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**Forty Carrots Family Center and Ringling Museum of Art
Partner to Support Local Families Exploration into the Arts**

[Sarasota, FL] – In September, Forty Carrots Family Center embarked on a new partnership with The John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art. One Saturday a month, families attending Forty Carrots’ weekly *Partners In Play* classes will be invited to The Ringling for a free morning of art-themed play and exploration.

In addition, through the pilot project, a Ringling art educator will visit Forty Carrots’ weekly *Partners In Play* classes held at the Palmetto Library in Manatee County and Jacaranda Library in Sarasota County to lead children and their families through an age-appropriate art experience.

“Exposing children to art, and encouraging hands-on activities, is a wonderful way for them to express their ideas and learn,” said Christina Rodrigues, Forty Carrots Parenting Program Director. “The Ringling is an extraordinary place that many of our families have not yet had a chance to explore with their children. We’re delighted to partner with The Ringling to offer new ways for families to encourage their children’s creativity and engage their senses.”

Leigh Dale, Youth and Family Program Coordinator at The Ringling, said new experiences and environments affect brain development in very young children, and exposure to the arts in particular instills creativity, cultural literacy and critical thinking.

“Cultural institutions like libraries and museums build awareness of how individuals fit into their communities,” she said. “We hope that children can learn from a young age that they are valuable members of our community, and as such, have these community resources open to them.”

Partners In Play is a free parenting education class that provides parents with support and information about early childhood development, while creating an enriching learning environment for young children. The sessions held at The Ringling will focus on art and creativity while encouraging families to explore and enjoy one of the premier museums in the Southeast.