



International Federation of  
Library Associations and Institutions

## IFLA Guidelines for Library Services to Children aged 0-18

Developed by the IFLA Library Services to Children and Young Adults Section  
Edited by Carolyn Rankin

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## Introduction

The IFLA Libraries for Children and Young Adults Section (C&YA Section) have undertaken this revision of the *Guidelines for Children's Libraries Services*, last published in 2003, to represent good practice in library services for children. The IFLA standards are internationally reviewed, published and regularly updated documents and each reflects current consensus on principles, guidelines, best practice or models for a particular activity or service.

It is acknowledged there are significant differences in the current state of public libraries across the world. For many children's librarians these IFLA Guidelines will be aspirational as they strive to meet the basic provision of books and to support reading. The Guidelines are not a set of rules for designing an ideal library service for children of all abilities. They suggest what may be feasible while being aware there are wide differences in social, cultural and economic circumstances in developing, middle income and industrialized countries. Each public library has a different community to serve and therefore different priorities and user needs. The IFLA Guidelines for Library Services for Children Aged 0-18 can be used to support the development and improvement of library services for children in all regions of the world.

These Guidelines promote and encourage the development of effective library services for children of all abilities by giving guidance to the international library community about children's needs and rights on information, literacy and reading. The intention is to help public libraries implement high quality children's services in the digital age and recognising the changing role of the library in modern society. The [IFLA Global Vision](#) discussion shows that libraries are deeply committed to core roles in supporting literacy, learning and reading and are focused on our communities. Quality of education and universal literacy is recognised in the vision for the [United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#).

The revised Guidelines provide up to date knowledge and professional insight for those who strategically plan or deliver children's library services and programmes. They are aimed at practicing librarians, library staff, library managers and administrators and the students and lecturers in library and information studies faculties. The Guidelines can help to inform decision makers and those involved in developing policies. The information will also benefit non-government organisations (NGOs) who support literacy and reading programs for children and their families.

## Age group covered by the Guidelines

The [United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child](#) (UNCRC) defines the child as a person under 18 years of age and these Guidelines specifically relate to the target age between 0 – 18 years. This includes services and resources for babies and toddlers, children and young adults. These Guidelines use the term children's librarian to also include early years librarians and young adult librarians.

The children's library will provide services and programmes for all in the local community in a non-commercial public space. This should include all children regardless of race, religion, gender, cultural background, socioeconomic status, intellectual, or physical ability. Because of the wide age range covered by these Guidelines there is an inevitable overlap with the target group 'young adult' which can be defined as those in-between childhood and adulthood. The years between twelve and eighteen are often used as a range for young adult library services. This range may be extended past eighteen years. Each library will set their own age range for what they consider to be young adult, which can vary by cultural background and country.

It is important to note that the children's library is not the same as a school library as they have different missions and goals. The public library and school library do have a shared common purpose of introducing children to library services and developing life-long learners, but they serve different community needs. Further information on school libraries is available in the [IFLA School Library Guidelines](#) (2015).

# Part A

## Mission and purposes of children's libraries

### The mission of the children's library

The mission of the children's library is to serve as an information, learning, and cultural centre, that acquires and provides meaningful access to age and ability appropriate information, programmes, and services, in languages relevant to the multicultural community of children, their families and caregivers. Supporting literacy, learning and reading are universally recognised as central to the achievement of this mission.

### The purpose of the children's library

The purpose of the children's library is to provide resources and services in a variety of media to meet the needs of children of all ages and abilities for their education, information and personal development. This includes recreation and leisure, and also supporting children's health and wellbeing. Library services for children play an important role in the development and maintenance of a democratic society by offering the child access to a wide and varied range of knowledge, ideas and opinions. The [United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child](#) (UNCRC) offers support to develop library policy and practice, related to children and young people. The Convention has 54 articles that cover all aspects of a child's life and set out the civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights that all children everywhere are entitled to. Children should be able to rely on libraries for their right to information and education and children's librarians are at the forefront of promoting children's rights as they play a key role in literacy development and disseminating information about the importance of literacy and reading. **Universal literacy** is recognised in the vision in Transforming Our World the [United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#).

Opportunities to develop language, literacy and reading are important. The children's library has a key partnership role in helping to develop these skills, by facilitating meaningful access to resources and services for children and their families.

