 12 years of age – and their grown-ups. Exhibits at the Children's Museum can be touched, handled, played with, climbed on, crawled through and experimented with in any way a child likes.

Visitors can dig for dinosaur bones or become one! Adventurers can explore an underground world of caves and find all the creatures that live inside. Stepping back in time, into a one-room schoolhouse, visitors can discover what it would have been like to live in the 1800's. Discoverers can experience life in the arctic by learning the language of Inuktitut and trying on snow-goggles used by the Inuit people. White sands, big fish and mythical ocean friends await sea lovers in Jellyfish Junction. Scientists can investigate the world through hands-on activities that bring science to life. Visitors can learn about the community through a child-sized street complete with a gas station, grocery store, bank and drive-thru. Future Astronauts can prepare for lift off as they climb aboard and pilot a space shuttle.

## 9.2 New Facility Exhibits

### 9.2.1 Exhibit Philosophy

The Children's Museum is for and about children and families. Therefore, children's and families' ideas will be placed at the centre of the exhibit design. The Children's Museum has and will continue to listen carefully to discover what children and families are really interested in.

When creating exhibits the Children's Museum will consider and plan environments to provide nurturing, sensory-rich, experiences for children in order for them to be free to play and explore. Exhibits will be designed to engage children in simple and complex forms of play that result in foundational learning. Technology will be integrated to enhance the experience and interaction within the exhibit.

Children inherently know what to do in exhibit spaces. Through play they develop a sense of freedom. The familiarity of revisiting the Children's Museum gives children the confidence to make it their own space. Therefore, exhibits will provide stimulation and challenge, as well as opportunities to slow down and spend quiet time. Group experiences will be mixed with individual experiences to account for different learning styles, social needs, abilities, and ages. Exhibits will include experiences that allow children to take risks, push their limits, and feel mastery. Signage that highlights the value of play and the development that is taking place in each space will be provided to help parents and caregivers to better understand the significant role child directed play has on their child.

## 9.3 Our Future Exhibit Context

### 9.3.1 Community Insight

Hundreds of families, Board members, staff, funders, volunteers and donors shared their exhibit ideas for the new facility.

When asked what exhibits from the current Children's Museum should be incorporated into the new facility, Street Where You Live (71.4%), My Place In Space (69.2%) and Dinosaurs (67%) were the top three exhibits. A Science Lab was reported as a priority for 100% of families and 97% of families reported permanent exhibits with technology enhanced features was a high priority. Further, 95% of families reported they wanted the Children's Museum to incorporate travelling exhibits in the new facility and 87% of families were interested in an art studio.

Families were asked to rate their interest in a series of pre-selected exhibits derived from the best practice review. The top five exhibits of interest to families were space (77%), Artist Studio (76%), Build It/Make It Centre (75%), Sound and Music (71%), and Street Where You Live (71%).

More than 500 ideas about exhibits were captured from community and staff related to exhibits. Ideas were distilled into the following themes:

- **History** – Historical components that appeal to children and utilize the collection in a fun and interactive way.
- **Science, Technology, Engineering and Math** – Interactive exhibits where children can use science, technology, engineering and math concepts to build, create and explore.
- **Environment** – A focus on nature and the outdoors.
- **Arts & Culture** – Exhibits that reflect London's diversity, offer a global perspective and showcase arts-based programming.
- **Community** – A celebration of our local community and its unique landscapes and people.

### 9.3.2 Best Practice Review

The Children's Museum completed an intensive best practice review of 30 family attractions, including 15 Children's Museums across North America. Exhibits, including photos, exhibit specification and exhibit features, were reviewed. The analysis resulted in the identification of 11 Exhibit themes and 75 sub-themes. The purpose of this analysis was to identify exhibit themes that were most prominent in children's museums, as well as, trends and patterns of up-and-coming exhibit themes.

Of the 300 exhibits reviewed, nature, history, culture and science were common exhibit themes. Newer exhibits tended to focus on 'maker culture' and global exploration.



### 9.3.3 Exhibits Themes and Concepts

The Children's Museum expects to have between 8-12 permanent exhibits in the new space. These will be hands-on and interactive, will promote experiential learning, and will be designed with varied ages and stages of development in mind. They will be built with the same standards of excellence and safety of our current exhibits.

Exhibit themes will be informed by information gathered during the community consultation and the best practice review. The Children's Museum will create unique exhibits that reflect the community and be relevant to visitors. The goal will be to incorporate London's history, culture, art, and environment into many of the permanent exhibits, while also drawing on the success of exhibits at other children's museums. Where possible, work will be completed locally.

Exhibit space will be modular to ensure that fresh, relevant exhibits will continue to engage, challenge, and spark creativity, while superior interactive experiences foster an excitement for the arts, heritage, science, literacy and diverse cultures.

