

Children's Museum receives grant to enhance early education program

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(Photo: Chris Cusumano)

A Museums for America grant is aimed at helping develop early childhood education at the Mid-Hudson Children's Museum.

During the two-year project, the sponsors of the \$146,799 grant — the Smithsonian Early Enrichment Center, Catharine Street Community Center and the Poughkeepsie school district — will partner with the Mid-Hudson Children's Museum to hold educational programming, development sessions for early educators and family workshops.

The grant was announced by U.S. Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand, D-N.Y., and U.S. Rep. Sean Patrick Maloney, D-Cold

Spring.

The museum's Executive Director Lara Litchfield-Kimber said the grant will help prepare children to attend school; encourage early childhood teachers to use new methodologies; and show parents how to use the museum as a learning resource.

"It is well documented that success in school begins long before a child ever enters the kindergarten classroom and that a child's earliest experiences directly influence brain development and the establishment of language, reasoning, problem solving, social skills, behavior and emotional health," Litchfield-Kimber said in a press release.

Museums for America, an Institute of Museum and Library Services program, provides grants to museums to promote school readiness for children in low-income and underserved communities, according to a press release from Maloney's office.

Maloney also co-sponsored the bipartisan Strong Start for America's Children Act. The legislation aims to send 4-year-olds from families 200 percent below the poverty level to preschool for the next 10 years.

"As a father of three kids, I know how important it is to ensure our kids have access to quality early childhood education all across the Hudson Valley," Maloney said in the press release. "Investing in early education programs that prepare our kids for the road ahead opens up opportunities for kids now and sets our children up for a lifetime of success."

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