#### Goals

- To facilitate the right of every child to information, literacy, cultural development, lifelong learning and creative programmes in leisure time
- To provide children with access to a wide range of appropriate resources and media
- To help children develop digital media information literacy skills
- To provide cultural and recreational programmes, oriented towards reading and literacy
- To provide various activities for children, parents and caregivers
- To address barriers for children and to advocate for their freedom and safety
- To encourage children to become confident and competent individuals and citizens
- To facilitate community partnerships so together we provide programmes and services to all children and their families in the community, including those on the margins of the dominant group, who may be economically disadvantaged.

### Governance of the children's library

Governance is about establishing and monitoring policy and its implementation. It concerns vision, being certain about the purpose of the children's library and what difference it intends to make. Good governance also concerns probity, that the organisation meets standards of openness and transparency, acts with integrity and in good faith.

In order to maintain the level of service required to fulfill their functions, children's libraries should be supported by legislation and sustained funding. The managers of children's libraries should be aware of all legislation affecting the operation of the library which will include legislation on financial management, data protection, health and safety and child protection and safeguarding. Adequate levels of funding are crucial to the success of the children's library to enable the development of policies for service provision

and to make the most effective use of available resources. This involves good stewardship in being responsible with resources, another aspect of governance. Policies must be implemented in order to have a real impact on the lives of children and their families.

## Part B

### **Human resources – competencies and knowledge**

Children's librarians require a range of skills and qualities, including interpersonal skills, social awareness, teamwork and leadership and competence in the practices and procedures of the organisation they work for. It is important to have staff with expertise in children's services including professional knowledge and enhanced awareness of theories of child development and psychology. Effective and professionally run children's libraries require trained and committed children's librarians who will design, plan, organise, implement, manage and evaluate services and programmes to meet the needs of children and their families in the community they serve. In addition, they will support children by removing barriers presented by socioeconomic circumstances, culture, privilege, language, gender identity, sexual orientation, ability, and other diversities.

According to the IFLA Children and Young Adults Section, the effective and competent children's librarian:

- Understands theories of child development and psychology, including communication, language and literacy, and their implications for library services
- Uses established techniques to identify the needs of all children and their families in the local community
- Designs, effectively delivers, and evaluates a variety of fun and engaging programmes and activities to meet the needs of all children in the local community
- Demonstrates knowledge and management of current children's culture: literature, games, music and films, children's use of digital content and media, and other materials that contribute to a diverse, all-inclusive, and relevant children's collection
- Stays informed of trends in emerging technologies, the digital world and social media and their implications for children's library services
- Cultivates a welcoming and supportive environment for children and their families to enable easy access to participation in library resources, programmes and activities
- Facilitates community engagement and partnership building
- Communicates and collaborates in partnership with other organisations serving children and their families in the community, to achieve common goals
- Communicates effectively with children and their families.
- Sets goals, develops plans and priorities for the children's library service
- Works creatively, and effectively with colleagues to deliver the goals and priorities of the children's library
- Plans, manages, controls and evaluates the budgetary resources available to the children's library to help meet service objectives
- Practices self-evaluation, is adaptable and undertakes continuing professional development opportunities on an ongoing basis

Further examples of competencies are provided by The Association for Library Service to Children (ALSC), a division of the American Library Association (ALA) who recommend [Competencies for Librarians Serving Children in Public Libraries](#) for children ages 0 to 14. The Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA) has published [Teen Services Competencies for Library Staff](#).

### **Education, development and training of children's librarians**

The quality and effectiveness of library services for children depends on the expertise of the staff who should develop their knowledge and update skills on an ongoing basis. As stated originally in the [UNESCO/IFLA Public Library Manifesto 1994](#): 'The librarian is an active intermediary between users

and resources. Professional and continuing education of the librarian is indispensable to ensure adequate services.’

The IFLA [Guidelines for Continuing Professional Development: Principles and Best Practices](#) state that the individual library and information professional is primarily responsible for pursuing ongoing learning that constantly improves knowledge and skills. However, the employers are responsible for providing staff development programmes and support for continuing education. This requires organisational commitment and effective personnel policies and procedures to be in place and the allocation of adequate budget and time for staff learning. In order to have committed, trained professional children’s librarians, there must be education and training in all areas of the service. This includes staff training to provide culturally sensitive, equitable service to all groups. Children’s librarianship should be part of the curriculum of any public library education programme.

