

# Kay Poustie Scholarship 2013

## Investigating Best Practice Early Literacy Programmes in Public Libraries

### SUMMARY

Analysis of the philosophies, resources and programmes of the libraries and organisations visited over a three week period is summarised below:

**OUTREACH:** Library staff in Vancouver were constantly looking for ways to reach parents and children, to inform them of library activities and resources, and to encourage adults to read with their children. Non-library users were persistently sought out in order to offer information on the importance of reading, and a 'no-barriers' approach was encouraged.

**PROGRAMMES:** Extensive programme timetables were essential tools used by the large library system in New York City, which developed and delivered thousands of programmes throughout the year. Programmes were created and adapted to help children's early literacy skills, along with supporting parents in how and why to be involved in early literacy.

**EDUCATION:** Educating parents about early literacy so they could develop basic skills for use with their children was a foundation philosophy in Dublin. Outside agencies partnered with libraries to assist with learning, to provide resources, and improve the profile of literacy for adults and children. Family and intergenerational programmes were developed.

**NATIONAL READING CULTURE:** Government sponsored work in encouraging reading for pleasure for all people was highly visible in Oslo. The development of reading as something that "everybody does" was possibly a philosophy that could have broad social and literacy benefits. Library support of Early Childhood institutions was extensive.

The Appendix details the content and delivery of investigated programmes that could be transferred and customised according to local needs in WA.

Key points are highlighted in red

### LIBRARIES VISITED

#### CANADA

Vancouver Public Library  
Terry Salman Library  
Brighthouse Library  
Surrey Library

#### IRELAND

Dublin Public Library  
Balbriggan Library  
Tallaght Public Library: email and telephone instead of onsite visit

#### USA

New York Public Library  
Mid-Manhattan Library  
McKinley Park Library  
Queens Central Library  
Leonard Library  
Brooklyn Central Library

#### NORWAY

Oslo Public Library  
Holmlia Public Library  
Grunerlokka Public Library  
Bergen Public Library

Meetings with external organisations:

Fingal County Child Care (Ireland)  
National Adult Literacy Association (Ireland)  
Teacher representative, Ed Dept (Ireland)

Association Read (Norway)  
Education Directorate (Norway)  
Leseфро (Norway)  
FUB (parents and kindergarten) (Norway)

## INTRODUCTION

Four countries were chosen for this project as follows:

1. Canada – for transferability of skills and knowledge to Australia
2. USA – for innovation and diversity in New York City
3. Ireland – for educating parents in the importance of early literacy
4. Norway – for a national culture of reading

At each location meetings were held with library staff and with professionals from partnering organisations. Discussion included details of particular programmes as well as of underlying philosophies.

## VANCOUVER, CANADA

### Vancouver Public Library

Vancouver Public Library was an imposing seven storey building in the centre of the city. The downstairs children's area included a main area plus circular storytelling room, playpen, toy area, game and puzzle space, magazine shelves, pop-up book display. Unlike the rest of the library, where information was provided by 'mobile' staff who went to the client, the children's library had a manned desk for asking questions.

The library's many programmes (In 2012 nearly two hundred and fifty thousand people attended 7,793 free programmes) covering early literacy as well as lifelong learning, multi-ethnic learning and personal learning were built into a strong and varied timetable.

**Programming** was a significant part of library services in Canada and the USA.

**Timetables of programmes and activities were a fundamental element of North American libraries. Timetables served variously for planning, promotion, and post-event evaluation**

Themed storytime kits were available for borrowing by carers and early childhood educators, and included books, puppets, activities, and language-development ideas.

"Books to Go" bags offered a selection of suitable items for day-cares, and were collected and returned by day-care staff or volunteers.

Use of Facebook, Twitter, U tube, Skype, Blogs and general social media was at the forefront of promotion, developing and retaining a high profile library presence. Smart phone apps, websites, databases, ebooks, wifi etc were at the forefront of services.

### Terry Salman Library

A new library attached to a recreation centre, this was colourful, modern and very popular. Story times were held on a 'drop in' basis, frequently with a hundred people. With an emphasis on '**no barriers**' anyone could come without being a resident or a member or booking in. They could come and they did come, especially new migrants who seemed to know the library was the place to go for help with information, integration and education.

**'No barriers' was an important philosophy amongst library staff who strived to be as open as possible. Food OK, noise OK, computers OK, everyone welcome**

### Brighthouse Library

This library had a great **feel** to it and, while talking with me, the children's librarian was managing dozens of day camp children who were spending the whole day in the library.

The shelving layout was by popular topic rather than Dewey, with individual bays of different shapes and sizes to accommodate the books. Customers were everywhere, happy with self-service stations, and appreciative of what the library offered.

**The feel of libraries as welcoming, helpful and affordable places was an intangible that made a significant difference to their effectiveness**

'Ready Set Learn' and 'Play and Learn' programmes encouraged people in to the library, and encouraged them also to stay there.

### Surrey Library

Surrey Library was far out of the city and I was concerned about being able to find the building when I got there. I needn't have worried however as it was well signed and much too big and imposing to miss.

A brand new, space-age-looking building, right by the train station, the city hall, the shops and sports facilities, with a large outdoor seating plaza at the front. Its size, architectural design, location and facilities demonstrated a wonderful **confidence** in libraries and their importance to the community.

