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***THE BACKYARD* OPENS AT THE NAT IN BALBOA PARK ON JULY 20**

New play space for children 5 and under at the San Diego Natural History Museum

SAN DIEGO, CA—Adventures begin in [The Backyard](#), a brand-new exhibition at the San Diego Natural History Museum (The Nat) that allows little learners to expand their horizons, learn, and explore the natural world through play. This new space provides children 0-5 years old with a safe, dedicated place to play while parents, grandparents, and caregivers participate or sit, relax, and observe. The exhibition is included with paid admission and free for members. All children must be accompanied by an adult to gain access to the space.

“Opening *The Backyard* enhances the Museum for our youngest visitors and their families,” said Judy Gradwohl, president and CEO of the San Diego Natural History Museum. “Based on early childhood learning theory and the natural wonders in our own backyards, this exhibition will delight young children and their accompanying adults. Our hope is that *The Backyard* inspires lifelong learning about the nature around us and instills an appreciation for the magnificent wildlife that can be enjoyed outdoors every day.”

The Museum has planned a Nat Talk and scheduled a new 3D film to open to help celebrate the grand opening:

- A Nat Talk entitled [The New Nature Movement with Richard Louv](#) will take place on Tuesday, July 10 at 7 PM. Louv will speak about “nature deficit disorder” and the importance of getting kids into nature.
- On August 1, [Backyard Wilderness 3D](#) opens in the Museum’s 300-seat giant-screen theater. The film follows a young girl named Katie who lives next to the woods but is blind to the real-life spectacle around her until she discovers the intricate secrets that nature has hidden so close to her front door.

Inspired by a quintessential San Diego backyard patio, *The Backyard* is packed with experiences that encourage curiosity about the natural world including, a shade tree, live animals, a potting bench, a giant ladybug, stepping stones, a pergola-covered reading nook, a garden bed for infant tummy time, an urban nature soundscape, and more.

The Backyard contains interactive activities and objects that instill a sense of wonder and curiosity about the natural world. Exhibition highlights include:

- A garden bed (ages 0-2)
 - Modeled after a self-contained garden area, this enclosed, soft space is separated from areas designed for older toddlers and preschoolers. It is an ideal area for infants to work on tummy time, rolling over, and sitting up. Within this space, older infants have an area to practice crawling, walking, and grasping different textures.

- An old oak tree (ages 2-5)
 - Children will embody imaginative, dramatic, and realistic play as they dress like familiar backyard animals, crawl on a giant ladybug, and gallivant around an old oak tree. Self-directed play can take many forms as kids build block structures, color mix on the light table, and uncover hidden sounds and live animals in the garden wall.

- A potting shed (ages 2-5)
 - Adults can relax and recharge on plush bench seating with free WiFi and a charging station while kids exercise fine motor skills and build imaginations as they create and pot flowers, read books, solve puzzles, and sort shapes.

“The Backyard provides flexible experiences that allow adults to choose their level of engagement,” Beth Redmond-Jones, vice president of engagement and education at The Nat, remarked. *“They can either be actively engaged in their child’s play or sit back and relax with a latté from The Flying Squirrel Café. And for parents or caregivers who have been gallivanting in Balboa Park all day, or simply just need a breather, that can be a beautiful thing.”*

Admission and Hours

This new 800-square-foot exhibition is located on Level 1 of the Museum behind [The Flying Squirrel Café](#). General admission includes access to all other exhibitions within the Museum as well as access to 2D and 3D films in the Subaru 3D Experience of the Charmaine and Maurice Kaplan Theater.

Admission [rates](#) (through July 31): \$19 adults; \$17 seniors/students/military; \$12 youth (3-17). Members and children 2 and under are free. Admission [rates](#) (effective August 1): \$19.95 adults; \$16.95 seniors/students/military; \$11.95 youth (3-17). Members and children 2 and under are free.

The Museum is open from 10 AM to 5 PM daily—only closed Thanksgiving and Christmas Day. *The Backyard* will close at 4:30 PM daily for cleaning and maintenance.

For more information, please visit sdnat.org/thebackyard or access our [online press kit](#).

About the San Diego Natural History Museum (The Nat)

The San Diego Natural History Museum (The Nat) is the second oldest scientific institution in California and the third oldest west of the Mississippi. Founded in 1874 by a small group of citizen scientists, the Museum’s mission is to interpret the natural world through research, education, and exhibits; to promote understanding of the evolution and diversity of Southern California and the peninsula of Baja California, Mexico; and to inspire in all a respect for nature and the environment. The Museum is located at 1788 El Prado, San Diego, CA 92101 in Balboa Park and is open daily from 10 AM to 5 PM. For more information, call 877.946.7797 or visit sdnat.org. To stay up to date on Museum news, follow The Nat on [Instagram](#) and [Twitter](#) and join the discussion on [Facebook](#).

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