## **Ethical standards and values**

Children's librarians have a responsibility to maintain high ethical standards in their work with children, their families, other members of staff and partner organisations in the community. All children and young adults in the community should be dealt with on an equal basis regardless of their abilities and background. Children’s librarians are committed to equal and free access to information, knowledge and services. This is exemplified in the [IFLA Global Vision Report Summary](#). They should demonstrate cultural competence and not allow personal attitudes and opinions to determine which children in the local community are served, which programmes are offered or how materials are selected, displayed and made available for use.

The [IFLA Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct](#), endorsed by the IFLA Governing Board in 2012, is offered as a series of ethical propositions for the guidance of individual librarians and other information workers. It applies of course to children's librarians and covers these areas:

- Access to information
- Responsibilities towards individuals and society
- Privacy, secrecy and transparency
- Open access and intellectual property
- Neutrality, personal integrity and professional skills
- Colleague and employer/employee relationship
- For examples and more information please view the document

The IFLA Freedom of Access to Information and Freedom of Expression (FAIFE) Advisory Committee has collected more than 60 [professional codes of ethics for librarians](#) from around the world. These guidelines customarily are adopted by national library or librarian associations or in some cases implemented by government agencies. The core values of equity of access to recorded knowledge and information and intellectual freedom are embodied in [Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights](#) and in the [core values of IFLA](#).

## **Funding and managing budgets and financial resources**

Funding is one of the biggest challenges for libraries as indicated by the [IFLA Global Vision](#), and children’s libraries need to ensure decision makers understand value and impact. The children’s library needs an appropriate budget allocation in order to provide services and programmes to meet community needs. This will take into account local circumstances and there is a need for children's librarians to be able to develop a funding proposal to their management authority and to external agencies. Adequate funding is crucial to the success of the children's library and is required not only when a library is established but should be sustained on an ongoing and regular basis. Without suitable levels of funding over the long-term it is impossible to develop policies for service provision and make the most effective use of available resources. The implementation of any programme or project can be boiled down to ‘this is a great idea but how are we going to pay for it?’ Ideally the children’s library staff should work with senior management to develop the budget and explore responsible options for the delivery of quality resources and services to children in the local community.

Children's librarians should know how to identify needs of the children's library and develop a budget plan. To do so they should:

- Understand the budgeting process of the parent organisation
- Know the timetable for the budget cycle, including operating or revenue budgets which are generally drawn up on an annual basis to fund current operations
- Be aware of the budget accountability processes
- Know key staff involved in budgeting

The components of the budget plan for the children's library include (but are not limited to):

- New resources (for example books, periodicals, toys and play equipment, multimedia, and digital materials, equipment for Makerspace activities)
- New devices (tablets, consoles)
- Costs associated with using ICT equipment, software and licensing costs, if these are not included in a general ICT budget for the parent public library
- Supplies and administrative materials
- Promotional events and materials
- Funding for programmes and activities
- Funding for publicity and marketing
- Staff training and development
- Staff salaries
- Overhead costs such as rent, cleaning, heating and lighting
- Library management system costs

Staff costs for salaries and staff training may be included in the children's library budget, or it may be more appropriate to have them included in the public library general staff budget. The children's librarian should be involved in estimating these costs as the amount of money available for staffing is closely related to how many hours the children's library can be open and what quality and range of services can be offered.

There is a need to monitor, evaluate, review and report on programmes, services and initiatives. This information may be included in an Annual Report which will show how the budget has been used. This will indicate whether the amount of money spent on the children's library programme and its resources has been enough to cover its tasks and attain the policy targets. Annual Reports should include evidence of the quality of library services and programmes and their impact on the user community (see Part G Evaluation and impact).

## **Sources of funding**

A number of sources of funding are used to finance public libraries but the proportions of funding from each source will vary depending on local factors in each country. The primary sources are taxation and block grants at local, regional or central level. Libraries should seek additional sources of income for project funding which may include donations from funding bodies or private individuals, revenue from commercial activities or user fees and sponsorship from partner organisations. Community libraries that are not financially supported by city, regional or state funding must ensure funding annually from other sources.

## **Partnerships and collaboration**

Public libraries are a crucial partner in the local community because of their widespread and welcoming, accessible infrastructure. Building effective and sustainable partnerships can help to ensure the best facilities, services, and opportunities for children of all abilities in the community.