**Confidence in libraries was high in Canada and USA. Politically, this may be something Australia could strive to emulate**

Staff members talked about the library service's philosophies and commitment to early literacy, along with a range of other programmes for every member of the community. There were helpful posters on the walls indicating early literacy skills, along with multi-lingual pamphlets and workbooks for parents to take home.

Due to the high migrant population special activities for non-English speakers were offered for both adults and children, and a Welcome table at the library was manned by staff from the appropriate immigration services that new residents needed to access.

Early Literacy programmes with new material and different ideas that I heard about in Vancouver included:

Ready Set Learn  
Alligator Pie  
Man in the Moon  
Free For All  
Reading Buddies  
If you give a kid a muffin  
Hippy (Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters)  
Language Fun Storytime

## NEW YORK CITY, USA

### Mid-Manhattan Library (circulation arm of New York Public Library)

The iconic and beautifully presented New York Public Library was a research library, except for the ground floor which was given over to a children's lending library. Children and adults were sitting, standing, lying, sprawling on every available bit of floor space, and in the attached meeting room parents of diverse ethnicities played with their babies on a large, brightly coloured mat.

On the other side of the road (Fifth Avenue) the Mid-Manhattan Library housed the hugely busy (this is after all the centre of New York) adult lending library, and its rather shabby appearance was no doubt due both to over-use and recent under-funding. The Public Programmes Lifelong Learning/Children and Families co-ordinator showed me the range of activities that the main library co-ordinated throughout the Borough of New York. Her role this month included organising a magician, arranging for a Sesame Street character to visit, and encouraging a local professional storyteller to share his skills, always combining literacy with the entertainment. She was engaged both with school-aged literacy and early literacy programmes.

### McKinley Park Library

When I saw this library I was disappointed. A rectangular brickwork building that had seen better days, it had a few high-up windows and these were barred, making the place look unfriendly and impenetrable. It was located in a high population density suburb, with more than 90% Asian, Chinese, African and other racial groups. There was a high proportion of newly arrived migrants, who, as in Canada, saw the library as 'the' place to go for help (one staff member said they got off the 'plane on Sunday and were in the library on Monday).

Inside the library I was NOT disappointed. Although it was basic – basic plain tables, basic old shelves around the walls, basic seating etc – it was such a well-used and loved community hub that some days they got 1500 visitors (and it isn't much bigger than Harvey Library where a good day is 250 visitors). Staff said some children came when they opened at ten in the morning and stayed all day, leaving with a huge pile of books to take home and read before coming back the next day. Staff had learnt that the Chinese in particular were so dedicated to the **value of education** that it made the library's job easy. They just had to open the doors and the families did the rest.

The value of education in some cultures resulted in libraries being more important, perhaps, than in our own more relaxed culture. How did this affect literacy levels?

## Queens Central Library

Whilst not architecturally outstanding, the inside of this big building was being refurbished in modern style, again demonstrating a confidence in libraries in the community. The new children's area combined science and literacy in a "Discovery" centre with interactive science displays intermingled amongst the books. Funding was available for science-related projects due to a nationwide push for S.T.E.M. - Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths – and the library had successfully **partnered** with that funding, resulting in an outstanding facility.

**Partnerships with other organisations were demonstrated many times as a useful method of achieving extra funding, wider promotion, and new programmes**

The Borough of Queens had 7 million library items ranging across 70 languages. It served a population of 2.2 million (the same as WA), and library members were allowed to borrow fifty items at any one time. Since two-thirds of low-income families in the U.S. owned no books, libraries played a critical role.

In libraries in NYC there was a problem of how to cope with a too-large demand rather than with a lack of interest, but it was acknowledged that there were always some who didn't know about libraries and whose children arrived at school unprepared. In fact only 400,000 people out of 2.2million were regular library users in Queens so the large numbers might be masking more of a problem with uptake than was immediately obvious.

## Leonard Library

A 100 year old original Carnegie Library, this traditional-style one-floor library was fully 50% children's area. Not fancy, just having wall shelving, open tables, well-scuffed flooring, hand-made posters, cream and green paint. The meeting room was downstairs in the dungeon, needing an oversized key to open a steel bank-vault-style door, and then going down steep concrete steps to a cold room with no windows.

The library staff were friendly and keen to talk about their programmes. Their 'Ready Set Kindergarten' session was a casual, 'come and join in if you want to' scenario, with a comment or two about literacy included for good measure. Held on Saturdays, attendance increased with a name change from one with 'Play' in the title to one with 'Kindergarten' in the title. The programme included stories and activities, and at the end of four sessions each child received a book to take home to start building their own personal library.

The particular **staff** in this library were as crucial as the content of the programmes, with personal contact being an important method of encouraging library membership and use.

**Many libraries emphasised the importance of friendly and competent staff, whose positive input ensured that programmes, resources and activities were effective**

## New York Public Library Children's Room

Located a few floors below the intense and serious scholars in the rest of the library, the Children's Room was more accessible and welcoming. Rows of strollers indicated that dozens of parents and toddlers were waiting for the start of the morning's two Baby Lap Times. Due to high demand and space restrictions (fire regulations allowed 'only' 75 people in the story room) tickets were given out on a first-come first-served basis.

