



## Topics

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Something for everyone

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Programmes for children

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Programmes for adults

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Programming is an activity which takes place in many public libraries, but programming as a term is very broadly defined. Programming refers to a specific recreational, educational or cultural group event or activity sponsored by the library which is aimed at children, young adults, adults or a combination of age groups. Programmes can be on-going, in a series, or one-time events.

There are a number of reasons that programmes are conducted in libraries:

- ❑ provide information
- ❑ increase awareness and promote the library's collection
- ❑ publicity for the library and its resources
- ❑ stimulate public interest in reading

Programming for children is often the primary type of programming in libraries. It is a high profile, effective and enjoyable means of acquainting children, parents, teachers and other caregivers with the services of the public library. Programmes introduce children to new ideas, interests, experiences and encourage further exploration through material in the library's collections.

In a number of libraries, however, programming is still an untried opportunity. A lack of funds and space, together with an already overworked staff, often prevent programmes from being held in smaller libraries. Some people hesitate because they have had little or no experience in designing these events. Others refrain from putting on programmes because they feel no one would be interested in attending such a function in the library.

In reality, programming should be viewed as a logical extension of the library's role in providing information. As a community organization supported by public funds, the library must strive to meet the needs of the entire community. Just as video, musical recordings and spoken word cassettes augment the print collection, library programmes enhance the cultural life of the community, particularly in smaller centres. Volunteers, local artists, hobbyists and craftspeople from the community are often called upon to help with programmes, presentations and performances. Community groups such as the Lions, Kiwanis and Guides are involved in various capacities to assist with the delivery of programmes.



Programming is also a valuable public relations tool. Programming events increase the profile of the library and attract potential members. Even with little or no budget, programming can be successfully undertaken.

Programmes are generally offered in response to long-term goals and objectives and/or on-going needs of the library's users. For instance, story hours may be offered to satisfy both the social needs of parents with preschoolers and the need of preschoolers to have their imaginations stimulated. In a small town, the focus for programming might be on children's programmes with a few carefully selected informational programmes that would be of interest to a number of people in the community.

At the same time, the library staff need to be aware of other programmes in the community. If a local community college is offering computer use courses, for example, it would be best to avoid programmes in this area and focus on programmes that fill other needs.

The library staff must consider the physical arrangement of the library. Programming possibilities may be expanded or reduced depending on the available space in the library. A meeting room in the library, for example, provides space and privacy for stories and programmes for both children and adults. Without this facility, it may be necessary to use other facilities or to schedule some programmes when the library is not open to the public. In some libraries, much of the programming is done as outreach - that is, visiting the school or a senior's home because there is no room in the library.

It is worthwhile to develop a statement of library programming goals. For example,

It is the goal of the Trillium Public Library to provide quality informational, educational and cultural programmes for the people of the Trillium area. In order of priority, the emphasis of these programmes will be to provide:

1. stories, crafts and other programmes for children to encourage them to read and to use the library
2. young adult programmes for people ages 13 to 18 to encourage them to use the library
3. informational programmes for adults



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### SOMETHING FOR EVERYONE

There is really no limit to the variety of programmes and activities which can be done in libraries.

‘Programmes’ are generally considered to be on-going activities. ‘Special events’ are one-time undertakings. A special event, however, may be so successful that it becomes an on-going programme, such as a well-attended lecture night that develops into an on-going series of lectures.

A special event is generally offered to:

- ❑ introduce something new  
(a newly acquired special collection, a renovated section of the building)
- ❑ achieve short-term objectives  
(an increase of circulation in a particular section)
- ❑ mark an occasion (the library’s centennial or Christmas)

It is important to select the type of event or programme which will provide the greatest benefit to the audience and best achieve the objective. For example, many programmes for children are designed to encourage the children to **read**. Other library programmes, such as films, puppet shows or lessons in library use are valuable in other ways but may not draw people to the actual collection.

*Lectures* are generally suited to providing information, creating social opportunities, reaching non-users, enhancing the library’s image. They are suited to older audiences (no younger than mid-teens) and larger audiences.