Children's librarians should work collaboratively and develop strong partnerships with other community agencies and stakeholders in lifelong learning and education to achieve the best possible participation and engagement of the communities. Partnerships may be in place at a strategic level, where organisations or



agencies have a policy directive to collaborate in order to achieve shared agendas. Librarians have a tradition of collaborating amongst each other and with other practitioners and developing communities of practice.

Children's librarians should have a good knowledge of their client groups and work to support the needs of their diverse communities. They are recognized for being good at engaging with 'hard-to-reach' groups, and successfully building partnerships, based on reading and family learning, as well as the expressed needs of the community. Local community characteristics may change over time, but the need for building partnerships and sustaining networks remains a constant. Adopting a community-led approach can help to change the way librarians engage so that planning and decision making is collaborative and participatory.

Library staff should have the ability to create partnerships among other groups in the community that address needs of children. Research evidence shows that library service naturally connects to the work of institutions in a community, such as schools, youth work, hospitals (doctors and paediatricians) and other health care centres, social services, local business, cultural and arts groups, the voluntary sector and other non-profit organisations. Collaborating with each of these sectors adds much value, especially when involved in reading promotion activities for children and their families or when addressing barriers to access in the community.

Outreach to community partners will expand the reach of the library to connect with new audiences and more potential users. This can lead to the development and provision of new and improved services to help meet the needs of children and families in the community. Involving local community organisations offers the opportunity for children's librarians to:

- Accurately define the profile of children being served
- Identify at the local level the needs and priorities of the linguistically, economically and culturally diverse community members
- Provide promotional opportunities for new and existing programmes, both at the library and the partner organizations
- Be in partnerships that serve all partners well

Pre-Schools, Kindergartens, and other educational institutions are also important partners for the children's librarian. The children's librarian should provide a variety of special programmes for the benefit of schools such as:

- Library visits
- Library orientation programmes
- Information literacy classes
- Reading promotion
- Lending services
- Cultural programmes
- Homework clubs and homework support
- Author/storyteller visits
- Space for practitioners to meet

## Part C

### **Collection development and management**

Children's libraries should provide a variety of developmentally appropriate materials in a variety of formats and to meet the needs of all age groups. There are no universal standards for the size and content of children's library collections. Collections and services should include all types of appropriate media and modern technologies as well as traditional materials. A wide range of opinions, values and views should be reflected in the library stock and online accessible materials. All communities that are served by the public library should have representation in the resources of the children's library. Children and their

families should be involved in choosing materials. The collection should be appealing, current, in good condition and organised in a way that is intuitive to children.

The content of materials should be diverse and locally relevant for example,

- Materials in all local languages spoken in the community
- Materials created by local authors and illustrators
- Resources that support local school needs

Diversity should be represented in the resources available by providing materials that:

- Reflect inclusiveness for example, diversity in gender identity, abilities, socioeconomic backgrounds, sexual orientation and family compositions
- Are balanced in their representation of gender and race

One source for collection development, IFLA's [\*The World Through Picture Books\*](#) provides a selection of picture books from around the world, chosen by librarians.

It is important that library collections are reviewed and developed on an ongoing basis to ensure that all children in the community have a choice of high-quality new materials and resources which reflect the local community culture, as well as the world. This will include multicultural materials and resources for children with disabilities, LGBTQ+ children, making friends and anti-bullying. For example, a story with a character with a disability can help a child with a disability see themselves reflected in a positive way and provide all children with insights into life experiences they may not have had.

The following categories of library materials may be provided in a typical children's library, although this list is not exhaustive:

- Fiction and non-fiction to suit all ages
- Reference works
- Resources in the primary language of the community
- Resources in minority languages in the community
- Computer games
- Toys
- Games and puzzles
- Musical instruments
- Study materials
- Audio books
- Sensory materials
- Treasure baskets for babies
- Equipment, tools and materials for Makerspace programming
- Working in partnership with other community organisations, libraries can circulate resources such as developmental learning materials, for example, DVDs in sign language or books in Braille.

## **Formats**

Materials should be offered in diverse formats. The following formats may be included in a children's library collection although this list is not exhaustive and new formats may become available:

- Physical formats (print and electronic) including books, audiobooks, comics, magazines, CDs, DVDs, videogames, Braille materials
- Digital formats including online streaming of music, movies, ebooks, educational and entertainment software, databases of local and global educational resources.

