(7) GET NOTICED

To provide a brief introduction about attracting users to your toy library. Whether it's coming up with the perfect name and logo, deciding on those individuals or groups who you'll want to inform or how to produce effective publicity materials, the following information will guide you through the most important aspects of getting people to come to your toy library.

Deciding on a Name
The name of your toy library will be important, and will be one of the key factors in attracting potential users. When you've decided on a name, try and link it with an attention-grabbing logo. Toy libraries conventionally use images associated with children, e.g. teddy bears, trains, jack-in-the-boxes and clowns. If you incorporate this logo on all your literature (posters, flyers, leaflets, compliment slips, etc.) users will remember and recognise your library immediately!
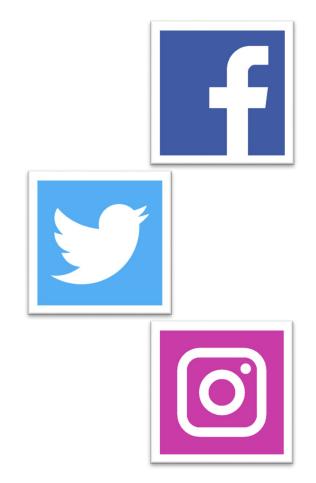
Publicising your Toy Library
Good publicity is crucial when trying to attract users to your toy library, and you should plan for a publicity campaign from the very beginning of your project. The first step is to decide who you'll want to inform about the project - this will include potential users and other relevant groups within your local community. You will need to decide which publicity channels and materials you will use.

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Who should your Publicity target?
The following list offers some suggestions of groups you will want to contact about your toy library project:
- The local community / potential users of your service.
- Your Local Authority - you may want to apply for funding.
- Strategic groups such as childcare or community partnerships.
- Health visitors, social workers and other professionals working with and supporting local families.
- Voluntary organisations / community groups - who may be working with your potential users or be supporting your project in other ways.
- Potential funders - local businesses / charitable trusts

Methods of Publicity
Deciding on the means by which you will communicate with the groups listed above is equally as important. Some potential publicity methods could be:

- Community websites and social media
- Distribution of leaflets and posters.
- Special promotional events, e.g. open days / fun days / competitions.
- Word of mouth - often the most effective method!

Producing Publicity Materials

It is important to have effective publicity material which clearly states:

- WHO you are
- WHERE you are
- WHEN you are open
- WHAT you are for

Such publicity materials can be professionally printed if you have surplus funds available, or you can easily make your own materials on a home computer. Design students are often happy to take on voluntary projects, or you could even ask among your users you may have a talented artist in your midst!

Keep the language and design simple, clear and uncluttered. It may also be helpful to consider translating your publicity material into languages relevant to your local community. Additionally, a location map is always useful with details of public transport routes.

Circulating Publicity Materials

When you're ready to hand out your publicity materials, try to distribute them as widely as possible across your local community. A good way to achieve this is to make a list of all the places where families might go - nursery groups, schools, public libraries, community centres, doctors' surgeries - and visit these places to put up posters or supply leaflets to be handed out. You could even ask users to help you out by taking posters and flyers to the places they visit, and to give out to friends and relations.

Online Advertising

The internet is now the easiest way to get across information to the local or wider community. Creating your own website is an excellent idea, and the software on most modern PCs will allow you to design and create your own site. You will need access to an internet service provider, and most will give you free space for your website. Keep your website simple and clear, and always remember to update your site regularly with the latest information.

Another fantastic online resource for your libraries is social media. Social media is a powerful tool in gaining attraction to your toy library. By utilising various social media platforms it allows you to obtain a quick and cost free presence on the internet.

Checklist

- ☐ Decided on a name and logo for your toy library?
- ☐ Considered effective methods of publicity?
- ☐ Made a list of all the people/groups you will need to inform?
- ☐ Decided who will design the publicity?
- ☐ Thought about how you will circulate your publicity materials?
- ☐ Considered creating a website, or setting up a Facebook page to connect with users?

Smart Play Network Members Support

Member you have access to telephone and email support. For more information about the topics covered in this guidance sheet, or any other queries you may have about your group, please contact us using: 0131 554 2620 or admin@smartplaynetwork.org

It is free to be a member of Smart Play Network, for more information on how to become a member please refer to our website: www.smartplaynetwork.org.