In addition to permanent exhibits, the Children's Museum will host large scale travelling exhibits. The range of these types of exhibits is vast and would make the space multi-purpose and multi-disciplinary.

The exhibit design team will be made up of staff and consultants with expertise in education, child development, and exhibit design. The Children's Museum will have direct access to expertise in learning theories, educational methodologies for stimulating curiosity and motivating learning, developmental appropriateness, current scholarly research and social issues affecting children. Several organizations, locally, nationally and internationally have expressed interest in partnering with the Children's Museum with respect to specific exhibits.

## 9.4 The Transition From The Current Facility To The New Facility

For the next 3 years, the Children's Museum's doors will remain open and the exhibits will be enjoyed by thousands of families. To ensure that exhibits are relevant and children can engage with exhibits in different ways, new 'consumables' will be introduced on a regular basis. Consumables are items that exist within the exhibit to supplement and enhance the activity. During this time maintenance and repairs will be made to refresh the space without incurring a capital expense. These include updated paint and signage. Enhancements will be made to the exhibits space through partnerships and collaborations. This will allow the Children's Museum the opportunity to test new ideas and pilot possible exhibits components, adding to the visitor experience while also allowing for data collection and research to take place to inform decision making for the future space.

# 10.0 Programs

## 10.1 Program Summary

In addition to self-guided exhibits, the Children's Museum will offer ongoing programming to add variety and depth to the permanent exhibits. Rotating and varied programming will draw in new audiences and retain current ones, and generate additional earned revenue. While exhibits will focus on children ages 3 to 9, programming will be targeted to a broader range of age groups from infants to 12 years of age.

The Children's Museum will continue to provide the high-quality programs it has come to be known for in its current location. A new and larger facility will give the Children's Museum an opportunity to expand and grow its programming and audience.

Programs will be exhibit based, supported by collections and incorporate guided play. Educational resources will be available to support the continuation of learning and strengthen the link between home and museum. Programs will evolve and change based on current events, timing, and seasonality.

The sections below outline some of the programs that will be available; however, this is not an inclusive list of programs.

## 10.2 Program Options

### 10.2.1 Public Programs

For over 30 years, children and their grown-ups have been exploring, discovering and learning together through the Children's Museum's public programs. Public programs are available for early years, school aged children and tweens.

### 10.2.2 In-Museum Education Programs

The Children's Museum has a long history of local school boards bringing school age children in to participate in various themed events or to experience the galleries often aligned with specific curriculum requirements.

### 10.2.3 In-Classroom Education Programs

Changes in school interests in field trips are occurring due to affordability, parent volunteer availability, and bussing costs. Taught by Children's Museum Educators, our 90-minute in-class programs provide an opportunity to bring the Children's Museum into the community and bring the Ontario curriculum to life using artifacts, hands-on activities, and portable exhibit components into the classroom further strengthening the connection between school and community.

## 10.3 Birthday Parties

Birthday parties are a common and popular program that will continue to be offered by the Children's Museum. They will be themed and incorporate the Children's Museums exhibits. Pricing options will be based on the size of the group and the length of the party. The Children's Museum hosts approximately 244 birthday parties annually and the amount is expected to increase to 350 in the first year of operations in the new facility based on statistics from comparative facilities.

Parties will focus on 'no-fuss' options for parents and a memorable experience for everyone. Generally, parties will be 1.5 hours in duration in a private party room for up to 11 children and 15 adult chaperones. The Children's Museum will also explore options for larger parties, up to 30 children, as there has been a trend towards parents and children wanting to invite more guests.

New birthday party themes will continue to be created to align with new exhibits and programming.

## 10.4 Camps

Camps will be offered during the summer and during school holidays. Camps will be themed and will include an interactive and educational component. Last year, the Children's Museum engaged 937 children through camps. Each year, the Children's Museum's camps are fully booked, however, due to space restrictions offering additional spaces is not an option. Camp themes will link to exhibit and curriculum themes and be built using feedback from families that participate to ensure that they are relevant.

In the new facility there will be an opportunity to accommodate more children in the Children's Museum's camps. It is expected the Children's Museum will be able to accommodate additional camps, hosting up to 1,200 children in the first year of operations based on comparative facilities and current oversubscription rates.



## 10.0 Programs

### 10.5 Educational Classes And Workshops

Educational classes and workshops range from pre-school age children to adults. Classes and workshops will incorporate a range of structures from one-day workshops to workshops that run over a period of four to twelve weeks. Workshops for children will be based on exhibit content and will offer the opportunity to engage in further learning. Workshops for parents and educators will focus on sharing and exploring play-based learning concepts and increased efforts to support parents and teachers with more information.

