



3 SMART ORGANISATION

This Guidance Sheet aims to provide further information on the subject of your toy library's organisational framework. Having addressed the major issues which impacted the opening of your toy library, the following information will offer some suggestions on the best ways to record and catalogue your toy library's stock now that your sessions are up and running!

Recording Toy Loans

You will need to record all toy loans efficiently to ensure you know where all your toys are, which users have borrowed which toys, and when toys are borrowed and when they are due back. To be effective, the simplest systems require a catalogue of all toys listed by category / number, an alphabetical file of borrowers' contact details and an assigned loan period.

The following are some examples of possible loan systems:

Book/Folder

- Date entered at top of page.
- User's name and toy number entered in two columns.
- When toy is returned, date is entered.

User's Cards

- Each user has a record card placed in an alphabetical file.
- Date and toy number of each toy borrowed are recorded.
- The card is then filed alphabetically, behind return date in separate file.
- When toy is returned, user's record is located and a line is drawn through date/toy number.

User's Tickets

- Each user has a ticket, envelope or card pocket big enough to
- Hold a toy card (when not in use, these tickets are kept on file in the toy library).
- Cards for toys borrowed are placed in the user's ticket and filed alphabetically by user's name, behind return date in loans file.

Top Tip



When establishing a cataloguing system for your toy library, remember to think beyond your current stock levels so that the system can be easily expanded if necessary. It is likely your library will expand rapidly as your number of users begins to increase.

When toy is returned, toy cards are retrieved from user's ticket and returned to toy file.

Cataloguing System

Cataloguing toys can be a time consuming process, but if you adhere to clear guidelines for cataloguing items you will make it much easier for both your staff and users in the long run.

Any classification should ideally have no more than three letters followed by three digits followed by up to ten digits. For example, if a toy library has three identical sets of Lego which are classified as "construction" toys, the classification code for construction would be "CON". This would be followed by the number allocated to that specific type of toy (Lego) amongst all the other toys which are classified under "CON". The final digits would then indicate the specific set of Lego. The classification would therefore read CON/210/3, indicating that this is the third identical set of the Lego construction toy in the library

Cataloguing Breakdown

Stage 1 = 'CON' for the category which is 'construction'

Stage 2 = 210 for the number given to a particular toy (i.e. the toy library has at least another 209 toys).

Stage 3 = 3 indicating that there are at least two other identical Lego sets for loan.



Users Catalogue

You will need to provide a catalogue for your users which details all the toys that are available in the toy library. Ideally, it should include a picture of every toy with a brief description, toy library catalogue number, and any special instructions, including may need adult supervision or needs batteries/adaptors. This information will help your users select suitable toys to take home.

If using a manual system, toy pictures may be stuck onto card with their catalogue number, and any special instructions. The cards can then be inserted into plastic sleeves and stored in a loose leaf file. Some toy libraries use large photograph albums.

Many projects are using electronic catalogues, which is easier to update if toys change. These systems are very beneficial when it comes to reflecting on which toys are regularly borrowed, allowing members to view all available toys / book them out and gathering statistics to report to funders. If you would like to know more about a system contact Smart Play Network as we are currently using a platform for our toy library.

Membership

You will need to keep a record of all those who borrow toys and equipment, so that members can be contacted if any toys are misplaced or are not returned on time. By keeping a detailed record of all members you will also begin to build up a profile of users. This profile will enable you to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of your service. Additionally, this information will provide valuable data for funding applications - funders will always want to establish who uses your service and whether there remains a need for it. All records should be kept confidential and you must also comply with general data protection regulations (GDPR). You may need to record:

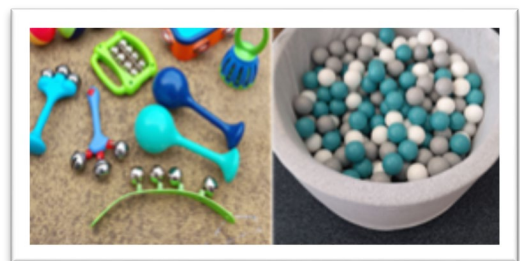
- Member's name.
- Contact details - address/telephone/email.
- Name and ages of children.
- Any special needs or medical conditions.
- Ethnic Monitoring.
- Where they heard about the library.
- Date of joining/Payment of membership fee.

Checklist

- Considered the means by which your toy library will record all loans?
- Instituted a cataloguing system?
- Thought about creating a users catalogue?
- Remembered to think beyond your current stock levels?
- Provided users with written membership information?

Membership Information

It is important to provide users with written membership terms and conditions. You should also provide a written pack detailing how your service operates, e.g. how users can get involved, services provided, etc. Key information to include in your membership pack would be the aims and objectives of your service, contact information, cost of membership, how the borrowing system works, child protection statement, privacy statement and complaints procedure.



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.