The academic skills that children develop early will help them be more successful in school. The social skills they develop – like perseverance, focus, motivation and self-confidence – will make them more successful in life. Children’s Museum Tucson supports children and families by providing accessible, authentic, interactive educational experiences geared to help children be successful in school, career, and life.

In 2020, the pandemic sharply highlighted the need for educational resources that support families, children, and educators in non-traditional formats and informal educational environments. Children’s museums – including CMT - were well-positioned for the challenge of serving families as they quickly pivoted to remote learning. Embracing the challenges, CMT introduced a lineup of virtual programs incorporating literacy, arts, science, and wellness themes.

This programming is particularly important for children in the CMT primary age range who are building lifelong academic habits and are in jeopardy of delayed developmental milestones.

Beyond the pandemic, CMT’s programs continue to keep kids active, enthusiastic and full of wonder. By investing in children earlier and connecting with underserved families, CMT programs help alleviate the educational and social problems that negatively impact children’s chances to succeed in school and life, building career-readiness skills and contributing to the creation of a better-educated, healthier, more connected community.

The Challenge

Even with added virtual and outreach programming, Children’s Museum Tucson’s downtown facility has reached its capacity for attendance, staffing, events and earned income. The need to grow and expand is clear.

With discussion on expansion and even relocation underway for over 10 years, CMT has pursued numerous options to enable it to meet the needs of its growing communities. The downtown location is iconic and beloved, but the historic nature of the Carnegie presents many obstacles and prohibitions for adding to the building or changing the footprint. The possibility of building a new museum has proven to be cost-prohibitive.