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Family Reading in Children's Library Services of Korea

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Abstract:

Following the main theme of "Family Reading," the overview of children's library services in Korea with its brief history, various campaigns for children's library, and its programs for children's service would be focused. In addition, campaigns to promote family reading and our efforts towards effective practices of family reading would be introduced. Especially, reading camps and story showcases will be emphasized as the best practice for family reading.

Family Reading in Children's Library Services of Korea

1. A brief history on children's library services

1) Overview of children's services in public libraries

Until the 1970's, children's services in public libraries merely existed. Even though public library had children's room, public library was simply a study place for students. However, the opening of Children's Library of the Seoul City in May of 1979 was a glimmer. Until the 21st century this library was the only children's library in Korea.

As of May of 2006, with the help of citizen's group and mass communications, many of the communities and regional self-governing bodies are showing interests, and now the children's libraries are ready to leap. Many people are talking about children's libraries and are interested in children's books. Along with it, new children's libraries are established in various locations.

According to the 2005 Korea Library Annual, the number of public libraries in Korea, the number of libraries reported to have children's reading service, and the number of children's libraries are as follows.

	subtotal	city/prov.	Off.Edu.	priv.	child's room(library)
Seoul	44	16	22	6	30 (2)
Busan	24	10	12	2	23
Daegu	13	0	12	1	9 (1)
Incheon	11	3	8	0	10
Gwanju	12	7	5	0	12
Daejeon	15	13	2	0	12
Ulsan	5	1	4	0	5 (1)
Gyeonggi	70	59	8	3	62 (2)
Gangwon	39	17	22	0	33
Chungbuk	25	10	15	0	20 (1)
Chungnam	38	19	19	0	26
Jeonbuk	36	18	17	1	23
Jeonnam	44	25	19	0	32 (1)
Gyungbuk	51	23	28	0	43
Gyungnam	42	18	24	0	33
Jeju	18	11	6	1	16
total	487	250	223	14	389(8)

* As of end of 2004. The numbers may differ from current data

* 6 children's libraries, 'the miracle library' were additionally included. 3 of 9 was already included in the 2004 data

2) Inpyo Children's Library

President Lee Inpyo of the Esquire Culture Foundation established the children's library to encourage dreams of economically and culturally –challenged children by providing a cultural space to have fun, read and to think. The first Inpyo Children's Library opened in May of 1990 at Sangye-dong, Seoul, and thereafter 14 more in Korea, 6 in China, and 8 more including Kazakhstan, Armenia, Russia, Sakhalin. Total of 22 same model libraries were organized. This is thought to be the starting point of private children's libraries in Korea. However, Inpyo Library is located within a local community center, making it difficult to work as a children's library individually, and has some limitations because of the lack of children's librarians.

3) Campaign for children's library

Around the end of the 1990s, house wives became actively involved in small children's libraries, private home libraries etc. They first started to help out children's reading activities in the middle of 1990s when the specialized children's book stores were a boom. Afterwards, these roles were shifted to small children's libraries and home libraries. Still, many of the small libraries (or home libraries) were more like a place where homework was helped and reading guidance was done rather than a library. Among those small libraries, some gathered with a spirit and established the small library organization in 1998, which afterwards developed as the Corporate Children and Library in March of 2005. Children and Library believes that reading nourishes children's lives, and children's libraries are the cultural grounds for children's culture. They gathered to help out small local libraries involved in regional children's cultural activities. Not all small libraries are affiliated to the Children and Library.

4) Miracle Library Project

Base on a TV program which gathered private donations, various materials donated by public organizations and private groups, and financial support from local self-governments, children's libraries named the Miracle Library was founded. Starting from Suncheon in 2003, there are 9 miracle libraries including Jecheon, Jinhae, Jeju, Seoguipo, Ulsan, Cheongju, Geumsan, and Bupyeong as of April of 2006. The Miracle Library is founded and managed both by private and government hands, and therefore is a new cooperation model for libraries. Every child has the right to grow honestly, brightly and freely, and all adults have a social duty to raise children as mentioned. The Miracle Library tries to help children to give full play of their imagination and inspiration through the free exploration and attractive experiences. Therefore, as the first in Korea, it was designed as an exclusive children's library. Along with its beautiful and comfortable design, special spaces were provided for babies and toddlers. It is the aim The Miracle Library to provide Ideal creative atmosphere with its service, and to embody the spirit.

