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# Greensboro Children's Museum

Where play is a smart adventure —

and a tasty one, too!

BY WAYNETTE GOODSON

**A**

half-acre, organic garden filled with vegetables, culinary herbs, dwarf fruit trees, and fruit bushes (kiwi, blueberry, and blackberry) — and even a chicken coop. It's all part of the new Edible Schoolyard at Greensboro Children's Museum.

The museum is the first and only licensed Edible Schoolyard (ESY) within a children's museum setting. It will serve as a national model for other museums and children's institutions nationwide, promoting health and wellness in young children and families.

At the ESY, children participate in all aspects of the farm-to-table experience, preparing garden beds, planting seeds, tending crops, harvesting produce, picking and preparing food, and composting waste. Through these engaging activities, children can begin to understand the cycle of food production — and perhaps most important, learn how to eat healthfully.



PHOTOS COURTESY OF GREENSBORO CHILDREN'S MUSEUM

The ESY also features a kitchen where children and their families can use fresh, local, and organic ingredients to make delicious snacks and meals. So not only do kids pick up practical gardening skills, they also learn cooking techniques, connect with the natural world, and enjoy nourishing food.

Is all of this beginning to sound very Alice Waters to you? It is! The renowned chef/author, who's credited with founding the farm-to-table movement, pioneered the first ESY at Martin Luther King Middle School in Berkeley, California, a project of her Chez Panisse Foundation. The Greensboro Children's Museum is the first licensed museum model of this original ESY.

But kids have much more to experience at the museum than the ESY. More than 20 permanent exhibits are designed to stimulate their imaginations and provide educational play experiences. For example, kids enter the actual cockpit of a DC-9 jet and pretend to be a pilot in the Plane Exhibit Area. They draw, color, paint, and design take-home art

projects from recycled materials at the Creation Station. And they can even play film director using real video monitors in the Media Room. Other interactive exhibits include Pizza Pan, Train Depot, and The Bloomingtales Bookstore.

It's no surprise to learn that in 2004, the museum was chosen as one of the top 50 children's museums in the United States. All that momentum began on May 15, 1999, when the 37,000-square-foot facility opened its doors for the first time in downtown Greensboro at 220 N. Church St.

Today it has evolved into a hands-on, interactive museum for children, their families, and teachers. Most of all, the space is designed to inspire learning through play in a safe, energetic environment for children up to 10 years of age. But to kids, that all spells one thing — f-u-n! Visit [gcmuseum.com](http://gcmuseum.com).

Clockwise from top: The Greensboro Children's Museum's Edible Schoolyard, climbing trees during "Chicks in The City," and making green eggs as part of the "farm to table" experience.

