



Libraries
for Children
and Young
Adults
Section

Guidelines for Children's

Libraries Services

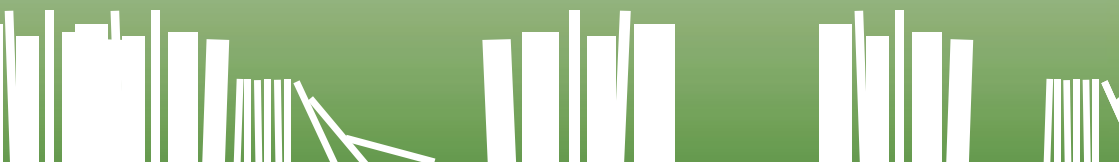
* library services for children - more important than ever
to children and their families all over the world *

Preface

The global community and the demands of the information age have re-shaped librarianship and the use of technologies to acknowledge and enhance the economic, cultural and communication revolution in today's world.

The Guidelines in an outline format, were written by the Standing Committee members of the Libraries for Children and Young Adults Section as an implementation tool for libraries of all sizes and economic levels.

These Guidelines complement IFLA's publications; *The IFLA/UNESCO Public Library Manifesto*; *The Public Library Service: IFLA/UNESCO Guidelines for Development*; and *Guidelines for Library Services for Young Adults*.



Introduction

Library services for children have never been as important for children and their families all over the world, as they are today. Access to the knowledge and the multicultural riches of the world, as well as lifelong learning and literacy skills have become the priority of our society. A quality children's library equips children with lifelong learning and literacy skills, enabling them to participate and contribute to the community. It should constantly respond to the increasing changes in the society and meet the information, cultural and entertainment needs of all children. Every child should be familiar and comfortable with the local library and possess the skills to find their way around libraries in general.



Purpose

The purpose of the guidelines is to help public libraries in various countries throughout the world to implement high quality children's services.

Audience

The audience for the guidelines is practising librarians, library administrators and decision-makers, students and instructors in library and information science training programs.

Section One

Mission

“**B**y providing a wide range of materials and activities, public libraries provide an opportunity for children to experience the enjoyment of reading and the excitement of discovering knowledge and works of the imagination. Children and their parents should be taught how to make the best use of a library and how to develop skills in the use of printed and electronic media.

Public libraries have a special responsibility to support the process of learning to read, and to promote books and other media for children. The library must provide special events for children, such as storytelling and activities related to the library’s services and resources.

Children should be encouraged to use the library from an early age, as this will make them more likely to remain users in future years.

In multilingual countries, books and audio-visual materials for children should be available in their mother tongue.”

(The Public Library Service – IFLA / UNESCO Guidelines for development, 2001)



Section Two

Meeting children's needs

The United Nation's *Convention on The Rights of the Child* stresses the right of every child to the development of his or her full potential, the right to free and open access to information, materials and programs, under equal conditions for all, irrespective of:

- age
- race
- sex
- religious, national and cultural background
- language
- social status or
- personal skills and abilities.

Growing up is a local community activity, not a global activity for children, but one affected by global issues.

Target groups

Target groups welcomed by the children's library, either individually or in groups, include:

- babies and toddlers
- pre-school children
- school children up to 13
- special needs groups
- parents and other family members
- caregivers
- other adults working with children, books and media.

Goals



- To facilitate the right of every child to
 - information
 - functional, visual, digital and media literacy
 - cultural development
 - reader development
 - lifelong learning
 - creative programs in leisure time
- To provide children with open access to all resources and media
- To provide various activities for children, parents and caregivers
- To facilitate families' entry into the community
- To empower children and to advocate for their freedom and safety
- To encourage children to become confident and competent people
- To strive for a peaceful world.

Funding

Children are a worthwhile “investment”.

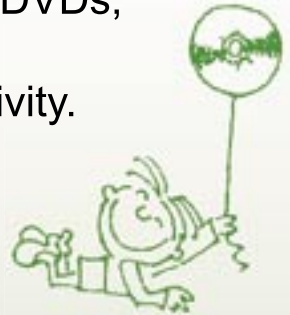
Children’s libraries need a budget to maintain and improve the quality of materials and services offered to the public.

