

What to Consider When Planning a YA Space

Use this document to help you plan and develop a good space in your library for the teens.

1. Your Current Space

Assessing the current space is the first step when planning a YA space.

- Is there already an existing space and how is it used by the teens?
- What kind of furniture is already in the space? Is it what the teens like?
- What programs or services are being provided in the space? Is there enough room?

2. What Your Teens Want

Talk to your teens. They have definite opinions about what they like.

- Ask them what kinds of programs they want, what kind of furniture, where they would locate the space, etc.
- Ways to gather input from teens
 - Surveys
 - Teen Councils
 - Focus Groups
 - School Leadership Clubs
- Allow teens to help you choose...
 - Colors – carpet, fabric, paint, etc.
 - Lighting
 - Furniture – choice and possible creation
 - Overall style/theme
 - Type of sign and name for the young adult area
 - Artwork for the space. You might want to highlight their work.

3. Services

Once you know what kind of services your teens want, you will need to ask yourself some more questions about each.

- Technology
 - What kinds of technology will you offer in the young adult area?
 - Will you need additional or dedicated space?
 - Will you provide multimedia centers for listening and viewing of TV, DVDs, and CDs?
 - Will you provide laptop ports or is your library wireless?
 - What changes in technology formats might be coming in the next 10 years. How can you plan now for these changes?
 - Technological issues should be discussed with maintenance, technology and facilities departments. Take advantage of their expertise.

- Homework Help
 - Do you need space for tables and/or study carrels?
 - Wiring and space for laptops? (see Technology)
 - Is there room for volunteers to work with students?
 - What kind of materials will be housed here?
- Programming
 - Ideally, every location should have a programming space for teens
 - What kinds of programs do you foresee?
 - Is there sufficient space for a permanent programming area?
 - Do you want moveable furniture to create a program space at appropriate times?
- Recreation
 - The YA space should reflect an inviting, comfortable atmosphere where teens can hang out, relax and socialize.
 - Will you provide board games and other activities?

4. The Collection

- What variety of formats will you house in the YA space, including hardcover and paperback, graphic novels, books on CD, music CDs, videos and DVDs, etc.?
- Will you expand the collection to include more formats?
- Will you house non-fiction and fiction in the YA space, or will you interfile nonfiction in the adult collection?

5. Furniture and Décor

The #1 request among teens when asked about furniture is that it be comfortable! Try to accommodate the teens' requests as much as possible. Include them in the decision-making process and have fun. Things to consider include:

- How much seating is there room for?
- What kind of seating can you provide?
- Is seating for recreational or study purposes?
- How will you balance the need for long-lasting furniture vs. the appeal and desire for fun fads?
- Will you need multi-media stations?
- What are your shelving needs?

6. Funding

- What funding sources are available?
 - Trust funds
 - Friends of the Library
 - Discretionary funds
- How much do you have to spend and how do you access these funds?

7. Future Relevance

- Plans should be based on estimated population growth
- Continue to monitor and learn about upcoming trends in service to Young Adults
- Allow space for collection growth, especially in non-print formats

8. Schedule for Development

Create a schedule for development for planning, furniture and décor selection, ordering, and set up. It helps to keep things on track.

- Find out what else is happening in your library that might impact your schedule.
- Work with other departments as applicable to create a realistic schedule. You will probably have to work with your maintenance department, for example, to set up dates for installing furniture.