The presenter was deliberate in teaching new finger plays, in mentioning easy games for parents to play with their babies, and in ensuring everyone got a take-home sheet with the day's songs and rhymes. It was a shame that the mothers didn't stay around for chat and socialisation afterwards, as, talking to one single mother, she told me that there was really nowhere else for her to go in Manhattan with her children.

It was suggested to me a number of times that libraries in New York City could run story times all day every day and still not fill demand. From my observations, story times in WA were equally as good as those in NYC, so I guessed the popularity was as much a function of the **population density** as of a strong demand for early literacy activities.

The effects of population density would impact on any of the programmes and activities that WA libraries were interested in running

A number of the regular visitors to the library were nannies looking after the children of working people, and as apparently they were often locked out of the homes during the day, the library was one place where they could spend time (I queried this with the librarian as I'm not sure how much this was perception and anecdote, and how much was actual fact.)

### Brooklyn Public Library Central

If I asked directions in the street on how to get to the library, people always knew: they were clear and exact in their directions as the library was a familiar location for everyone. In terms of the Brooklyn Central Library there was an added dimension in that it was massive: stately, bold, and architecturally spectacular, with one million visitors per year. The large size of the library's stock meant that customers could borrow 99 items each!

The children's room was crowded with strollers as parents waited for toddler story-time to take place, again on a first-come first-served basis due to fire regulations in the storytelling room. The presenter was well practised, with half an hour of songs, rhymes, finger plays and two short books. Parents were given a take-home sheet of songs and rhymes, including some early literacy tips about reading with children. Because it was mostly different participants each week there was little feeling of group cohesion and friendships: the mothers generally didn't seem to know each other or to interact very much.

Brooklyn was a participant in the 'Reading is Fundamental' scheme which has provided 15 million books each year to children who needed them most. Through RIF the children could select and own their own books, which was regarded as a fundamental part of learning and discovering the joy of reading. RIF also had a website 'Leading to Reading', which featured literacy activities for adults to experience together with young children.

Rachel Payne described their many programmes, their funding scenarios, their outreach activities, their school liaison, their website and e resources, their Facebook and Twitter accounts, and their enthusiastic usage by the general public. Rachel was well known for her work in the early literacy field, having researched and co-authored books and articles on the topic. Her enhanced early literacy story times included **intentional teaching** of parents, with encouragement for them to talk, read, play, write and sing with their children.

The details of intentional teaching were worth investigating (see Appendix 1). Even if not suitable for every storytime, the model was educationally sound, easy, and effective

The programme suggested that during the storytime the presenter gave three brief 'asides' (ensuring that they didn't interfere with the flow of the story):

1. The first 'aside' to the parents before beginning the story introduced a literacy topic and why it was important.
2. The second 'aside' somewhere in the middle of the story was an illustration of the topic.
3. The final 'aside' gave tips on how the topic could be continued by parents at home.

Along with other programmes investigated during the study tour a holistic approach to early literacy was paramount, including five general elements of **talking, reading, singing, playing and writing** with young children. Engaging in these five elements on a daily basis would undoubtedly improve early literacy amongst youngest members of the community.

Talking, reading, playing, writing, singing (in Dublin, counting replaced singing): five easy ways to enhance early literacy

Early Literacy programmes with new material and different ideas that I heard about in New York City included:

ABC kits  
Reading is fundamental  
Annual play date  
Reach out and read  
Kidsmobile  
Pop-Up library in the park  
Every child ready to read  
Ready set kindergarten  
Read play grow  
Super science fun  
Enhanced storytimes

## Dublin, Ireland

### Dublin City Library

Located in a busy shopping centre, this library was suffering from the economic downturn in the Irish economy since 2010. Whilst the rest of the shopping centre was glitzy, the upstairs library was scruffy and lacked spark. There were no leaflets or posters about children's activities, and nothing special about the well-thumbed children's library.

I met with an early years' psychologist who was essentially working with the library as part of her **outreach** to local agencies and organisations ('in-reaching' to the library?) As a psychologist she was concerned about over-diagnosis of autism and of ADHD, with diagnoses enabling parents to access special services, but also labelling children for life. All aspects of literacy, she felt, could improve this situation: reading with children to increase their skills, their knowledge, their intimate time with care-givers, and their ability to successfully interact with the world around them.

Outreach could be useful in two directions: libraries reaching out to other organisations, and other organisations reaching out to libraries for their mutual benefit



Her colleague who worked in the adult literacy field was also keen to use libraries for the benefit of clients, especially those for whom the trigger to improving their literacy was their desire to help their children. **Hooking** the parents in first was essential in improving literacy in the early years, as children of non-literate parents had serious difficulties. Family literacy programmes and intergenerational activities were promoted by both NALA (National Adult Literacy Association) and libraries.

Finding a **hook** to encourage non-users of libraries to become users of libraries could be a key to unlocking a new world for them: food, a gift, an event to enjoy, a joint library/agency approach, personal invitation etc. The family could then work on literacy together

With research indicating that “parental involvement in a child’s learning has more of an impact on their educational outcomes than any other demographic measure including social class or level of income” (Desforges, 2003) a high profile parents-and-children programme called “Help my kid learn” was developed by NAL A which was well structured, pedagogically supported, and widely promoted. A simple, visually attractive website that was easy enough for non-readers to navigate was clear on the five major strategies Talk, Play, Read, Write, Count ('count' instead of 'sing' as in similar programmes elsewhere).

