

**Build Adventures**

**BLOCK**
**PARTY**
**Spaceship Build and Scan**


## Expanding across the Northeast, LEGO Discovery Centers offer a fun time for the entire family

By Lisa A. Beach

**W**hen Jessica Mercedes Penzari of New York City wanted to celebrate her son Hendrix Benjamin's sixth birthday, tapping into his passion for LEGO toys seemed like a no-brainer. Hendrix loved going to the LEGOLAND Discovery Center at Ridge Hill Mall in Yonkers, N.Y. So, a birthday visit to the brand new LEGO Discovery Center in the greater Washington, D.C., area provided the perfect way to celebrate his special day.

"The new D.C. LEGO Discovery Center did not disappoint! We had to drag my son out after three hours of nonstop play," Penzari says. "The laser obstacle course room was really fun, DUPLO (park) was adorable and the Build Master was really cool, too. But the coolest experience? The immersive 4D movie theater with showings every 30 minutes. We're talking scent and water effects, with different films featuring favorite characters



Hero Zone

Creative Club



Tree of Imagination



LEGO DISCOVERY CENTER, WASHINGTON, D.C. (3)

like Ninjago and LEGO Friends. I was impressed!”

Since 2008, LEGOLAND has been building its footprint across the United States, starting with its Columbus, Ohio, location and continuing to add more than a dozen Discovery Centers over the years, including in New York, Pennsylvania, New Jersey and Massachusetts. The D.C. area Discovery Center opened in summer 2023 inside Virginia’s Springfield Town Center, boasting 32,000 square feet of family fun.

Both the LEGO Discovery Centers and LEGOLAND Discovery Centers are similar, providing the ultimate indoor

LEGO playground with various rides and experiences that bring families and friends together. The LEGOLAND Discovery Centers boast classic attractions while the three LEGO Discovery Centers, which opened in 2023, offer a mix of reimagined fan-favorite attractions alongside next-generation attractions.

All Discovery Centers also host all-new events throughout the year, like NINJAGO: Dragon’s Rising Event and the Play Unstoppable Festival in 2024, along with classic seasonal events such as Brick-or-Treat and Holiday Bricktacular. The D.C. Discovery Center recently built hundreds of cherry blossoms using 9,800

LEGO bricks in honor of the National Cherry Blossom Festival. The attractions also offer unique LEGO education workshops for schools and groups, along with birthday parties. With a focus on their local communities, they also schedule several appreciation days with discounted admission for health care workers, military service members and teachers.

“It’s one of the few places in the world where families can journey into the world of LEGO and build memories together in an indoor interactive experience,” says Julie Estrada, spokesperson for Merlin Entertainments North America, the LEGO

Discovery Centers’ parent company. “We continue to see more and more families who travel to our Discovery Centers looking for shared experiences, and we are able to bring out creativity, adventure and joy in our visitors every day.”

Ranging in size from roughly 30,000 to 40,000 square feet (some with multiple levels), Discovery Centers are tucked into malls or shopping centers located in or near cities. This makes them accessible to their target audience — families with children ages 3 to 10 — although children younger and older can also enjoy the

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### DUPLO Park



experiences. For instance, each Discovery Center includes a toddler-friendly DUPLO area, and older kids can rise to the challenge of competing for a high score on interactive rides like Kingdom Quest or Imagination Express.

All Discovery Centers include build areas, opportunities to meet a master model Builder, a LEGO 4D Cinema and an interactive ride. Estrada points out that experiences can vary slightly between the centers.

What sets LEGO Discovery Centers apart from other family entertainment centers?

"We bring the top toy brand in the world into an interactive indoor adventure where families can make their imaginations truly run wild," Estrada says. She notes that the facilities' unique zones combine new technology for family-friendly experiences only found at a LEGO Discovery Center. For example, some feature play areas based on NINJAGO, while others are themed after LEGO City. Plus, the new LEGO Discovery Centers introduced exclusive attractions such as:

**Spaceship Build and Scan.** In this extraordinary building experience, guests can design and build a LEGO spaceship, take charge and launch it into the digital universe. Friends and family can follow

along by tracking the launch on the big screen.

**Build Adventures.** With an entire area dedicated to playing and creating with LEGO bricks, guests can jump over a crocodile in the jungle, loop over lava and drive through the desert, thanks to their "bricktacular" creativity.

**DUPLO Park.** Preschoolers can meet a roaring dinosaur, spin the wheel in the big construction challenge and enjoy the brick pits. Here, the littlest builders and

their families can learn and play together, solve puzzles, build with toddler-friendly DUPLO bricks and catch ducks in the duck pond.

**Minifigure Creator.** In this build-your-own section, guests can craft LEGO Minifigures, choosing from a billion LEGO heads, bodies, legs and more.

"My son loves LEGO," says Eric Robles, noting the family lives near the new D.C.-area LEGO Discovery Center. "We love everything the attraction has to

LEGO DISCOVERY CENTER, WASHINGTON, D.C. (3)

offer. Between all the zones, we spend hours here. Our son's favorite is the Imagination Express ride and Spaceship Build and Scan."

Estrada says that the brand taps into guest feedback to ensure interactive and engaging experiences at the Discovery Centers. "We've taken these learnings and applied them to future offerings and events to make them a great experience for the entire family to build memories together."

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