

Your Public Library: A Resource and Partner

Public libraries, school libraries and classrooms are natural partners in helping children of all ages become lifelong readers. *Joel's Library Jam* is intended to strengthen that partnership by inviting young children to visit the library and make it an important part of their lives, and by encouraging parents, teachers and school librarians to join with the public library to promote reading.

The public library really is for everyone! Public libraries provide a wealth of resources and are a welcoming place for patrons of all ages. But children have a special place at the library—and parents, childcare providers, teachers and school media staff are encouraged to bring children, even newborns, to visit the public library frequently. Public librarians, in turn, are encouraged to build the partnership by extending quality outreach services to school libraries and classrooms.

The Public Library Enriches Children and the Community

The public library offers a wide range of children's items to borrow at no cost, including books, audio and video cassettes, music and narrative compact discs, as well as movies and educational DVDs and CD-ROMs. Obtaining a public library card is easy—and free.

Most public libraries provide a variety of free, quality programming for all ages from newborns to adults. In addition to the traditional weekly preschool story times, many library branches host baby and toddler story hours, after-school programming, weekend enrichment, evening or bedtime story times, and special summer programs, including a summer reading club. Some libraries also sponsor family programs, tutoring and homework help.

Many public libraries also have computers available for public use. As technology becomes increasingly engrained in daily life, the library ensures that everyone has free and regular access to word processing and online services, including the Internet.

The Public Library Partners with Schools

Special library cards and services often are available to help educators enrich their classroom literature collections. At some public libraries, classroom teachers may check out a large number of books and keep them for an extended period of time. School classes are always welcome to visit the public library, both to attend special programming and to check out books.

Public librarians may also make time during the year to visit schools and classrooms. This outreach might be the only contact that some children have with the public library. Book talks, story times, contests and other promotions are a few of the programs that have proved popular over the years in the classroom.

Additionally, public libraries support reading programs in local schools, such as the Accelerated Reader program and summer reading lists. They also help students and their families locate books needed for required school reading. School librarians assist by providing lists of the assigned reading to the public library.

School librarians and public librarians partner to provide valuable services to children in their educational setting. The public library's large book collection can be used as a supplement to the school's library when multiple classes and/or teachers are studying the same subject area. The school librarian may arrange for public librarians to make outreach visits to the school to promote special library activities like the summer reading club. The school librarian or media specialist can also be a public library advocate year round by handing out library card applications to students and new families.

Libraries Make a Difference

By working together, public and school librarians and classroom teachers encourage children and their families to enjoy reading and children's literature. It's never too early or too late to begin to foster a love of books in children, encouraging them in the priceless process of learning to read, reading to learn and, most important of all, learning to love reading.

See YOU at the Library!