



*Ready to Read at New York Libraries:*  
Early Childhood Public Library Staff  
Development Program

# Early Learning Spaces

Marisa Conner, MEd. – Lead Trainer



[Your library's  
logo here]



This project was made possible in part by the Institute of Museum and Library Services

*Ready to Read at New York*  
*Libraries: Early Childhood Public*  
**Library Staff Development Program**  
Foundation Training Components, 2014 – 2019

- 1. Early Literacy Community Asset Analysis**
- 2. Strategies for Successful Partnerships and Outreach to Families with Young Children**
- 3. Strengthening Young Families through Early Literacy Practices**
- 4. Early Learning Spaces**
- 5. Everyone Serves Families with Young Children**

# Objectives for Today

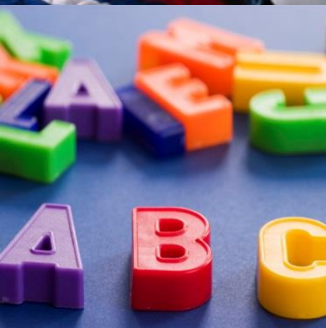
Participants will gain confidence in:

- Planning and designing welcoming, flexible Early Learning Spaces that promote family engagement.
- Making space selections that foster user comfort and encourage children's development and early literacy skills.
- Making spaces safe and accessible.
- Creating spaces for various sizes, budgets, and staffing levels.

# Every CHILD Ready to READ<sup>®</sup> @ your library<sup>®</sup>



Talk  
Sing  
Read  
Write  
Play







PLAY

“Play is the work of childhood”

Mr. Rogers

# Why Play in Public Libraries?

“While playing, children learn about their world, acquire skills necessary for critical thinking, discover how to solve problems, and develop self-confidence. Play encourages healthy brain development while fostering exploration skills, language skills, social skills, physical skills, and creativity.”





Photo by Doug Snower Photography



# Get Inspired...



# Inspiration - Libraries



Mother Goose Playscape, West Bloomfield Township Public Library, Michigan





Storyville, Baltimore County Public Library, MD





Mt. Airy Branch, Carroll County Public Library, Maryland





## Phoenix Public Library, Arizona







Hennepin County  
Library,  
MN





Lawndale Library,  
County of Los Angeles, California,  
a Family Place Library





# Lewistown, Montana





# Inspiration – Children’s Museums Mid-Hudson Children’s Museum, NY





# The Strong®



The Strong Play Partners





## Super Kids Market With Wegmans Food Markets







# Cotsen Children's Library / Princeton, NJ





# Inspiration – Early Learning Catalogs

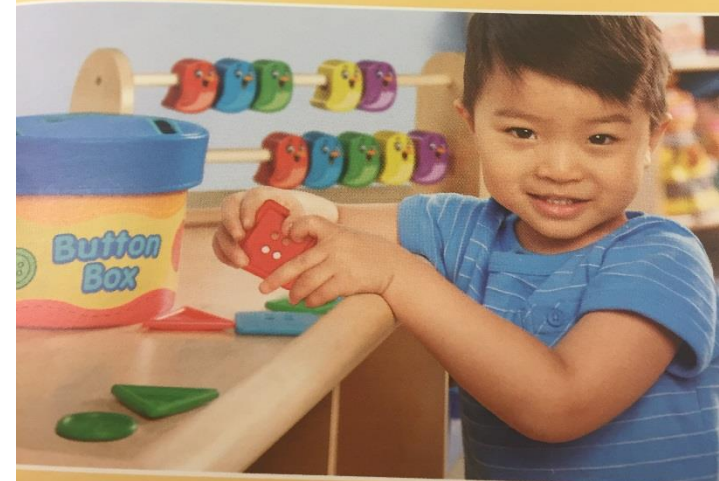


**DRAMATIC PLAY**  
An imagination-inspiring space filled with opportunities for toddlers to act out their thoughts, ideas & feelings.

This complete environment provides toddlers with a variety of role-playing experiences—with low storage centers that give easy access to the included props and costumes... self-contained play surfaces that keep vehicles and toys in place... plus a toddler-sized table & chairs for pretend mealtimes, doll play and more.

above is approximately 10'8" w x 9'5" d.

AA1211  
DRAMATIC PLAY



# Inspiration – Your Community





# Inspiration – Early Education



# Design Idea Boards





★  
To get ready to read, children need an  
environment  
that supports early literacy and learning.





# Every library, like every child, is unique.



No matter what your size or resources, your library can create an environment that supports and encourages literacy and learning.





