

Tips for Partnering with Your Library

Successful relationships are built on knowledge and understanding of partners, mutual respect and trust. Below are some tips for working with your local librarian.



Getting Started

- If you don't already know, find out which library serves the community in which your school/child care is located. Your local school district or town website often posts this information.
- Check out the library's website to gain some basic information on what it offers, what geographic area it serves and how to get a library card.
- If you live in a different library district than the one in which your school is located, make a point to also visit your home library. You can borrow children's materials from your home library for use in your classroom as well as materials for your professional development.

Initial Contact

- Call or email to make an appointment with the children's librarian for a library tour and to learn about services, collections and programs available for early childhood teachers/care providers, students and parents. Some questions you may want to ask include, Does the library:
 - Have an early childhood area on the public floor with toys and interactive materials for infants, toddlers and preschoolers?
 - Have a parents' and/or teachers' collection?
 - Offer collections & services for children with special needs?
 - Have online or printed materials on their early childhood and parenting offerings that you can share with your families?
 - Offer special services such as class visits and tours, nursery school fairs, kits or special collections that can be checked out?
 - Offer programs onsite at early childhood schools and care centers?
 - Provide professional development workshops on story telling or book sharing techniques for your staff and/or parents?
 - Outreach to ensure local school and child-care center students get library cards?
 - Have a list of all libraries in the area you can show parents who do not reside in that particular library's service area?

Build a Partnership

- Library staff and child care providers bring strengths and limitation to the table. Both parties may be concerned about limited staff, pressing schedules and different hours.
- Addressing issues of concern at the beginning helps clear the way for a positive collaboration.
- Take time to get to know each other. Talk about local networking opportunities.
- Make a plan. Outline what activities can be done relatively easily and when those activities will take place. Set up a meeting schedule if you decide to explore other cooperative ventures.



Building Foundations for Early Learning

Check It Out: Partnering with Libraries and Museums to Extend Learning in the Early Years



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Building Foundations for Early Learning

Benefits for Teachers and Child Care Providers

Family Place Libraries™ and Children’s Museums offer early childhood educators and child-care providers with:

- Access to a vast array of free materials including books, manipulatives, puppets, toys, DVD’s and digital media that support curriculum for young children of all abilities and those speaking languages other than English.
- Convenience of professionally pre-packaged kits of Early Literacy and STEAM materials and hands-on activities for use in classroom and child care settings.
- Librarian/museum educator expertise that connects you to just the right materials, programs or services to enhance your lesson plans.
- Access to free, research-based curricula such as the Children’s Museum of Manhattan’s *EatPlayGrow*.
- Information and referral to library and community services (i.e., early intervention, parenting support groups, ESL, Citizenship, computer classes, etc.) you can share with your families.
- Brochures on a vast array of early childhood library/museum programs and exhibits you can share with your families.
- Onsite visits to your child-care or classroom setting tailored to meet your group’s specific interests and needs.
- Free delivery of materials to your center is offered by many libraries.
- Local field trip destinations.
- Guest speakers on a variety of topics for parents, professional groups and early childhood conferences.
- Organizational expertise in planning and implementing joint programs and events.
- Professional development workshops for child-care providers and early childhood educators.



Working together with librarians and museum educators, you can help to build an integrated, comprehensive network of community support and early learning opportunities for families with young children.

“Children thrive when, in conjunction with their school experiences, they engage in interest-driven summer and after school programs in the home, and at early childhood centers, libraries and museums”¹



Benefits for Young Children and Families

Family Place Libraries™ and Children’s Museums offer babies, toddlers, preschool and primary grade children and their parents/child care providers:

- Free, welcoming, developmentally appropriate, interactive, play-based early learning environments and exhibits for children of all abilities.
- A wealth of free materials including early childhood and parenting books in multiple languages, manipulatives, puppets, toys, DVD’s, digital media, apps, early literacy, and STEAM kits for home use.
- Fun-filled, research-based programs for children and their adults that support the development of early language and literacy, STEAM, social-emotional and executive function and nurture and support the parent/caregiver in their role as child’s first teacher.
- Information and referral services that connect parents and their children to education, health and human services such as parent/caregiver support groups, early intervention, food and housing, domestic violence, immigration services.
- Librarians and museum educators who model best practices and facilitate rich, enjoyable parent/caregiver-child interactions. This promotes parent-child bonding, boosts children’s cognitive and social-emotional development, increases parent/caregiver confidence and competence, and often sets families on a trajectory of involvement in children’s learning.
- An opportunity to meet and form relationships with other parents/caregivers with similar aged children.



“Children even at the youngest age can thrive when they participate in a network of learning opportunities.”²



“When schools, communities and networks of families and institutions guide families to navigate and access community opportunities, especially those at no or low cost, families are better able to ensure children’s safety and promote valuable learning opportunities.”³

Collectively these benefits empower parents as key players in their children’s early learning, decrease parent/caregiver isolation and provide a sense of community belonging.

^{1,2,3} Lopez, M. Elena, & Caspe, Margaret. “Family Engagement in Anywhere, Anytime Learning.” *Family Involvement Network of Educators (FINE) Newsletter*, Harvard Family Research Project, June 2014, Vol.6(3). Retrieved from <http://www.hfrp.org/publications-resources/browse-our-publications/family-engagement-in-anywhere-anytime-learning>.