

# ***Opening Doors:*** **Children's Services Transition Team** **Final Report**

“ The Library – A house that has many doors: particularly for children”  
*Margaret Laurence*



*Sharon Smith*

“My real education, the superstructure, the details, the true architecture, I got out of the public library. For an impoverished child whose family could not afford to buy books, the library was the open door to wonder and achievement, and I can never be sufficiently grateful that I had the wit to charge through that door and make the most of it.

Now when I read constantly about the way in which library funds are being cut and cut, I can only think that the door is closing.”

*Isaac Asimov*

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**Children’s Services Transition Team**

Helen Benoit	Kelly Elliot
Ilona Hitchcock	Leslie Muirhead
Jane Graves	Libby Vervaeke
Karen Cooper	Don Kilpatrick

## Introduction

Children's library services are valued by the general public and command enormous public support. *Buildings, Books and Bytes*, a report that reveals what library leaders and the public have to say about the future of libraries in the digital age, found that eighty-three percent of those queried rated children's services as very important. Most recently and closer to home the *Strategic Directions Council* in support of a comprehensive strategic planning process found that 10 out of the 20 defined lifestyle segments ranked children's as the most valued library service.

Using the *Working Principles for Transition Teams* as a touchstone, the Children's Services Transition Team was asked to establish service priorities and service responses including programming, community and school liaison needs, branch staff requirements and on-going staff training. The team was also asked to recommend appropriate roles and responsibilities for the Area Children's Librarians and for other staff delivering children's services.

We began our work by sharing information about the children's programs and services each system currently offers their community. We went further afield and surveyed other library systems for best practices and alternate methods of service delivery. Our findings are summarized in the *Across Canada Survey* section of the report. We found that with the exception of the after school programs, Hamilton Public Library's slate of services compares well to libraries across Canada. We also reviewed recent research reports and studies for trends and demographics that could assist us in planning for the future. In terms of demographics, the *Strategic Directions Council Document* highlighted the impact of immigration and the below average population growth with a decline in the 0-4 year old group and the greatest growth predicted for the teen group. In terms of trends to consider, the *Document* emphasized increased computer use, changes in how education is delivered (such as online schools, the new school curriculum, increased home schooling) and the growing importance of public and private sector partnerships.

Using information gathered from a variety of sources, our team prepared a *Vision Statement for Children's Services*, developed *Operational Principles* and defined *Core Children's Services for the Amalgamated Library System*.

We struggled with the challenge of service delivery in light of current staffing and resource allocations. It became clear that we have to phase in recommended changes. We have concentrated on the delivery of core programs and services and have designated a number of optional programs for a future phase of implementation. We have rooted our staffing recommendations in the *Branch Role and Organizational Report*.

## Children's Services Vision Statement

Our commitment is to provide an effective, efficient, accessible and specialized program of public library service to children, parents and caregivers of diverse interests and needs in order to promote library use and to create and nurture a lifelong interest in reading and learning. Service to children is a core service and is recognized as a key element in garnering and maintaining public support for library services. We will be guided by the following service principles:

### **Child Centred**

We will nurture a lifelong interest in reading, learning and library use through the provision of books and other materials and services that entertain, inform and inspire.

We will support and promote the equality of children as library customers by providing necessary staff assistance and resources to enable children, their parents and caregivers to access the library's collections and services.

We will offer access to collections to meet the information and recreation needs of children/parents through various means including in-person services, telephone services, programs and appropriate technology.

We will offer collections and services that are easy for children to access and housed in a welcoming environment.

We are committed to maintaining a Children's Services training program for new and experienced staff.

### **Community Focused**

We will offer services and initiatives that are appropriate, flexible and responsive to community needs.

We will promote children's literacy and build on community support for children's services through outreach, by networking with community groups and organizations and engaging in co-operative ventures.

### **Collections**

We will develop collections that are selective, accurate and timely, reflecting community needs.

