Enhancing Public Library Programs Through a Family Engagement Framework

Margaret Caspe, Global Family Research Project
Judy Nelson, Pierce County Library System
Maren Ostergard, King County Library System

Global Family Research Project

Public Libraries Are Changing

Libraries Engage Entire Families

It's About Relationships

Families:
Promote and advocate for children’s learning and development from early childhood to young adulthood

Schools and communities:
Open doors for families to meaningfully participate in children’s learning anywhere, anytime

It Happens Anywhere

6,000 hours of awake time we all have annually, including children

1,000 hours the average US student attends school annually (with 100% attendance)

5,000 available hours to impact, educate and enhance the learning of American children beyond status quo
It Happens Across Time

- Improved school readiness
- Higher student achievement
- Better social skills and behavior
- Increased likelihood of high school graduation

It Impacts Children’s Success

- Improved school readiness
- Higher student achievement
- Better social skills and behavior
- Increased likelihood of high school graduation

It Is a Matter of Equity

Equality vs. Equity

Why Libraries Matter

- Families who are from low-income homes use the library at a high rate compared to other community spaces.

Libraries for the 21st Century: It’s a Family Thing

- Surveys and interviews
- Learning community
- Foundational materials

Why Libraries Matter

- Attended Religious Event
- Visited Library
- Attended Sporting Event
- Visited a Bookstore
- Gone to a Live Show
- Visited a Zoo
- Visited a Museum

Credit: United Way of the Columbia-Willamette
Family Engagement Initiatives

- Key Elements
  - Staff Hiring & Training
  - New Partnerships
  - Breaking Down Internal Silos
  - Reflecting Community Needs
 Dallas Public Library + Bureau of Vital Statistics

Dallas Public Library’s Homeless Engagement Initiatives

In Partnership with the City of Dallas Poverty Taskforce

Dallas Public Library’s Get Fit Club – Grauwyler Park Branch

Dallas Public Library’s Discovery Faire

Kaleidoscope Play and Learn
Leadership
• Intentional opportunities for caregiver leadership
• Provides opportunity to share resources available through the public library

Maren Ostergard
King County Library System
Early Learning Librarian
Kaleidoscope Play and Learn

Engagement
• Raise up – Uses emergent curriculum reflecting input from the families served
• Reach Out - Intentional efforts to help parents and caregivers build supportive relationships

Support Services
• Program is based in partnership with many community agencies
• Weekly circle times connect families with collections

World Language Story Time

Leadership
• Engages families who speak a language other than English at home
• Supports parents as children’s first and best teachers
• Build professional and community capacity

Engagement and Support Services
• Reinforce home language
• Improve library world language collections

Prime Time Family Reading

Leadership
• Targets elementary school age children and their families
• Connects families, university scholars, school districts, the public library and local businesses
• Targets underserved and/or at risk families
• Builds family engagement by creating a directed family “book club”
• Provides opportunity to share resources available through the public library

Judy T Nelson
Customer Experience Manager – Youth
Pierce County Library System
Prime Time Family Reading

• Engagement
  - Raise up – supports concept that families are a child’s most important teacher
  - Reach out – connects the community through the library
  - Reinforce – models library spaces promote family interaction

Prime Time Family Reading

• Support Services
  - Children will have more support with their school work with free online homework help
  - Families will experience positive interactions around reading and the library

Block Play

• Leadership –
  - Targets children in Head Start/ECEAP programs
  - Builds professional capacity with librarians and child care professionals
  - Builds knowledge, skills, and confidence in families and community to support children’s out of school learning

Block Play

• Engagement & Support Services
  - Reinforce value of early learning through Pierce County Early learning Coalition/Project Child Success
  - Reimagining beginning STEM activities
  - Relating state kindergarten readiness to activities at the library

Thanks & Stay in Touch!

Send Us an Email:

Margaret Caspe: margaret_caspe@globalfrp.org
Jo Giudice: marjo.giudice@dallascityhall.com
Judy Nelson: jnelson@piercecountylibrary.org
Maren Ostergard: ostergar@kls.org