## **Collection development and management policy**

Each public library system should have a written collection development and management policy for the children's service, endorsed by the governing body of the library service. The policy should ensure a

consistent approach to the development and management of the library collections for children. A policy statement provides the basis for future planning and will assist in determining priorities, especially when allocating financial resources. Formal policy statements can help in making the case for the library when dealing with both its users, administrators and funding bodies. These statements support the stated objectives of the organisation, demonstrating accountability and commitment to agreed goals.

For further information on collection development, see Chapter 4 in [The Public library service: IFLA/UNESCO guidelines for development](#) (2001).

### **Physical and digital resources**

The physical and digital resources of a children's library include facilities, equipment, and collections of resources. Whenever possible, materials should be downloadable. Library websites and digital content products should be compliant with [WCAG 2.0 \(Web Content Accessibility Guidelines\)](#). It is good practice to ask people who use adaptive technologies to test equipment and services for usability.

Children's librarians should consider partnering with a specialized library serving those with print disabilities to make additional materials available to children in the library or options such as home delivery. These libraries may also offer specially designed, fully accessible library catalogues and digital content products.

### **Technology in the children's library**

Librarians can help foster the digital literacy skills of children and young adults. Children's libraries are potentially well placed to take advantage of new technologies, which can support reading and learning needs. Technology implies excitement, entertainment and fun to most children. Libraries should be a place where children can both use technology, access resources, and information and learn how to critically evaluate such information. Parents, caregivers, and educators should be offered guidance on how to select and safely use technology to support children's developing skills, as well as how to use technology provided by the library. Research may be needed to understand the digital competencies of children and young adults and to implement appropriate literacy programmes.

Librarians should promote the role of the library as a safe place and provide guidance on helping children, young adults, their parents and caregivers to stay safe online. Library staff should have knowledge and skills to facilitate the use of digital media. The C&YA Section [Statement on Social Media, Children and Young Adults @the Library - Safety, Privacy and Online Behavior](#) provides guidance. Digital literacy programmes and tutorials can help to educate children about issues such as 'fake news', online bullying, abuse and hatred campaigns.

The children's library should be equipped with IT facilities with the same priority as the adult section of the library. OPACs, multimedia workstations, internet workstations, tablets and a variety of software (to use in the library and for loan) should be provided. Libraries are often an important community hub for high-speed internet access. Librarians must consider legal aspects concerning children's access to the internet which are relevant in their respective country.

Computers, other digital devices and free of charge internet access can help to bridge a critical gap for those who do not have those resources at home. Where children do not have internet access at home, materials can be downloaded to a child's device or devices loaned with books preloaded. Whenever possible, downloadable materials should be compatible with popular devices such as smartphones and tablets with built-in accessibility features. These devices reduce the need for more expensive specialized technology and can also ensure children with disabilities will have equal access. Libraries with 'maker' technology (a 3D printer, for example) can use it to produce accessible programme materials.

# Part D

## **Programmes and community outreach activities**

Effective programming and community outreach activities need to be designed to reflect the changing population and diversity of the local community. This requires an understanding of the demographic composition of the community. Children's librarians can show a commitment to diversity, inclusion and social justice in working with their local communities by providing services, programmes and resources that reflect the particular needs of those communities, and by engaging with and listening to the community. It is important that librarians observe and listen to customers and plan services appropriate to their needs.

Public libraries have a special responsibility to support the process of learning to read, and to promote books and other media for children. Children's libraries provide an opportunity for children to experience the enjoyment of reading and the excitement of discovering knowledge and works of the imagination. Children and their parents and caregivers should be supported in making the best use of a library and how to develop skills in the use of printed and electronic media. Children's librarians promote reader development as an active intervention to increase confidence and enjoyment of reading and offer opportunities for children to share their reading experiences. The children's library should provide special events for children of all abilities, such as storytelling and activities related to the library's services and resources. It is also important to engage children and young adults by involving them in the co-creation of activities such as reading clubs, tutoring and crowdsourcing.