5) Working Committee for Children's Services of the Korean Library Association (KLA)

In July of 2003, the Working Committee for Children's Services of the KLA was established along with the appointment of a committee member to the Library Services for Children and Young Adults Section of the IFLA. The aim of the Working Committee for Children's Services is to promote reading habit, take efforts to preserve good quality books, to support the activity for reading promotion of librarians, kindergarten and school teachers, to settle ideal children and young adults services, to establish these role of children's librarian, and to reinforce these ideas by development of training and education programs. In 2004 and 2005, the storytelling workshop gain applause. Among the 30 participants in 2004 and 2005, 13 and 27 members completed the course, respectively. Once a month, continuous training is held.

6) Development of Children's service program

Children's library programs should be developed, focused and established to induce children to come to the library and to guide them as frequent users as they grow as adults.

- Reading classes during vacations

This is a children's service program, sponsored by the National Library and operated by the local

public libraries during the summer and winter vacations, started in 1971. This program is considered Korean-original, which meets the current situation that the total number of libraries is still insufficient to fulfill everyone. The Reading class deals with comprehensive library education such as library tours, library user education, reading education etc. Some of the programs are modified so that the library can guide children with pleasant reading experiences. Especially booktalk, storytelling hours, exciting activities applying creative children's materials etc. are included.

Example>

time	Mon.	Tue.	Wed.	Thu.	Fri.	
09:00 -09:50	Registration	After reading record	After reading record	After reading record	After reading record	
10:00 -10:50	Self-Introduction	What is The book? (history of books)	Story-Making In NIE (using photos in newspaper)	How to Write? (activity of after reading)	Role play using books to read	
11:00 -11:50						
12:00 -12:50	lunch					
13:00 -13:50	Booktalk or Storytelling	How to Read?	Drawing of after reading	Write the impressions of after reading film	Evaluation completion	
14:00 -14:50		Free reading	Free reading			
15:00 -15:50	Library tour					

- One-day Reading Class

This is a one day library-visiting program. Public libraries prepare library use education, library tour, storytelling, bootalk for visiting group from kindergartens, elementary schools, etc. Depending on the level of the visiting group, public libraries modify the programs in some different ways. However, the important concept is to let them believe that reading is a cheerful and exciting event.

- Storytelling Hour

Listening is the best way of learning. There seems to be nothing better in reading education for young children before learning characters than storytelling. Certainly, storytelling is the most established, indispensable program among children's library services. With the help of volunteers, storytelling hours are becoming conventional in public libraries in Seoul. Storytelling hours were greatly influenced by the Storytelling Workshop for Librarians and the Beautiful Granny Project (Silver Storytellers Workshop), which resulted in the production of many library sponsors and volunteers.

- Reading Club

Most of the public libraries have variety of reading clubs. Reading clubs are designed for elementary school students, young adults, housewives etc. Reading clubs for children and young adults are organized by librarians or volunteers. The activities of these reading clubs depend on the amount of passion and the active interest of the librarian.

2. Campaigns to promote family reading

1) One City One Book Project:

This project was organized by the Korean Library Association sponsored by the grant for public benefit from the Ministry of Government Administration and Home Affairs in 2003. By modifications of reading promotion actively done in the US and Canada with a Korean taste, this project aims to settle reading cultures including mass reading and discussion to citizens without distinction of age or gender. Starting from the end of 2003 in Seosan City, it has expanded to Suncheon, Busan, and Wonju in 2004. To promote children and adults to read together, children's books were mainly selected. Citizens of the selected cities were encouraged to participate in reading and discussion of the book together.

The participants of this project agreed that they had the joy of reading children's book again in adulthood and it was a meaningful experience to reassure mutual love and understandings through communications with their children. These communications reinforced family love, friendship and relationships between teachers and students. One of the key to success was the fact that public libraries fully supported the project. The books selected for this project ranked high in lending services in the libraries with continuing growth in sales of books afterwards. This project is currently expanded as one library one book, one village one book campaign.

2) Reading Seoul Project;

This project started in 2004 with the main theme of "unified Seoul Citizen through books, unified Seoul City through books." Based on the concept that books are the core of culture and art, Seoul Culture Foundation was established and various "Reading Seoul" activities were held in September "The Reading Month." 31 public libraries participated in the 2004 Reading Seoul Project. Each library held reading week events, seminars and programs.

3) Reading Family Project:

It started in public libraries organized by the KLA in the Reading Month of 2002. Based on the concept that creation of reading atmosphere in families is the key to reading promotion, the project first aimed to select and encourage families who are frequent users of the libraries. When selected as the 'Reading Family,' they receive a certification from the president of the KLA and the chief librarian of the public library which they use, and a hanging board with 'Reading Family' on it.

