



LIBRARY PROGRAMMING GUIDE

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Considerations When Planning Programs

Ask!

- Ask community members what library activities they would like to see. Be prepared to describe general types of programming to them. Consider having a programming survey available at the library. An example survey is attached at the end of this guide.
- Ask patrons to ask their non-library-using friends what types of programs would encourage them to visit the library.
- Ask age groups what time would be convenient to for them to attend programs.
- Establish and maintain contacts with a variety of community groups. Ask them for feedback from their clients on what type of programming will bring them into the library.

Collecting suggestions will get you some great and relevant ideas; however, it is unlikely that you will achieve a consensus on one program everyone would like to see.¹

Do remember that programming for teens and adults is a two-way street. Community members often would like to pass on their skills as well as learn new ones.

Your library might consider establishing an advisory board. A committee consisting of five to twelve people of varied backgrounds will allow for short and long-term planning. These are frequently done for various age groups: teens or seniors.

When planning for programs keep these rules in mind:

1. Identify and prepare some book lists and brochures in large print.
2. Flyers announcing the program should invite patrons to contact the library in the event that they require accommodations to attend.
3. The meeting room should be accessible to people with varying degrees of mobility; the meeting room chairs should be comfortable and accommodate people of all sizes.
4. Arrange the room to ensure that everyone can see and hear the presentation. A microphone for the speaker is a good idea.
 - a. Remind the speaker to repeat back questions that are asked to ensure everyone in the room heard what was asked.
5. Be sure all speakers are introduced verbally; attendees with vision impairments may not be able to read name tags.
6. At the beginning of the session, announce the locations of washrooms, water fountains, and emergency exits, giving specific directions. If refreshments will be served, announce the time, location, and types of food and drink.
7. Schedule a few minutes for staff to conclude the program, perhaps summarizing key points of the presentation. Remember to thank the speaker(s).
8. Develop simple and focused evaluation forms. Shorter forms are more likely to be filled out.
9. Finally, stay and mingle after the conclusion of the program. This is an excellent time to create and maintain relationships with members of the community, to receive feedback, and perhaps even get suggestions for future program topics.²

¹ Mates, *5-Star Programming and Services*, 35.

² Mates, *5-Star Programming and Services*, 37.

Marketing and Promotion

Marketing is an essential part of a successful program. If no one knows about the program, it won't matter how well you plan it!

Website

One of the first places many patrons will look for information about your library's upcoming events will likely be on your **website**, particularly your home page. Blogs can also be a good way to promote events.

Social media

Announcements on your Facebook page and short tweets can spread the word far and wide, depending on the audience.

Flyers

Focus on eye-catching design and colour. Put them in high traffic areas and on public boards around town. If you have a Friends of the Library group, they may help distribute these (and they may also help pass on information about the program through word of mouth).

Include all key information:

1. The title of the program (displayed prominently)
2. Names and qualifications of the presenter(s)
3. A brief description of the program
4. The day of the week, date, and start/end time of the program
5. The address and phone number of the library (and logo if you have one)
6. The cost of attending the program (or if there is no charge, indicate that as well)
7. If pre-registration or tickets are required, mention this
8. Contact information

Library Newsletters.

Newsletters are a good way to promote your programs and keep your community informed about your library's activities. Include the same types of information as for flyers.

Community Newsletters

If there are community organizations with newsletters, they may be willing to include information about your program(s) in their newsletters.

Press releases.

Press releases are sent directly to media outlets like TV or radio stations. Press releases should be printed or emailed on the library's letterhead. They should include all of the program information as well as a contact person. For more advice on how to create a press release, go to

<https://expresswriters.com/writing-a-press-release-sample/>

Direct Publicity

If there is a specific group in your community that would find a program interesting, contact key members of the group directly and ask whether they will promote your program. They might even agree to distribute fliers on your behalf.³

In-House Advertising

Bookmarks are an excellent vehicle to promote library programs. They should be printed on card stock, the heaviest your printer can handle, so as to stand up to repeated use. You can also order them from sites such as printsafari.ca or printingpeach.ca

Bag inserts are another option; these can be a half-page size.