Small	\$0 - \$10,000
Medium	\$10,000 - \$100,000
Large	\$100,000 and up







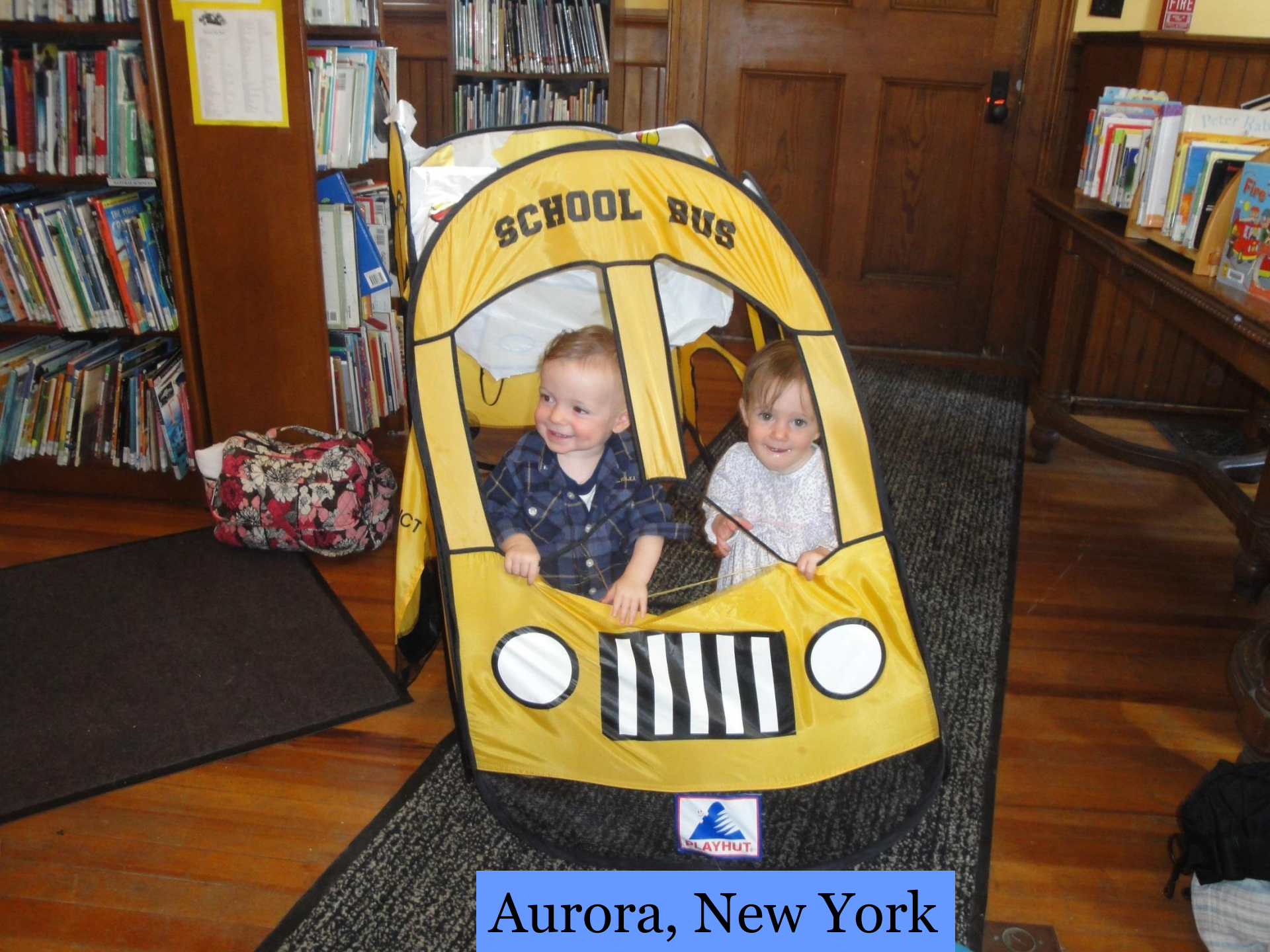












Aurora, New York





Hennepin County Library,  
MN











Before





After



Westminster Branch, Carroll County Public Library, MD \$100,000





Mt. Airy Branch,  
Carroll County Public Library, MD \$86,000





# Storyville, Baltimore County Public Library, MD \$750,000





To get ready to read, children need an environment that supports early literacy and learning.







Middle Country Public Library, Centereach, New York,  
a Family Place Library



# Design Principle: Appealing environment

1. First impressions
2. Signage
3. Graphics







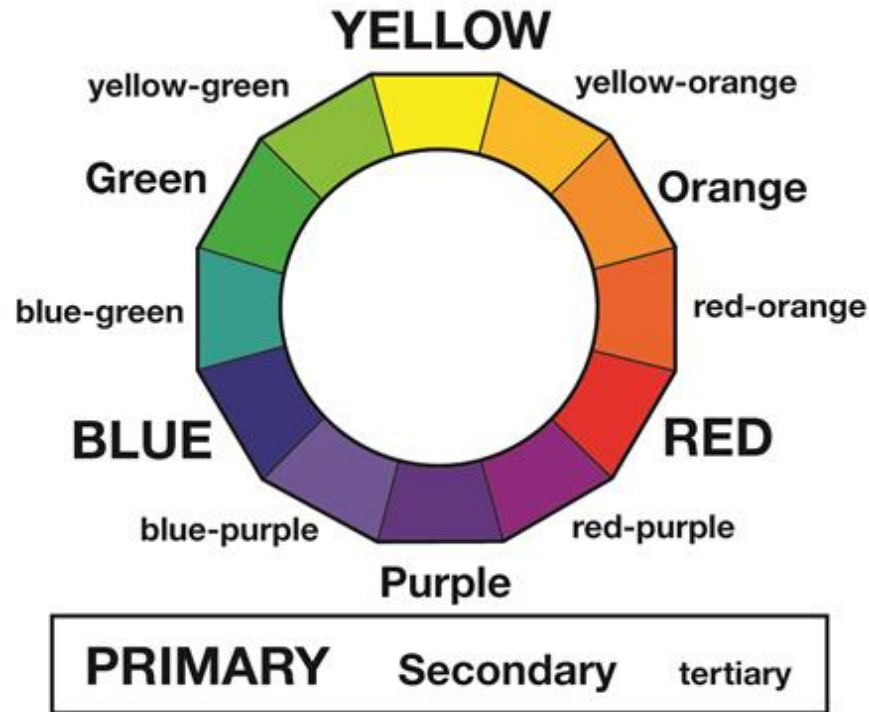
# Design Principle: Appealing environment Using light



- Varied
- Cold and Warm
- Natural and Artificial
- Interesting
- Half-light
- Textured
- Translucent
- Transparent



# Design Principle: Appealing environment Using color





# West Bloomfield Township Public Library, Michigan



# Storyville

## Baltimore County Public Library, MD





# Carroll County Public Library, Maryland















# Bozeman Public Library, Montana





# Design Principle: Organized displays

Use face-out displays to encourage children to browse and choose titles for themselves.

Use seasonal or thematic displays with hands-on activities to engage children and parents.

Change or rotate displays at regular intervals to create ongoing interest.





# Design Principle: Easy access to materials







# Design Principle: Flexibility



# Southampton, New York







Playing make believe helps me dream,  
create, and improvise.







Hennepin County Library,  
Minnesota



# Spring Cafe



# Pet Vet





# Tables



# Tables, Window Sills, Ledges





# Discovery Table





# Design Principle: Interactive spaces





What does “interactive” mean?







# 5 Active Learning Ingredients

- Choice – The child chooses what to do.
- Materials – There are ample materials that children can use in a variety of ways.
- Manipulation – The child can manipulate objects freely.
- Language – The child describes what he/she is doing while they are doing it.
- Support – Adults and peers encourage the child's problem solving and creativity.



# Arranging Your Space

- Small, well defined niches and nooks encourage greater language experiences and collaboration with peers and adults.
- Children become more involved in sustained literacy play when objects are clustered together to create schema or meaning network (themes)
- Place books in the immediate area of play activities
- Create cozy areas for families to sit and read.
- Create spaces that allow for children to engage in dramatic and constructive play.

