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## Born Learning trail unveiled

ANDREW CRITCHELOW The News-Enterprise May 20, 2018



Children play Saturday at the new Born Learning Trail, which was established adjacent to Funtopia in American Legion Park Elizabethtown.

ANDREW CRITCHELOW/The News-Enterprise

A new Born Learning Trail was unveiled Saturday at American Legion Park in Elizabethtown and for organizers and sponsors of the trail, this was a reason to celebrate.

To mark the occasion, a festival was held outside Funtopia with features including face painting, arts and crafts and children's activities provided by community agencies.

C.J. Quick, co-owner of Brighter Futures Counseling and co-organizer of the trail, said the trail is designed to prepare children 5 and younger for Kindergarten through a variety of learning activities. She said the trail is an accessible way for parents to prepare their children for education.

“We want parents to realize it’s just an every day thing; you don’t have to send you kid to daycare if you can’t afford it or preschool,” she said. “You can still make learning a part of your life, which the trail does.”

The trail has been in the works for eight months and is a collaboration between Brighter Futures Counseling, the city of Elizabethtown, Elizabethtown Independent Schools, Lincoln Trail Health Department, Louisville Paving & Construction Co., United Way of Central Kentucky and Vulcan Materials. Benches were donated by Brite Electric Supply, the family of Mildred Taylor Crain and Quick & Coleman.

“It’s been a community effort,” Quick said.

Elizabethtown Independent Schools Superintendent Jon Ballard was in attendance during the 10 a.m. ribbon cutting. He said he foresees the trail having a lasting effect on young learners.

“I can tell you that this trail will have a lasting impact not just on the kids who walk through this trail with their parents but also on our community,” he said.

Ballard’s wife, Courtney, was responsible for the artwork on the trail, which included a hopscotch court and various other images designed to encourage childhood learning and engagement. She completed the artwork with the help of EIS students.

Born Learning Trails are an extension of United Way of Central Kentucky’s Born Learning Academies, which are free workshops for parents and caregivers that encourage early learning. Another Hardin County Born Learning Trail is at North Park Elementary School in Radcliff.

Quick said the trail’s location in proximity to Funtopia and Elizabethtown Aquatic Park will attract families to make use of it.

“I think incorporating this in with the Aquatic Park and Funtopia makes it more accessible, more exciting and we’ll get more foot traffic,” she said.

Quick said she was excited to see families take advantage of the new community resource.

“It’s geared to just making learning fun and exciting and easy and free,” she said.

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New Born Learning Trail to open this weekend with fair