



NEWS RELEASE

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### **The City of Mankato Proclaims June 12th Official Play Day!**

Recognizing the importance of unstructured play to children's healthy development, Mayor Brady has proclaimed June 12<sup>th</sup> to be Mankato's first-ever official Play Day (see attached Mayor's proclamation). From 10 a.m. to noon on Friday June 12<sup>th</sup>, families with young children are invited to the Play Day celebration in Elk's Nature Center in Rasmussen Woods. Hosted by the Family and Consumer Science department at MSU-Mankato in collaboration with the emerging Children's Museum of Southern Minnesota and the City of Mankato, the official Play Day reminds us that free-choice, unstructured play should be at the center of children's lives as they grow and learn.

The Play Day is an initiative to bring free and unstructured play back into the center of children's lives by encouraging parents and children to take this opportunity to play together. Holding an official Play Day is important because free play offers many benefits to a child's physical, social and cognitive development. According to Dr. Heather Von Bank of MSU's Family Consumer Science department, "This type of play is slowly being removed from children's daily routines due to our busy lives and the over-scheduling of children's free time. Play Days can range from a matter of hours to an entire day and have taken place all over the world" Peter Olson, Executive Director of the Children's Museum states, "We understand that play is core to children's learning and to our learning as adults. We are extremely excited for our first collaboration with the folks at MSU and hope it's the first of many as we continue planning for a permanent facility in Greater Mankato."

There will be hands-on activities and opportunities for parents and children of preschool to early-school age to play together with everyday household items in creative ways. Families will be encouraged to continue to make time for their children's play every day.

**CHILDREN'S MUSEUM of SOUTHERN MINNESOTA**