We will meet the information and recreation needs of children, parents and caregivers by providing attractive print and non-print collections in formats that are easily accessible to various reading levels.

### **Technology**

Child friendly technology will be available.

Staff working with children will be trained in the use of appropriate electronic information resources.

## Operational Principles

1. Core services offered by locations are reader's advisory, preschool programs, class visits, and summer reading programs.
2. There is a system commitment to a web page, outreach and community partnerships.
3. Service levels will be specified for Central, district, community and neighbourhood libraries. When deciding the mix of services a branch/department will offer, the location must meet minimum system standards. Within the allocated times, core services for both preschool and school age children must be offered.
4. How core services are delivered may vary within each service tier.
5. Core services may need to be phased in over three (3) years.
6. Minimum registration and/or attendance figures will be established for core programs.
7. Library programs for children are free.
8. Existing program and operating budgets allocated for children's services must be pooled and considered to be a minimum in the new amalgamated system. Funding needs for system programs have priority over individual location needs.
9. The Service Development Coordinator will review and approve the number and type of programs offered annually in consultation with appropriate staff and in response to community needs.
10. Using the portfolio system, the children's librarian specialists are a system resource.

## Core Services

### Children's Readers Advisory

Guiding children to books and assisting them with their information needs is the fundamental role of the library for children. A knowledge and familiarity of children's literature and reference tools is essential if children's staff members are to perform this role effectively. Both literature and reference functions are provided at the information desk, by class visits and by the children's web page.

Ensuring that staff have the necessary skills and knowledge requires a tailored and effective training program. This challenge will be addressed in the **Training** portion of our report. Reference work with children is also reader's advisory and is of increasing importance in light of developing electronic resources and the changing school curriculum.

### Preschool Programs

Preschool services are a core service offered by the Amalgamated Library System. They must be a high priority for children's services as current research (*The Early Years Study Final Report*) indicates that intellectual stimulation during the first three years of life is imperative for learning and future success. As the preschoolers door to learning and literacy, the library plays an essential role. We are one of the few institutions offering programming for the early years.

When amalgamation is complete, equitable service in preschool services will be available throughout the city with the type of programs offered dependent upon the branch tier service level, registration and the needs of the local population.

### **Levels of Service**

The **minimum** levels of service for Central, district, community and neighbourhood libraries are:

- Neighbourhood: Family Storytime, 2-5 years
- Community: Toddler Time, 2-3 years; Storytime, 3-5 years
- Central and district: Baby Time, under 24 months; Toddler Time, 2-3 years; Storytime 3-5 years

If staffing levels permit and system standards are met, locations may offer additional programs.

### **Service Implementation Recommendations**

- Core preschool programs be phased in within 3 years.
- During the phase in period, minimum registration and/or attendance figures be established. It is recognized that these figures could vary from location to location depending on the suitability of the facility.
- Storytime programs be offered September to May.
- Identify staffing required to offer storytime programs at all locations.
- Identify training issues and establish a training program for staff.
- Opportunities for storytime staff to share knowledge and resources be provided. Cooperative planning and resource sharing is essential. For example, the system puppet collection and the Ellison machine are system resources.
- The Service Development Coordinator will review and approve the number and type of preschool programs offered in consultation with appropriate staff including the system preschool specialist.
- Storytime kits be prepared that include stories, puppets for fingerplays and possible outlines based on the theme. These kits could travel with the Storytime staff or be ordered by individual branches. This is not intended to limit preschool programming staff from creating their own programs but rather to provide support for branches that may have limited staff resources for planning. The kits will allow for more equitable access to preschool resources for branches that do not currently have an in-house collection. Establish a dollar amount for each kit, e.g. \$200.00 per kit. Determine a minimum number of storytime kits to be created.
- Create a travelling position(s) to provide programs at branches identified as requiring this service.

### **Issues to be Resolved**

- Develop criteria for determining staffing requirements for the various service tiers. (for example, district branches may require in-house children and youth services staff, whereas community and neighbourhood branch programs can be facilitated with traveling Storytime staff).
- The method of program delivery may vary within each branch service tier.