Without a heavy handed approach, the programme took people from where they were, encouraging and supporting them with their literacy journey. There was much that libraries could learn from this approach.

### Teacher Liaison

The Irish Education Department had been forced to cut teachers' pay, to implement employment freezes and to allow larger class sizes. Poor school libraries often meant that teachers and students made heavy use of public libraries instead, with bulk loans of resources. Additionally, teachers were dealing with more social problems and plummeting educational standards. Reasons for this decline were not understood, but the beneficial effects of early childhood literacy were understood. Helping parents to appreciate this was crucial, and the use of partnerships between public libraries and social/educational/health agencies was effective in broadcasting this message.

### Balbriggan Library

In the outer suburbs of Dublin, Balbriggan Library had developed an early literacy programme with many similar elements to Better Beginnings: gift bags for parents with books and information pamphlets, a DVD modelling reading with a child, invitations to attend functions etc. The programme was to be named and launched in October.

New regulations in the child care sector required seven early learning areas to be covered. An award-winning programme was demonstrated for development of literacy skills in day cares, with potential **adaptation** for library story times. Elements of the programme included talking with children respectfully and with open questions, engaging in creative play, reading and writing at any opportunity, singing, rhyming, encouraging print awareness and general knowledge.

**Adaptation** and customisation of programmes to fit the local situation could be sensitively achieved by local staff, always ensuring that the inherent philosophy and management of the programme was retained



## Tallaght Public Library

Whilst unable to meet with an appropriate staff member at Tallaght Public Library in South Dublin, I nevertheless discussed details of their award winning “Read 2 Me” programme through email and telephone contact. The programme encouraged **intergenerational** educational approaches, plus library support, and engagement with preschool education services. It recognised the parent as a critical role model, and it offered training to pre-school staff in how to read with children. The five skills outlined in the enhanced storytime model noted above were the foundation of the programme, plus a sixth skill called Print Motivation - that is, ENJOY!

**Intergenerational and family literacy programmes could enable a holistic approach well suited to public library activities**

Information on the Read 2 Me website indicated that one in six Irish children had never had a story read to them, and efforts to develop a reading culture in Ireland would no doubt help this, as it would in Australia. To this end, use of social media was substantial.

Following the “Celtic Tiger” phenomenon after which Ireland's economy plummeted, it was understood that radical measures needed to be implemented to improve the situation: education of everyone – including, and in particular, the Romany travellers – was an important element, beginning with improving Adult Literacy and from there improving children's literacy. Strategies included the three-pronged approach of using libraries, smart phones and family ties.

Early literacy programmes with new material and different ideas that I heard about in Dublin included:

Read 2 Me  
Help My Kid Learn  
Rediscover  
Shared Library  
Ready to Read  
Vocational class interaction

## **Oslo, Norway**

### Oslo Public Library

Located in an old building a little out of the centre of the city, this traditional-style library was well used. With a keen confidence in the future of libraries, and with the habit of reading for pleasure pushed into high profile by the government, a new multi-million dollar library was planned to sit adjacent to the iconic Oslo Opera House, creating a cultural hub within easy distance of popular waterfront walkways, restaurants and coffee houses.

Children's librarians in Norway were the busiest of all library staff members, with multiple visits to the library by kindergarten classes, and with multiple visits out to kindergartens by the library staff. Library staff were heavily involved in teaching kindergarten staff how to

use books, how to read with children, and how to make progress with early literacy skills. They also talked about the same topics with parents at twice-yearly kindy/parent meetings, at the same time introducing the library and its services and encouraging membership.

95% of Norwegian children aged 1 – 5 years were in kindergarten (day care) for at least 35 hours per week so there were no general drop-in story times or rhyme-times for the public during the week at the library. The children were all in institutions. Educating children in literacy skills, socialisation skills, healthy eating and outdoor play through day care seemed, in Norway, to be more important than less structured approaches favoured by other countries in which the children stayed at home with their parents until school entry at age four.

Oslo Library had a “Silver Suitcase” project in which new picture books were delivered to kindys, along with ballots where both children and adults could vote for the books they liked best. This project resulted in an increase in visits to the library and loans of picture books. It was a smaller version of the Leseфро project outlined below.

Mini libraries were offered at health care centres and doctors’ offices for use by children and parents. The small collections were lent out by the main library and replaced regularly.

Early childhood education and care (ECEC) was a policy priority in Norway, where a high level awareness of early literacy was illustrated through library provision, Lesefro, and the kindergarten learning framework.

### Association Read

The role of this government agency was to develop a **reading culture** in the community. The Association dealt with younger children via their parents, building a national values-structure specific to Norway. A rolling menu of programmes and activities aimed to reach all sectors of the community was developed and the high profile department had as much influence as, say, sporting organisations or political bodies.