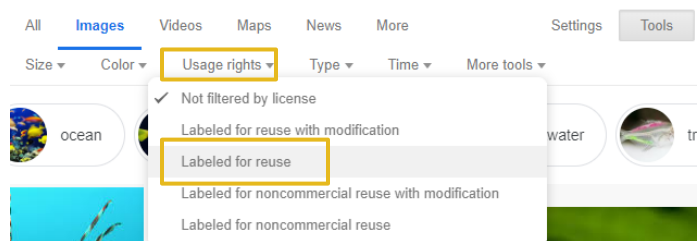
Staff promotion provides another good way to get the word out – staff can talk to patrons face-to-face about upcoming programs. Additionally, at the beginning or end of a program, you can announce upcoming programs that would interest participants.

Posters should be put up around the library.

Monthly calendar showing all upcoming programs at the library is a good way to advertise multiple programs at once.

Creating promotional materials:

- a. Try to make them original, focused, and to the point.⁴
- b. Use wording or key messages to attract specific audiences as appropriate.
- c. Focus on being as simple and eye catching as possible. For instance, a large eye-grabbing headline coupled with a few small sentences that provide detail.
- d. Software programs such as Publisher simplify the design process.
- e. There are many free images available online. Make sure to only use images available for public use or that you have permission from the owner to use. Microsoft clip art is freely available for use. If using Google image search, you can filter by reuse rights by clicking on Tools.



³ Brett W. Lear, *Adult Programs in the Library* (Chicago and London: American Library Association, 2002), 86.

⁴ Ranier, *Programming for Adults*, 218.

Preschool Storytime Template

There are as many ways to do Storytime as there are Storytime practitioners. It is important to find your own style, and adapt your program to the needs of the children in your community. The following template includes some elements that are fun, useful, and developmentally appropriate. Please adapt for your own needs!

A note on themes: Themes can be a lot of fun, but make sure that your first priority is finding books, songs, rhymes and activities that are high quality, engaging and memorable. It's better to have a tried-and-true fingerplay than finding an obscure one that isn't as good but fits your theme.

Things to remember

- Plan for 2-3 simple things and stick to that format each week (unless you discover you need to add more!) Consistency is important!
- Remind parents that you want them to participate WITH their children for maximum benefit, rather than sit in back and do their own thing.
- Some people come up with a song or use a puppet help them to make this more engaging
- When starting a new program or drastically changing it, set aside time to reflect on what worked and what didn't.
- Don't be afraid to ask for input from participants or colleagues.
- It's not a singing contest, it's supposed to be fun.

Sample schedule

Note: This is fluid and you will need to gauge what your community and participants need. For shorter programs, 1 book and 1 or 2 activities may be enough.

1. Greet participants as they enter

- Consider having everyone make a nametag as a writing activity (you may have to read creatively to be able to tell what they say)
- Learn everyone's names--especially the children
- It is fun to play music as people are entering the room--it's welcoming and friendly, and it's a good cue that you are ready to start when the music stops

2. Hello song

- Stays the same each week--at least for the whole Storytime session, and maybe even longer
- Simple actions (clapping/ tapping along) can be a great addition. Walk participants through actions before you start.
- [Jbrary](https://jbrary.com/youtube-playlists/) (https://jbrary.com/youtube-playlists/) is a wonderful source for greeting songs.

- Repeat if it feels comfortable for you and the participants are engaged.

3. Book

- It works well to have your first book be a little longer/more challenging (within reason).
- Be aware of the length and word choice. Too many words on a page can be a red flag for story times. Comic like books can be a challenge for younger children and require more adlib by the story teller.

4. Participatory activities (x2)

Two engaging activities of your choice, offer to repeat each one if the participants enjoy them.

- Finger play
- Interactive flannel board (counting, or related to the story)
- Participatory song or rhymes (actions are a plus)
- Having participants use “shakers” or instruments with songs

5. Book

- A shorter silly book that encourages engagement
- Prompt children to identify animals, sounds, finish a sentence etc.