4) The Beautiful Granny project; "Silver" Storytellers Workshop

This project was planned and coordinated by the Seoul Society for Children's Library and Literature(SSCLL), and supported by the Grant for Woman from Seoul City. Currently the workshop is in its third year from 2004.

(1) Objective

-To offer participants, who are seniors, grandmothers aged more than 50 living in Seoul, chances to volunteer as storytellers at libraries, kindergartens, schools, social education centers etc.

-To develop opportunities for grandmothers (the OLD) and grandchildren (the YOUNG) to get together through fairytales, picture books, and stories. These gatherings reinforce communication between the different generations, and grandmothers could be able to substitute working mothers.

-Storytelling for grandchildren and children is self-fulfilling, which is also a welcomed and beautiful social activity for the aged.

(2) Workshop process

-Practicing various ways to tell stories; Storytelling, Read aloud, Sing a song and nursery rhymes

etc.

- Meetings and lectures with children's story writers

- Create chances to become familiar with children by attending storytelling hours in libraries and reading-camp.

(3) Results

- "Beautiful grannies" as a storyteller were produced. Many libraries secured supporters/ volunteers for children's service programs, especially for storytelling hours.

- Participants gained self-esteem and tasted self-accomplishment once again which motivated positive future planning.

- Among the 56 projects sponsored, 'The Beautiful Granny Project' received the best award of 2004 and consecutively be sponsored in 2005, 2006.

3. Best Practice of Family Reading

Seoul Society for Children's Library and Literature (SSCLL), a nonprofit organization, was launched in February of 1996. By providing ideal reading atmosphere to children through reading promotion and library promotion, they aim to deliver the fun of reading and open the happy world through books. To accomplish its mission, the SSCLL researches children's books, and hosts the various activities to link children to books and nature, so called Chekori Campaign.

The base of Chekgori Campaign is to bond children with books, and to coordinate good atmosphere that helps interesting reading experiences. Reading experiences include linguistic (verbal) and nature experiences. Verbal experiences are gained through storytelling and read aloud. Very efficient way of nature experience is through reading camps.

Family Reading is associated with various activities, like a storytelling and reading camp that bonds book and nature with children. Also various activities are including book selection and evaluation, development of library programs, reading and library campaign, etc.

1) Meeting the nature and books through reading camps

Seoul Society for Children's Library and Literature hosts reading camp annually. Reading camp provides chances to meet book and nature all together. To successfully lead children to the nature and books during reading camps, some of factors should be considered.

First, location and programming of the camp should be elaborately planed with a specific topic and aim. The location is selected according to the main topic, which is needed to be taught and easily learned. Further details and books are also selected accordingly.

Second, try not to oversize the camp however, the participants should not be limited. Do not expect too much from just one camp. Guide children to enjoy nature and the reading experience. Since there are no age limitations, kindergarten kids to junior high student and parents are all allowed to participate.

Third, plan the program in detail so that people can meet the nature and books through the reading camp. Books are selected based on the prior research on the special features of the camp site, regional history and archeological sites near the camp site. Selected books are read before the camp while booktalk, reading discussion, and storytelling hour are combined with the actual experience of nature during the camp. Reading programs planned with an adult point of view without precise considerations for children, may even cause bad influences. It is very important to first establish good reading habit(culture). Within this good habit(culture) the experience of nature would guide them grow

truthfully. Reading camp can be one of the most effective ways of children experiencing nature.

The followings are some of the examples of annual reading camps organized by Seoul Society for Children's Library and Literature. It is a one night two day trip at the end of summer vacation. The final weeks is usually avoided so that children can prepare the new semester after the camp. Some of the procedures and planning examples can also be applied when planning family trips and etc.

The basic considerations when planning the reading camp, is remembering that it is to forget that it is to bond books, children, and nature. First, 4-5 books are selected prior to the camp. Secondly, have story hours before bedtime. Thirdly, reading activities and after reading activities about the books read should be planned in the mornings.

“Large Family Experience”(Aug. 1997, Chiak Mt. Wonju)

This type of reading camp is best when the participants are in a smaller scale around 30-40 people. If you wish your children to have special memories and become friends with the children of your close friends or colleagues, this type of reading camp can be very much effective.