# Consider a few Basic Features

- Area Rug to Define the Play Space
- Bins, bin units, shelves to organize learning toys
- Bookcase for thematic books
- Puppet Theatre for themed puppets
- Magnetic Board for changeable magnetic activities
- Child height table and chairs
- Seating for adults and children







# Woodlawn Branch, BCPL





# Loch Raven Branch, BCPL

# Furniture with Bins



























# Early Learning Play Themes

- Animal Buddies (pets)
- Busy Bugs (insects)
- Down on the Farm (farm animals)
- Splash (water animals)
- Dinosaurs Rock!
- Wild Things (wild animals)
- On the Go (transportation)
- Community Helpers
- Once Upon a Time (fairy tales, nursery rhymes)

# Word Wall





# Self-Serve Activity Bins



# Learning Tips

## Alphabet Picture Blocks

**Contents:** 24 Wooden Alphabet Picture Blocks

### Together with your child:

**TALK** about the letters and pictures on the blocks and ask your child to identify them.

**SING** the Alphabet Song.

**READ** words you make by putting blocks together to spell a word like "CAT".

**WRITE** trace the letters with your fingers.

**PLAY** with the blocks. Allow your child to build their own towers and structures. As they build, encourage your child to talk about the blocks by asking questions, such as, "Can you please hand me the C block", "What are you building with the blocks?"



# Thematic Learning Toys



# Realistic Animals





# Puzzles



# Puzzles





# Cause & Effect Toys



# Basic Concepts





# Alphabet Activities



# Sensory Toys





# Fine Motor/Prewriting Skills





- Colors
- Patterns
- Building
- Cause and effect



# Imaginative Play



# Story Telling Props

Combine props  
with books for  
dramatic play.





# Selecting Library “Friendly” Toys

- Not too many pieces, consider clean-up
- No choking hazards, no batteries
- Consider noise factor
- Open-ended for multiple developmental levels, interests, promote creativity
- Combination of toys on a theme and concepts (color, number, shapes, ABC)
- Gender neutral
- Reflect community culture (food, dress-ups, etc.)

# Group Toy Activity



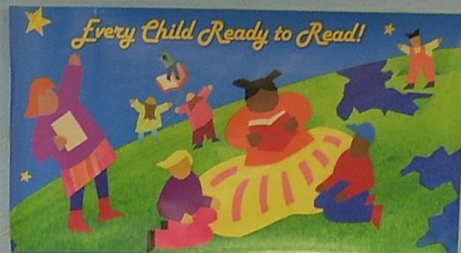


# Connect Play to Books

- Merchandise thematic books
  - Board books
  - Picture books
  - Easy non-fiction
  - Concept books







...to about

...les  
...t by reading to  
...ive older children  
...to you.

...books  
...ur names to children  
...ut, and letter sounds  
...to you.

...ept Books  
...st, numbers, shapes)

...roduce children to basic ideas  
...they will build on in school.

...eginning Readers  
...or school-age children who are  
...having trouble to read.

...First Chapter Books  
...or school-age children who are  
...developing early reading skills.





# Puppet Theaters























# Themed Puppet Sets







# Magnetic Boards & Activities









**Allosaurus**

**Brachiosaurus**

**Pterodactyl**

**Spinosaurus**

**Triceratops**









# Small Table and Chairs



# Themed Activity Rugs













# Themed Furnishings









Giraffe Book Bin







# Additional Play Opportunities

- Baby Play Area
- Kitchens and Markets
- Dress up Areas
- Train Tables
- Duplo Tables
- Block Areas
- Light Table







Norfolk Public Library, a family place library, baby & toddler playscape





duck  
barn  
farmer  
corn  
cow  
horse  
hay  
apple  
pig  
rooster

Welcome to the Baby Play Area  
For ages 2 and under with an adult or all times  
Other adults are encouraged to stay outside gated area  
Please use double outside gates