- Provide training for new staff and on-going training for experienced staff.
- Identify the most effective and efficient method of providing staff to deliver the program. There are several ways of doing this. A travelling storytime position(s) could be created for branches lacking sufficient staff to provide the program. This position(s) could use a prepared storytime kit containing books, puppets, flannel board stories, fingerplays etc. In order to make the travelling storytime position(s) workable, additional tasks such as class visits and summer programs may be added. The boxed storytime kits could be routed to branches with staff but limited storytime resources. It may be possible that a travelling storytime component could be added to existing positions.

## **Class Visits/ Grade 7 Reference Workshops**

The purpose of the class visit program is to ensure that each child has been introduced to public library service at least once in their school career, that children have an opportunity to learn about the recreational as well as informational resources available to them and to ensure that each child has the opportunity to receive a library card of their own.

For primary grades, a typical class visit may include giving children a tour of the library, highlighting some books and other materials they might enjoy, telling a story, distributing library cards to students and explaining the responsibility of having a card and allowing children to borrow books at the visit. It is possible that schools distant from a branch library may decline the invitation. In such cases, an attempt should be made to provide students with information about the benefits of visiting the Amalgamated Library System and owning a library card.

*When amalgamation is complete for primary classes we envision:*

That there be, at **minimum**, annual grade 4 class visits offered at all libraries to local schools to introduce children to pleasure reading and to ensure that each child has the opportunity to receive a library card. Where resources allow, grade two classes be invited to visit.

*When amalgamation is complete for grade 7 classes we envision:*

That there be grade 7 reference workshops focusing on use of the library's information resources. Not only should these be offered at Central and district libraries, but we recommend that senior staff be made available to offer these workshops at other libraries as well. Vancouver's model where interested teachers must contact the library to take advantage of advertised time slots could serve well. As students approach high school, it becomes increasingly important that they have some basic research skills to succeed academically. Reference workshops training students how to use the library's textual and electronic resources would be invaluable.

## **Service Implementation Recommendations**

- Hamilton and Dundas currently offer class visits and should continue to offer them following the new guidelines. Wentworth branches should phase in visits over a three-year period as staffing levels allow. As class visits have been identified as a core program, staffing levels must be increased at the Wentworth branches.
- The two major school boards and private schools in the area have been approached to provide the number of classes at the target grade levels. Prepare an allocation list that assigns all schools to their closest library branch. Review this list in light of staffing resources and prepare a plan of action that will phase in equitable service.
- Building on the Hamilton Wentworth Information Network initiative, consider alternate and complementary methods of ensuring that each child has a library card.

- Consult with teachers and staff in order to streamline contact procedures and maximize the number of classes that can visit. Develop a detailed format that can be used at the three targeted grade levels with recommendations for implementation.

### Issues to be Resolved

- Identify **minimum** staffing required for expansion of visits throughout the Amalgamated Library System. Staff have determined that a school visit takes 2 hours of staff time.
- Identify staff training required and establish a support system for new programmers.
- Bookmobile staff currently visits many schools. The recommendations of the transition committee reviewing Bookmobile service may impact on the school allocation list.

## Summer Reading Club

The Summer Reading Club is a highly successful core program that will be offered by the new Amalgamated Library System. It is an essential core service since the library is one of the few institutions offering literacy programming for children in the summer months. “The public library is the most influential institution in a child’s summer learning. Children who read as few as six books for pleasure during the summer maintain or gain reading skills.” (*Family Literacy Fact Sheet, American Library Association, 1994*).

When amalgamation is complete, equitable service in summer reading clubs will be available throughout the city with the type of programs offered dependent upon the branch tier service level, the needs of the local community (i.e.: low literacy area; ESL) and availability of grant funding. The Summer Reading Club depends upon grant funding to meet demand. Since the funding base cannot be expanded, alternate ways of delivering this service will be reviewed.

When amalgamation is complete we envision:

That there will be, at **minimum**, the Summer Readers club for ages 6-12 at all locations. This is the traditional program in which children read on their own and report on books.

Preschool Storybook Club will be modified using the Storybook Train model, which uses parents as recorders. It is recommended that this club be phased into all locations by 2002.

Reading Buddies is a literacy program for children who need help or encouragement with reading. Summer students are hired to organize and implement the program. Volunteer tutors meet twice a week with the children to help them practice their reading. This program is entirely dependent upon grants. If there are sufficient resources, (after the needs of the reading and preschool clubs are met) locations offering this program will be determined annually.

### Levels of Service

The **minimum** levels of services for Central, district, community and neighbourhood (rural and urban) are:

- Central: offer all 3 reading clubs.
- District: offer all 3 reading clubs.
- Community: offer Summer Readers, Preschool Storybook Club. If funding available and in consultation with Service Coordinator and Outreach Specialist offer Reading Buddies.
- Neighbourhood (urban): offer Summer Readers, Preschool Storybook Club. If funding available and in consultation with Service Coordinator and Outreach Specialist offer Reading Buddies.
- Neighbourhood (rural): offer Summer Readers. Phase in Preschool Storybook Club. If funding and resources available (staff, size of location, community needs) phase in Reading Buddies in consultation with Service Coordinator and Outreach Specialist.



### **Service Implementation Recommendations**

- A 2001 Summer Reading Committee be formed as soon as possible.
- Core Summer Reading Programs be phased in within 3 years
- Toronto Dominion Bank materials be used as the primary source for prize materials and may be supplemented as budgets and donations are available.
- Training issues be identified and a training program for staff be established.
- The Service Development Coordinator in consultation with appropriate staff including the Outreach Specialist will review and approve the reading programs offered at each location in the different branch tier service levels
- The first priority is to ensure that the in-branch summer reading clubs run smoothly. Outreach (in parks, playgrounds) is a second priority and will be conducted where there is a community need and as resources permit.

### **Issues to be Resolved**

- Staffing levels required to offer the clubs.
- Number and types of other summer programs to be offered.
- Method of delivery: number of books to be read; number of prizes used; the reporting methods used
- Grant funding
- Issues related to the Teen Reading club have not been investigated by our committee and need to be resolved.

## **System Commitments**

In addition to the core services and programs that will be offered at all locations within the new Amalgamated Library System system, the committee identified the need for system commitment and coordination in the following areas:

- design and maintenance of a web page for children and parents
- development of community partnerships and projects
- outreach presentations to promote library services and materials

### **The Web Page**

The *Vision for Children's Services* states that child friendly technology be available and that staff working with children be trained in the use of appropriate electronic information resources.

We can build on existing strengths. Hamilton Public Library's Kidspage has been favourably received and could serve as the foundation for a children's web page that would serve system needs. It meets the designated criteria of sustainability, expandability and equitability if ongoing staff resources are allocated for maintenance and development. In terms of staffing, the web page requires:

- a children's librarian's time to evaluate new sites and develop value added information
- clerical support to mount the information on the web and to maintain links

Currently, Hamilton Public Library has a children's librarian whose specialist portfolio includes the Kidspage. Both Library Automated Services and Communication and Community Relations department assume some responsibility for the library's home page. Assistance with the technical aspects of adding and modifying information on the site need to be clarified.

## Community Partnerships

The *Vision for Children's Services* states that we will offer services and initiatives which are appropriate, flexible and responsive to community needs. We will promote children's literacy and build on community support for children's services through outreach, by networking with community groups and organizations and by engaging in co-operative ventures. The *Strategic Directions Council* document predicts that partnerships will account for an increasing share of service delivery and identifies four specific varieties:

*Public libraries attempting to raise their quality frequently recognize that they need more resources than they can muster through one organization. Therefore, they increasingly turn to partnerships. These partnerships fall into one of four types. Firstly, there are partnerships for production. In these, public libraries join private-sector information vendors as electronic knowledge creators. Secondly, there are partnerships to secure and share audiences e.g. , St. Louis public library has found audiences for library materials and programs in hundreds of day-care and senior centres. Thirdly, there are partnerships with service providers to organize programs e.g., working with theatre production companies and health care service providers to import specialized services into the branch library setting. Finally, there are partnerships with donors. This involves relationships with banks, baseball clubs to name a few.*

Given this increasing emphasis on partnerships, the library must be able to respond as a system when community groups and agencies request library participation on various community initiatives. Participation in these partnerships involves the use of staff expertise (knowledge of children's reading, literature and libraries) to assist and direct community groups working with children to meet community needs and to promote and encourage the use of library resources. Currently, Hamilton Public Library is viewed as a valuable community partner and the Service Development Coordinator is contacted for input and participation. This is a position and profile that the library has spent many years cultivating.

*The Service Review* identified system flexibility to accept new community partnerships as an issue needing resolution. The reorganization of children's services at Hamilton Public Library resulted in a reallocation of system resources to meet this need. There is a children's librarian's position whose specialist portfolio includes community outreach. As services are adjusted to fit available resources, the Service Development Coordinator will spend less time on fundraising and be able to focus on other partnership models.

In terms of the designated criteria, community partnerships are possible if the new Coordinator of Youth Services position (working within operational principles and the strategic plan) has the authority level to commit the system and allocate necessary and available resources. Because resources are limited, when a new service/program is added an existing service will be dropped or significantly reworked in order to make necessary resources available.

A defined fully supported after school program funded by community partnerships is a service area which needs to be explored. Other libraries have responded to the need for such programs with a variety of approaches that reflect their space, staffing and community support resources. Houston Public Library has an excellent program called ASPIRE ( After School Programs Inspire Reading Enrichment) which focuses on tutoring and technology schools for middle school students through the school year. The committee recommends that children's staff focus on after school programming as the area for future research and development.

## **Outreach and Sharing Literature with Children**

Children's services staff will participate in a limited number of community events where there is a good fit between the audience and children's services. Some venues include Festival of Friends, the Children's Museum Birthday Party, and the Teddy Bear's Picnic. These festivals and special events are already regional in nature and draw participants from the new City of Hamilton area. In order to facilitate participation, the status quo in terms of system support is necessary:

- that summer workers who assist with these events be specially trained and compensated
- that up to 5 days call-in is available for experienced children's staff to perform at these venues on a volunteer basis and subject to departmental scheduling guidelines

Children's librarians will continue to offer ongoing training workshops to adults who work with children (i.e. train the trainer model) in such areas as puppetry, storytelling and children's literature. Each request will be considered in light of staffing constraints and other system commitments.

## **Staffing**

Staffing is a key element in core service delivery and our recommendations for each service tier are rooted in the ***Branch Roles and Organizational Structure Report***. Changes will need to be phased in to correspond to the range of hours and staffing levels outlined in the report.

### **Role of the Children's Librarians as a System Resource**

Using the current Hamilton Public Library model as a framework, the three Area Children's Librarians and the Central Library's Children's Department staff (including the librarian) will report to the Co-ordinator of Youth Services. The four librarians will have system-wide responsibilities for youth services collections and services.

#### **System Preschool specialist:**

Collection Responsibilities: E fiction and non-fiction collections

Program/Service Responsibilities: preschool programs, nursery and day care liaison.