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- Grandparents, fathers also participate and compose a large family.
- Family members such as big uncles and aunts, younger uncles and aunts are composed considering the age and conditions of the participating parents. Participating children are called by their nicknames and are considered as brothers and sisters of a big family. Family tree is drawn to let them understand the family relationship. Children can share some time together to get to know each other before they name each other according to one's special features and characteristics.
- Enjoy the nature through stories of the father's childhood, flower stories of the grandmothers, camp fire, water playing, collecting and learning herbs and flowers etc.

“Tasting Youngdong, the Persimmon Village”(Aug. 1998, Youngdong Youth Hostel)

You can find about the specific regional characteristics and the culture of the camp sites, by reading book related to the area or by cooperation with the local residents.

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- Groups should be divided to evenly distribute children from the city and local children in a group. This makes a friendly atmosphere and activates group performances.
- Let the children taste the special features of Youngdong. By looking at the roadside persimmon trees, they feel that Youngdong really is a persimmon village.
- They can also experience traditional music and instruments in the Korean Traditional Music Hall in the neighboring city of Okcheon.

“Tasting the History of the Civilization Period” (Aug, 1999, Deokpojin Education Museum)

The Deokpojin Education Museum in Gimpo City is one of the best places to experience the old school life. Deokpojin is historical sites that indicate the efforts to drive out the western culture. It is also a good location to camp because there is a youth hostel right by the Museum.

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- Children can experience the school life of their parents by using the reproduced class rooms of the old times.
- They can also feel the wisdom of the ancestors by visiting the Deokpojin Education Museum.
- The historical site that show the efforts to drive out the western culture during the war of

Byong-in-yang-yo and Sin-mi-yang-yo etc., helps in understanding the history of the civilization period.

“Into the Nature with Books” (Aug, 2000, Youngweol Book Museum)

Renovated abolished school is used as the Book Museum in Youngweol City. When you climb up the front steps of the school building, huge playground sits right in front of you. In such a great location where nature, books and human can be united, we can talk about the environment and pollution problems. You can also visit the Cheong-ryang-po the place of exile of the king Danjong.

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- You can enjoy the nature through activities such as observation of the Book Museum, the beautiful mountain districts and the river stream etc.
- Lying on a straw mat outdoors, storytelling hour can be enjoyed along with the stars and mysterious stories can be told at nights.
- Kangwon-do (province)'s famous agricultural products, potato and corn can be baked in ashes of the camp fire.

“Play and Draw with Feeling” (Aug, 2001, Mr. Cheong's Atelier, Tokisan Geurimte, Chungju)

Picture book illustrator, Mr. Seung Gak Chung's atelier is renovated from a small church. The Rabbit Mountain Atelier(Tokisan Geurimte) is named because of the small mountain called “Rabbit Mountain” behind the atelier. Drawing ‘Feeling’ with Mr. Cheong was the main program and afterward stayed at the log house in Bonghwang Nature Woods.

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- Supper was prepared by the curry and rice contest for each group. Everyone participated in making the best curry and rice of the day.
- Storytelling hour, camp fire, talent contest excited every one after supper.
- We visited the house of a famous poet Kweon Tae Eung and his monument, and learn and sing his poem “Potato Flower.” We played and performed using the works made in Rabbit Mountain Atelier.

“Experience the Exciting Korean Music, Pungmulnori” (Aug. 2002, Gosari Hostel, Munkyeong)

Gosari Hostel is a training facility run by Ehwa Womans University. Its facilities, meals are one of the best and most of all very safe. A Pungmulnori band was invited and they performed in the auditorium. And afterward, everyone joined in circles and learned Korean folk songs and boat songs. We also visited the near by film set for the drama The King Taejo, Wang Geon.

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- After having self made rice ball for lunch, we visited the film set for the drama “Taejo, Wang Geon.” We took pictures with the armors and the historic generals and tasted the history.
- The Pungmulnori performance unified everyone. After the excitement, Good Night Storytelling Hour was planned before the night's sleep.
- We also had a chance to learn Pungmulnori. After hours of group practice, we had a group Pungmulnori contest.

“Hear the Sound of Woods!” (Aug, 2003, Musuegol(Iron Village) Nature School, Gangreung)

Along the way to Gangreung City, in Musuegol beside a clear valley, there is a private summer house named ‘Musuegol Nature School.’ The main theme of the camp was ‘Hear the Sound of woods!’ We can hear the sounds of the wind, birds, water running down the valley, etc. in the woods.

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- We visited the Ojukhun, birthplace of Yulgok Lee, a famous scholar in Y Dynasty, and the Sound Museum near by.