# Baby/Toddler Gym





# Kitchen



# Market and Garden

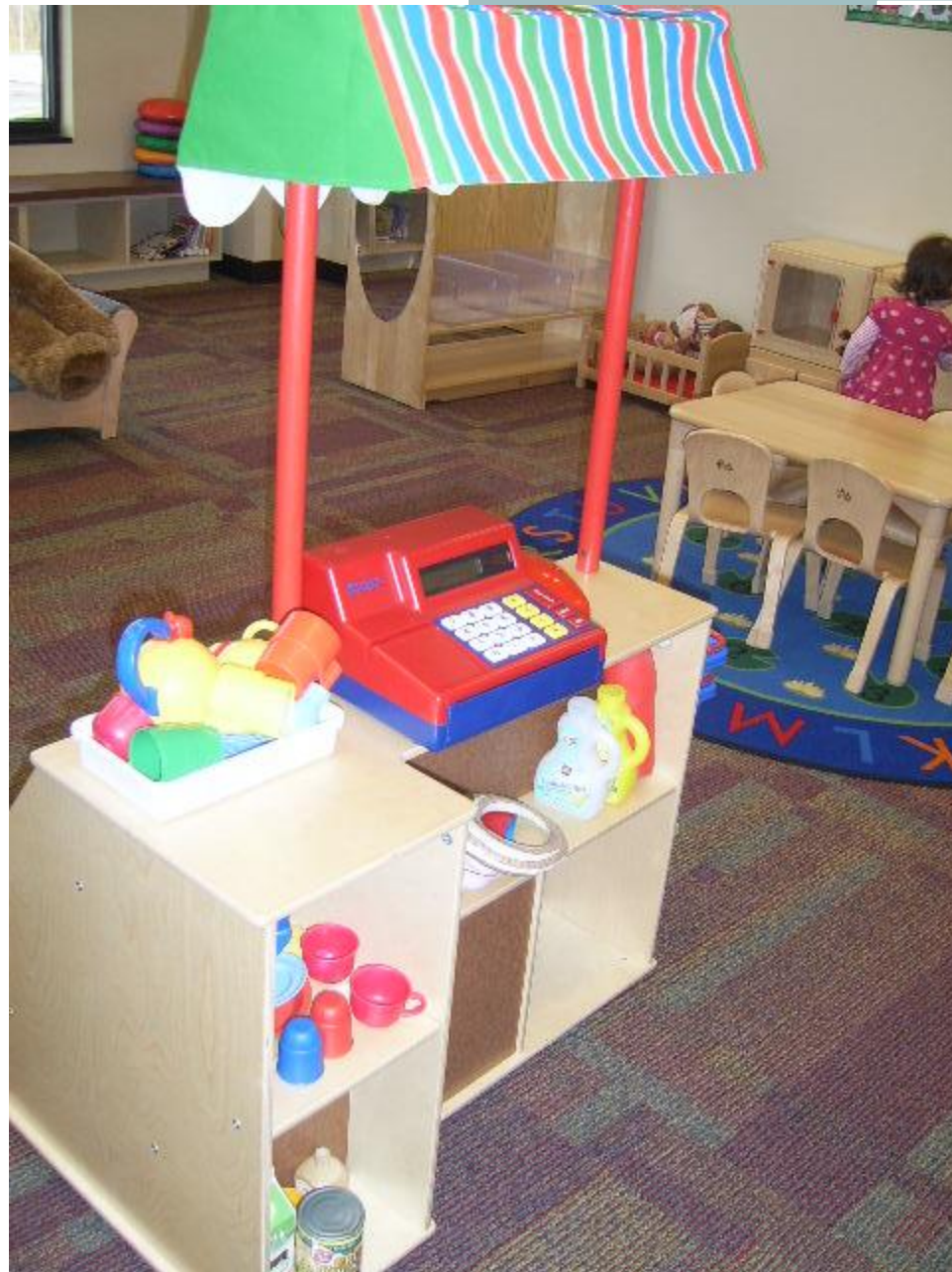




# Hennepin Public Library, Minnesota



# Store





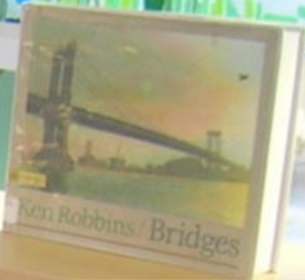
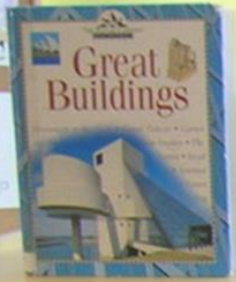
# Train Table



# Blocks







Bozeman Public Library, Montana

# Duplo/Lego Table





# Light Table



# Doll/Animal House

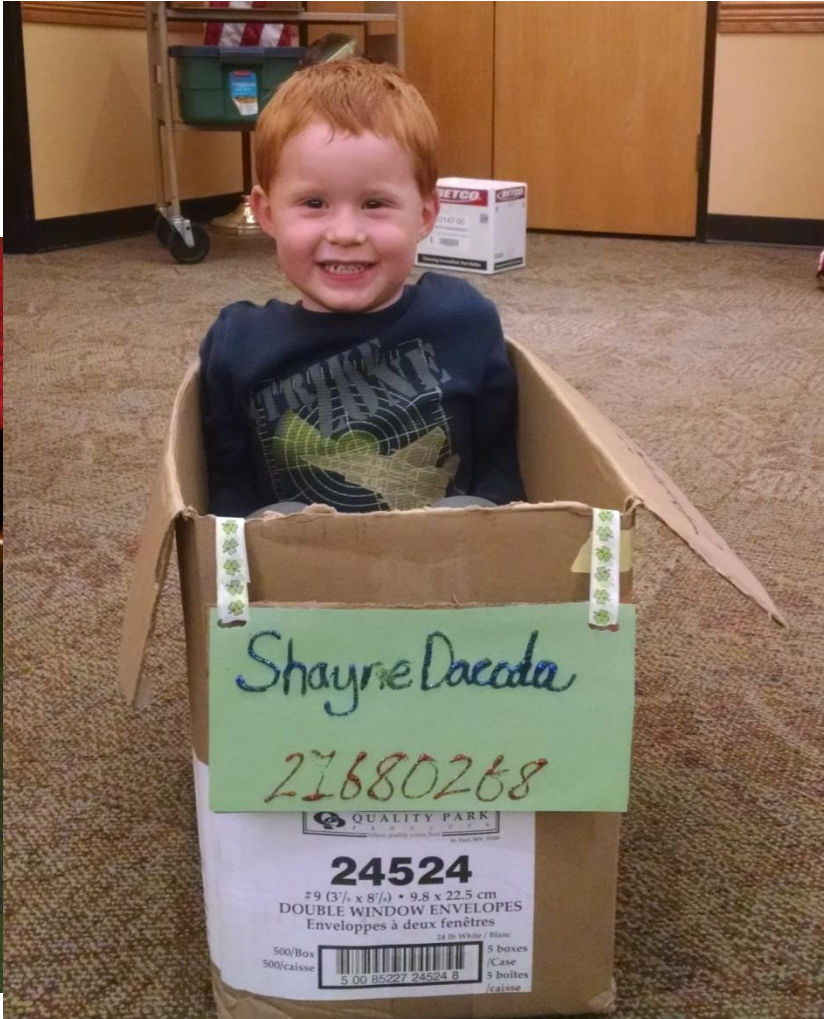




# No Money? No Worries! Time to Get Creative!



Baby in tunnel.  
Middle Country Public Library  
Centereach, New York,  
a Family Place Library



Boy in a box.  
Westminster Branch,  
Carroll County Public  
Library Maryland



# Seasonal Play Spot



# Dramatic Play – Caps for Sale





# Dramatic Play - Kitchen



# Cleaning your Space







**SANITIZE ME!**

**PLACE ITEMS IN THIS BIN THAT  
YOU FEEL NEED CLEANING**

# Care and Cleaning

- Consider a “sanitize me” bin – parents put “dirty” items in designated bin
- Child safe spray solution “Clorox Anywhere”
- Machine washable items – use non-fumed non toxic laundry detergent
- Cleaning schedules
- Replacement materials available



# What about straightening up?

- Encourage clean-up as part of the play
  - School readiness skill
  - Promotes sorting, classifying
  - Social...clean up after yourself...expected in Kindergarten
  - Make it fun...show child by example
  - Idea – give a sticker to children for cleaning up the area

# Accessibility and ADA Requirements

- Early learning spaces should follow the same guidelines for accessibility as other spaces in the library. These guidelines are primarily around space for wheelchairs to get around and making sure that all materials are accessible.
- Consider the placement of your play area and furnishings and make sure they meet these guidelines.



# Staff Participation

- Involve your staff in determining space designation and choosing furnishings
- Include staff when choosing themes and selecting learning materials and activities
- Provide training for staff the on purpose, use and care of the centers
- Give all staff in your branch some “play time”

# *Early Learning Center Philosophy & Guidelines*

1. Philosophy – purpose, function, strategy, staff role in family engagement
2. Guidelines – creativity and innovation within a framework of practical expectations
  - a. Who – team approach
  - b. What - play-and-learn opportunities for young children through safe, educational, and fun environments
  - c. How – using components such as a puppet theatre and activity unit, rotation of toys and materials, innovation based on community needs

*PowerPoint presentation on staff intranet*

*Written guidelines on staff intranet*

*New staff training*





The library has so much: many more toys and books than I could ever have; so we come here; and it is good to get the kids out of the house. Just to expand what they are seeing.  
—Parent visiting a Family Place Library



Carson Public Library, California  
A Family Place Library



Providence Public Library, Rhode Island  
A Family Place Library



Valley Community Library, Peckville, Pennsylvania  
A Family Place Library



Library spaces create exciting places for every child to get ready to read.