*Seminars and workshops* are generally suited to objectives with an educational component, and seek to attract non-users. They work best with small audiences.

*Performances and readings* tend to be suited to objectives with a cultural orientation, social opportunities and attraction of non-users. Particularly for performances, demographic factors (age, culture, heritage) will have an impact on the type of theme appropriate for a performance.

*Open houses and receptions* are suited to objectives with a strong public relations slant. They are particularly appropriate to mark significant milestones in the community or library.



### Programmes for pre-school children

Programmes for pre-school children are a good way to introduce the library and the collection to young children and their families. Studies have shown that children who are read to regularly enjoy books more and are more interested in learning to read than children who do not have this experience.

The story hour for pre-school children is the most frequently offered library programme for children. The story hour offers a unique setting in which children hear stories and share them and related experiences with others. Storytimes can be offered as a series of 6 to 12 weeks or as an on-going series, with or without pre-registration. The pre-school story programme can take place anywhere and generally involves children from ages 3 to 5 years of age. To ensure a realistic sharing experience for all those involved, a group of 10 to 20 children is advisable.

In planning storytimes, begin by setting **goals and objectives**. Possible goals are:

- introducing children to books and related activities
- increasing interest in reading
- increasing picture book circulation
- bringing parents into the library

Possible objectives might be increasing the attendance at the programme by a certain percentage and teaching two new finger plays during the series.

Programmes for this age group are best scheduled on a weekly basis rather than biweekly or monthly. Regular programmes allow the staff or volunteers to build on the previous week, and the children become accustomed to the routine.

The story times should be **planned** in advance. The books should be selected and set aside to be sure that they are available when needed. One or two books or stories, finger plays, songs and a poem or rhyme are enough for a 30 minute programme.

Picture books with rather detailed plots covering a wide range of subjects related to the child's environment and introducing the experiences of others should form the basis of the programme. However, finger plays and songs as well as flannel board and puppet stories are excellent complements in that they provide variety and an opportunity for the children to participate.



**Choose books with good, clear pictures that can be seen well from a distance.** Books should have a good balance of pictures and text. Pre-schoolers will not sit still for a very long story with few pictures. A variety of art styles, lengths and tempos is good. Four stories all in rhyme or books all by the same illustrator can be dull.

### Programming for school-aged children

There are many programming possibilities for school-aged children. Among the most popular are:

- ❑ storytelling
- ❑ summer (and other) reading activities
- ❑ informational programmes
- ❑ tour/orientation sessions for school classes or community groups
- ❑ film/video programmes

During March Break, summer holidays and other special times of the year, professional performances of theatre, puppetry, music or magic provide a special treat for children. Film and video showings for both pre-school and school-aged children are entertaining and can be educational as well.

The goals and objectives of programmes for school-aged children should be established. Many programmes focus on helping children learn about the services offered by the library while others are intended to encourage children to read while introducing them to children's literature.



### Storytelling

Storytelling is the art of sharing stories by telling rather than reading them. Storytelling is an historic part of the cultures of most countries and is a way of passing events and customs on to the next generation. It has traditionally been a major source of family and community entertainment. Today the literature on storytelling as a technique is growing, and everyone seems to have a slightly different approach.

Storytelling is a good way to teach children about the appeal of a story. There is no book or other object between the storyteller and the children, allowing the storyteller to maintain full eye contact with the children.

The process of storytelling involves selecting, learning and telling stories. Selecting the story can be tricky, and it may be necessary to look at a number of stories before choosing. The story must be appropriate for the intended audience. The plot should be straightforward without subplots. Action should begin early in the story. Rhythm and repetitive phrases add interest and are helpful in learning the stories.

Two good reference books are:

Bauer, Caroline Feller. *Handbook for storytellers*. Chicago: American Library Association, 1977.

Sawyer, Ruth. *The way of the storyteller*. Revised edition. Viking, 1977.

### Summer reading activities

Summer reading programmes are conducted by libraries to encourage children to read. Generally they last for a limited time period and use a theme as well as awards and prizes. With an appealing theme, this type of reading programme can attract children and their parents to the library. The staff can get to know the children and their reading interests better.



