

Early Learning in Libraries: Discussion Questions

In February 2016, the Public Library Services Branch in Alberta hosted “Little Ones in Libraries: Symposium on Early Childhood Library Services”. The full report is available here:

http://www.municipalaffairs.alberta.ca/documents/libraries/Symposium_ECD_Report.pdf

This worksheet provides some group discussion questions and the responses gathered from the Alberta event. Consider using one of these questions to start a conversation with your board. These responses may inspire some ideas to try in your own library!

Discussion Question # 1:

Summer has been identified as a challenging time to provide programming. What strategies could you do, or do you do, to keep your pre-K programs going?

- ▶ Change the format – take the program to the park, change the hours, change to drop-in
- ▶ Incorporate pre-k into Summer Reading Club activities
- ▶ Hire a summer student
- ▶ Plan programs for Tuesday-Thursday because many families take extended weekends in the summer

Discussion Question # 2:

How do you define a partnership? What makes a partnership successful? How do you ensure that the partnership is beneficial to all parties? Think of every organization in your community as a resource – who could you reach out to?

- ▶ A partnership is a collaboration between two or more parties working towards a common and agreed upon goal.
- ▶ A partnership is successful when each party benefits and is able to meet its organizational goal and avoid duplication of effort.
- ▶ Communication, checking in , reviewing , planning, written agreements
- ▶ Community and health agencies, municipality, education, and non-traditional – farmers’ market, seniors’ groups, RCMP, Aboriginal groups

Discussion Question # 3:

Setting aside any challenges that come to mind for a moment, what’s the one thing you’d like to do at your library for early childhood literacy that you’re not already doing?

- ▶ Innovative programming: sign language, animal programming, STEM-focused programs (science, technology, engineering, math), more active programs, programs specifically for one-year olds.
- ▶ Staffing: have a dedicated staff for children’s services, have all staff trained so that everyone can run the programs.
- ▶ Space: have a dedicated staff for children’s programming, super-imagination experience lab, messy play space, new and inviting children’s space, early literacy computer stations.
- ▶ Engaging a wider audience: fathers, seniors, intergenerational audience, children with special needs, reach vulnerable families.
- ▶ More outreach: get out into the community more. Have a presence at parks, seniors’ homes, hospitals, shelters, food banks, doctors’ offices, daycares.