“Maintain a joyful, playful atmosphere around literacy activities”

--National Research Council, 1998

“Education is a natural process carried out by the child and is not acquired by listening to words but by experiences in the environment.”

-- Maria Montessori, 1870-1952



# Funding

Where do we go for funding an Early Learning Spaces project?

How do we make our case to potential funders?





# CASE STUDY:

## Middleburgh Library

Teresa Pavoldi  
Library Director



Children's Room,  
Middleburgh Library, NY



# After The Flood



















# Thank You!

Case study provided by:  
Teresa Pavoldi  
Library Director  
[tpavoldi@mvlis.info](mailto:tpavoldi@mvlis.info)



# CASE STUDY:

## Central Library, Onondaga County Public Library

Janet Park

Early Literacy/School Age Outreach Coordinator

# Major Renovation Underway at Onondaga County's Central Library

By Alexa Green 3/19/16

*Some major changes underway at Onondaga County's Central Library in downtown Syracuse. An \$8.7 million renovation project has already transformed much of the space. As Alexa Green shares, it's all to better fit the needs of the community.*

<http://www.twcnews.com/nys/central-ny/news/2016/03/21/major-renovation-underway-at-onondaga-countys-central-library-.html>



We've Got Issues!

## Study Report

### Early Childhood and School Readiness: Creating a Community Where All Children Thrive by Five

2013 Study

The "Thrive by Five" study explored the early childhood landscape in Onondaga County to assess the concerns and challenges, and consider how we might more effectively deploy our existing resources toward the goal that all children enter school ready to learn. The Study Committee concluded that we must shift our focus to the earliest years as the optimal time to invest in young children and their families to improve health, well-being and academic outcomes throughout the lifespan.

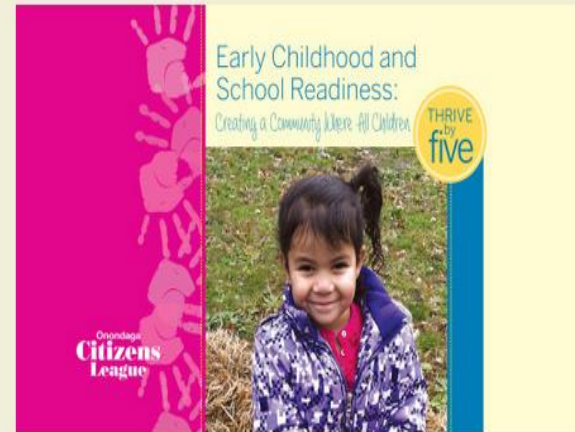
#### View The Study

Early Childhood and School Readiness: Creating a Community Where All Children Thrive by Five



#### Study Details

Board President: Heidi Holtz



# Syracuse named a 'pacesetter' for child literacy

- a community-wide effort in Syracuse and Onondaga County to increase childhood literacy, school readiness and, ultimately, high school graduation rates
- the national [Campaign for Grade-Level Reading](#) announces that Syracuse is one of 38 municipalities across the country to be named a 2013 Community Pacesetter