Providing an incentive to read is a way of helping some children learn that reading is enjoyable in itself. For some children, the rewards may help in overcoming reluctance to read for pleasure. Reading programmes held in the summer help to maintain reading levels from one school year to the next.

According to library staff, a drawback to some reading programmes is that they bring out competitiveness and emphasize how many books are read rather than what the child is reading. Poor or slow readers may be discouraged in such a programme. Awarding a prize for reading may actually give the impression that reading is only done when there is some reward for the activity. Reading programmes should encourage a love of reading, not a desire to read the most or to be the best reader.

There are a few ways to structure the programme to avoid this problem. Children can contract to read a certain number of books -- a realistic number for the individual. The programme could also be structured to emphasize the total number of books read by the children as a group rather than the number read by each child.

A package of resource material has been produced to help library staff across Ontario plan summer reading programmes. Each programme revolves around a particular theme with supporting promotional material. Information on this programme is available from the Ontario Library Service.

### **Tours and orientation sessions**

To help school children become better acquainted with the library, it is helpful to offer tours or orientation sessions to school groups or community groups such as Brownies or Beavers. In many communities, class visits to the public library are the principal form of interaction between schools and libraries. In other communities, the public library may not be large enough to handle a class visit to the library, preferring to take students on a more individual basis.

The purpose of the class visit may include:

- a general introduction to the library
- library registration
- a lesson in how to use the library
- introduction of material for a specific school project
- encouragement of recreational reading
- a recreational programme of storyreading, films, etc.



If the schools in the area have adequate resource centres, it is unlikely that public library visits are required for library instruction or for introduction to materials for assignments. In this instance, the visit to the public library is more likely to be an introduction to the public library as a place to find recreational reading, programmes, etc.

Reading stories is a good way to introduce the library as a pleasant place to visit. If bookmarks or flyers with information about the library are handed out to each child, they will remind the children and their parents of the material available in the library.

### **Informational programming**

Some library programming includes events other than reading. An informational presentation is another form of programming. A popular choice is to use the local police or fire department to present a safety programme. Many of these programmes include videos and working models of equipment. The value of these presentations is that, not only do they entertain children, but they also instruct children on such things as how to take care of themselves and the best way to handle an emergency.

In some areas, it might be useful to have an official from the Ministry of Natural Resources make a presentation on survival skills. The programme might include a video and discussion on how to prepare a survival kit, and what to do if lost in the woods.

### **Programmes for young adults**

In most libraries, the young adult is defined as a person between 12 and 16 years of age. Most programmes should be planned for the junior high or high school level. In this age group, the young adult either comes to the library on his/her own or not at all. He or she are past the age when a parent would bring them for storytimes and the regular library visit and they may, or may not, have decided that the library fits into their schedule. For this reason, programming for young adults can be very challenging.

It is important to remember that many other organizations and activities are also vying for the attention of young adults. It is helpful to know what other activities are planned in the community and to provide something that other community services are not already providing.



Popular programmes for young adults include:

- ❑ arts and crafts (make your own earrings, design a t-shirt, origami)
- ❑ beauty, exercise and health
- ❑ food programmes
- ❑ research skills
- ❑ contests in art or writing
- ❑ clubs (chess, computer, etc.)

Other ideas for young adult programmes include presentations on an environmental issue relating to the community, poetry reading, readings from particular books during “Freedom to read week”, drama club for teens, sports card collecting and exchange.

A young adult programme might be run on a specific night of the week over a certain period of time. A sample plan for a fourteen week programme follows. Ideas taken from this programme could also be used as a single programme in a very small library.

1. Opening night party
2. Participant from Canada World Youth shares experience
3. Caring for exotic pets
4. Kid’s television host talks about their career
5. A percussion workshop with a band from a nearby municipality
6. Discussion of censorship and display of banned books  
(for Freedom to Read Week)
7. Jazz dance workshop
8. Discussion of women’s issues  
(for International Women’s Day)
9. Video
10. Art of origami
11. Author of a book for young adults
12. Rap music workshop
13. Art of cartooning
14. Farewell party



### Programmes for adults

Programming for adults is a challenging and often neglected area of library service. It can be frustrating to put considerable time and effort into planning a special programme with a guest speaker, only to have two people show up.