### 10.6 Special Events

This is an area that is highly aligned with the type of operations undertaken at the Children's Museum. It allows for creativity, multiple themes, variability through the course of the year, ability to identify with different target audiences and related perspectives.

### 10.7 Facility Rentals

Those looking for a unique venue for their next get-together, party, wedding or corporate function will be able to rent the Children's Museum. The Children's Museum is the perfect venue for fundraising events, holiday parties, graduation celebrations, receptions, meetings, and corporate or family functions.

Rent the entire facility and invite guests to explore, discover, and learn throughout the Children's Museum, or rent exhibit space and gather for food, fun and some gallery exploration. A space like the Children's Museum offers the unique opportunity for facility rental packages to include customizable options such as demonstrations, programmed activities and group interaction opportunities for both children and adults.

Another facility rental option will be a Night at the Museum. These family-friendly events promise a sleepover that children will never forget. Sleepovers will include a snack, admission into the Children's Museum, space to sleep in the museum overnight, and fun activities. Sleepovers can be coupled with a movie night where visitors are invited to view a family-friendly screening after the purchase of an admission to the Children's Museum.

# 11.0 Visitor Experiences

## 11.1 Attendance

The Children's Museum has estimated a visitation of approximately 101,000 visitors per year in the new space. This is a conservative estimate based on actual results at other children's museums. For example, when the Manitoba Children's Museum re-opened after their renovation/expansion their visitor rates doubled in the first year. Attendance rates increased from 80,000 to 160,000 visitors. Their current (136,000) visitor rates align with the average attendance rates to square footage estimates from the ACM's reports. The Children's Museum experience is expected to align with Manitoba's experience given the similarity between the organizations' history, size and location.

## 11.2 Admission Rates

The current admission rate is \$7 for adults and children and free for children under one. Admission rates for the new facility have not yet been finalized, however, the daily admission rates are expected to be \$10 for adults and children and free for children under one. These rates are consistent with the rates charged by other similar children's museums and are reasonable when compared to admission rates at other facilities in London.

## 11.3 Memberships

The Children's Museum facilitated an extensive review of membership programs at other children's museums. The results demonstrated that children's museums generally offer memberships to users that allow for unlimited visitation to the facility as well as other benefits such as discounts at the gift shop, member events, and newsletters.

The Children's Museum will offer 5 types of memberships. These memberships will include:

**Family Membership** – a one-year family membership for any 2 adults and up to 4 children from the same household. Additional adults and children from the same household can be added to the membership for an additional fee.

**Donation Membership** – a one-year donation membership includes one family membership plus a donated family membership that will be provided to a family who cannot afford a membership. A tax receipt for the amount of the family membership will be provided.

**Grandparent Membership** – A one-year grandparent membership includes two grandparents from the same family and unlimited grandchildren plus exclusive grandparent club activities.

## Visitor Experiences

Membership benefits include:

- Free unlimited admission to the London Children’s Museum.
- Free admission to participating science centres across Canada.
- Subscription to the Children’s Museum e-newsletter.
- Discounts on unique summer, March Break, PD and holiday camps.
- Discounts on one-of-a-kind birthday party packages.
- Discounts on Explore Store purchases.
- Invitations to special members-only events.
- Free admission to special events.
- One free family day pass to share the fun with family and friends.
- Early registration for events.

**Tiered Memberships** – Comparative organizations have incorporated tiered memberships for families interested in exclusive opportunities such as behind-the-scenes tours, additional discounts, express lines, and additional free day passes for family members. The Children’s Museum will further explore the option of tiered memberships to determine if it is an appropriate strategy for our visitors.

**Community Group Membership** – Community group memberships will be available for groups interested in accessing the Children’s Museum. This membership is for groups such as daycare centres, nursery schools, and preschools.

## Community Access

Through the generosity of sponsors and funders, children and their grown-ups will have the opportunity to visit the Children’s Museum at a discounted admission rate or free of charge. This is a significant part of the mandate of the Children’s Museum. Specifics of the community access program are currently being explored to ensure that the program meets the needs of the community.



# 12.0 Marketing

## 12.1 Marketing and Communications Strategy

Developed with input from Museum staff, volunteers, Board Directors and most importantly its members and visitors, this marketing and communications strategy is designed to support The Children's Museum as it transitions into new space and starts to lay the foundation for an exciting and sustainable future.

With highly visual and compelling content, The Children's Museum has a remarkable and impactful story to tell. Stories of children and their families at play, interactive adventures and discoveries as well as passionate staff and volunteers.

With a new strategic plan and renewed vision and mission, this marketing and communications strategy provides critical support to the Museum's program growth and development, revenue generation and fund development initiatives, as well as staff and volunteer retention and recruitment.