Activities and programmes can include:

- Library orientation programmes
- Information literacy and family literacy activities
- Reading promotion and reader development
- Lending services
- Reading clubs
- Cultural programmes
- Homework clubs
- Author visits and storytelling events
- LGBTQ+ programmes such as Drag Queen Storytime or Rainbow Storytime
- Baby and toddler Rhyme Time
- Craft activities
- Coding clubs and events
- Makerspace activities
- Creative play
- Music and drama events

In promoting community outreach the library should ensure services for all community members, including, for example, children with disabilities, immigrants, refugees, and those whose lives have been stigmatized. To support inclusion, the library should inform disability organisations about accessible collections and services at the library and engage them in outreach and programme development. Children's librarians can reach out to educators who are often the first to identify children with learning disabilities such as [dyslexia](#) or autism. Information about accessibility should be provided on the library website and also on promotional materials. All programmes and activities should be inclusive as it is not always obvious if a child in the audience has a disability.

# Part E

## **Design of the space and creating a welcoming place**

The children's library must have suitable space within the public library. In library buildings, where services for all age groups in the community are housed, children should get an appropriate proportion of the whole library space. Ideally, a children's service needs its own area within the library building. The children's space should be easily recognizable and distinct from other parts of the library.

Space needs to be well designed in the children's library in order to meet present and future needs. It is a resource that must be managed by the library staff, along with stock, staff and finances. In addition to meeting the needs of different age groups, space must be managed for different kinds of activities – for example, individuals browsing or studying; families or groups of teens using the space socially; larger events, such as storytelling, baby and toddler Rhyme Times, homework clubs and author presentations.

Libraries aim to attract children and young adults by offering a range of services and facilities appealing to the particular age groups. This includes a welcoming physical space and children of all ages should find the library an inviting, attractive, challenging and non-threatening place to visit. The children's library is a place to meet, play and communicate. It should be a safe, supportive and welcoming space that facilitates the exchange of diverse ideas. An inviting atmosphere and good design encourages children to use all library resources, to read and linger in the library. The exposure to language and literature begins with books and reading, so spaces are needed where children can spend time with books and listen to stories.

There are no universal standards for the size and design of children's library facilities. The following should be considered in planning library facilities for children:

- Central location, on the ground floor if possible
- Appropriate design for the age range of users
- Appropriate design for all library users, including those with special needs
- Adequate size to give space for the collection of books, newspapers and magazines, non-print resources and storage, reading areas, computer workstations, display areas, and work areas for library staff
- Flexibility to allow for a variety of activities. The space should be able to be used and rearranged for a wide range of activities, including music, play, story time, independent learning, and work stations for the development of digital literacy skills
- Appropriate signage and way finding
- Space for child care including breast feeding and baby changing
- Family-friendly and all-genders toilets
- Noise factors depending on the age range
- Appropriate and sufficient light, natural and/or artificial
- Appropriate room temperature (e.g., air-conditioning, heating) to ensure good working conditions year round
- The space and furnishings should comply with child safety regulation codes

## **Age ranges**

Children are not a homogenous target group. Their different skills, gifts, talents and needs vary depending on their age, cultural, sociological and economic background. This must be considered in the space planning process and furnishing of the library. As the children's library covers a wide range of ages and abilities, from babies to young adults, the design of the space and the furnishings should suit their different needs.

The designing of library space for children and young adults takes specialist knowledge and skills. The most important is a knowledge of behaviour and information needs. It is challenging to make the space inviting for all ages across the youth spectrum. Their wants, desires and expectations of the library service come from their life experiences and social, educational and cultural influences. As children grow and

become more independent and interested in socialising, the challenge is to provide welcoming space in the library for networking, socialising and enjoying the reading experience.

### **Furnishing and equipment**

In the children's library, it is important to provide an inviting space and comfort is an important consideration. Furniture and equipment for the library setting should be sturdy enough to withstand energetic use as it will receive considerable wear and tear. Libraries should invest in technology, equipment or furniture which can withstand heavy use and easily be repaired. For teenagers, comfortable furniture including couches, coffee tables and beanbags or other casual furniture is most inviting.

Shelving for book display should be engaging and attractive. The shelving should allow different media to be presented and should be low throughout the children's section to make the resources accessible to children. Differing heights of shelves, however, will always make books easily reachable by some children and adults and not others. A dynamic approach to stock management and display is the best way to overcome this. Regularly changing what can be seen and reached in different places in the space will widen choice and increase the access to books for everyone. Maintaining as many low shelves as possible will make books and other materials available to all library users.

### **Lighting**

Lighting will control how the library space feels and looks and it is beneficial to incorporate both the best of natural light and internal-lighting techniques. Most readers like to read in natural light, and different lighting levels are needed for study spaces and for creating ambience in more reflective areas. Varieties of mood lighting is popular in areas designed for teenagers.