Interest in adult programmes will vary widely and the apparent lack of interest may be the result of any number of causes. It may be that people have too many other commitments or it could be that the right people did not know about the programme. It may be necessary to publicize the fact that in addition to programmes for children, there are programmes for adults at the library.

There are endless possibilities for programmes for adults. Popular programmes include:

- ❑ financial topics  
(e.g., planning for retirement, purchasing a home, investing in the stock market)
- ❑ cooking and nutrition  
(e.g., holiday cooking, low-cholesterol foods)
- ❑ health and safety  
(e.g., first aid and CPR, household and personal safety, managing stress)
- ❑ academic subjects  
(e.g., racism, public education system)
- ❑ crafts and leisure time activities  
(e.g., quilting, flower arranging, photography)

Programmes on running a small business, travel shows and local history are good choices for adults. In cooperation with the local horticulture or garden club, a programme on gardening or, specifically perennial gardens can be presented. It may also be possible to provide adult upgrading courses in reading, writing and math at the library. Such programmes are often co-sponsored by the library and the Board of Education.

Book discussion groups are another type of adult programming. Most are run as a series whereby a list of books is provided to interested adults. The group meets monthly to discuss the book assigned that month. Everyone is invited to participate either for a single session or for the entire series.



In some libraries, programmes focusing on parents have been successful. In most cases, it is a daytime coffee break programme using films, speakers and discussions to look at the challenges of raising a family. The programme can be open for people to attend all or part of the session. A decision has to be made about the provision of child care. In some cases, it may be possible to run a pre-school programme such as a storytime at the same time. A sample plan for an eight week session could be:

1. Preventing drug abuse: the difference parents make
2. Birthday party planning blues
3. Easter decoration
4. Helping children understand death
5. Gardening for the whole family
6. Ask a dentist about new trends for braces and cosmetic dentistry
7. The environmentally friendly home
8. Safety in the kitchen

Programmes for senior citizens are similar to that of other adults, although the focus might shift toward topics such as health and fitness for older people, and wills and trusts. Retired people may also be more interested in daytime programmes such as a regular afternoon coffee break and book talk.

### Intergenerational programming

Intergenerational programming involves the deliberate mixing of generations in a single programme. For example, older volunteers can be used in an after school programme, particularly where there are a number of “latchkey children” in the library requiring supervision. With younger children, the volunteer can read to them, tell them stories, and even help them to pick out books.

Another type of intergenerational programming involves presenting activities that attract a variety of age ranges. For example, pioneer dollmaking can be interesting to people of different ages and can be enhanced by stories from older people. Instruction on the use of the library, such as a new computer system will often draw participants of all ages.

Sample 1: Programme plans and Sample 2: Programme publicity at the back of this *Sourcebook* also provide examples of programmes for children, adults or intergenerational groups.



There are any number of resources available to assist with the planning of programmes -- people in the library, community resources, ideas from other libraries!

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### RESOURCES: IDEAS AND FUNDING

#### **Library staff**

It is very helpful to get to know the various talents of individual library staff members. Who on staff could be recruited to lecture, lead a seminar or workshop, dance, sing, act, provide readings, bring greetings at an open house? Is anyone interested in particular hobbies, crafts or sports? Is there someone who has a talent for creative writing, foreign languages or music? This information may lead to potential programmes.

#### **Community resources**

Think about the various clubs and service groups, large and small businesses, crafts people, politicians, cultural and theatrical groups and educational institutions. Often individuals in the local community can lead programmes or help with programme ideas. Many, if not all of these groups, will become involved for no charge.

#### **Other programming resources**

Resources for programming can go beyond the local community. Colleagues in other libraries have resources and ideas which may be shared. Staff members from the Ontario Library Service can provide ideas and input.

