



MISSISSIPPI CHILDREN'S MUSEUM

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The MS Children's Museum to Open *Rocky's House* Traveling Exhibit at National Guard Armory in Gloster, MS

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Jackson, Miss. (May 22, 2026)— The Mississippi Children's Museum Traveling Exhibit, *Rocky's House*, will be open at the National Guard Armory in Gloster from May 28 – June 25, 2026, bringing interactive literacy experiences to local families beyond the museum's four walls. This exhibit promotes the literacy campaign *Talk from the Start* and its mission to raise awareness that talking to and with children from birth is essential to learning to read.

Rocky's House introduces caregivers and children to a cast of characters representing the diverse population of Mississippi, Rocky's Friends. Along with Rocky, they guide guests through three primary methods of language and literacy development: playing, talking, and reading. Through various hands-on exhibit elements, visitors will learn about these methods and have a chance to play them into practice. The centerpiece of the *Rocky's House* traveling exhibit is Rocky's Home. There, visitors can read a book, ask questions, and put their own stories into motion with puppets. Step out the back door to Rocky's Big Backyard, filled with books for reading and play. The exhibit features four larger-than-life interactive book experiences — Read with Me, Talk with Me, Play with Me, and Grow with Me — each designed to encourage conversation, imaginative play, storytelling, and early learning between children and caregivers.

"Traveling exhibits like *Rocky's House* allow us to extend the Mississippi Children's Museum's mission beyond our walls and into communities across the state," said MCM's President and CEO, Susan Garrard. "Through play, conversation, and shared reading experiences, this exhibit helps families build the strong language and literacy foundations children need to thrive in school and in life."

EXHIBIT ELEMENTS:

- **Read with Me:** Rocky's best friend, Kareem, invites guests to cast a line and catch a fish featuring engaging questions about stories they have read.
- **Talk with Me:** Mei and Ella encourage visitors to explore communication through blocks, images, and American Sign Language while engaging with the world in new ways.
- **Play with Me:** Cody and Mateo invite children and caregivers to step into imaginative play with costumes, storytelling prompts, and pretend-play experiences.
- **Grow with Me:** Rocky's youngest friend, Mateo, welcomes visitors to explore his garden through age-appropriate toys, sensory activities, and interactive play.

Rocky's tour will share the campaign's message "We all play a part, talk from the start," which encourages parents, caregivers, educators, and community supporters to talk to and with young children. You can request to book *Rocky's House* in your community by visiting www.talkfromthestart.org.

The *Talk from the Start* Campaign and its companion project, the *Rocky's House* traveling exhibit, have been made possible through funding by the W. K. Kellogg Foundation. For more information, visit www.TalkfromtheStart.org.

About the Mississippi Children's Museum

The Mississippi Children's Museum (MCM) is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization with a mission of creating unparalleled experiences to inspire excellence and a lifelong joy of learning in all children. MCM's two award-winning museums in Jackson and Meridian collectively offer over 100,000-square feet of exhibits and educational programming designed around five primary initiatives, Literacy, STEAM, Health and Nutrition, Cultural Arts, and Mississippi Heritage – the keys to helping our children mature into healthy and productive adult learners. MCM offers exceptional resources for children, families, and educators through MCM at Home virtual programming, traveling exhibits and programs, community outreach, *Launch into Learning* afterschool program, professional development for educators, and *Talk from the Start* and *Reach Out and Read*, initiatives for parents and caregivers to promote language development in children from birth to five years old.

MCM is honored to have received an Institute of Museum and Library Services National Medal, the Mississippi Tourism Association Governor's Award for Travel Attraction of the Year, and USA Today's '10Best Travel Award for Best Children's Museum. Learn more: www.mschildrensmuseum.org

About the W.K. Kellogg Foundation

The W.K. Kellogg Foundation (WKKF), founded in 1930 as an independent, private foundation by breakfast cereal innovator and entrepreneur Will Keith Kellogg, is among the largest philanthropic foundations in the United States. Guided by the belief that all children should have an equal opportunity to thrive, WKKF works with communities to create conditions for vulnerable children so they can realize their full potential in school, work and life. The Kellogg Foundation is based in Battle Creek, Michigan, and works throughout the United States and internationally, as well as with sovereign tribes. Special attention is paid to priority places where there are high concentrations of poverty and where children face significant barriers to success. WKKF priority places in the U.S. are in Michigan, Mississippi, New Mexico and New Orleans; and internationally, are in Mexico and Haiti. For more information, visit www.wkkf.org.

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