**How could a national culture of reading be developed in Australia?**

### Education Department

Early literacy skills were one of the seven learning areas that kindergartens were required to cover, and there was emphasis on the way language was used with children. A holistic approach saw teachers being aware and reflective with their speech with children, ensuring that the child was respected and that it was a two way communication. “Strive for five” was a slogan adopted to encourage adults to always have five interactions when speaking with a child (eg child, adult, child, adult, child).

Staff in the Department were thorough in their pedagogy, and their commitment to kindergartens – which had exploded in number since 2009 when it became a right for every child to have access to a place. The required 1 : 3 ratio of adults to children varied according to the area which the kindy served, with poorer areas struggling for staff and resources, and with a concern that many child care workers were untrained. Despite the rhetoric about the value of kindys from age 1, kindy staff were low status, with low pay, and very often with low skills. I wondered what were the advantages of **educating** a child at home with the parents and what were the advantages of **educating** the child in a group setting with a formal programme of activities?

What happened to individual family values when children were no longer at home? Was education in early literacy, socialisation, healthy eating and exercise etc more important?

### Holmlia Library

Set in the suburbs and with a migrant population of 50+% this library was housed within a residential and shopping complex. Nicely presented inside and well-staffed, it was an active part of the community. I particularly wanted to hear about the Lesefro project that had been managed from there for the past two years.

Lesefro meant **sowing the seed** of reading and set out to encourage and engage under-school age children in the joys of reading. Significant funding was obtained to purchase thousands of books to lend to the kindergartens, with 3 books per child in Norwegian and 1 book per child in some of the 40 other languages spoken in Norway. This was a significant outreach project by the libraries which had involved:

- \* seeing a need
- \* accessing funding to supply resources
- \* providing education for staff and parents
- \* assessing the outcomes creatively

Details of this programme can be found in the Appendix. It would be worth investigating how libraries could support Australian day cares in this way, with beneficial outcomes on childhood literacy levels.

Sowing the seed of reading could take place within the library or outside the library – at homes, playgroups, day cares and kindergartens. Ensuring these groups had abundant resources, plus relevant knowledge, could be a useful and achievable target for libraries

The Lesefro project was in addition to the broad nation-wide interaction between libraries and kindergartens, with a significant literacy teaching role by library staff (teaching the day care staff how to use books with young children). Immigration caused Oslo to be the fastest growing city in Europe, and library staff also played a substantial role in developing migrant literacy to a level where they were integrated into their new society and homeland.

With the fourth highest GDP per capita in the world Norway's provision of library resources and services was able to include extensive materials in languages other than Norwegian, such as Polish, Pakistani, Iranian, Somali, Lithuanian, Urdu and Arabic. The high-level economy also supported an initiative of libraries in the creation of language-development games and apps for use with Ipads, with technological 'teaching' proven to be effective in particular with second language learners and with children at risk of reading failure.

### FUB – Association of parents and kindergartens

With parents handing over their children to an institution at the age of 1, whilst they went out to work full time, their ability to work with children's reading-readiness and language skills was diminished. FUB sought to build home-school **relationships** so that what children learnt at kindy could be carried on at home. Language researchers developed programmes to work with a twin approach of language skills and emotional well-being, with the two factors being intensely intertwined in the full-time day care situation.

## Relationships – a major factor in all programmes and activities

### Grunerlokka Library

This Oslo Library branch in a low socio economic, high migrant area taught me one thing: people in Norway still use libraries even when run down and offering no activities.

Early Literacy programmes with new material and different ideas that I heard about in Oslo included:

Association Read's 'Read To Me Dad' and 'Strive for Five'

The silver suitcase

Mini libraries

Lesefro (Sowing the seed of reading)

### CONCLUSION

During the three week study period key concepts for the development of early literacy programmes in libraries included:

Creating full timetables

Providing a 'No barriers' approach

Getting the 'feel' of the library right

Supporting national confidence in libraries

Placing high value on education

Creating partnerships

Having good staff

Dealing with population density

Using intentional teaching methods

Reading, talking, writing, playing, singing  
with young children

Extending outreach activities

Finding a hook

Adapting ideas

Encouraging intergenerational/family work

Developing a national culture of reading

Sowing the seed of reading

Ensuring strong relationships

Libraries in WA already cover many of the early literacy concepts discussed in Vancouver, New York City, Dublin and Oslo.

With a customer focus and philosophy of constant improvement, I hope that library staff will sift through these ideas to find what will work for them – and thus improve the early literacy skills of our young children. In turn this will lead to an improved future in employment, financial security, relationships, continuing education, health, social integration and happiness for those children.



At New York Public Library

## PROGRAMMES

### READY SET LEARN

The Ministry of Education funds **Ready, Set, Learn** events in local schools. Families and their three-year-olds engage in play-based early learning activities while finding out about the local school.

Host schools provide resources to help improve school readiness. Ready, Set, Learn events can include school tours, visits to the school library, information sessions for parents and caregivers, presentations by community agencies and other activities that support preschool aged children's learning. "Welcome to kindergarten" events include a bag of books and brochures.

### PLAY AND LEARN

**Play and Learn** is a free, five session workshop that includes toys, games, puzzles and other items specially selected to enhance a toddler's educational and physical development. Child development specialists are in attendance for talking with parents about special issues. Workshops are held in public libraries, and participants receive a take-home pack of information.