- BBQ was for dinner, and the storytelling hour was also planned. Its theme was about winds and trees, and folk song.
- The famous region dish, Dubu(bean curd) was for breakfast.
- A wagon was used to look around the local area.

“Wild Flower and Folktales with Grandmothers” (Aug, 2004, Wild Grass School, Samcheok)

Wild Grass School is located near Samcheok City in a renovated old abolished school. It is surrounded by mountains, and bean and corn field. And the playground is full of grass and wild flowers. The granny from the beautiful granny project also participated.

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- We visited the biggest cave in Korea, Hwanseon Cave.
- Stories were told by grandmothers at the storytelling hour, and everyone enjoyed traditional old games.
- We observed the nature surrounding the Wild Grass School, wild grass, wild flowers and grass bugs.

“Finding Our Traditional Culture” (Aug, 2005. Korean Traditional House Village, Jeonju)

Korean traditional culture was experienced in Jeonju Hanok(Traditional House) Village. Everyone experienced the traditional Korean food, buildings, and meet the royal family of Chosun. We also enjoyed traditional outdoor playing such as julneomgi(jump rope), and indoor play Yutnori, We also had the chance to sleep in traditional bedding sets in a old Korean style rooms and experienced the traditional culture.

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- Mind map and mini book making activities were done based on the historical attractions visited during the camp.
- Folk tales from the grandmothers, and tea ceremony for the grandparents were scheduled.
- Korean paper crafts were made.
- We had Jeonju Bibimbap (rice with seasoned vegetables mixed together), one of the three famous dishes in Korea. Bibimbap for 80 people was prepared all together in a huge wooden tray. The making of the huge Bibimbap, the color, the taste, and the experience was unforgettable.

2) Story Festival for the Family (Story Showcase)

Story Showcase is one of the best ways for “Family Reading.” Seoul Society for Children’s Library and Literature has Chekgori Storyteller's Troop. The “Story Festival for the Family” is a story showcase that shows various storytelling methods. This program attracts families to the libraries, and delivers the joy of stories with the experience of the library. It is usually held in the reading week, reading month as a form of book festival. According to the library facilities, audience and the location, it is possible to arrange a flexible story showcase. Started on the fall of 2003 during the reading month (October), Story Festival for the Family now is preparing its 4th year.

the program runs about one and a half hours with programs such as

- * Telling Folktale and Sing a Song (30 min.)
- * Slide for Picture Book (10~15min.)
- * Rest and Stretching (5~10min.)
- * Yard Play(Madang Nori) Performance (20~25min.)
- * Dance Together After Yard Play (5~10min.)

- The storytelling hour starts with three fun folktales and songs.
- Picture books are made into slide using powerpoint. Picture books are read aloudly with the slide

presentation.

- Simple games or stretching is used to move the body.
- Yard play based on children's picture book is performed
- All the children gather in circles and learn songs and enjoy dances after the yard play.

Locations of the Story Showcase

***2003 Autumn Nights Story Showcase**(paper puppet performance): at Songpa Public Library(2nd Oct., 2003) and Godeok Public Library(31st Oct., 2003)

***2004 Story Showcase for Family**(Yard Play) : at Gangnam Public Library(28th Oct., 2004), Songpa Public Library(29th Oct., 2004), Korean Foster Parents Association(28th Dec., 2004) and Andersen 200 Years Memorial Children's Book Festival-Nami Island(30th Apr., 2005)

***2005 Story Showcase for Family**(Yard Play): at Donjak Public Library(22nd Sep., 2005), Gangseo Public Library(13rd Oct., 2005), Songpa Public Library(27th Oct., 2005), Mapo Public Library(3rd Nov., 2005), Deobureo(Together) Welfare Foundation, Daegu(28th Feb., 2006) and Hyomok Public Library, Daegu(28th Feb., 2006)

***2006 Story Showcase for Family**(Yard Play): at Jeondok Library(15th Apr., 2006) and Youngjong-do Elementary School(scheduled 17th Jun., 2006)

4. Library program acts as the magnet to draw users

- It is our duty as the librarians to draw users to the library, to the interest of books, and reading.
- Creating good reading habits from the early stage, providing family reading environment is now jobs of the libraries.
- programs that induce families to use the libraries together, promoting family reading programs are the best worthy library projects.
- Family reading may also promote to keep families together in a harsh modern society.

“Family Reading” is the basis and the completion of the “Libraries: Dynamic Engines for the Knowledge and Information Society”, the main theme of this year's IFLA meeting.