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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Avon Grove Library helps local preschoolers get ready for kindergarten through play

West Grove, Pa. - January 2, 2017 - Chester County has been selected to participate in a new program called Play K, which focuses on using play to help preschoolers develop the skills needed to be successful in kindergarten—and later in life. According to the Pennsylvania Office of Child Development and Early Learning (OCDEL), 34 percent of Chester County children aged 3 and 4 are living in households earning 300 percent or less of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL) of income. Of that group, 83 percent are currently not served through a formal Pre-K program. Studies show that children without the benefit of a Pre-K program often struggle when beginning kindergarten.

The Office of Commonwealth Libraries is working to narrow this gap by partnering with public libraries to offer a new program called Play K. The program provides materials and activities for six different play and learn centers or “playscapes.” Each center is designed around an early childhood theme or topic to provide an interactive learning experience. Play K is aligned to Pennsylvania’s Learning Standards for Early Childhood, with the goal of promoting early learning skills within the library setting.

“The library is the social hub for the community—a place that not only offers a large selection of books, but also innovative programming for people of all ages,” said Denise Thomson, Children’s Programming Specialist. “We’re excited to be included in the Play K program and feel fortunate to be able to offer this opportunity to the parents and caregivers of our community’s preschoolers.”

Beginning in February, Avon Grove Library will introduce its first Play K programs using the new playscapes. Play K programs are scheduled for Wednesday afternoons from 2–3 p.m. starting on February 8th, with a monthly Saturday program starting February 18 at 10 a.m. For more information on events at Avon Grove Library, check www.avongrovelibrary.org or call the library at 610-869-2004.

About Each Playscape

Within each playscape, the nine key learning areas from Pennsylvania's Learning Standards for Early Childhood are reinforced as children and parents play and learn together. Materials and books for hands-on learning are provided. Through games and activities, children will develop fine motor skills, spatial skills and problem-solving skills; build their vocabulary while using their imagination; improve letter recognition and number skills; and grow narrative skills and comprehension. In addition, the playscapes are designed to encourage interaction in order to

develop social and emotional skills. The best part is that all of this will be learned while children are playing and having fun.

The Outcomes

Families and caregivers will learn how vital play is to their child's development of early learning skills. They will also learn how five simple things—talking, singing, reading, writing and playing with their child every day—can build skills that will enable their child to be more successful in kindergarten.

Preschoolers will increase their ability to interact with other children and adults while exploring and experimenting with developmentally appropriate learning materials.

The library will host the following playscapes during the course of the year:

- **Playscape 1: All Aboard!** This playscape explores the theme of transportation, including different types of transportation and why it is important to our daily lives. Toys include puzzles, a sound-matching game and a “Vehicle Sorting Center” to provide opportunities for STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) exploration and play.
- **Playscape 2: A Home for Me and a Home for You.** This playscape explores the theme of house and home, including the different kinds of houses that people live in within communities. Toys include a puppet set, a rhyming game and a “House Building Center” to provide opportunities for STEM exploration and play.
- **Playscape 3: Let's Go Shopping!** This playscape explores the theme of shopping and beginning economics. Children will learn how money relates to the purchase of goods and services, using a grocery store as the example. Toys include pretend foods, shopping baskets, shopping lists and picture/word rings, and a “Play & Learn Cash Register” to provide opportunities for STEM exploration and play.
- **Playscape 4: All Around Town.** This playscape explores the theme of community and citizenship and focuses on the different people in the community and how when everyone works together, the community is a better place. Toys include a community sorting center, community helper figures and a set of “Community Vehicles & Buildings with Garages” to provide opportunities for STEM exploration and play.
- **Playscape 5: Amazing Animals–Pets.** This playscape explores the theme of animals as pets and what they need to live and grow. Toys include puzzles, a fine motor skills game and a “Pet Vet Center” to provide opportunities for STEM exploration and play.
- **Playscape 6: My Colorful World.** This playscape explores the theme of color and light and how colors help us describe the objects in our world. Toys include a puppet set, size and color sorting bears, and a set of “Light and Color Tabletop Blocks” and a “Color and Light Science Kit” to provide opportunities for STEM exploration and play.

“Avon Grove Library is also a participating PA Forward Library,” said Denise Thomson. “And the Play K initiative fits in so well with all five literacies of PA Forward: basic, civic and social, financial, health, and even information literacy, with recommendations for parents of online resources to support the themes.”

For more information, visit www.avongrovelibrary.org. To learn more about **PA Forward**, visit www.pafoward.org.

The PlayK program is made possible by a Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Services, as administered by the Pennsylvania Department of Education through the Office of Commonwealth Libraries.

Located in the heart of West Grove, Pa., Avon Grove Library promotes lifelong learning by offering materials, services and programming to the Avon Grove community. Avon Grove Library is a member of the Chester County Library System. Learn more: www.avongrovelibrary.org

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