

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**TALARIS AND CHILDREN'S MUSEUM OF TACOMA TEAM TO CREATE
"LEARNING LOUNGE" FOR PARENTS**

***Acclaimed family researcher Dr. John Gottman provides
research and expertise to innovative project.***

Tacoma, Wa. (May 28, 2003) – Talaris Research Institute, a Seattle-based non-profit research institute focusing on advancing knowledge of early brain development, and the Children's Museum of Tacoma(CMT) announced the opening of a new interactive exhibit targeted to parents and childcare providers who visit the Museum with their children.

The exhibit is called "the Learning Lounge" (<http://www.talaris.org/pressroom.htm>) and features the collaboration of acclaimed family researcher, Dr. John Gottman. Gottman is partnering with Talaris on other research projects and has provided feedback on the exhibit which focuses on his five steps to emotional learning. The Museum closed for one week for construction of the exhibit, and recently re-opened to the public.

"Now, there is a learning opportunity for parents and childcare providers that matches the fun their children experience when visiting the Museum," said Buck Smith, Talaris Research Institute Executive Director. "At the museum, parents are already engaged in interactive learning and play activities with their children. Our goal at Talaris is to help those responsible for children to have access to understandable, research-based information that can dramatically improve their ability to raise healthy children. This will help us move closer to achieving that objective."

"With more than 30,000 visitors each year, everyone recognizes that a lot of little friends come through our doors," said Tanya Andrews, executive director of the Children's Museum of Tacoma. "What sometimes goes unnoticed is that there are a lot of parents and childcare providers that spend a lot of time here also. For a long

time, we have looked for a way to help them improve their parenting skills in a fun, interactive way, while they are at the museum with their children. And, just as art museums have their 'collections,' we view the useful content on child development provided by Talaris as our 'on-loan information collection' at the Museum for Children."

The exhibit will feature Dr. John Gottman's five-step approach to parenting that can help forge stronger family bonds while preparing children to cope with the powerful world of emotions they face everyday. These steps include emotional awareness; recognizing emotions as an opportunity for intimacy and teaching; listening empathetically and validating the child's feelings; labeling emotions; and setting limits while helping the child problem-solve.

Research by Dr. Gottman shows that children who can understand and cope with emotions do better in school, form stronger relationships, have fewer behavioral problems and generally lead happier, healthier and less stressful lives. Gottman's Emotion Coaching approach shows parents and caregivers how to teach these skills.

The exhibit features three different interactive pods that provide "emotion coaching." These pods are made up of colorful photo murals and various settings that include a playhouse for role playing and a living room set to promote the reading of children's books on emotions. The exhibit also features a series of hands-on activities that include a series of mirrors that encourage children to create emotions with their faces, several multi-colored easels where kids can draw "angry" lines or "silly" lines and other emotions. CMT and Talaris Staff partnered to create in-depth "make-and-take" activities from which children and parents can take home projects that depict what they have learned.

"Every parent's goal is to help their children become happy, well-adjusted people," says Dr. John Gottman. "Research has shown, however, that many parents just don't have all the tools to help them in this process. There is no question that as parents become more skilled in understanding their children's emotions they move closer to achieving that goal. I am very pleased to have these tools being taught at the Children's Museum of Tacoma and believe parents will learn and have fun doing so when they visit."

Funding, photographs, and research content for the Learning Lounge are being provided by Talaris, and construction, design and furnishings are being provided in-kind by IKEA.

About the Children's Museum of Tacoma

Since 1985, the Children's Museum of Tacoma has celebrated the power of play in the lifelong journey of learning. Located in Tacoma's historic theatre district at 936 Broadway, the Museum is open Tues-Sat 10 to 5 PM, Sun noon to 5. Our imaginative environment reaches beyond home and school experiences, nurturing young children and their adults as they explore the world together. Come play!
www.ChildrensMuseumofTacoma.org

About Talaris Research Institute

Talaris Research Institute, www.talaris.org, is a non-profit institute for advanced study based in Seattle. Talaris' mission is to advance knowledge of early brain development for all who nurture children. Dedicated to discovering how children think, feel and learn, Talaris translates the science of learning into tools and information for parents, caregivers, childcare providers, educators, healthcare providers, and the corporate community. Talaris Research Institute is funded by the Apex Foundation.

If you would like to receive Talaris Research Spotlights via email please send an email request to cp@talaris.org. Some previous spotlight topics have included: "Not Such Sweet Dreams", an examination of nightmares and night terrors; "Are you Okay Daddy?" a study of empathy; "Baby See, Baby Do!" a look at imitative behavior and memory; "Do You Remember When..." a discussion of early memories.

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Images included below:



