

Saskatchewan Public Library Governance

The role of libraries in early learning

The importance of the early years

“What children experience during the early years sets a critical foundation for their entire lifecourse. This is because Early Child Development (ECD) – including health, physical, social/emotional and language/cognitive domains – strongly influences basic learning, school success, economic participation, social citizenry, and health.”

Early Child Development: A Powerful Equalizer, 2007

<http://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/10665/69729/1/a91213.pdf?ua=1>

What can libraries do?

There are now many studies on the development of the brain that suggest that a young child's early years are important, as the learning that takes place during this time contributes to brain development and functioning.

Practitioners should be providing young children with the following opportunities to:

- Have interaction with adults as listeners
- Practice movements, sounds and rhythms
- Practice language patterns repeatedly
- Play imaginatively
- Discover and investigate creative means of expressing themselves
- Be able to move around on their tummies to explore their personal space and the physical environment around them.

Library Services from Birth to Five: Delivering the Best Start. Facet Publishing, 2015, p. 33.

How libraries for children and young adults are supporting development by providing access to information:

According to *A Statement from the Libraries for Children and Young Adults Section (CHILD)*, International Federation of Library Associations (IFLA),

Libraries for children and young adults support development in infinite ways:

- Providing open access to a great variety of high quality, selected resources, information and tools, in all formats including digital
- Providing skilled professionals to assist young patrons, guide them, teach them to access and evaluate information
- Organizing a great variety of programmes and activities:
 - For children to familiarize with reading and information literacy;
 - For digital literacy;
 - Sometimes together with parents or grandparents;
 - Programmes to encourage young people's own creativity and productions (personal, artistic, scientific).
- Offering not only resources and guidance, but a welcoming safe place for girls and boys to do school work and therefore, supporting education and gender equality. Also, a place to meet and develop social links.
- Empowering parents and caregivers
- Engaging with the community, working in partnership with schools as well as NGOs working for development

A statement from the *Libraries for Children and Young Adults Section (CHILD)*, International Federation of Library Associations (IFLA)

<http://www.ifla.org/files/assets/hq/topics/libraries-development/documents/libraries-for-children-and-young-adults.pdf>

Play and Exploration: Early Learning Program Guide

“Young children experience learning through play and exploration in a variety of settings including the home, child care, prekindergarten, preschool and other early childhood programs. High quality programs engage children and their families in the planning and delivery of a healthy, safe, culturally sensitive and stimulating program that promotes children's abilities and interests.”

Public library programs and spaces offer resources and programming to support play and exploration outside formal settings.

Play and Exploration: Early Learning Program Guide

Government of Saskatchewan, p.1:

<http://publications.gov.sk.ca/document/s/11/82946-ELPG%20Complete%20document.pdf>

Developing Early Literacy Skills

Early literacy is what children know about reading and writing before they can actually read and write. A child's positive early experiences with books and language lay the foundation for success in learning to read. Encourage parents to talk, sing, read, write and play with their children. Share books together every day and have fun reading!

TALK: Talking with children helps develop language skills and stimulates brain development.

SING: Singing and rhyming are great for learning the sounds of letters which helps prepare children to decode print.

READ: Reading aloud is the most effective way to help children become good readers.

WRITE: Writing helps children learn that letters and words stand for sounds and that print has meaning.

PLAY: Children learn about the world when they play. The more they learn, the more they understand books and stories when they begin to read.

Early Literacy Information Guide (based on Every Child Ready to Read), Winnipeg Public Library:
<http://guides.wpl.winnipeg.ca/earlyliteracy/skills>

Books for Babies

Often in partnership with community agencies and health regions, libraries can participate in a Books for Babies program directed to new parents in the community. A Books for Babies bag usually includes a board book, early learning chart, rhymes and songs, baby's first library card and information about reading and library services. It is distributed by public health nurses, midwives and through hospitals and libraries.

Books for Babies is a popular early learning initiative because it is never too soon to start reading to a newborn. By reading to their babies and by becoming regular library users themselves, parents help their babies develop language skills and start them on the path to success in reading and learning.

- ▶ The importance of reading to children begins at birth.
- ▶ Hearing words — whether in books or songs — is a great first step toward literacy and learning to read.
- ▶ Children who have a book rich environment have greater success in school.

Regina Public Library provides more information about its *Read Together Regina* program here:
www.readtogetherregina.ca

How Does Learning Happen?

"Children are competent, capable of complex thinking, curious, and rich in potential. They grow up in families with diverse social, cultural, and linguistic perspectives. Every child should feel that he or she belongs, is a valuable contributor to his or her surroundings, and deserves the opportunity to succeed. When we recognize children as capable and curious, we are more likely to deliver programs and services that value and build on their strengths and abilities."

How Does Learning Happen? Ontario's Pedagogy for the Early Years, p.6:

<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/childcare/howlearninghappens.pdf>



Invitations for Learning

- ▶ An invitation for learning is:
 - ▶ A display of materials, carefully selected and arranged
 - ▶ Purposefully and intentionally designed with the interests of the children and outcomes in mind
- ▶ As the children interact with the invitation, the educator observes and documents the children's interests, thinking, and learning
- ▶ The children's questions and interests can become the focus for an inquiry or project

Engaging with Families: Early Learning Pedagogy & Public Library Program practices, Saskatchewan Libraries Conference 2016:
<https://www.dropbox.com/s/v7riiovf0eb5xc4/Howett%26Gray-%20Engaging%20with%20Families%20SLA2016.pdf?dl=0>