6. Large motor activity

- [Songs](#) that encourage large movements
- Dancing to music
- Using beanbags
- [Parachutes](#)
- Scarves
- Balance beams
- Playing with balls to play together

7. Storytelling

- Flannel story
- Puppets
- Props

8. Another fingerplay or participatory song

9. One More Book

- If you have multiples of the same board book, you could do this one as a unison read, giving each caregiver/child pair the same board book to read aloud.
- Unison reads are especially good for younger children and children who have a hard time staying focused in Storytime

10. Goodbye song or rhyme

- Stays the same each week
- Sources for goodbye rhymes and songs

- <https://teachingmama.org/goodbye-songs-for-preschoolers/>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DuwTW6DzObs>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PraN5ZoSjiY>

Other elements to consider:

- Art projects are a great way to engage kids and parents. Be sure to include some process-based art projects, particularly for younger children. You can do this every week, or just sometimes
- [STEM activities](#), like measuring, building, or experimenting are great things to add in to regular Storytimes.
- Throw in one short, friendly literacy tip sometime during each Storytime. This is most effective if you put it in context (talk about rhyming after reading a rhyming book or doing a rhyming fingerplay, for instance). [Sample tips.](#)
- Consider giving out [handouts](#) to parents/caregivers to reinforce concepts. You can also create [a visual schedule](#) for your participants to follow.
- Put out a display of books, including parenting books, and encourage families to look at and check them out.
- Be sensitive to the needs of the kids in your Storytime. Try to make your Storytimes [as inclusive as possible](#).
- [Using puppets](#) in Storytime doesn't have to be intimidating, you can use them with songs and fingerplays.
- Don't be afraid to adapt Storytime if it is an especially unruly day--[you can rescue Storytime!](#)

More Storytime resources

- <https://iflsweb.org/inclusive>
- <http://lisaslibraryland.blogspot.com/>
- <http://www.sotomorrowblog.com/>
- <https://jbrary.com/>

Presenter Initial Contact Checklist

Name of Program	
Name of Presenter	
Contact Info for Presenter	
Topic of Program	
Length of Program	
Program Format <i>(if applicable)</i>	
Meeting Space Available <i>(Location and maximum number of participants)</i>	
Month(s), days, and time of day for proposed program.	
<i>Checklist for calling the presenter</i>	
Explain your expectations.	
Obtain the days and times the presenter is available (within your time frame).	
Ask what the presenter feels is fair compensation, if the presenter is not volunteering. Have a ballpark figure in mind.	
What is the presenter's preferred audience? Adults? Children? Youth? All ages?	
Let the presenter know if they will be required to use a microphone. Ask if any other special equipment is needed for the presentation.	

Ask the presenter for a brief biography to include with promotional material (you can also use this information when introducing the presenter at the beginning of the session).	
Can the presenter to send a brief outline of the proposed program, if the presenter is developing the content.	

Based on form contained in:
 Lear, Brett W.
Adult Programs in the Library.
 Chicago:

American Library Association, 2002Program Brainstorming Form

Program Development

Pre-Program

Subject/topic/theme _____ Target audience _____

Day of the week _____ Time of day _____ Location _____

Community partner? (Presenter name/organization) _____

Program

Title of program _____

Description

Length of program _____

Resources

- Book titles / Author

- Props (puppet, instruments, felt board, etc)

- Craft supplies

- Equipment needed (e.g. laptop projection unit, CD player, etc.)

Promotion

In house _____ In community _____

Evaluations prepared

Cost

Honorarium/Gift _____ Promotion (poster, ads, bookmarks) _____

Revenue from program _____

Program Planning Checklist

What?	Task?	Who is Responsible?
Program Content	Choose type of program/speaker/book talk/entertainment	
	Determine best format to present program content: series, single program, etc.	
Venue	Choose time and place, date, etc.	
	Check with other departments/branches in your library so your program does not conflict	
	Reserve space for program	
	Put program on library's calendar of events	
	Identify what equipment is needed for the program	
	If registration is required, determine method	
	Determine if there are costs/secure funding	
	Determine if there are space restrictions	
Speaker/Presenter	Research speakers and presenters; ask for recommendations from colleagues	
	Discuss program with presenters/ determine expectations	
	Reconfirm time and date with presenters	
	Prepare introductions for presenters	
	Complete any contract or agreements for funding	
Partners	Connect with community partners	
	Involve community partners in program planning	
	Ask community partners to publicize programs	
	Collect partners' logos to use on publicity materials	
Publicity	Design promotional materials	
	Involve staff; make sure they have information so they can promote program/provide specific information	