### STRONG START

**Strong Start** is held in schools for parents and children, five days a week, three hours a day, on the understanding that since literacy skills are the strongest indicator of a child's future success in life, the community as a whole needs to take responsibility for helping children learn to read.

The scheme uses under-utilized school spaces to deliver early learning services. Qualified early childhood educators lead learning activities, including stories, music and art to help children get ready for success in kindergarten. The programme is for adults and their young children, aged birth to five, at no cost to families.

### ALLIGATOR PIE

**Alligator Pie** is an externally funded programme (\$10,000 pa over 3 years) delivering story times at day cares, and assisting day cares with programming and library visits.

The programme includes parent and staff education on topics such as how to read with a child, how to make storytelling resources, how to talk purposefully, and how to develop "make and take" craft activities.

### MAN IN THE MOON

**Man in the Moon®** is a registered programme by men, for men, to encourage fathers to read and play with their babies. Held at weekends and evenings, the programme offers an hour of storytelling, rhymes, songs and finger plays for men and their babies only.

The program builds on research that shows fathers' involvement in children's lives impacts enormously on health and literacy outcomes. By teaching fathers how to play, sing, talk and read to their young children, the father-child bond builds the foundation for children's reading readiness, happiness and success later in school and in life.

### FREE FOR ALL

**Free for All** is aimed at non users, delivering a library presence at public markets, parks, festivals etc. This includes early literacy resources and information.

## READING BUDDIES

**Reading Buddies** are teenage volunteers who regularly read to toddlers as part of their compulsory community service course at school. They also assist at day camps when children of all ages stay at the library all day to take part in book-related activities.

## IF YOU GIVE A KID A MUFFIN

**If you give a kid a muffin** is a weekly story time sponsored by Rotary International and aimed at low income families and migrants. To encourage attendance, and to assist in developing healthy eating habits, the story time includes a snack break.

## LANGUAGE FUN STORYTIME

**Language Fun Storytime** is specifically for 3 – 5 year old children with speech difficulties, and is run as a partnership between the library and the Health Department. Speech therapists work with the children in a relaxed storytime setting.

## HIPPY

**Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters** targets first nation residents to support parents in readying their children for school. A culturally sensitive HIPPY home visitor spends one hour a week in the homes of participating families, explaining activities and supplying books and materials.

## ABC KITS

**ABC Kits** include a bag with a rhyme sheet, CD, DVD, tips for parents, magazine and free book. The kits are sponsored by the annual Family Literacy Day which raises awareness of the importance of reading and engaging in other literacy-related activities as a family.

Kits are delivered to medical centres, doctor's surgeries and hospital waiting rooms with the message that even reading just 15 minutes a day can improve a child's literacy skills dramatically, and can help parents improve their skills as well.

## READING IS FUNDAMENTAL

**Reading is Fundamental** motivates children to read by delivering free books to those children and families who need them most. The programme inspires children to be lifelong readers through the power of choice. RIF provides new, free books for children to choose from and make their own.

Volunteers visit schools, homeless shelters, or community centres — wherever there are children — distributing books and promoting the importance of literacy in the community.

## ANNUAL PLAY DATE

**Annual Play Dates** show parents how to have fun with their child: a day of book-related fun includes ideas, activities and early literacy information.

Smaller Play dates are run by library staff using regular library resources, whilst bigger events need to have enough resources and activities to cater for hundreds of participants.

## REACH OUT AND READ

**Reach out and Read** is a partnership with doctors who 'prescribe' reading. Medical providers promote early literacy in paediatric exam rooms by giving new books to children, and advice to parents about the importance of reading aloud. ROR helps develop critical early reading skills in children, beginning at 6 months of age.

Books are taken to surgeries, obstetric and & gynaecological clinics



## KIDSMOBILE

**Kidsmobile** is a children's library on wheels which visits schools, daycare centres, after school programs and community events. Kidsmobiles may stop at parks and playgrounds, and can also be booked for community events.

## POP UP LIBRARY IN THE PARK

**Pop Up Libraries** involve books being taken out into the community and set up in a library stall or mini library at parks, beaches, playgrounds, laundromats, shopping centres etc. Libraries can appear out of nowhere for a few hours or days, offering books, stories, activities and information. Since some people don't have the opportunity to get to a library, these pop-up designs bring resources straight to the people themselves.

The associated 'Uni Project' is dedicated to expanding a culture of learning beyond the walls of schools and libraries and into public space. Project members have developed a portable educational environment called the Uni that can be dropped into almost any available street-level location. Part library, part classroom, the Uni provides a place to gather around books and learning experiences, right in the heart of neighborhoods.

## EVERY CHILD READY TO READ

The **Every Child Ready to Read** philosophy is that public libraries could have an even greater impact on early literacy by focusing on educating parents to learn more about the importance of early literacy and how to nurture pre-reading skills at home.

The ECRR toolkit empowers public libraries to assume an essential role in supporting early literacy within a community, including research-based practices that can help young children develop skills they need before they can learn to read.

## READ PLAY GROW

**Read Play Grow** is a library-based grant-funded activity encouraging play for babies and toddlers for whom everything they do is a learning opportunity.

Participants learn that as they repeat words the children develop listening skills and vocabulary. When they turn the page of a book, their fine motor skills grow. Reading is made playful by picking fun books with flaps to lift, holes to peek through and other interactive features. The programme offers the "Brooklyn reads to babies" brochure.

