



museum of  
**science+industry**  
chicago

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## **WELCOME TO SCIENCE INITIATIVE BUILDS BRIDGES BETWEEN YOUTH AND SCIENCE**

CHICAGO—The Museum’s nationally recognized education programs, the Welcome to Science Initiative, were created to realize the Museum’s vision: to inspire and motivate our children to achieve their full potential in the fields of science, technology, medicine and engineering.

The Welcome to Science Initiative creates learning experiences both inside and outside the classroom, and removes barriers that exclude youth from participating. Providing access is critical – MSI places a priority on serving schools and neighborhoods with predominantly low-income student populations and reaching youth who are underrepresented in STEM fields.

While it’s important to provide programs directly to youth, there are a range of important influencers who guide them, help them make decisions about school and careers, and build their science literacy. That’s why the Museum’s unique approach supports youth and all those who are essential to their success – their families, teachers, schools and communities – with resources and opportunities.

The initiative extends the content of the Museum’s world-class exhibitions through strategies that empower teachers, engage the community, and excite students and Museum guests. The Museum works with local school systems—especially Chicago Public Schools—and collaborates with some of the best minds in science and education to develop and evaluate programs.

The Museum’s science education programs focus on three strategies:

### **1. Improve the quality of science teaching in schools.**

One predictor of a child’s academic success is the quality of the teacher in their classroom. But many teachers aren’t adequately prepared to teach science. MSI provides skills and resources to teachers, administrators and schools through graduate-level professional development courses and support for whole-school improvement in science. Programs target teachers in high-needs schools who have little experience with science or science teaching. Most are from Chicago Public Schools; in fact, 46 percent of CPS K-8 schools have at least one MSI-trained teacher.

### **2. Connect science to children wherever they are.**

Students spend more time learning outside of school than in classrooms, so reaching them with science experiences beyond the school day is critical. MSI supports science programming in neighborhoods and during out-of-school time like weekends and summer vacation. Our 180+ community partnerships use a train-the-trainer model to build self-sustaining learning programs and strong networks of community-based educators, while our youth science engagement programs invite teens from diverse backgrounds to discover new interests and skills, prepare for college and learn about science careers.

### 3. **Showcase diversity in STEM fields.**

For children to believe they can have a career in science, they need to see STEM professionals who look like they do and come from communities like theirs. MSI introduces young people to a diverse range of science professionals through intimate discussions, large-scale events, specialized programming and throughout Museum exhibits. By dismantling stereotypes and preconceptions, these role models help youth see themselves in science and feel like they belong.

MSI's approach works. A team of researchers constantly evaluate programs to measure and improve their effectiveness. This research is leading the discussion about what a museum can do to create the next generation of scientists and innovators.

Learn more about the Welcome to Science Initiative at [msichicago.org/welcometoscience](https://msichicago.org/welcometoscience).

**The Museum of Science and Industry, Chicago (MSI)**, one of the largest science museums in the world, offers world-class and uniquely interactive experiences that inspire inventive genius and foster curiosity. From groundbreaking and award-winning exhibits that can't be found anywhere else, to hands-on opportunities that make *you* the scientist—a visit to MSI is where fun and learning mix. Through its Welcome to Science Initiative, the Museum offers a variety of student, teacher and family programs that make a difference in communities and contribute to MSI's larger vision: to inspire and motivate children to achieve their full potential in science, technology, medicine and engineering. Come visit and find your inspiration! MSI is open 9:30–4 p.m. every day except Thanksgiving and Christmas day. Extended hours, until 5:30 p.m., are offered during peak periods. The Museum is grateful for the support of its donors and guests, who make its work possible. MSI is also supported in part by the people of Chicago through the Chicago Park District. For more information, visit [msichicago.org](https://msichicago.org) or call (773) 684-1414.

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