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# Family Place Libraries™



## Overview and Impact Summary 2006

[www.familyplacelibraries.org](http://www.familyplacelibraries.org)



# Family Place Libraries™

## Transforming Libraries into Welcoming Spaces for Young Children

### What is a Family Place Library?

Based on a model of comprehensive family-centered services, a Family Place Library is a center for early childhood information, parent education, early literacy, socialization and family support. Expanding the traditional role of children's services, Family Place builds on the knowledge that good health, early learning, parental involvement and supportive communities play a critical role in young children's growth and development.

Family Place Libraries is a joint initiative of Middle Country Public Library (MCPL) and Libraries for the Future (LFF), the program arm of the national non-profit organization, Americans for Libraries Council.

### Key Features

- **The Parent/Child Workshop**—a five week program that involves toddlers and their parents and caregivers; features local professionals who serve as resources for parents; emphasizes the role of parents as the first teachers of their children; facilitates early intervention; and teaches strategies for healthy child development and early literacy
- **Collections** of books, toys, videos, music and other materials for babies, toddlers, parents and service providers



- **A specially designed, welcoming, developmentally appropriate space** within the library for families with young children
- **Collaborative work with community agencies** that serve families and young children to connect parents to local resources
- **Outreach** to new and non-traditional library users, especially parents and young children
- **Age-appropriate programming** for very young children and their parents
- **Librarians** trained in family support, child development, parent education and best practices

With the above elements in place, Family Place Libraries become welcoming environments for the youngest children and their parents and caregivers. They provide the local network families need to nurture their children's development during the critical first years of life and help ensure all children enter school ready and able to learn.

*Since becoming a Family Place Library, our library looks different, sounds different and feels different. The Family Place concept has opened up our minds to all that a library can be for its community.*  
*Shippensburg (PA) Public Library*

## Model Replication

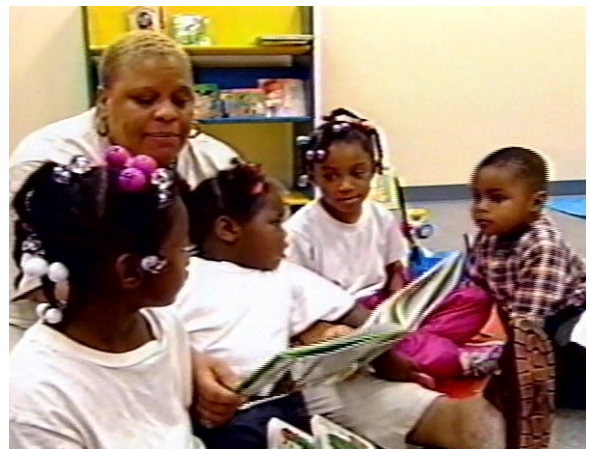
After searching the nation for a model parent program in a public library, LFF selected Middle Country Public Library as a national model, and together LFF and MCPL created a framework that libraries nationwide could put into practice. To date, Family Place Libraries has been replicated in over 200 libraries in 23 states with major clusters in Arizona, California, Connecticut, Pennsylvania and Long Island, NY.

## Project Impact

Findings from two independent evaluations<sup>\*</sup>, as well as internal reports and surveys<sup>\*\*</sup> reveal the following:

### For Parents and Children

- Library use increased among participants in Parent-Child Workshops and remained high after the workshop was completed. The AZ Report showed a change in rate of 100% for twice-a-month visits and 195.4% for once-a-month visits.
- Parents (including non and low English speaking families) report feeling less isolated and a sense of community belonging.
- Parents are increasingly communicating with one another as a result of the Workshops.
- Parents report being better informed about child development and early literacy issues.
- Library card acquisition rose. The AZ Report indicated by the end of the Parent Child Workshop 91.5% of parents had library cards.
- Parents report being more informed of library and community resources.
- Children with delays and special needs are being identified early and connected with early intervention services.
- Parents/caregivers spend more time reading, playing, talking and singing with their children both in and out of the library.
- Parents feel more confident in their role as a child's first teacher.
- Parents prize the informality and the relaxed atmosphere of the Parent-Child Workshop format and reported it encouraged curiosity and discovery learning.
- Parents value the development of their child's social, verbal and early literacy skills.



## For Libraries

- 100% of the libraries expanded their collections for very young children, parents, caregivers and family serving professionals.
- Over 82% offer the Parent Child Workshop series two or more times per year; with 50% offering it 3 or more times per year. 15% of the respondents are new sites currently developing the workshop.
- 55% report an increase in staff hours devoted to children.
- 48% have renovated or expanded their Children's space and others have plans to do so.
- An estimated average of 15 (AZ) to 50 (Long Island, NY) families per day utilize the specially designed Family Place space.
- 97% of Family Place libraries report partnering with community agencies serving families with young children.
- 93.5% of community agencies surveyed in the AZ Report refer parents to the library and 61.3% said they regularly share information about Family Place with families their agency serves.
- Library staff report an increase in positive attitudes and comfort levels toward their role in family support, partnering with other family serving agencies, reaching out to new and underserved audiences, and serving as early learning and parent education facilitators.
- Library directors in AZ reported an 80% increase in positive staff attitudes.
- In general, libraries indicate Family Place helps them transform themselves into community destinations for parents, caregivers and young children, increasing visibility and awareness of the important role libraries can play in family support, early childhood education, and community building.



*Family Place has changed everything we do in our library!  
We have a tremendous increase in programming and circulation.  
Youth Services has added a new position. The design of the new wing will be greatly  
influenced by the Family Place concept. We are now seen as playing a central role  
within the community at both the local and state level.*

*James V. Brown Library, Williamsport, PA*

*\*Family Place Arizona 14-Site Documentation and Evaluation Year Two Report 2005, and Family Place Logic Model Focus Group Report of Parents and Caregivers for Five Blair County (PA) Libraries, 2006*

*\*\*The Family Place Long Island Evaluation and Documentation Report 2005, and results from the 2006 Family Place National Survey*