

Feinberg, Sandra, Kathleen Derr and Barbara A. Jordan, Marcellina Byrne, and Lisa G. Kropp. **The Family-Centered Library Handbook**. New York, NY: Neal-Schuman Publishers, 2007. 324pp. \$65 USD. ISBN-13: 978-1-55570-541-3 ∞

Public libraries striving to position themselves as community hubs will find valuable strategies and resources in this handbook. By acknowledging both the individuality of the child and the important role of caregivers, the authors explore collaborative ways to build on traditional children's services.

Serving as the primary text for the Family Place Libraries™ Training Institute in New York, this book is organized into sixteen comprehensive chapters. Part I, *Preparing for a Family-Centered Library*, explains the synergetic philosophy of the program and includes core competencies for staff in delivering services to families and working in partnership with other agencies. An overview of early childhood developmental stages is provided, along with cultural differences in parenting styles.

Part II, *Developing Services for Young Children and Parents*, puts the theory into practice. Libraries planning renovations to create welcoming, accessible family environments will find many helpful design considerations. Nineteen programs including "Mother Goose/Rhyme Time," "Little Signing Hands: Baby Sign Language Program," and "Apple of my Eye: Childhood Sexual Abuse Prevention" are summarized. Details include a program overview, partnering organizations, and cost in terms of both supplies and staffing. While many of the offerings are familiar, the practical tips and caveats from seasoned programmers are noteworthy. The authors also explore ways to seamlessly integrate parent education into existing library programs.

Three chapters are devoted to collection development. The selection criteria specifies resources that are "multisensory, interactive, and available in a variety of formats and that highlight play, creativity, and individual development" (p. 137). The print material listed includes classic picture books such as Margaret Wise Brown's **Goodnight Moon**, as well as multicultural titles such as Alma Flor Ada's **Pio Peep! Traditional Spanish Nursery Rhymes**. Unfortunately, only one Canadian title is included (Marthe Jocelyn's **ABC x 3: English, Espanol, Francais**). Information on tactile and adaptive material for children with special needs will help to fill a gap in many collections. Guidelines for creating a toy lending library are also examined.

Part III, *Reaching Out to Special Audiences* explores innovative outreach programs designed to meet the needs of low-literacy families, teen parents, culturally-diverse families and children with special needs. Care is taken to address the barriers and obstacles each user group faces when trying to access library services. The

programming advice is written in a straight-forward, honest manner.

The Family-Centered Library Handbook is a thorough, practical manual for taking libraries “beyond early literacy to embrace the entire family unit, to see the link between assisting young children and families and community and economic development, and the importance of collaborative efforts on behalf of children to advocate for a more healthy and literate society” (ix). Highly recommended for public library resource collections.

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