	Select channels of communication for promotions	
	Create your program materials	
	Write media communications	
	If photo permissions are required, have forms available	
Day of the Event	Arrange room	
	Contact media sources to confirm event	
	Refreshments (if necessary)	
	Publicity flyer posted at site	
	Evaluation forms	
	Photo releases (if necessary)	
	Name tags or table tent cards for panel	
	Hosting – identify someone to serve as host for the program	
	Record statistics	
After the Event	Send thank you notes to presenters	
	Thank staff/volunteers	
	Thank community partners individually	
	Review evaluations	
	Share successes (post photos; Facebook posting; Public thank you for support; program recap via a letter to the editor, etc.)	

Program Evaluation Form

Date: _____ **Program Attended:** _____

Overall, how would you rate this program? (Please circle)

Excellent

Very Good

Average

Poor

How did you hear about this program? (Check all that apply)

- | | | |
|---|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Library Newsletter | <input type="checkbox"/> Library Website | <input type="checkbox"/> Library Staff |
| <input type="checkbox"/> From a friend | <input type="checkbox"/> Facebook/Twitter | <input type="checkbox"/> Community Calendar |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Newspaper or Radio
Ad | <input type="checkbox"/> Poster (Where?)
_____ | <input type="checkbox"/> Other:
_____ |

What did you like best about the program? Do you have suggestions for improving the program?

Additional comments or suggestions? (If you need more room, please use the back of this form.)

Date: _____ **Program Attended:** _____

Overall, how would you rate this program? (Please circle)

Excellent

Very Good

Average

Poor

How did you hear about this program? (Check all that apply)

- | | | |
|---|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Library Newsletter | <input type="checkbox"/> Library Website | <input type="checkbox"/> Library Staff |
| <input type="checkbox"/> From a friend | <input type="checkbox"/> Facebook/Twitter | <input type="checkbox"/> Community Calendar |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Newspaper or Radio
Ad | <input type="checkbox"/> Poster (Where?)
_____ | <input type="checkbox"/> Other:
_____ |

What did you like best about the program? Do you have suggestions for improving the program?

Additional comments or suggestions? (If you need more room, please use the back of this form.)

Program Evaluation Form

Date:	Program Title:				
Overall, how would you rate this program?	Excellent 5	High 4	Average 3	Fair 2	Poor 1
How would you rate the speaker on knowledge of subject ?	Excellent 5	High 4	Average 3	Fair 2	Poor 1
On presentation?	Excellent 5	High 4	Average 3	Fair 2	Poor 1
Is this the first time you have attended a library program?	<input type="checkbox"/> First time <input type="checkbox"/> I have attended library programs before				
How did you hear about this program? (Check all that apply)	<input type="checkbox"/> Library Newsletter <input type="checkbox"/> Library Staff <input type="checkbox"/> Library Website <input type="checkbox"/> Library Flyer <input type="checkbox"/> Newspaper		<input type="checkbox"/> Radio <input type="checkbox"/> Community calendar <input type="checkbox"/> From a friend <input type="checkbox"/> Facebook <input type="checkbox"/> twitter <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____		
How would you rate the comfort level of this room?	Excellent 5	High 4	Average 3	Fair 2	Poor 1
What did you like best about the program?					
Suggestions for improvement?					
Additional comments					

Programming Survey

I prefer programs held in the: (Circle all that apply)

Morning Afternoon Evening Weekdays Weekends

I prefer programs that are: (Circle all that apply)

Lecture Based (eg. Speakers or instructional presentations)	Hands-on (eg. Technology workshops)	Discussion groups (eg. Book clubs)	Film/Video Based (eg. Movie nights)	Other: _____ _____ _____
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I would attend programs on the following subjects: _____

I want to hear about library programs through: (Check all that apply)

- | | | |
|--|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Library Newsletter | <input type="checkbox"/> Library Website | <input type="checkbox"/> Library Staff |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Newspaper or Radio Ad | <input type="checkbox"/> Facebook/Twitter | <input type="checkbox"/> Community Calendar |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Poster (Where?) _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ | |