



SCHOOL LIBRARY GUIDELINES **Supplement for Nursery Schools and Units**

These guidelines were written for LISC (NI) by librarians from the five Education and Library Boards, Northern Ireland.

“Language development is crucial to living and learning...Learning and language development are greatly assisted when children have access to a well-stocked library of story and information books suited to their needs, interests, race and culture, and when books are available in their areas of play.”

Curricular Guidance for pre-school Education,
CCEA, 1997 ISBN 1 856 78 7698

Books support all the main elements of the young child's learning. Within the nursery curriculum, all activities should be planned holistically to develop the full range of children's abilities. Library book provision and use form an integral part of the planning for teaching and learning.

Why books?

Books make a positive contribution to children's pre-school experience by:

- Helping to establish good, secure relationships with adults
- Extending their experience of life
- Encouraging talk about their own experiences, fears and anxieties
- Introducing them to the pure joy of story and rhyme
- Developing concentration when focused on story, rhymes, poetry
- Promoting a positive attitude to learning through early experiences with the printed word

Personal, Social and emotional development

Promoting manual dexterity in handling books and turning pages
Promoting hand/eye co-ordination
Developing left to right orientation as a precursor to learning to read
Physical development

Encouraging self-expression in response to books
Affording an awareness of colour and shape
Experiencing rhythm in story and song
Learning that there is meaning in picture
Developing their own imagination
Creative/aesthetic development

Listening and conversational skills in response to story
Discovering that the printed word has meaning
Extending their own vocabulary
Language development

Affording an awareness of size, order, shape, pattern, repetition
Providing information about themselves
Demonstrating how things work
Allowing children to make observations and simple predictions
Extending their awareness of their environment, e.g. nature,
weather, concepts of time
Early mathematical/scientific experience

The library in the nursery school or unit

Libraries have a contribution to make to creating a stimulating and challenging environment in the early years.

Effective library provision will be underpinned by a policy statement, which should outline aims and expected outcomes. It should consider:

- Accommodation and atmosphere
- Stock
- Promotion and use
- Management

Accommodation

There are a number of options for library provision in the nursery school or unit:

- Separate quiet room
- Book corner
- Classroom collections

Accessibility is the key to effective provision. While classroom collections will be an essential feature of book use, a separate library room helps to introduce the concept of the library as a different kind of experience for both children and adults.

Atmosphere

The library area should be bright, warm and welcoming. It should be well-lit with adequate power-points if storytapes and CD-ROMs are to be used. The area should be carpeted, with low chairs and cushions and attractive soft furnishings. Shelving units should be sturdy and stable, with low level shelves and no sharp corners, and with sloping shelves for face-on display of books and other materials. Browser boxes for picture books provide safe and accessible storage. There will also be a need for a range of storage for other materials in different formats.

The library area should offer space to display children's own work, with wall space and notice boards for posters and illustrations.

Library stock

Nursery schools/units should stock at least 11 items per child. Where books are available for home loan, this figure may need to be higher.

Library materials should include:

- Board books
- Novelty and lift-the-flap books
- First concepts, e.g. size, shape, number, myself, time, weather
- Multicultural books
- Nursery rhymes and fairy tales
- Picture story books
- Large format books for use in group storytelling
- Wallcharts, videos, audio tapes of music and rhymes, CD-ROM etc.

Promotion and use

Effective use of books and other related materials fosters language development in children and improves their listening skills and concentration. The best introduction to books is on a one-to-one basis with an adult, but children should also be encouraged to look at familiar books by themselves and in small groups.

Storytelling sessions with groups of children should:

- Be part of the daily routine
- Take place in the library or designated story corner
- Include songs and rhyme for the children to join in
- Include a mixture of familiar and new stories, with strong repetitive elements to encourage audience participation
- Involve occasional guest storytellers - parents, librarians from the public library, other members of staff, storytellers from the outside community

Library management

- Record keeping of children's reading activities can help monitor their progress
- Books must be in good condition and attractive to children, so that they are encouraged to use and care for them properly
- Shabby and damaged books should be withdrawn
- A guaranteed annual budget for library materials will be required
- New titles should be added regularly to stimulate interest
- The range of stock should be reviewed regularly to ensure that it provides opportunities for progression and challenge

The nursery school/unit library and the community

Children should have experiences which encourage positive attitudes about the value of reading both at home and at school.

Parents are the first educators of their children

- Involve parents as much as possible in reading activities
- Lend books for parents to read with children at home
- Encourage parents to join the public library with their children
- Welcome parents into school to read with children or listen to storytelling
- Publicise any initiatives or activities related to parents and children in libraries
- Consider organising your own early language initiative involving parents

Links with the public library service

The school can show by example the value it places on reading and libraries. It is important for children to become familiar with the public library and to understand that they are welcome there. The school can help by:

- Organising visits to the nearest public library
- Inviting public library staff to come for storytelling
- Volunteering children's artwork for display, where appropriate.

The Schools Library Service

Your Schools Library Service may offer some or all of the following services:

- Loan of additional resources, including tapes, videos and posters
- Advice on purchasing stock, or a purchasing scheme at good discounts
- Storytelling
- Talks to staff or parents groups
- Advice on setting up and managing your library, including furnishing and equipping it

How to contact the School Library Service

Tel. Nos.

BELB	02890-491058
NEELB	02825-664117
SEELB	02897-566400/566457
SELB	02837-525353
WELB	02882-244821 (OMAGH)
	02866-322886 (ENNISKILLEN)
	02871-272322 (LONDONDERRY)