This strategy has also been developed at a time when the Children's Museum has committed to an increase in its marketing resources. In-house communications capacity will enable the organization to cost-effectively implement and sustain the work identified in this plan and be flexible and responsive to opportunities as they unfold.



## 12.2 Broad Strategies

In order to educate and engage key audiences in the authentic and experiential learning experiences at the Children's Museum, a multi-faceted strategy is required. This includes:

### Refresh the Brand

- Keep the existing logo, and create a broader and brighter colour palette as well as a new look for marketing materials
- Extend the refreshed brand to the physical space in a consistent and cohesive manner

### Sell the Experience

- Focus on programming and events, with special attention to those elements that would continue in the new museum
- Put children at the centre of all marketing and clearly demonstrate the values of play, curiosity and discovery

### Test, Analyze, Adjust, Repeat

- Use the transition phase as an opportunity to test new ideas, marketing vehicles and online platforms
- Track and measure all communications, offers and marketing. Analyze results and adjust accordingly.

### Go Digital

- Take full advantage of new and existing technologies to increase online marketing, social media engagement, content marketing and social PR
- Use social media to connect with members and build a strong following of supporters for the future
- Leverage website as a key driver of e-communications and social media

### Take the museum out into the community

- Partner with other organizations that appeal to the same family audience to create a presence for the Museum that goes beyond its physical space and enables new community relations. For e.g. The Grand Theatre, London Knights and the London Lightning
- Leverage opportunities to showcase the Museum at community events and public spaces

### Focus on Revenue Opportunities

- Create specific marketing initiatives to bolster revenue-generating opportunities such as special events
- Develop tools to reach educators and encourage connections that could ultimately improve sales of field trips and in-class education packages

### Thought Leadership

- Position Children's Museum as the thought leader and leading resource on children and the power of play
- Build relationships with local, regional and national media contacts that specialize in the area of children's education, experiential learning and the power of play
- Use social media to participate in discussions on children's education, experiential learning and the power of play

## 12.3 Phases

### Phase I – Reimagining the Brand

The focus of Phase I is on refreshing the brand by creating a bright new look and feel with expanded colour palette and font choices around the existing logo (a new logo will be created for the new museum).

Implementation of the refreshed brand has been applied to the following marketing tools and tactics:

- Education Guide
- Thumbprint Newsletter
- E-Newsletter
- E-Blasts
- Main entrance
- Social Media skins

### Phase II – Building on the Foundation

During this phase, the marketing strategy continues to build on the foundation developed in Phase I, measuring and adjusting the materials and methods as required.

While in Phase I the marketing efforts focused primarily on visitors and members, in Phase II new initiatives will be undertaken to reach out to specific target audiences such as tourists, educators and the media.

Tools and Tactics include:

- Online Advertising - Google Search and Facebook
- YouTube Channel, Videos
- Blog
- Promotional Brochure
- Website
- Membership marketing
- Educators Outreach
- Media Relations





# Marketing

## Phase III – Public Awareness

In Phase III the focus of marketing will be on raising broader public awareness and engaging the community in fundraising for the new Children's Museum. Timing of the campaign should be as the new museum is being built and for sometime after it is open to the public.

Tools and tactics will include:

- Public Awareness Campaign
- Advertising and Posters
- Exterior Visuals
- Community Outreach
- Guerilla Marketing