### **Signage and way finding**

The signs in the children's library are a critical part of communicating with users. Signs with friendly wording in the languages of the local community will make everyone feel more welcome. Signage that gives children visual and textual pointers, such as pictograms, to what is available should be a strong design feature. Makaton signage (a language program that uses signs and symbols to teach communication, language and literacy skills) can help to provide all children and families full access to resources.

### **Accessibility of the library space**

Using a universal design approach, facilities should be accessible to all.

### **Health and safety**

The children's library must be a safe place and staff should be aware of local legislation regarding health and safety.

Consultation with users – involving children and young adults in designing their library space

It is important to have user participation in developing and planning new libraries. Innovative librarians should involve children and young adults by consulting and listening to their ideas for creating the library space.

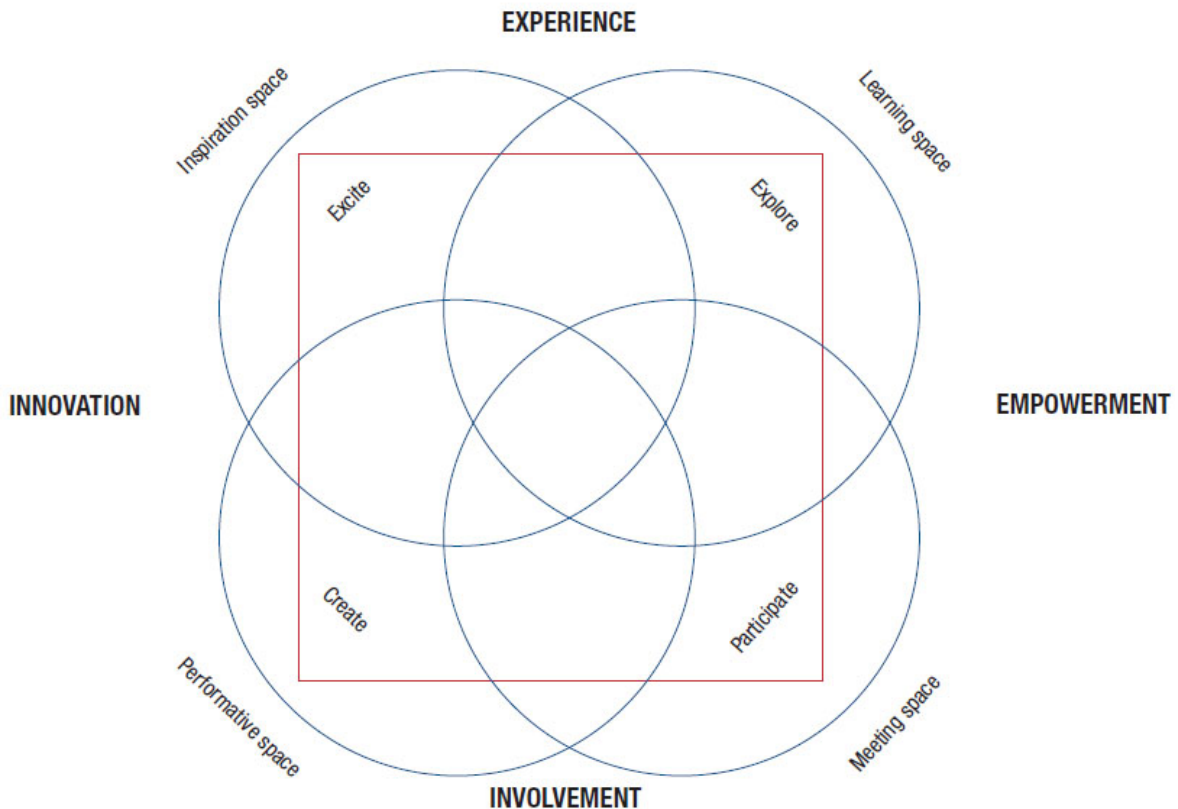
### **The Danish [Model Programme for Public Libraries](#) – as an example of innovative design and good practice**

Danish LIS-scientists Dorte Skot-Hansen, Henrik Jochumsen and Casper Hvenegaard Hansen have introduced a model to describe the transformation of the public library from a passive collection-based space to a more active space for experience and inspiration and a local meeting point. The model consists of four different overlapping 'spaces': the inspiration space, the learning space, the meeting space and the performative space. These four spaces' overall objective is to support the following four goals for the public library in the future:

- Experience
- Involvement
- Empowerment
- Innovation

The four spaces are not to be seen as concrete 'rooms' in a physical sense, but rather as possibilities that can be fulfilled both in the physical library and in cyberspace.