## FIRST FIVE YEARS INITIATIVE

**The First Five Years Initiative**, funded by an anonymous donation, offers a spectrum of library-based early literacy programmes including: Babies and Books, Toddler Time, Pre School Story Time, Story Play, The Child's Place (for children with special needs), Special Events, Books and Materials for Young Children, Environments for the First Five Years (child-sized furniture, cozy reading spaces, toys and learning tools, preschool computers etc), Reading is Fundamental Programme, Outreach activities.

## ENHANCED STORYTIME / INTENTIONAL TEACHING

**Enhanced Storytimes** embrace **intentional teaching** as described in full in the book "Storytimes for everyone" (by Saroj Nadkarni Ghoting and Pamela Martin-Diaz, American Library Association, 2013).

Early literacy concepts that are intentionally taught include:



1. Phonemic awareness (letters have sounds)
2. Word awareness (words have meaning)
3. Print awareness (books have top and bottom, are read from left to right etc)
4. Vocabulary development
5. General knowledge development

Storytime presenters choose one concept for each session, explaining to parents in just one sentence what it is and why it is important. They also point out an example within the story, and then give suggestions at the end of the story for further playing with words.

In addition presenters promote the five essential components of early learning:

Talking, Reading, Playing, Singing and Writing

### HELP MY KID LEARN

**Help my kid learn** is a high profile programme partnering day cares and adult literacy activities, working on the knowledge that when adults become parents they often aspire to change. Using apps available on smart phones, adults are encouraged to talk, read, play, count and write with their children.

The programme mixes traditional ideas like card games and hopscotch with e-books and apps for reading for pleasure.

Media, online resources and celebrity endorsements have enabled the programme to reach 1000 parents in two years. The website includes links to related helpful organisations, and a range of attractive printed information includes a useful credit-card sized expanding booklet that has “more ideas on how to keep your kids entertained while they learn”.

### READISCOVER

**Readiscover** is a joint industry/ National Library Council project to remind people that their local library is a fantastic community resource for everyone to enjoy.

Readiscover Your Local Library Month runs for a full month, with libraries participating in events for their members such as author readings, workshops and a range of entertaining activities, giving residents the opportunity to reacquaint themselves with an old friend - the local library.

### SHARED LIBRARY

A **Shared Library** is a special collection of books lent by libraries to crèches and day cares including: one big book and multiple copies of the ordinary-sized version. The same book is used multiple times during the week, in different ways – read, spoken, acted, mimed, storyboard etc.

Noticeboards alert parents to the story of the day, and give them something specific to remember and talk about with their children. A particular aspect of the programme is encouraging parents to slow down and spend time with their children

### READY 2 READ

The **Ready 2 Read** project is a joint initiative between the library service and the R.A.P.I.D. coordinator (R.A.P.I.D. stands for Revitalising Areas by Planning, Investment and Development and aims to improve the quality of life of disadvantaged communities).

Outreach storytelling sessions and art activities involve hands-on training for parents to help their children develop six pre-literacy skills which prepare them for formal learning in school.

Learning is accomplished through fun workshops which involve reading, nursery rhymes, songs, group activity and a series of practical tips. At the end of the programme, each child and parent pair is presented with a joint certificate.

## READ2ME

**Read 2 Me** is associated with Ready 2 Read and involves a series of talks and activities by library staff for parents and carer, identifying the six pre-reading skills:

- Print Motivation
- Vocabulary
- Print Awareness
- Narrative Skills
- Letter Knowledge
- Phonological Awareness

The libraries also work closely with the Childcare Committee to train pre-school staff. A Mobile Library Service visits crèches and pre-school facilities with book loans, storytelling sessions, and information.

## VOCATIONAL CLASSES

**Vocational Classes** at local technical colleges which train child-care workers make attractive story bags as one of their assessed projects. Students are taught how to choose suitable fiction and non-fiction books on a subject, related toys and information sheets to include in the bags. The bags are donated to the library, and students also deliver a library storytime as a learning activity.

In a related course at the technical college mothers make similar bags and are introduced to the “What’s the story” project on how to choose suitable books for children, and on the value of reading to children, with a library visit as the final event.

## FAMILY DAYS

**Family Days** are community events held in conjunction with the Arts Sector. A mobile library is in attendance to show library resources, to hold story telling sessions, to offer craft activities, to provide access to therapists, to join up new members, to give out library information etc

## ASSOCIATION READ

The **Association Read** is a government sponsored agency whose brief is to develop community awareness about reading for pleasure. Young people are encouraged to share their reading experiences with their peers. The Association collaborates with teachers, librarians, booksellers, writers and publishers to encourage as many as possible to read.

With the **Read to Me Dad** programme reading agents meet fathers at sports tracks, gyms, shelters, prisons and other male dominated places to talk about the value of reading out loud to children, and to encourage men to become reading role models for their children.

The **Strive for Five** strategy encourages adults to develop at least five to-and-fro interactions with small children to encourage language use and understanding.