# Reading program expanded to cover all of Onondaga Co

By Brandon Roth 3/2/16

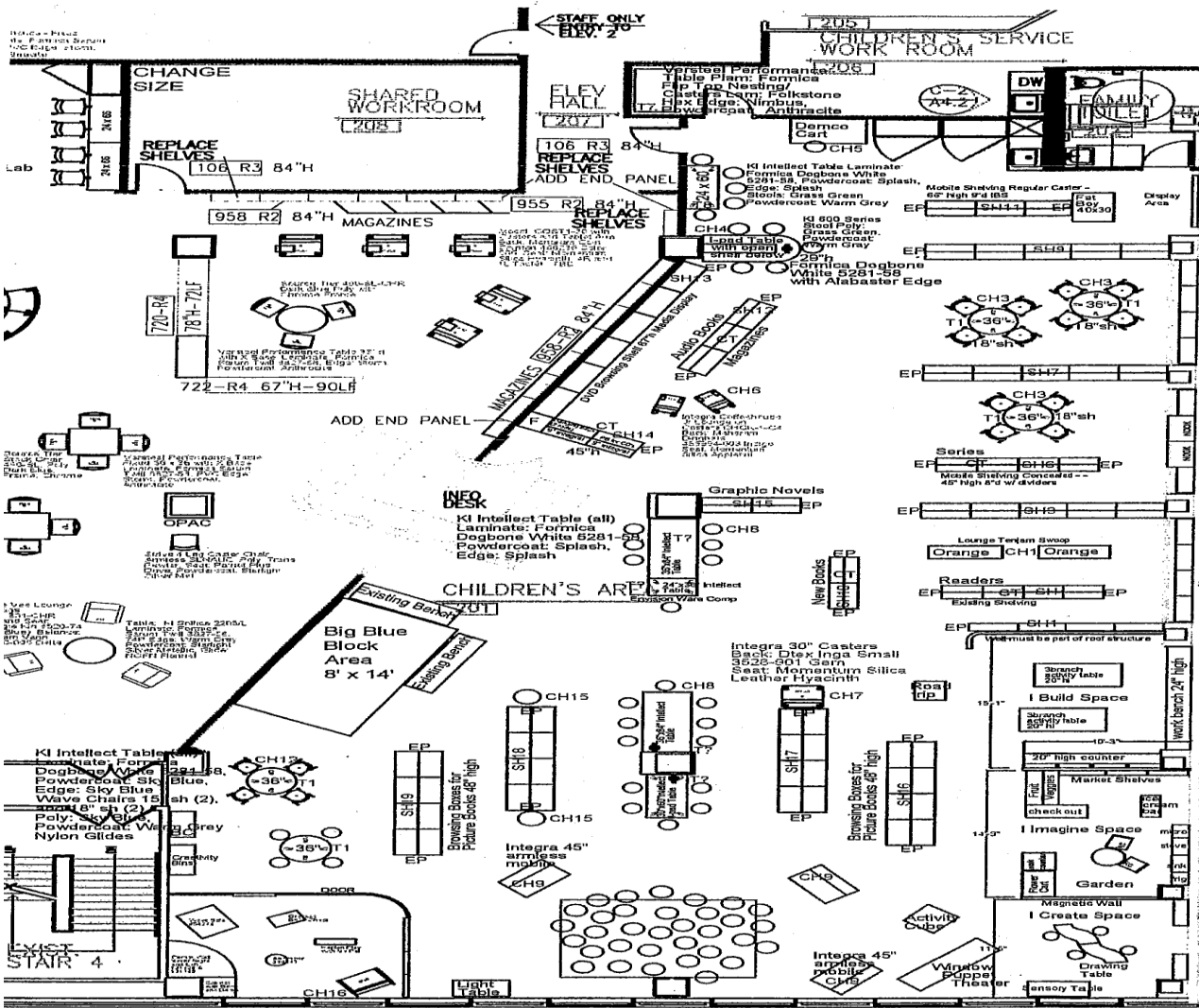


# Space Planning is not Furniture Selection

- Programmatic
- Schematic
- Design Development
- Design Documentation



Notes - Please see Furniture Schedule for details of items shown.



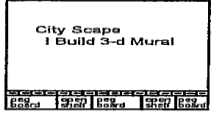
Bulletin Board  
Fabric Framed  
8'w x 4'h

All End Panels and  
Canopy Tops will be  
Formica Dogbone  
White 5281-58  
with Alabaster Edge

SH8  
KI Intellect Table  
Laminate: Formica  
Dogbone White 5281-58,  
Powdercoat: Splash,  
Edge: Splash  
Wave 18" sh Chairs:  
Poly: Splash (6),  
Targelo (4)  
Powdercoat: Warm Grey  
Nylon Glides  
SH5



We will be looking for these  
two Reading Nooks that will  
be built between two sections  
of shelving. To be fully  
wrapped with padded vinyl or  
just the bottom surface to  
have a vinyl seat pad - TBD  
Vinyl: Momentum Silica  
Hyacinth  
SH2 Laminate: TBD



City Scope  
I Build 3-d Mural  
Market Mural  
Kitchen Mural  
Garden Mural  
Wall Mounted  
BlackBoard  
Wall Activity  
Center (Music)  
Wall Mounted  
Easel

Model # M940-U Areadia  
Haven Metal with Urethane  
Arms Bariatric Slatte,  
Momentum Silica Leather  
Hyacinth

Lakeshore Learning  
First Step Activity  
Carpet, AAG26 8' x  
12' Area Rug

Integra 45" Branch on Casters  
Backrest: Momentum Silica  
Leather Hyacinth  
Momentum Silica Book Jacket

# Big Blue Blocks by Imagination Playground





Imagination Playground is a breakthrough play space concept designed to encourage child-directed free play.

**Benefits include:**

- Creativity
- Communication
- Collaboration
- Self expression
- Social skills
- Problem solving
- Release, relaxation
- Fine & gross motor skills
- Accomplishment
- Focus, determination



[www.imaginationplayground.com](http://www.imaginationplayground.com)



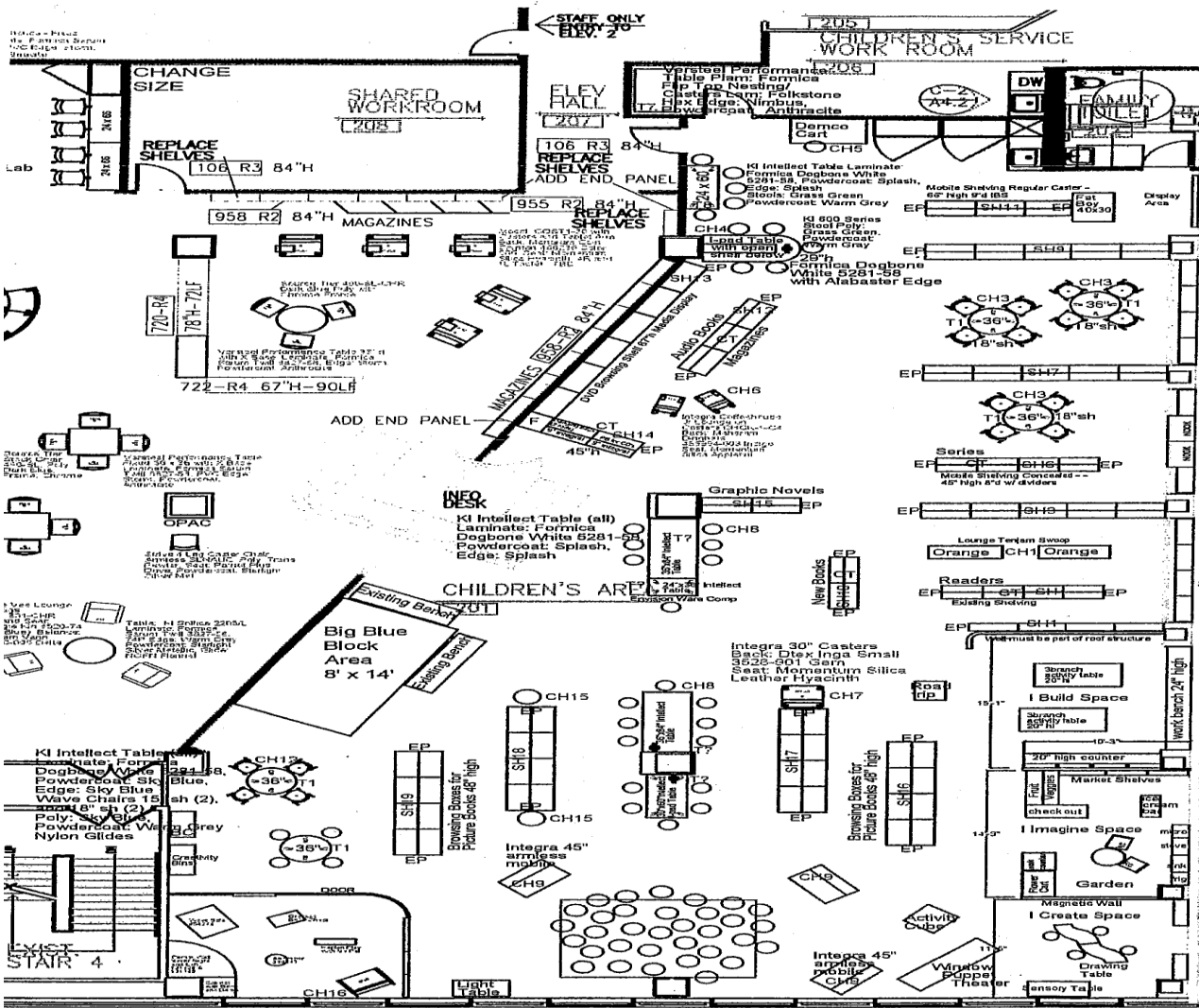
THE HOKKI  
STOOL  
-ergonomic  
seating for active  
kids



**Mod Rocker™**  
Awarded **Honorable Mention, 2006**  
**I.D. Magazine Annual Design Review**



Notes - Please see Furniture Schedule for details of items shown.