There are several opportunities to participate in province-wide programmes. Ontario Public Library Week, sponsored by the Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Recreation is held in October. Each year, material is sent to each library in Ontario providing information about the theme, programme ideas and products available for sale. The Canadian Children's Book Week is usually held in November, although the materials are available throughout the year from the Canadian Children's Book Centre.

Several organizations such as the Canadian Bar Association, have established a speaker's bureau which offers associations, service clubs, libraries and schools the opportunity to have a specialist address a group on a particular topic or legal issue.



Many government departments are willing to provide speakers for public information forums. For example, Revenue Canada sends out speakers on Income Tax Preparation, and Health and Welfare Canada does an excellent presentation on the various income security programmes. The local Ministry of Natural Resources office may be another source.

Some provincial agencies which provide speakers and exhibits are the Royal Ontario Museum, Royal Botanical Gardens, Ontario Science Centre, Art Gallery of Ontario, and Science North. The addresses for these agencies can be found in two Ontario government directories (*KWIC Index to your Ontario government* or *Ontario Government Telephone Directory*). These two publications are recommended as part of the basic reference collection for an Ontario public library and if they are not in the collection, they can be purchased through mail order from the Publications Ontario at 50 Grosvenor St., Toronto, Ontario M7A 1N8 or by calling 1-800-668-9938.

Displays are also a vital part of library programming. Ideas for displays might include items from a local collector, handicrafts and artwork, or travelling exhibits from another organization such as the Royal Ontario Museum. A display can also be designed around a specific theme or an upcoming travelogue. Often community groups are interested in providing displays to promote their organization's services. The rule of thumb is DON'T BE AFRAID TO MAKE ENQUIRIES. Good programmers develop a keen sense for new ideas.

Printed resource material for programming include the following titles, most of which are available for loan from the Ontario Library Service.

Brown, Barbara J. *Programming for librarians: a how-to-do-it manual*. New York: Neal-Schuman, 1992.

Jones, Patrick. *Connecting young adults and libraries: a how-to-do-it manual*. New York: Neal-Schuman, 1992.

Painter, Christ and Maureen Crocker. *Rated "A" for adult: a guide to library programming*. Colorado Library Association, Public Library Division, 1991.

Wood, Melody. *Programming for school-aged children*. Ottawa: Canadian Library Association, 1988.



### **Paying for the programme**

A surprising number of good programmes can be planned for little or no money. Films and videos may sometimes be borrowed from other libraries. Many speakers are willing to participate for no or minimal remuneration. Government and community organizations are pleased to provide speakers free of charge in return for an opportunity to publicize their services.

Performing artists, in particular, are probably the most expensive type of programming and the library may require a special grant to be able to afford to use them. A number of libraries in Ontario have received grants from the Touring Office of the Ontario Arts Council (OAC) to pay for some of the artist's fees. The balance of the artist's fees is usually covered through ticket sales or local fundraising. OAC touring consultants are located in each region of the province and listed in the two Ontario government publications listed above. These consultants provide guidance and assistance in co-ordinating artist bookings within the region, marketing and ticket selling.

Another funding avenue to pursue is cost-sharing through joint sponsorship. Local clubs and organizations are sometimes willing to contribute funds if the programme pertains to a specific community project or special display. Jointly sponsoring a programme with a local organization raises the library's image within the community and promotes the variety of services the library offers.

The local photography club, for example, might be interested in co-sponsoring a lecture on travel photography, a community parenting group might consider co-sponsoring a streetproofing programme or a local genealogical or historical society might be interested in co-sponsorship. One of the advantages of co-sponsorship is that it often includes a core audience. The co-sponsoring group may also be able to help with publicity and expenses.

Local businesses can be approached about providing specific items. For example, a local appliance store may be quite willing to supply microwave ovens for a cooking demonstration in return for free publicity. If a programme involves refreshments, local supermarkets may give discounts or even supply the items free of charge.

A final source of funding is to charge an admission fee for the programme. Policies about charging for programmes vary in libraries throughout the province. Consider community needs and wants in determining that policy.