## LESEFRO

**Lesefro** has accessed funding to deliver resources to all kindergartens: 3 books per child in the main language and 1 per child in alternate languages (and funding is currently being sought to include some adult books about reading with children). Books are delivered to kindys every six months and it is a requirement that they are available to the children at all times. On delivery day, the kindys have an all-day book related party – a real celebration. At the end of six months staff get together to celebrate how they have used the books, to share ideas, and to show how the children have developed, and this has become an inspirational event for all concerned. The Lesefro contract requires books to be used every day, and kindys must report to Lesefro each month with how they used the books.

Librarians in the Lesefro programme train kindy teachers in how to use books, and why: how important reading is, ways to tell a story, talking about the story, making it exciting and attractive. Lesefro is also involved in parent education, modelling how to read with children, including speaking together – especially with the child telling the story in his own words.

An active Lesefro blogspot enables the sharing of ideas and stories and some evaluation. Although the programme is only two years old, it has already improved co-operation and understandings between libraries and kindergartens, and, importantly, massively improved the ready availability of suitable reading material for young children.

## A bit off-topic – but nevertheless interesting.....

### Topic-Related Shelving

At Richmond Library where the slogan was “Go anywhere, learn anything, read every day” creative signage included the following:

New and hot bestsellers  
Laugh out loud  
Interesting lives  
Movie tie-ins  
Rapid reads  
Relationship rescue  
House and home

Self help  
Active lifestyle  
Get crafty  
Fun facts  
Sports and hobbies  
Animals and pets

### Read Away Your Fees

At Queens Libraries, young customers who have acquired overdue or lost-item fees can pay off their debt by going to the library to read. Library Bucks are issued in half hour increments at \$1 each: that is, for every half hour the customer spends reading in the library, the debt is reduced by \$1.

## Bring Your Own Baby

For parents or caregivers of children under three, this once a month activity enables book-lovers to enjoy the stimulation of a Book Club discussion in a baby-friendly setting.

## Buy a Book

The library Foundation encourages residents to buy books for the library, either through a regular monthly donation, or as a one-off in memory of someone such as to honour a birth, wedding, graduation or anniversary. Donations of \$25 or more are honoured by a book-plate.

## Mail A Book

The free Mail A Book service provides resources to housebound readers, or those who have no access to a library. When books are returned to Mail A Book other books are automatically sent out.

## Digital Subway Library

A collaboration between New York Public Library and Miami Advertising School to encourage bored commuters to read on their daily commute: the first ten pages of a wide range of books can be scanned and read. Once the 'free read' is used up the app gives the commuter directions to New York Public Library so they can continue with the story.

## Practice Keyboards

In-library electronic keyboards can be booked for practising or composing music.

## Be a Library Champion

Volunteers are trained to become library champions, going out in to the community to let people know about library services, especially new migrants.

**BE A NewToBC LIBRARY CHAMPION!**  
HELP NEWCOMERS TO DISCOVER LIBRARIES

Many new immigrants are not using libraries and do not know about all of the wonderful services and programs that libraries offer. As a volunteer Library Champion, you will reach into your community to share information about libraries and encourage new immigrant families to become library users.

**THE SURREY LIBRARY CHAMPIONS PROJECT**  
INFORMATION SESSION  
CITY CENTRE LIBRARY, 10350 UNIVERSITY DRIVE, SURREY BC  
WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 28, 2013 6:00- 7:30PM (ROOM 120)

You should attend this session if you are:

- Enthusiastic about libraries,
- Have connections in your own ethno- cultural communities,
- Willing to volunteer by introducing libraries to newcomers,
- Interested in becoming a Library Champion!

**FREE TRAINING OPPORTUNITY!**  
As a Library Champion, you will:

- Expand your knowledge of library services and programs
- Build your communication skills
- Have a sense of pride for giving back to your community
- Receive a certificate of achievement upon the training completion
- Get a volunteer work reference for the period of active Library Championship

Library Champions will receive support to cover transportation costs.

To register for this information session, go to: <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/ADP>.  
Registration

Only 13 people will be selected as Library Champions. Register today!

To learn more about NewToBC, go to: [www.newtobc.ca](http://www.newtobc.ca)

**NewToBC**  
THE SURVEY MONKEY COMPANY





1. A high profile and confidence in libraries was evident in North America (Surrey Public Library, Vancouver, Canada)



2. Wide-spread information on early literacy was prominent



<b>Tuesday</b>	<b>Let's Talk Science</b> 10:30am-12:00pm L4, Rm 418 <b>Pyjama Storytime</b> 7:00-7:30pm
<b>Wednesday</b>	<b>City Centre Scrappers</b> 10:00-11:30am L4, Rm 418 <b>Toddler Time</b> 11:30am-12:00pm L1, Rm 120
<b>Thursday</b>	<b>Baby Storytime</b> 10:30-11:00am L1, Rm 120 <b>The Noiseguy</b> 12:30-1:30pm L1, Rm 120
<b>Friday</b>	<b>If You Give a Kid a Muffin Storytime</b> 10:00-10:30am L1, Rm 120
<b>Saturday</b>	<b>Saturday Storytime</b> 11:00-11:30am

3. Libraries had full timetables of programmes



4. Friendliness and a 'No Barriers' approach were important





5. Grand library on Fifth Avenue, New York City



6. Old Carnegie Library in NY suburb still being well used