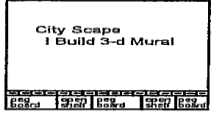
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# Picture Book Bins with Face-Out Shelving



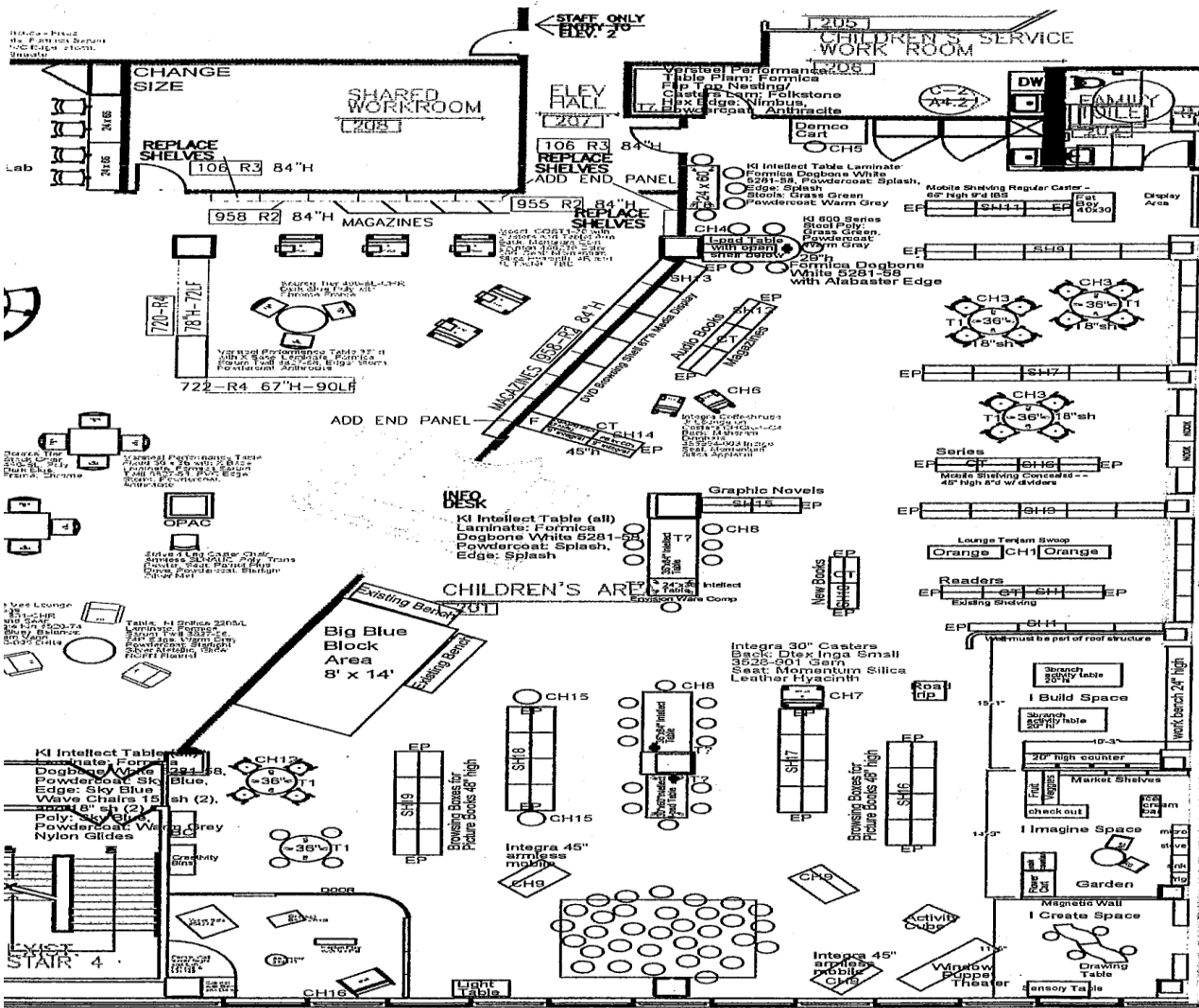


# First Steps® Activity Carpets

from Lakeshore Learning

[http://www.lakeshorelearning.com/product/productDet.jsp?productItemID=1%2C689%2C949%2C371%2C915%2C638&ASSORTMENT%3C%3East\\_id=1408474395181113&bmUID=1461019472286](http://www.lakeshorelearning.com/product/productDet.jsp?productItemID=1%2C689%2C949%2C371%2C915%2C638&ASSORTMENT%3C%3East_id=1408474395181113&bmUID=1461019472286)

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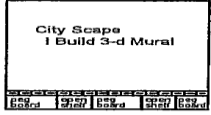
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# 3branch Discovery Activity Tables

Table Tops include:

Lego

Tinker Toy

Train

LightBox \*\*NEW

# Smaller, less expensive ...Alternatives





# Weplay Design by Wendy Wu



<http://www.e-weplay.us/>

# Thank You!

Case study provided by:

Janet Park

Early Literacy/School Age Outreach Coordinator

[jfpark@onlib.org](mailto:jfpark@onlib.org)



# CASE STUDY:

## Queens Borough Public Library

Gillian E.W. Miller

Coordinator of Early Learning Services

# Queens County

- 108 square miles
- < 2.3 million people
- 6.5% under 5 years old
- 47% foreign born
- >60% speak a language other than English in the home
- 165 languages spoken

# Queens Library

- 62 Branch Libraries
- 1 Central Library
- 2 Pre-Schools
- 1 Teen Library
- 7 Adult Learning Centers
- 13.5 million items circulated
- 52,000 programs with 884,000 attendance



# Early Learning Mission

Our role is vital not only offering early learning opportunities to families with young children, but also in supporting parents in being their child's first teacher.