### Charging

Charging for “special programming” is permitted under the *Public Libraries Act, R.S.O. 1990, Chapter P.44* (formerly known by the title, *Public Libraries Act, 1984*) and is becoming more and more common and popular as a means of extending library programming budgets. Consider that studies and experience have shown that, in most cases, when there is a charge for programming, attendance and perceived value go up.

A decision must be made regarding fees -- whether or not they should be charged, and, if so, the amount. Does the cost of the event need to be covered from the revenue? Or is the purpose of the event or programme to raise funds, for instance, for a building project? Remember, certain groups, such as the Ontario Arts Council, require a minimum charge.

Unless the purpose of the programme is to raise funds for a special purpose, any money raised from programming should be used for programming and **not** for general operating revenue.



In planning and executing any programme, there are a number of factors to consider including:

- theme
- day and time
- speakers or leaders
- expenses
- location
- duration
- room management
- equipment

These factors will affect the programme to varying degrees depending on the nature of the programme.

### **Theme**

Every programme and special event should have a theme to tie it together. A theme can be a particular author or subject, or it can be a season or occasion, such as Hallowe'en, Ontario Public Library Week or the library's centennial.

Themes have the effect of linking. They link one story hour to another, one lecture to another and so on. There is a sense in which the audience becomes committed to a series by attending the first event. Themes also link the local library to other institutions sponsoring the same theme. When a library programme piggybacks on the theme of Heart Month, for instance, the library takes advantage of the current interest in the subject and the Health and Stroke Foundation's work is promoted through another avenue.

### **Day and time**

Day and time should be considered very carefully. For some events there may be little choice regarding day or time, such as an anniversary celebration, but even these may be held at a late date rather than risking low attendance. Consider the following questions:

- When is it most suitable and timely for the intended audience? For example, a seminar for business people in the community should be scheduled for late afternoon or early evening, as they probably would be too busy to take time out in the middle of the day. Analyze this factor well, as in many cases, events become unsuccessful simply because the timing was inconvenient for the audience.



- ❑ Is there sufficient time to plan the event, invite the speakers and the participants, and promote the event? As a general rule, speakers should be invited eight weeks in advance, and all advance preparations should be in place six weeks before the event. Consequently, conception and planning of the most simple events should start at least two months in advance.
- ❑ Can a first and second choice of dates be indicated? It is always good to have an alternative in case the guest of honour, the speaker, or the facility are not available on the preferred date.

### **Speakers/leaders**

If the day or time are not flexible, be prepared to be flexible on the choice of speakers or leaders. Conversely, if the speaker is the important element, the day and time may have to be adjusted. Keep the audience in mind though as they represent the most important element and the reason for the event in the first place.

### **Expenses**

When inviting a speaker/leader, all charges and expenses should be discussed ahead of time. Many will perform the service for no charge, but this should be made clear. In this case, an honorarium might be considered. Honoraria range from \$50 to \$100. If it can be done, it is a good gesture to give an honorarium or a gift to the speaker/leader.

It is generally expected that speakers/leaders should not have to cover their own expenses. This is especially true if there is no fee. Again, this should be discussed in advance to avoid surprises.

### **Special guests**

What special guests should be invited to the programme or special event? The media (especially the local newspaper) are always looking for newsworthy items. Always make sure they are informed of everything from regular programmes to high-profile occasions. Especially for the latter, send them invitations.

Depending on the occasion other special guests may be invited. Special guests should be selected based on the theme and/or occasion. Occasions of significance for the community and/or the library are excellent opportunities to involve politicians, the Ontario Library Service and the Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Recreation.



### Location

The majority of people will associate an event with a location. A library event held in the school auditorium will most likely be remembered as a school event. To promote the library to best advantage programmes and events should be held in the library. Nonetheless, the library is not always equipped to handle the particular type of event or size of audience. If the library's facilities are inadequate for the event, it may have to be held elsewhere.

