



**Media Contact:**

Meredith Hamme  
mhamme@nationalchildrensmuseum.org

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**All Aboard for Thomas & Friends™: Explore the Rails! Fun at National Children's Museum**

Washington, D.C., January 12, 2022 – All aboard! The world's most beloved #1 blue engine will roll into National Children's Museum this winter for exciting fun and adventure. Thomas & Friends™: Explore the Rails!, an interactive exhibit created by Minnesota Children's Museum and inspired by the popular children's series now on Nick Jr, steams into the Museum on Saturday, January 22, for a four-month stay through Sunday, May 15, 2022.

Featuring favorite engines and destinations from Thomas & Friends™, this STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) –focused exhibit seeks to engage children, ages 2 through 7, and families in foundational skills that foster STEM literacy through playful learning experiences. The exhibit incorporates foundational STEM practices that encourage thinking mathematically, making comparisons, experimenting to solve problems using a variety of methods and tools, thinking creatively and reflecting on actions and results.

Visitors to the exhibit will be delighted as they find themselves surrounded by the Island of Sodor's iconic locations: Knapford Station, Sodor Steamworks and much more. In the exhibit, children help Thomas and his friends solve a variety of challenges, from a simple sorting and shape identification activity to more complex engineering obstacles, such as completing a train track using track pieces with different levels of elevation. As children encounter new challenges and test their abilities, the smiling faces of Thomas, Percy, Victor and others are there to offer encouragement and remind children how "really useful" they all are.

**Inside the Exhibit:**

- Climb into Thomas' cab and explore the engine's inner workings. Flip levers and investigate other movable parts that trigger train noises such as braking, whistles and steam.
- Fix Percy's wobbly wheel by removing and replacing parts and experimenting to find a combination of wheels, rods and bolts that work.
- Explore the favorite Island of Sodor destinations including: Tidmouth Sheds, Brendam Docks and the Sodor Search & Rescue Station on an over-sized Thomas Wooden Railway train table.

# national children's museum

- Work with old and new friends loading luggage, livestock and other freight into the coaches of two train cars.
- Collaborate with others to get Percy moving by loading coal into his coal box and filling his tank with water from a water tower.
- Suit up as the conductor to exchange money and sell tickets to other visitors taking a ride on the train.
- Wander through a Thomas & Friends retrospective featuring model engines from the original live action series produced in London, copies of the original drawings and 75 manuscripts from the Rev. W. Awdry, the creator of Thomas & Friends, and a collection of memorabilia documenting the history and evolution of Thomas & Friends through books, television, and toys.

The Thomas & Friends exhibit was designed and developed by Minnesota Children's Museum in partnership with Mattel, Inc. Fisher-Price, the leading manufacturer of infant and preschool toys, is the presenting sponsor for the exhibit.

Admission to Thomas & Friends: Explore the Rails! is \$15.95 for adults and children 1 and older; free for children under 1 and Museum members. For more information about the exhibit at National Children's Museum, please visit [www.nationalchildrensmuseum.org/visiting-exhibit-hall](http://www.nationalchildrensmuseum.org/visiting-exhibit-hall).

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## **About National Children's Museum**

National Children's Museum is a unique hybrid institution that combines learning elements found in a science center with children's museum experiences. Through hands-on science, technology, engineering, arts, and math (STEAM) based exhibits, programs, and virtual offerings, the Museum sparks curiosity and ignites creativity for children under the age of twelve and their families. Since February 2020, the Museum has reached more than 1 million people through in-person and digital initiatives. Learn more on how to visit the Museum and engage with virtual STEAM resources at [nationalchildrensmuseum.org](http://nationalchildrensmuseum.org).

## **About Thomas & Friends®**

Thomas the Tank Engine™ was created over 70 years ago, by a British clergyman, the Rev W Awdry, as a storybook for his son. That story quickly grew to become the award-winning #1 preschool train brand franchise it is today, enjoyed by families in more than 160 territories and over 55 languages across multiple touch-points and formats, including: 500+ original TV shows; 12 feature-length films; selling 1 engine every second; apps; toys; consumer products; publishing; live attractions and much more. Thomas & Friends is viewable on more than 30 world-class broadcasters including Nick Jr. in the US, Super RTL in Germany, and on Five's Milkshake! in the UK. Thomas & Friends can also be viewed across digital platforms including



Hulu, iTunes, YouTube and more. On YouTube, the Thomas & Friends channel has had over 1.16 billion lifetime views, over 909k subscribers and 2.6MM engagements. For more information about the world of Thomas & Friends, please visit [facebook.com/thomasandfriends](https://facebook.com/thomasandfriends).

#### **About Minnesota Children's Museum**

As the nation's leading developer of traveling children's museum exhibits, the Minnesota Children's Museum is a trailblazer in creating immersive learning environments, reaching more than 15 million children and adults in the United States, Canada and Mexico through the nation's largest collection of children's traveling exhibits. The Museum is consistently rated as one of the top children's museums in the country by national media outlets like Forbes and Parents and was recently named as a finalist for an Institute of Museum and Library Services Medal of Service, the nation's highest honor conferred on museums and libraries.

#### **About Mattel**

Mattel is a global learning, development and play company that inspires the next generation of kids to shape a brighter tomorrow. Through our portfolio of iconic consumer brands, including American Girl®, Barbie®, Fisher-Price®, Hot Wheels® and Thomas & Friends®, we create systems of play, content and experiences that help kids unlock their full potential. Mattel also creates inspiring and innovative products in collaboration with leading entertainment and technology companies as well as other partners. With a global workforce of approximately 28,000 people, Mattel operates in 40 countries and territories and sells products in more than 150 nations. Visit us online at [www.mattel.com](http://www.mattel.com).