Creating Library Spaces for Very Young Children

An Infopeople Webinar

Wednesday, March 25, 2009
12 noon – 1PM

Presenter: Linda Demmers
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Agenda

• Child Development and Learning
• Supporting Learning and Play
  – Motor skill development
  – Learning environments
  – Discovery, Imagination and Role Playing
  – Self Awareness
• Parent Child Participation
• The Nurturing Environment
• Basic Space Design
• The Safe Environment

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**Child Development Stages**

- Sees in black & white
- Focus is 8” to 12”
- Explores with mouth
- Sits with support and rolls over
- Reaches to touch
- Self image in mirror

**0 to 6 months**

- Rattle and Jiggle
- Baby story time programs
- Large images
- Music activities
- Tummy activities to strengthen upper body
- Things to reach for (hand to eye coordination)

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6 to 12 months

- Dance, bounce and clap
- Crawling and pull to standing position
- First word spoken
- Identify familiar objects
- Repetition songs
- Separation anxiety

Infant Learning Activities

- Lap sit story programs
- Music programs
- Creeping activities for lower body development
- Cloth books
- Board books

12 to 18 months

- Walk, run, climb
- Songs and rhymes
- Pretend and fantasy
- Parallel play
- Hold crayon
- Turn pages

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Toddlers: 18 to 24 months

• Self image (me and mine)
• Trouble with sharing
• Books that address specific interests
• Story time and story telling
• Fine motor skill development
• Fill and dump

24 to 36 months

• Over 900 words
• Uses computers
• Curiosity
• Improving motor skills
• Cleans up
• Recognizes letters, sounds and words

Preschool: 3 – 4 years

• Tells and remembers stories
• Fantasy play and acting
• Computer and TV time
• Shares toys
• Counting
• Singing
Play = Learning

The Learning Environment

Learning and Play

Play is problem solving without consequence.
George Forman

Play is vitally necessary to a child’s healthy and full development.

Learning Characteristics

• Causing something to happen and recreating it
• Absorbing a new idea
• Connecting ideas
• Mastering a task
• Using a new word or phrase
• Asking questions
• Retelling in own words
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**Play Characteristics**

- Spontaneity
- Active involvement
- Absorption in task
- Intrinsic motivation
- Free of consequence

**Supporting Motor Skill Development**

Millbrae Public Library

Newport Beach Main Library

Almaden Library, San Jose

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Haskett Branch Library, Anaheim

Gross Motor Skills
San Jose Children's Museum

Simple vs. Complex
The simpler the object, the more complex the play.
The more complex the object, the more simple the play.

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Imagination and Play

Camarillo Library
Huntington Beach Main Library

Imagination and Development

- Children inventing the world
- Finding their place in it
- Developing self awareness
- Feeling in control
- Confident
- Recreating past

Library Station, Springfield Greene County

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Imagination and Self-Awareness

• Who am I?
• Images
  – Mirror
  – Videos
  – Projected images
  – Green screens
  – Shadows
• Who am I in relation to you?

Me in the Universe

Role Playing

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Dramatic Play

- Open-ended learning environment with loose parts
- Includes reading & writing
- Helps with recall
- Stage area
- Granny’s attic
- Costumes
- Props

San Jose Children’s Museum

Barnes and Noble Bookstore. The Grove, Los Angeles

Fontana Library, San Bernardino County

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**Designing the Environment: Scale**

Scaled environment says "I fit here!"

San Jose Children's Museum

City of Orange Main Library.

Tustin Library circa 1987

Fontana Library 2007

Midvalley Regional Library, Nordhoff, LAPL.
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Special Nooks and Crannies
Morgan Hill Library, Santa Clara County
Marina Library

Emulating the Outdoors
• 99% of respondents named the outdoors as their favorite recreational environment
• 90% of time spent indoors
• Development linked to ability to interact with environment
• Calming color palette
• Senses monitor change, not constancy

Why trees?
Children's Library, Anaheim Main Library
Buena Vista Branch Library, Burbank

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Buena Vista Branch Library, Burbank

Almaden Branch, San Jose Library

Children's Library, Anaheim Main Library

Highland Library and Environmental Learning Center, San Bernardino
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Parents join as a playmate
Talk about activities
Suggest the script
Encourage with problem solving
Builds strong emotional bonds

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Richest play can occur when a parent is involved; the best environments encourage parent and child interaction.
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The Nurturing Environment

- Cubbies
- Stroller parking and stroller locks
- Accessibility
- High chairs & boosters
- Family restrooms
  - Changing table
  - Toddler seat

Conveniences

- Stimulus shelters
- Bouncing seats
- Basic supplies
  - Diapers
  - Wipes
  - Pacifiers
  - Age appropriate snacks

Comfort

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**Basic Space Design**

- Color
- Space
- Lighting
- Materials
- Furniture and shelving
- Acoustics
- Air quality

**Color**

- Area definition
- Affects mood and muscular activity
- Calming effect of natural colors
  - Blues and greens
- Provide a wide range of coordinated colors
  - Various preferences
  - Reflect the natural environment
  - Non-competing with the work

**Space**

- Spatial density increases aggression
- Too much open space encourages running
- Small low partitions encourage cooperation
- Create small *calm down spaces for melt downs*
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**Acoustics**

- Hard surfaces
  - Glass and marker boards not parallel
- Air tightness
- Parallel walls
  - Angle slightly
- Sound absorptive materials
  - Panels
  - Fabric hanging

**Flooring**

**Carpet**
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Shelving

- Low shelves for young children’s collections
  - 45" high maximum
- Deep Shelves for young children’s books
  - 12" deep
  - Slotted divider shelves
- Wide aisles for children’s collections
  - Room for browsing with a parent
  - 48” minimum, larger if possible
- Pictorial signage
- Board books in sturdy bins that won’t tip over

It can be messy...

Special Spaces: Story Time

Newport Beach Main Library

Crane School, Montecito
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- Haskett Branch, Anaheim Library

- Biane Library, Victoria Gardens, Rancho Cucamonga.

- Haskett Branch, Anaheim Library

- Carmichael Library, Sacramento Public.

- Parent Spaces
  - Opportunity for networking
  - Opportunity for parents to participate
  - Places for parents to gather
  - Resource collections
  - Chair-and-a-halves

- Vineland Public Library

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Preschool Spaces
- Large and small block area
- Kitchen area
- Costume area
- Art area
- Science area
- Sand and water tables

The Safe Environment

Hazards and Red Flags
- Toxins and chemicals
- Surfaces and corners
- Outlets and cords
- Small pieces and choking hazards
- Large objects, stacks, and tipping over
- Table height and seat ratio

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Unsteady Customers

Furniture

Tipping Over

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**CPSIA 2008**

Consumer Product Safety Information Act of 2008

- Designed to protect children under 12
- Retroactive ban
- Includes books, toys, media, crafts
  - Books published prior to 1985
  - Touch and feel books “Pat the Bunny”
  - Crayons, pencils, paper, paint, cloth

**Lead Sources**

- Peeling paint
- Dust in carpet
- Drinking water
- Candy and candy wrappers
- Trinkets and toys

**PVC**

- Trinkets and give-aways
- Mini-blinds
- Artificial Christmas trees
- Synthetic turf

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Very Young Children Best Practices
- Recognize developmental abilities
- Encourage play, learning, discovery and imagination
- Scale spaces
- Parent participation
- Safety, comfort and convenience
- Open space
- Natural light and fresh Air

Thank You!

Next webinar in this series:

Creating Inviting Low Cost Teen Spaces

Wednesday, April 29, 2009
at 12 noon

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