# 13.0 People

## 13.1 Board Of Directors

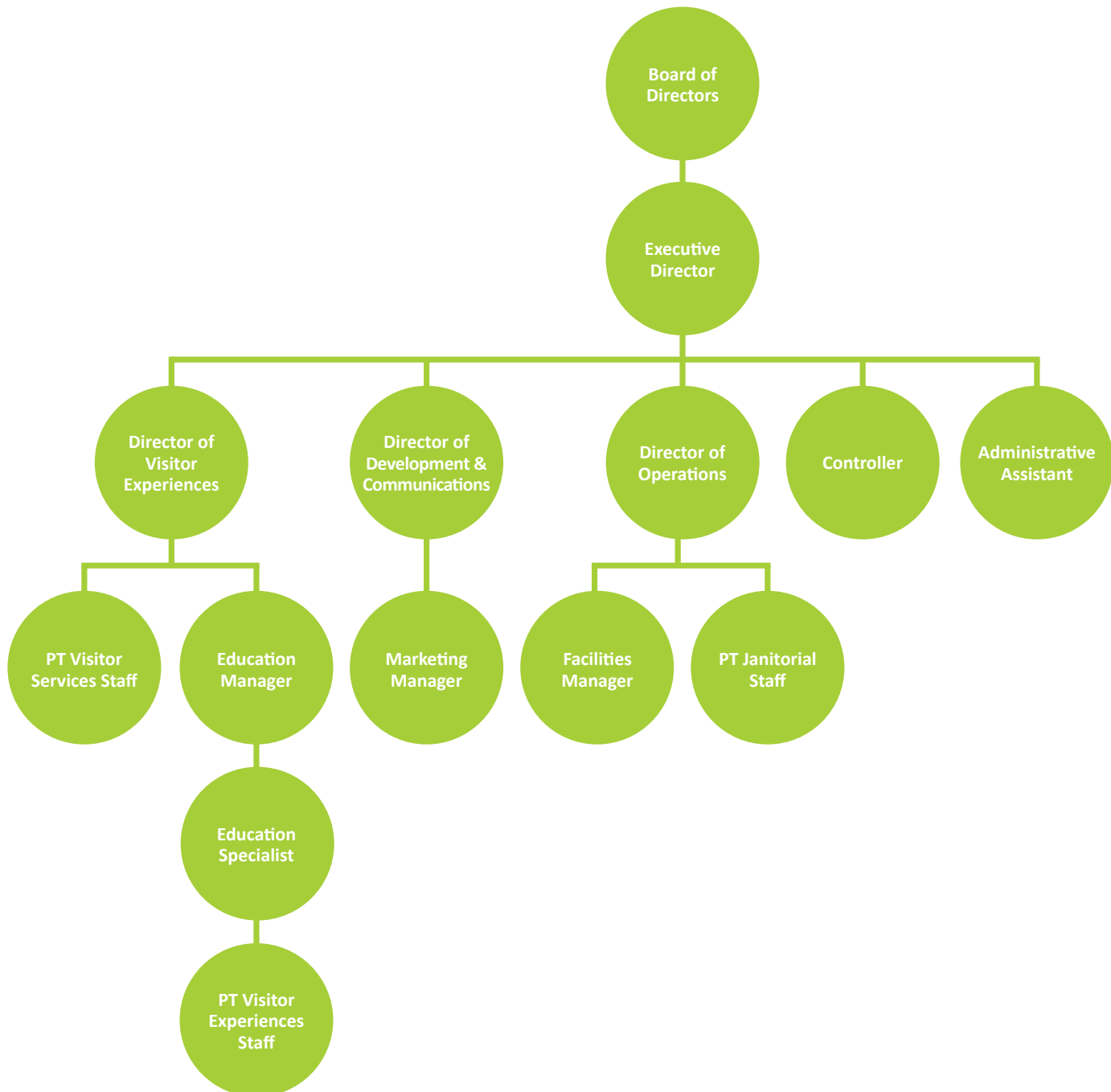
The Children's Museum is governed by a Board of Directors. Through a diverse and broad skill set, the Board of Directors provides strategic leadership to the Children's Museum. The Board of Directors is currently championing the development of the Children's Museum. Board members include:

- **President** – Natalie Spoozak, Business development, publishing, sales and marketing professional
- **Vice President** – Megan Winkler, Manager of Marketing and Public Affairs, Brain Tumour Foundation of Canada
- **Treasurer** – Drew Forret, COO, CarProof
- **Secretary** – Ryan Warren, Lawyer, Szemenyei Mackenzie Group Law Firm LLP
- **Founder and Honorary Chair** - Carol Johnston, President, Creative Learning Group
- **Director** – Alison Hannay, Principal, Cornerstone Architecture Incorporated
- **Director** – Angie Kehoe, Law Clerk, Siskinds LLP
- **Director** – Greg Marshall, Teacher, Thames Valley District School Board
- **Director** – Stephane Ouellet, Vice President Strategic Partnerships/FCHS Site Director Middlesex Hospital Alliance
- **Director** – Kerry Robbins, Vice President with TD Bank Group.
- **Director** – Carole Stinson, Executive Director of Development Programs, Western University

It is expected that the Board of Directors will change and evolve as the new facility is established. Many of the current Board members will remain for continuity purposes; however, additional Board members with specific expertise will be recruited to be part of the Board. The Board will continue to include 10 to 13 Board members with broad expertise in fundraising, accounting, legal, childhood education, museum and/or attraction operations, and marketing. Further, committees will be formed in order to ensure adequate strategic direction. The Board of Directors is committed to effective governance and abides to a set of bylaws.

## 13.2 Management And Staff

The proposed staffing structure of the organization is illustrated below. The structure is based on information from comparable organizations and the current Children's Museum staff structure and complement. In total, there will be 10 full-time staff and 20 part-time staff.