# Play Today at Queens Library

## Statistics

January 2015- January 2016

**3620 program sessions**

51,000 children + 45,641 adults

**96,710 total attendance**

---

July-February FY15

**2,532 sessions and 67,396 attendance.**

July-February FY16

**2,960 sessions and 82,724 attendance.**

This is a 16.9% increase in the number of early childhood programs and a 22.7% increase in attendance.

# Queen's Library Spaces of Play

- Designed for the appropriate level of development
- Incorporate the needed skills of early education
- Made to pique the interest and imagination of young learners
- Be inventive but safe in design
- Include ALL users, creating enhanced experiences
- **Make it a place children WANT to come**



Wednesday,  
February 8, 2017

# Children's Library Discovery Center



Wednesday,  
February 8, 2017

# Children's Library Discovery Center Early Learning



Wednesday,  
February 8, 2017

# Elmhurst Community Library





Wednesday,  
February 8, 2017

# Elmhurst Early Learning



Wednesday,  
February 8, 2017

# Glen Oaks Community Library



Wednesday,  
February 8, 2017

# Glen Oaks Early Learning





Wednesday,  
February 8, 2017

# Peninsula Community Library



Wednesday,  
February 8, 2017

# Peninsula Early Learning



Wednesday,  
February 8, 2017

# Corona Community Library





# Corona Early Learning



# Thank You!

Gillian E. Miller

Coordinator of Early Learning Services

[gmillers@queenslibrary.org](mailto:gmillers@queenslibrary.org)

Phone: 718-990-5164

Cell: 347-549-2721



Now it's your turn.

Apply the design principles to your library spaces.  
Discuss ways you can use these principles to create space that supports the five early literacy practices.

 **Talking**



 **Singing**



 **Reading**



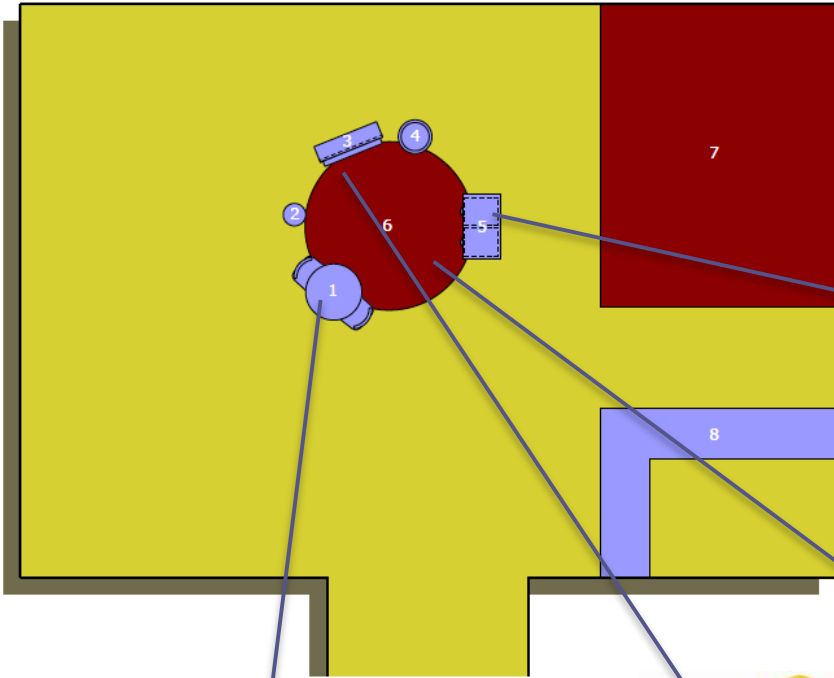
 **Writing**



 **Playing**





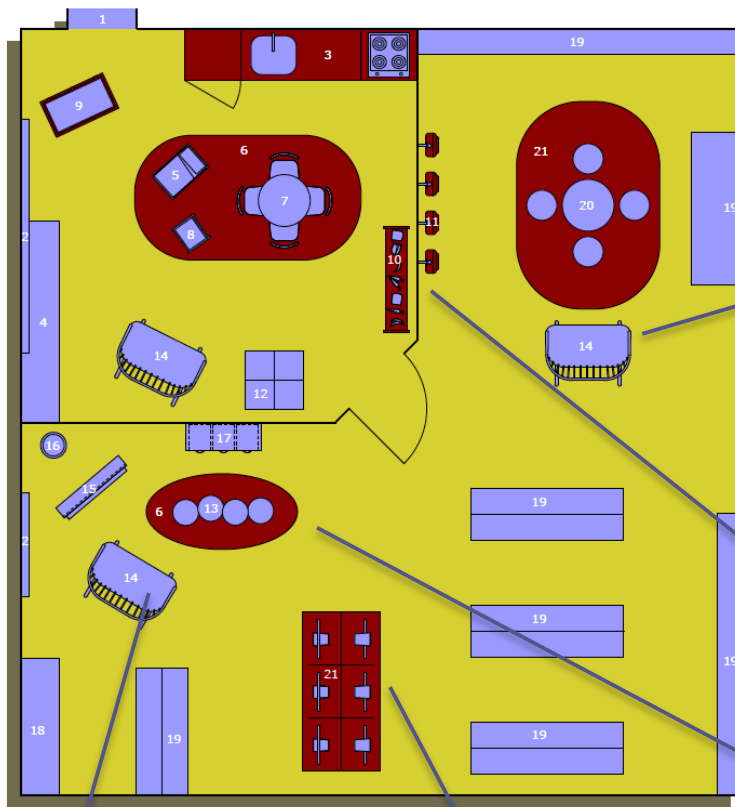


**LEGEND**

- 1. Tiny Table w/ Chairs
- 2. Pole
- 3. Puppet Theatre
- 4. Bin of Puppets
- 5. 4 Drawer Bin Unit
- 6. Rug
- 7. Staff Office
- 8. Desk

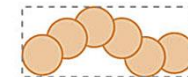


**Small Play Spot**



**LEGEND**

- 1. Storage Closet
- 2. Windows
- 3. Play Kitchen
- 4. Bench w/ Books Undemeath
- 5. Crib
- 6. Rug
- 7. Small Table w/ Chairs
- 8. High Chair
- 9. Dressup Area
- 10. Food Market
- 11. Activity Book Bags
- 12. Duplo Table
- 13. Caterpillar Table
- 14. Dangle Rocking Chair
- 15. Puppet Theatre
- 16. Puppet Bin
- 17. Toy Bins
- 18. Bench
- 19. Book Shelves
- 20. Low Table w/ Cushions
- 21. Children's Computers
- 22. Eric Carle Rug



**Midsized Plan**



Presenter's Name | email address