Before deciding on the actual location, consider these factors:

- Is it important that it be held in the library? If so, can the type of event be modified to better suit the facilities? (For example, an open house to dedicate the renovated part of the library can only be held at the library. The hours of the open house can be extended or perhaps the speeches can be conducted outside.)
- Is the location suitable for the number of people expected?
- Is it appropriate for the topic, occasion or objective? If the objective involves raising awareness of the library, the best location for the programme or event would be the library.
- Will it disrupt any other activities going on or will other activities disrupt the regular library workings? Avoid using auditoriums in schools during school hours, for instance.
- Will the audience be comfortable in the facility? Someone who is illiterate may not feel comfortable attending a literacy meeting in a school, since his or her problem may stem from difficulties with the school system.
- What about security precautions? When equipment or valuable books are being displayed, the security must be adequate.
- Does the facility have easy access to audio-visual equipment needed? Are there electrical outlets within easy reach?
- What are the fire and safety regulations for the location?



### **Duration**

The length of programmes and events will vary with the audience and the objective. Generally, however, lectures should not exceed one and a half hours and there should be a refreshment break at the halfway point. Interactive events, such as workshops and seminars, should be about three hours. Events for children should be from half an hour to one hour long.

### **Room arrangement**

How the room is arranged should suit the type of activity. Theatre-style is appropriate for lectures and performances. Tables should be provided if participants are expected to write. Small groupings around several tables work well for workshops and seminars. Open houses usually require mostly standing room with chairs around the walls.

Children's programmes often work better with the participants sitting on the floor. The children should be sitting in a carpeted area or they could be asked to bring their own cushions for programmes.

### **Audiovisual equipment**

Provide a speaker's microphone for any group exceeding 60 in number. Provide a microphone for smaller numbers if the speaker is soft-spoken or if the acoustics are poor.

Find out what additional equipment the speakers/leaders will need and who will provide it. Equipment should be checked ahead of time to ensure that it is in working order. Allow additional set-up time to be able to make alternate arrangements, if necessary. Neighbouring libraries and community associations often have audiovisual equipment they are willing to lend. This equipment should be booked well in advance, as it is usually very popular.

### **Hospitality**

When speakers or leaders are invited to be involved in a library function, someone should act as their host. If needed, travel and accommodation arrangements should be made by someone on staff and directions to the library or programming location provided. If their time at the library will include a normal mealtime, consider hosting them for the meal.



### Welcoming

All participants should be welcomed at the door. For more formal sessions this welcome could take the form of a registration desk and include name tags. Nonetheless, library staff and/or board members should be available to greet participants and guests, indicate where coats may be left and show the way to the correct room.

### Opening and closing

It is always appropriate to open events with introductory remarks. These remarks may be made by library board or staff members depending on the event. They should include introduction of all speakers/leaders and special guests and proper credits to funding agencies and/or co-sponsors.

Closing remarks should also be made, to thank speakers/leaders and to provide a clear ending to the event.

### Publicity for the programme

There are a number of ways that the participants can be informed about programmes. The method used would depend on the library's budget and resources. In larger libraries, there are usually more resources to compile and print large quantities of attractive flyers, calendars and newsletters for distribution, and often greater access to the community bulletin board services of radio and television stations. At the same time, libraries in smaller centres often have greater access to local newspapers and community bulletin boards, for example, at the post office or general store.

It is traditional to include a **book display** at the programme itself. A book or artifact display set up in a prominent location a few weeks before the actual programme can serve as publicity.

**Flyers** are an excellent medium for publicity, as they can be picked up and taken home for reference. Flyers can be used for individual programmes as shown in Sample 2: Programme publicity, or if a number of programmes have been planned, a small monthly calendar as shown in Sample 3 listing all of the library programmes can work well.



**Signs** posted in the library and community can be helpful for publicizing programmes to regular users. Signs can be produced by hand or in-house using a computer and so they are within reach of most libraries.

The advantage of flyers is that they can be distributed to every patron coming into the library. When it is appropriate, flyers can be distributed to schools. When the children take the flyers home, their parents can see what is available for children as well as what may be of interest to themselves. Unfortunately printed materials do cost money to produce and as a result, it may only be feasible to publicize programmes using signs.

Computers have made it possible to create very professional-looking publicity materials, whether flyers or signs. Desktop publishing is the term used to describe the process of laying out and printing text and graphics using a desktop computer and printer. Different styles and sizes of typeface are available for the text.