The roles and responsibilities of full-time staff are outlined below:

#### **Executive Director**

Reporting to the Board of Directors, The Executive Director will be responsible for providing the necessary leadership to fulfill the mandate of the Children's Museum in an effective, efficient, legal and fiscally responsible manner. The Executive Director will oversee general operations, administration, facilitation, staffing, volunteerism, fiscal management, fund development, communications, programs, and exhibits. Representing the Children's Museum locally, nationally and internationally will also be the responsibility of the Executive Director. Strategic leadership through ongoing organizational planning and evaluation will also be a key role of the Executive Director.

#### **Controller**

The controller position is accountable for the accounting operations of the company, to include the production of periodic financial reports, maintenance of an adequate system of accounting records, and a comprehensive set of controls and budgets designed to mitigate risk, enhance the accuracy of the company's reported financial results, and ensure reported results comply with generally accepted accounting principles.

#### **Director of Fund Development and Communications**

This key role provides leadership for all development, public relations, communication and fundraising activities. Responsibilities also include building relationships with donors and potential donors to ensure financial sustainability of the organization and to develop, manage, and implement the public relations plan and strategies while maintaining the brand identity of the Children's Museum.

#### **Director of Operations**

The Director of Operations is responsible for leading the strategic development and implementation of exhibit, collection, and physical plant initiatives which support outstanding visitor experiences and which advance the mission of the Children's Museum.

#### **Director of Visitor Experiences**

The Director of Visitor Experiences is responsible for leading the strategic development and implementation of programs and initiatives which support outstanding visitor experiences and which advance the mission of the Children's Museum. This role will also be responsible for overseeing the relationship with the education market, overseeing the development and implementation of the annual public program schedule, oversee the volunteer program, and working with internal and external stakeholders.

# People

## Education Manager

The Education Manager is responsible for leading the development and implementation of all onsite education programs (Museum School, school groups), the development of teacher support packages and edukits, special events, and acting as a Children's Museum ambassador by building and maintaining connections within the community. The Education Manager is also responsible for overseeing the development and facilitation of all offsite education programs including outreach and in-class; onsite early years programs; all internal public programs, demonstrations and day camps; special events and special guest bookings.

## Facilities Manager

The Facilities Manager is responsible for ensuring the Children's Museum is a clean, comfortable and safe environment for visitors, volunteers and staff by monitoring, maintaining and repairing the building, galleries, exhibits and grounds.

## Marketing Coordinator

The Marketing Coordinator is responsible for supporting the implementation of the Children's Museum's strategic marketing plan during the transition to our new space and upcoming capital fundraising campaign. The Marketing Coordinator will be responsible for generating content and coordinating the production of communications including social media, website and print materials as well as tracking and analyzing the appropriate analytics.

## Education Specialist

The Education Specialist is responsible for leading the development and implementation of the offsite in-class education programs, the onsite early years programs, internal public programs (birthdays and demonstrations) and day camps. As well, the Education Specialist oversees the part time VEA staff and volunteers who in turn are responsible for the delivery of public programming.

## Visitor Services Associate

The Visitor Services Associate is the first point of contact for guests and visitors of the Children's Museum. Responsible for customer-friendly service from reception to departure, this role also provides sales support through front line activities such as registration for membership, birthday parties, school group bookings, and day camp.

### 13.3 Volunteers

As well as paid staff, volunteers play a vital role in the Children's Museum. The Children's Museum attracts people studying education, child development, psychology, public relations, and all the areas reflected in the exhibits. It is expected volunteers will serve in roles such as assisting the floor staff, program and exhibit development, event support, and fundraising.

The number of volunteers engaged in the work of the Children's Museum is expected to remain at current levels, which is 150 volunteers. These volunteers have played an integral role in the development and operation of the programming, services and fundraising. In the 2013 – 2014 fiscal year, volunteers contributed 6,927 volunteer hours. The majority of volunteers (67%) volunteered between 1 and 50 hours. From there, 12% volunteered 51 – 100 hours, 11% volunteered 101 – 200 hours and 7% volunteered more than 200 hours.

Rather than increase the number of volunteers, the Children's Museum will focus on volunteer retention by expanding the depth of the volunteer program through enhancing volunteer engagement and providing meaningful opportunities.



# 14.0 Concept and Site

## 14.1 Operating Schedule

The Children's Museum is expected to be open to the public as outlined below:

<b>Monday</b>	10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. (from Victoria Day to Labour Day and Holidays only)
<b>Tuesday to Sunday</b>	10 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.
<b>Friday</b>	10 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.

The Museums hours will reflect demand and visitor feedback. After hour events and rentals will have flexible times.

The Children's Museum will be closed Christmas Day, Boxing Day, and New Year's Day.

## 14.2 Site Parameters

A world-class destination for families, the Children's Museum's design will have vibrant, engaging and ever-changing spaces.