Standard budgets can be supplemented with outside sources of funding, such as:

- government grants (for special programs and new initiatives)
- cultural organisations (for music, dance, drama, arts, historical and ethnic presentations)
- publishers (for visits by authors or illustrators and for other give-aways)
- sponsorship (local businesses and volunteer organisations to support specific events)
- non-governmental agencies
- matching funds.

Materials

Children's libraries should include a variety of developmentally appropriate materials in all formats, including printed materials (books, periodicals, comics, brochures), media (CDs, DVDs, cassettes), toys, learning games, computers, software and connectivity.



Selection criteria

Building collections and services, librarians should choose materials which are:

- high quality
- age appropriate
- current and accurate
- a reflection of a variety of values and opinions
- a reflection of local community culture
- an introduction to the global community.

Space

Children of all ages should find the library an open, inviting, attractive, challenging and non-threatening place to visit.

Ideally, a children's service needs its own library area, which must be easily recognisable (e.g. special furnishings, decorations and colours) and distinct from other parts of the library.

Libraries offer a public space where children can meet each other or can meet others in cyber-space.

Services

Children's services should be taken as important and treated equally with those for adults.

Children's libraries should meet the information, cultural and entertainment needs of the community's children by:

- lending a variety of materials
- offering information and reference services
- helping children select materials
- involving children in the selection of materials and development of library services
- offering training in library skills and information literacy
- doing motivating activities (reading promotion)
- offering creative programming and storytelling
- educating parents and caregivers
- providing reference and training for caregivers, pre-school teachers, school teachers and librarians
- co-operating with and supporting community organisations and institutions.

Networking

A network with other organisations and institutions in the local community is important and beneficial.

- Investigating the information and cultural needs of the community and trying to match those needs with library resources insures that local institutions do not compete but co-operate to the benefit of children.
- Schools are important partners. The school library provides support for the educational process and the children's library deals with self-education and leisure reading.
- Healthcare centres, day-care centres, kindergartens and other caregiving places are institutions which are necessary and welcome partners, especially in reading promotion activities for children, parents and professionals.

Publicity

A positive, public profile for children's libraries is most important as competition for a child's time and attention grows.

Reading and literacy are necessary skills in order to communicate and their value must be constantly reinforced.

Human resources

Effective and professionally run children's libraries require trained and committed children's librarians.

Desired skills include:

- enthusiasm
- strong communication, interpersonal, team working and problem-solving skills
- the ability to network and co-operate

- the ability to initiate, be flexible and be open to change
- the ability to analyse user needs, plan, manage and evaluate services and programs
- an eagerness to learn new skills and develop professionally.

Children's librarians also need a knowledge and understanding of:

- child psychology and development
- the theories of reading development and the promotion
- artistic and cultural opportunities
- literature for children in books and related media.

Management and evaluation

It is important that those who manage children's services participate in the planning process for the library as a whole, to insure an awareness and support for children's services in the overall goals and long term plans of the library.

Reliable performance information is a necessary tool for evaluation and improvement

- collect statistics related to resources, staff, services, circulation, activities, etc., to provide data for planning, showing accountability and making informed management decisions
- measure staff performance based on standardised competencies.

Section three

Seeking your contribution!

- The Standing Committee of the Libraries for Children and Young Adults Section wants your assistance.
- Please, join the Section and send your “best practices” examples to be included on the Section’s part of IFLA’s web page.
- Please send information to the Committee Chair or Information Co-ordinator for editing and inclusion.

Further information

This brochure is produced by the IFLA Libraries for Children and Young Adults Section and jointly funded with Medvescak Public Library, Zagreb, Croatia (December 2003).

If you are interested in the work of the Section become a member of IFLA and register for the Section.

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For further information and more details, please consult the Section on the IFLANET (www.ifla.org). A paper version of the full guidelines text may be ordered from the Information co-ordinator.

The Guidelines are based on the draft text developed by Section's Working Group and the collaborators as the comprehensive background text. See at: www.ifla.org/VII/s10/scl.htm.

The drawings used in the Guidelines were taken from the archives of Medvescak Public Library, Zagreb, Croatia.





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