### The four spaces of the public library



The model can be used:

- As an instrument for arranging, rearranging, designing and building libraries
- As an instrument to develop libraries e.g. through partnerships
- As a management and communication tool in connection with the development of library plans and policy
- As a tool for communicating the role of the library to (local) politicians
- As a point of departure for the discussion of the public library's role in the continued development of a democratic society

# Part F

## Marketing and promotion

Children's librarians should be strong advocates for libraries at national and regional leader level evidencing their impact and value for reinforcing reading and literacy skills. Children librarians are focused on their communities and able to engage children and young adults in the promotion of resources and services. Reading and literacy are vital skills in 21st century society and their value must be constantly reinforced. Children's librarians can use marketing techniques to find out what their users need and to plan effectively to meet those needs. The library should also promote its services and resources to the children and the community. Children and young adults can be encouraged to help promote library services and resources that are of interest and value to them, and volunteering can be encouraged.

Marketing is about anticipating and meeting customer needs. It is also about reaching customers and making connections. This will require effort and creativity by library staff to effectively reach out to groups and individuals who do not have a tradition of using the library or where there is no reading culture. Children's librarians should be proactive in outreach work and not wait for the underserved to come to the library.

It is important for the children's library to develop a plan for promoting and marketing the library and its resources in the most appropriate way for the target audience. This could include the following:

- Making positive use of print, electronic and communications media
- Use of social media to connect to children, young adults and families
- Displays and exhibits
- Effective interior and exterior signage and way finding
- Regular publications and the preparation of resource lists and pamphlets
- Reading and literacy campaigns and author visits
- Designing campaigns to meet the needs of children with physical and sensory disabilities
- Book fairs
- Annual library week celebrations and other collective promotional activities
- Public-speaking activities and liaison with community groups

This list is not exhaustive and other marketing and promotional activities can be included depending on local circumstances.

# Part G

## Evaluation and impact

Evaluation is a fundamental and important component of delivering library services and a crucial part of the planning process. It is iterative and starts with strategy and planning. As an ongoing practice it requires an investment of time and money. Evaluation can provide a tool for improving programmes and services and inform policy decisions if the appropriate evidence is collected and analysed. It needs to be linked to pre-determined goals and outcomes. The evaluation of children's library services and programmes can help to determine if these are meeting the needs of children in the local community. The library should already have a mission statement, in line with vision and values, when the evaluation process begins. It is beneficial to develop an evaluation plan which should outline the goals, the research questions and type of information and evidence to be gathered.

User studies and library research on needs and behaviour can be used in different phases of the library and information process cycle. The first step is to identify what is to be achieved and it is important to decide what is valued as evidence and why. Both qualitative and quantitative measures should be used to determine the success of children's programmes and services.



The [IFLA Global Vision Report Summary](#) states that libraries have an opportunity to understand community needs better and design services for impact. Libraries need to ensure their stakeholders and communities understand the value and impact of children's services. Impact evaluation can be undertaken on a programme or a policy and provide information about the impacts produced by an intervention. The focus in this type of evaluation is on outcomes, or the effect of the services and programmes on children and communities. There are a number of international standards relating to library and information settings. The [ISO 16439:2014 Methods and procedures for assessing the impact of libraries](#) provides guidance to the library community on methods for assessing the impact and value of libraries. It was developed in response to worldwide demand for specifications of library impact assessment.

There are some practical questions to be considered in developing an evaluation plan for a children's library programme:

- What will be evaluated?
- What types of evidence are needed?
- What is the best time to carry out the evaluation?
- What criteria will be used to judge programme performance?
- What standards of performance on the criteria must be reached for the programme to be considered successful?
- If comparisons are to be made over a period of time, how easy is it to replicate the process?
- What conclusions about programme performance are justified based on the available evidence?
- How will the findings be acted on to implement change?

The IFLA [Libraries and the Sustainable Development Goals: a storytelling manual](#) is a guide for librarians and library advocates to support advocacy efforts. This manual provides digital space to share the story of the children's library activities, projects, and programmes as well as their impact on the local community, and how that contributes to the United Nations (UN) Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

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