Training Responsibilities: preschool programs, preschool literature and reference

#### **System School Age specialist:**

Collection Responsibilities: J fiction and non-fiction collections

Program/Service Responsibilities: services for school aged children such as class visits

Training Responsibilities: class visits, summer reading training, school aged literature and reference

#### **System Outreach specialist:**

Collection Responsibilities: non-print collections; development specialized collections (e.g. FLAG)

Program/Service Responsibilities: summer reading programs, outreach, community development, and grantsmanship/proposal writing

Training Responsibilities: puppetry, storytelling, outreach

### **Central Children's Librarian:**

Collection Responsibilities: electronic information resources and web page

Program/Service Responsibilities: strong departmental role; demonstration of expertise in children's services' launches of new services

Training Responsibilities: electronic resources

### **District Libraries**

There is a children's librarian at the Amalgamated Library System's largest branch, Terryberry. The recommended staffing levels for the district libraries are 2 or more librarians. It is recommended that one position at each district branch be designated as the children's librarian. This librarian would report to the Branch Head but would consult with the Co-ordinator of Youth Services and the System Specialists regarding children's services, programs and collections. Their duties would include programming for preschoolers, information work, the supervision of summer reading students and volunteers, conducting class visits and serving as a local contact person for children's services. In addition to children's services responsibilities, this senior position could be the designated assistant/back-up for the Branch Head.

### **Community Branches**

Using the Amalgamated Library System model, core programs and services would be delivered by trained branch staff.

### **Neighbourhood Branches**

Current staffing levels are problematic. Some core services such as storytime will be delivered using different models and specially trained staff who are hired to travel from location to location. For other core programs, a minimum of one staff member will be trained to deliver specified programs and services.

## **Training**

Children's core services have been identified as reader's advisory, storytime programs, class visits and summer reading programs. To make these available at each location, staff must be trained. In the first year of amalgamation, substantial system resources will need to be allocated towards equipping staff to deliver the services outlined in this document. Not only is initial training essential, but also on-going training to maintain and expand skills and knowledge. Hamilton Public Library currently offers a more comprehensive and structured staff training program than any of the libraries surveyed. Our *Children's Services Training Manual* and training sessions have served as a benchmark for other library systems and Hamilton Public Library children's staff are frequently invited as trainers to institutions such as Mohawk College.

## **Recommendations**

- The existing framework of training sessions and workshops together with the *Children's Services Training Manual* serve as a foundation. Necessary modifications will be made to meet the needs of the Amalgamated Library System.
- Children's staff training should be centralized to ensure optimum delivery of core services.
- System standards be established to ensure that staff are properly prepared before they are required to deliver any specific core service.

- A checklist model be devised to monitor training for each of the core service areas.
- Training be the responsibility of Children’s System Specialists, using experienced staff members as a resource.
- Staffing support from call-in be available in order to free staff to participate in required training.
- Two streams of training be developed; one for new and the second for experienced staff.
- The *Children’s Services Training Manual* be required reading for all staff presenting children’s services.

The new training model will be rooted in the defined core services and programs. The following is an overview of children’s staff training as it addresses these individual core services:

#### **Reader’s Advisory**

A variety of training sessions such as:

- reference work with children ( including text and electronic resources)
- history of children’s literature
- folk and fairytales
- evaluating children’s literature
- award winners
- picture books
- genre sessions on poetry, science fiction, fantasy, historical fiction, realistic fiction and humorous fiction
- required reading lists of major picture books and children’s fiction

#### **Class visits**

- observe and learn mechanics and philosophy
- booktalking
- festival or workshop on storytelling

#### **Storytime/Toddler/Babytime**

- observe and learn mechanics and philosophy
- festival or workshop on puppetry and storytelling with props

#### **Summer Reading Club**

- learn philosophy and mechanics

#### **Other**

- continue annual co-operative workshops with neighbouring systems
- workshops and training on topics of immediate concern as need arises

## **Appendices**

### **A. Parking Lot Issues**

- 1) Teen services and programs such as teen summer reading, Power of the Pen, high school class visits, web site, The Buzz need to be defined.