The Children's Museum is exploring facilities that are available for rent and purchase. Finding the optimal site is a critical task for the Children's Museum. The following criteria will be considered for a new location, including:

- An interior building space that accommodates current operations and the opportunities for future growth
- Opportunities for outdoor play and learning activities
- Easy access to parking
- Space for school bus drop off
- Proximity to a bus route
- A loading dock that can accommodate travelling exhibits
- Open concept to accommodate modular exhibits
- Accessibility
- Environmentally mindful
- Low overhead fees and costs to support the long-term sustainability of the Children's Museum

## 14.3 Size And Location

The size of the facility will be approximately 40,000 – 60,000 square feet of space located centrally in London, Ontario.



# 15.0 Financial Summary

## 15.1 Capital Funding and Budget

### Capital Budget

A capital budget has been developed based on the experiences of comparative Children's Museums. The estimates are very preliminary as a facility has not yet been secured and detailed drawings have not yet been completed.

Market research demonstrates the following costs:

- Exhibits that target early childhood development and are sensory in nature: \$150 sq./ft.
- Exhibits that are technology driven: \$300 to \$500 sq./ft.
- Program and rental space costs: \$200 - \$250 sq./ft.
- Office space: \$50 – \$100 sq./ft.
- Storage space: \$25 - \$50 sq./ft.

Based on the Manitoba Children's Museum experience and exploration of local facilities it is expected that the total capital costs will be \$9,500,000. This includes specialized equipment purchases such as a sound system, security, seating etc., design, fabrication and installation of 8 – 12 exhibits, and building and site improvements.

These are estimated costs only and are subject to change depending on the facility rented or purchased.

### Capital Campaign

A campaign will be implemented to raise the funds required to cover capital costs.

A full capital campaign plan will be developed. The quiet phase of the campaign is expected to launch in the spring of 2015. The timing of the public phase of the campaign will be determined once a facility is secured.

### Capital Grants

In addition to private funding, the Children's Museum expects to receive public funding for the development of the facility. Comparative Museums obtained public funding from all levels of government.

Funding for a project of this nature will need to be obtained from a variety of sources. Children's Museum leadership and campaign volunteers will build relationships with various levels of government and other potential funding organizations. The Children's Museum plans to leverage municipal support to secure Provincial and Federal support.

## 15.0 Financial Summary

### 15.2 Funding For Ongoing Operations

#### Earned Revenue

The various funding sources of earned revenue have been outlined in various sections of the business plan including: visits, memberships, programs, camps, birthday parties etc. It is expected that approximately 55% - 65% all of revenue will be earned revenue.

#### Contributed Revenue

The Children's Museum will require contributed revenue to fill the gap between operations expenses and earned revenue. Contributed revenue sources are expected to include individual giving, municipal, provincial, and community grants, sponsorship, fundraising events and corporate donations.

### 15.3 Preliminary Financial Projections

In developing the preliminary financial projects three data sources were used. The first source of information was the Children's Museum's 2013 – 2014 audited financial statements. The audited financial statements provided a baseline for all calculations. Three years of financial statements from the Manitoba Children's Museum were used to calculate growth estimates. The Manitoba Children's Museum financials were used because their situation closely mirrors that of the London Children's Museum. Finally, financial data from the Association of Children's Museum (ACM) was used. The ACM database presents data from similar size Children's Museums that served as a comparator to validate growth estimates.

Full financial projections will be provided in the final business plan.



## Revenue

Year 1\*

### Earned Revenue

Admission Revenue	\$450,000
School/Group Revenue	\$102,997
Workshops and Day Camp Revenue	\$158,865
Memberships	\$150,075
Shop Sales	\$60,000
Food Sales	\$22,000
Birthdays/Rentals Revenue	\$80,500
Total Earned Revenue	\$1,024,437

### Contributed Revenue

Fundraising	\$300,000
Grants	\$450,000
Total Contributed Revenue	\$750,000

**Total Revenue  
(Earned + Contributed)** **\$1,774,437**

## Expenses

Year 1\*

### Operating Expenses

Salaries and Benefits	\$812,000
Advertising and Public Relations	\$45,500
Administration	\$174,150
Marketing	\$34,000
Programs and Activities	\$105,000
Cost of Sales Shop	\$20,000
Exhibit, Curatorial and Conservation	\$10,000
Total Operating Expenses	\$1,200,650

### Building Expenses

Building Utilities	\$40,000
Rent or Mortgage	\$520,000
Total Building Expenses	\$560,000