Artwork helps to brighten the look of any printed material. It is important to produce a format that is readable and neither confusing nor too cluttered. Clip-art, sometimes called “Reproduction Art”, is now available in several formats and can enhance publicity material. A number of publishers distribute collections of black and white line drawings for use as graphic illustrations. These drawings are intended to be clipped from the page (hence the term clip-art) and used as illustrations or borders in publications, advertisements and displays. Clip-art has been incorporated into some computer graphics programs whereby the image is moved into the publication while others allow images to be drawn and printed using the computer.

Publicity information can be printed onto plain paper or can be also added to pre-printed paper such as TCPC. In the samples at the back of this *Sourcebook*, TCPC graphics have been used for the flyers announcing individual events (Sample 2: Programme publicity) and the monthly calendar of events (Sample 3: Monthly calendar of events). TCPC graphics are actually in colour, although they appear in black and white in the samples. TCPC paper is available at a nominal charge from the London office of the Southern Ontario Library Service.

It is also helpful to maintain a large calendar on which all library programming is recorded. On this calendar, dates, times and other details of all programming should be recorded. As well as helping to keep track of library programming, it provides one place for both staff and volunteers to look -- and if patrons ask questions about a specific programme, everyone knows where to look. (Sample 4: Programming calendar)



The evaluation of all programming undertaken by the library is important not only as an assessment exercise but also as a planning aid for future programmes. Most programmes should be evaluated in terms of cost effectiveness -- that is, weighing the attendance and value for those attending against staff time and effort, and expense. If a programme was not successful, it is important to find out why. For example, was the publicity inadequate or the timing wrong?

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### EVALUATION

Well-kept records and evaluations are invaluable. The evaluations do not need to be formal or complicated, but some statistics on individual programmes should be kept. If a programme planning book is used, for example, the number of people in attendance should be noted alongside the programme name, date and time of day. Attendance figures are also needed for the *Annual Survey of Public Libraries*. (Sample 1: Programme plans)

With a bit of extra effort, an evaluation form could be provided to programme participants, to be collected as they leave. Some helpful criticism and good ideas for future programmes can come from participants.

Providing space within the library premises for public meeting and gatherings is another form of service which is currently being offered by many libraries.

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### MEETING ROOMS

#### Policy

Before space is made available, a meeting room policy should be established. The policy should specify who is eligible to use the facilities, and clearly states the rules and regulations and the responsibilities of both the user and the library. It might also include a description of the available facilities, rental charges, if any, and the times and dates when the space is available.

#### Statement of responsibility

In order to ensure accountability, the user must sign a "Statement of responsibility", agreeing to enforce the rules and regulations while using the facilities. A Statement of Responsibility might include the following:

- fire regulations
- smoking or non-smoking regulations



- regulations about consumption and/or sale of alcoholic beverages
- responsibility for supervising attendees
- liability for damages to facility and/or equipment
- penalty, if any, for cancelling a booking without notice
- clean-up and set-up responsibilities
- a clause absolving the library board of liability for personal injury or damage, loss or theft of personal items, etc.
- library's right to cancel a booking upon breach of conditions

A daily booking calendar should be kept with time intervals blocked off. The name of the group or individual booking the facility should be noted along with the date and hours the space will be used. A contact telephone number should be recorded.

A sample booking form is printed at the back of this *Sourcebook*.  
(Sample 5: Meeting room booking form)

## Charging

Charging for the use of the facilities may or may not be part of the library's policy. Some factors to consider when debating this issue are:

- what costs are involved in the upkeep of the facilities?
- if the rooms are to be used beyond library hours, will there be staff costs for security?
- what other public meeting facilities are available in the area and is there a rental charge for them?

In some libraries, space is offered free of charge to non-profit community groups, for example, literacy groups. Others have a two-tiered system with a higher rate for groups charging admission when using the facilities. It might be advisable to offer a reduced rate to community groups or to groups using the facilities on a regular basis.



## **Samples**

1. Programme plans
2. Programme publicity
3. Monthly calendar of events
4. Programme calendar
5. Meeting room booking form