- 2) Staffing levels for providing core services needs to be addressed.. Currently, many branches are not adequately staffed to deliver core service programs during their hours of operation.
- 3) The role of volunteers needs to be defined. Presently, Hamilton and Dundas libraries use volunteers to assist with the Reading Buddies program. Wentworth does not use volunteers. The *Across Canada Children's Services Survey* indicates that volunteers are being used in conjunction with outside partnerships.
- 4) The number and type of optional programs (March Break and summer programs) to be offered need to be determined.
- 5) Service to day-cares and the role of Hamilton Public Library's daycare collection needs to be investigated.
- 6) The *Across Canada Children's Services Survey* indicates that a majority of library systems considered author visits a core service. The Amalgamated Library System needs to consider how author visits will be integrated in the service mix.

## B. The Role of the Central Childrens Department

This department has a multifaceted role to play. It serves as a flagship department, a neighbourhood branch for the downtown core and a resource for the system and the city.

## C. Across Canada Survey

**Summary of highlights and points of interest:**

**Libraries surveyed:**

Halifax  
 Ottawa  
 Kitchener  
 Vancouver  
 Victoria  
 Windsor

**Core services:**

All libraries identified storytime and summer reading club as a core service. Other core services identified included: reader's advisory, class visits, toddlers time, babytime, author visits, March break and other children's programs.

**Storytimes:**

All libraries surveyed offered storytime and toddlers time. Almost all offered babytime. Some offer ESL, family, French, bilingual and evening storytimes. Ages for babytime varied greatly, sometimes even within the same system. The focus and strengths of the person presenting as well as the make up of the community seemed to be defining factors for age range of babytime. Community demand, the size and make-up of the children's population, floor space and staffing most commonly establish the number and type of storytimes offered at various branches of systems. None used volunteers to present the program. All were free. Some systems require registration while others offer open storytimes. Frequently systems have some with and some without registration.



	Storytime	Toddler time	Babytime	
Halifax	Age 3-5 Core 19 at 13 locations	18 – 36 months Core Offered at 6 of 13 locations	0 – 2 yrs non-core 1 of 13 locations	
Kitchener	3-5 core 8 at 4 locations	2 yrs core 4 at 4 locations	8-24 months Core 4 at 4 locations	
Ottawa	3 – 5 Core all branches Multiple depending on demand and child population	18mon-2.5 yrs or 2 yrs core all branches multiple	0 – 18 months half as many as st and same as tt	All are offered in French, English and bilingual Evening ST (some branches) non-core Ages 3-8
Vancouver	3 – 5 Core All branches Multiple depending on demand and population.	2 – 3 years Core All branches Multiple sessions by demand and pop	Varies by branch Starting at 0, 6 months or 18 months Core Multiple sessions	Variety of special ST's (e.g. evening, ESL)
Victoria	3-5 Core Multiple depending on branch	2 and 3 yrs Non-core Most branches	Not offered	
Windsor	3-5 1 at each location	2yrs 3 (Ceand2Resource)	6 –24 months Central only	Bedtime Stories All ages,3 branches

### Nursery Schools and Daycares

Ideas of interest included:

#### *Vancouver*

Books to Go - these are book deposits of 25 pre-selected titles that daycares can borrow for one month. While they may include some titles on a theme they will also include good preschool titles to expose nursery school children to good books.

Book Deposits – VPL will put together deposits of 50 discarded picture books in good shape for Family Resource Centres, The point is to get good books to children, Centres are asked for a \$50 deposit.

Student ECE teachers, daycare providers and ECE teachers are invited to training sessions on how to make most of the library resources for their students.

#### *Kitchener*

Library Links for Life - project with partnership and funding from with various community agencies places book collections of 150 – 200 board books, beginning readers and picture books in community centres and other local organizations that are easily accessible to families.

### **Class Visits**

All libraries offer class visits. Ideas and points of interest include:

#### *Vancouver*

VPL offers reference tours specifically for grade 7, introducing textual and electronic resources that be valuable to students in their high school career. Rather than library staff chasing teachers, these are advertised in library publicity for specific locations, dates and times. Teachers contact the library to book their classes.

VPL offers training on research skills also for teachers, to give them a better idea of how the library resources can best serve their students as well as for homeschoolers.