**Total Expenses  
(Operating + Building)** **\$1,760,650**

\* Conservative Budget

**Net Profit  
(Revenue – Expenses)**

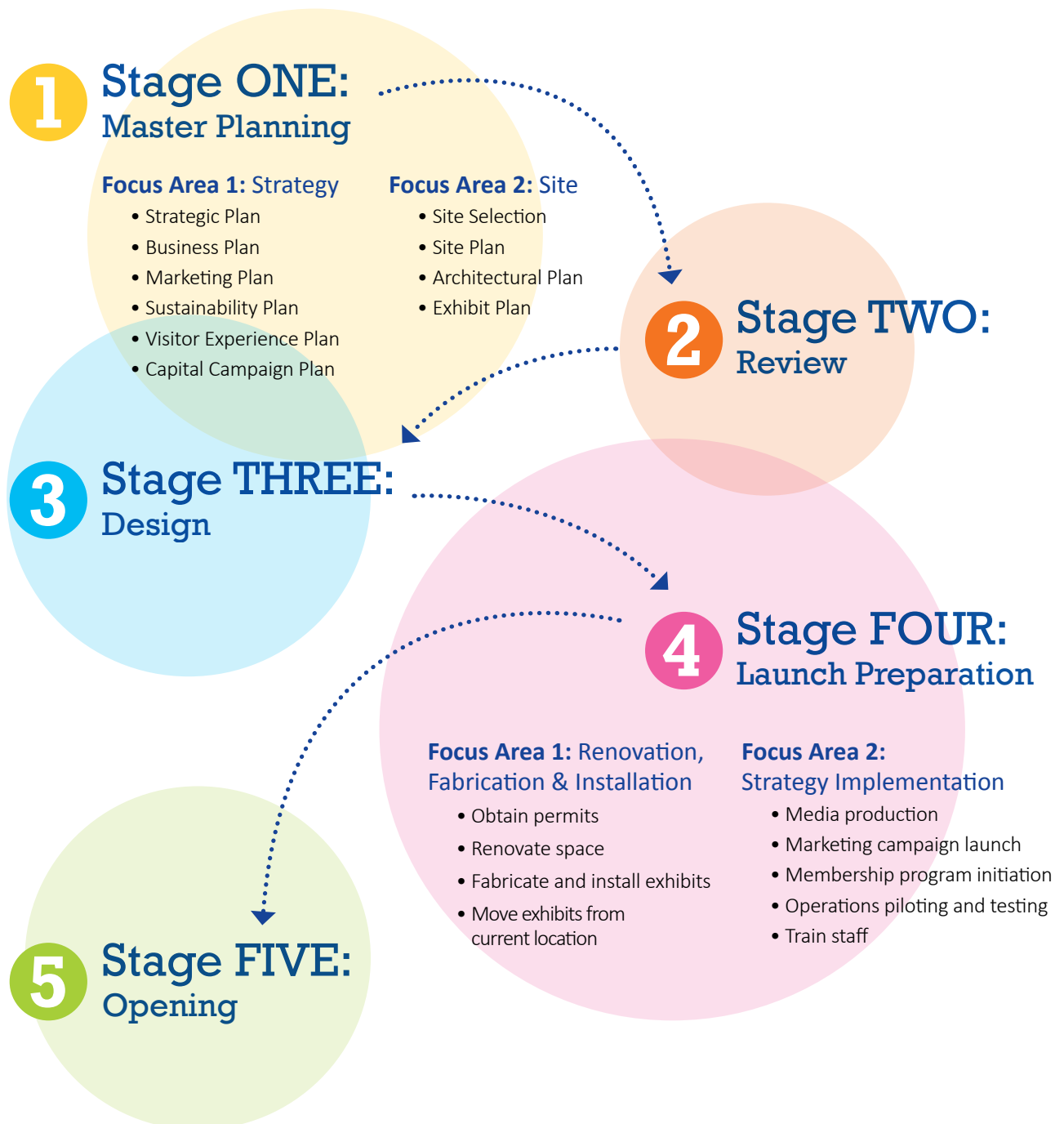
**\$13,787**

This data is based on ACM data from Children's Museum in North America and specifically Manitoba Children's Museum experience.

# 16.0 Next Steps

**It is time to take the dreams of the community and make them a reality.** This document represents the initial business plan. However, it is expected that there will be multiple iterations of the plan as the Children's Museum moves from planning toward implementation.

The following road map highlights the key stages over the next three to four years:





# 17.0 End Notes

<sup>1</sup> Association of Children's Museums. Case for Support. 2005

<sup>2</sup> Association of Children's Museums. Case for Support. 2005.

<sup>3</sup> White, Dr. Rachel E. The Power of Play: A Research Summary on Play and Learning. 2012.

<sup>4</sup> Association of Children's Museums. Case for Support. 2005.

<sup>5</sup> London Regional Children's Museum. Audited Financial Statements. 2012.

<sup>6</sup> Statistics Canada. 2011 Census.