#### *Ottawa*

Class visits are very important in Ottawa. In 1999-2000 school year they offered 1,220 class visits and 429 visits for other groups such as daycares, summer camps and guides. Also provide class visits for home learners.

#### *Halifax*

Halifax offers a series of school-time programs where classes come to hear guest speakers on various topics (e.g. African Heritage). They hosted 22 in September and October alone.

#### *Windsor*

Schools are encouraged to bring classes in for student tours by children's librarian. One location offers tour of library's resources for teachers, homeschoolers and parents.

### **Author/illustrator visits**

Author visits are very important in most of the libraries surveyed. For example:

#### *Vancouver*

Author visits are considered core at VPL. For example, authors doing presentations in October include Dennis Lee, Marie-Louise Gay and W.D. Valgardson. Events are advertised and classes or groups may book to attend. As Libraries – Let's Celebrate, these are funded from a variety of grants and supporters including Canada Council.

#### *Kitchener*

Offers 10 – 15 author visits a year.

#### *Victoria*

Each branch hosts at least 2 author visits a year, with as many as 28 annually for system.

#### *Halifax*

Host as many author visits at various branches as grants allow. For example hosted 13 authors' visits September to November 2000.

#### *Windsor*

Occasionally and hoping to increase this.

### **Summer Reading Club**

All locations surveyed have a Summer Reading Club, consider it core, and offer it for free. All respondents report it as extremely successful and important. Some offer this for birth to age 12 (Ottawa), all children reading independently (Halifax), ages 2-12 and teens (Kitchener), ages 5-12 and teen SRC for over 13 (Victoria and Vancouver). Reading Buddies is offered at Halifax, Windsor and



Kitchener and being introduced at Victoria and Vancouver. It is not offered in Ottawa. The province of British Columbia produces Summer Reading Club materials – posters, stickers, booklets and bookmarks- for all public libraries similar to the materials that the Toronto Dominion Bank is endeavouring to provide for Ontario.

### **After School Programs**

#### *Halifax*

Almost all locations offer regular after school programs, often one for ages 5-7 and another for ages 8-12. Frequency varies from weekly to monthly. Programs include stories, games and crafts on a theme.

#### *Ottawa*

Eager Readers Book Club monthly at one branch, and Homework Club weekly at one branch.

#### *Windsor*

Chess club at one branch and Magic Club at one branch.

#### *Victoria and Vancouver*

Do not offer after school programs, but Vancouver is providing special space for students to gather after school to do homework.

#### *Huston Public Library*

was contacted specifically because they are a leader in after school programming. Their power point presentation and documentation of their “Aspire” program are of interest.

### **Other In-house Library Programs**

Halifax, Ottawa, Vancouver and Victoria report a special effort to offer puppetry regularly. Halifax, Windsor, Victoria, Vancouver library branches offer seasonal programs and March Break and summer programs.

Windsor offers Saturday programs (mom and daughter bookclub, movies, seasonal) These may be delivered primarily by staff as in Vancouver and Victoria or also include hired performers as in Halifax and Ottawa.

Kitchener and Halifax seem to be to most proactive in offering programs in partnership with other community agencies.

### **Outreach and Partnerships**

All respondents report talks on children’s books and reading for parent and teacher groups.

#### *Kitchener*

Kitchener has a very large commitment to outreach and partnerships. They offer community outreach to all types of groups through community centres, schools, home schooler groups, neighbourhood associations, special interest committees and Waterloo Region Home Child Care. “Library Links for Life” is an extensive partnered program geared to children 0-6 and their families, using both volunteers and staff.

“Sharing the Spark” is an annual outreach to primary grades funded through an endowment.

#### *Ottawa*

They are involved in “1,2,3 read with me”/ “1,2,3 Lis avec moi” baby kit project in which every baby born in Ottawa receives a cloth bag in which there is literature about the importance of reading and a certificate to join the library and receive a free book.