

Children's Librarianship



Ludington Library Exterior, Bryn Mawr, PA



ABBY FORTUNE '23

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Field Supervisor: Laurent Mondon

Learning Goals

My goals centered on gaining observational and hands-on experience in a children's library to determine whether children's librarianship was a career path I wanted to pursue. Last Fall, I completed a Cities senior thesis that explored collection development strategies, the impact of book bans on library services, and the role of children's libraries in developing children's literacy and engagement with public institutions. This Spring, I wanted to explore practical avenues for children to develop citizenship and literacy.

Daily Tasks

- Became part of the Ludington Library Junior Room staff 3 mornings a week for the spring semester
- Cultivated a welcoming and fun environment for children ages 0-6 to explore library resources.
- Supported family literacy by aiding with circulation using Polaris, implementing programming, observing story hour, and learning about collections development.
- Networked with professionals
- Built a bibliography on public libraries' sociocultural functions.



Librarians like Laurent Mondon, Coordinator of Youth Services at Ludington Library, are thoughtful about guiding patrons to personally engaging, age-appropriate content as shown through the curation of themed displays and established collections such as First Chapter, Parent-Teacher, and Superheroes.



Melody demonstrates that teaching experience can be the difference between an effective and exemplary storytime librarian.

She must understand developmental milestones in order to set expectations for both the children and their caregivers

Library Mythbusters!

Myth #1: The library is a silent space.

BUSTED!

- Storytime is a place to sing, dance, and clap to your favorite stories or songs.
- Exposure to new vocabulary and socializing with other children are key to learning a language.

Myth #2: Librarians are all old women who only shelve/read books

BUSTED!

- Librarians are of many genders and ages.
- Every month librarians:
- Purchase new books
 - See popular TV and movie releases.
 - Read about technological advances that can enhance library services like AI chatbots.

Myth #3: There is no reason to visit the library before reading age.

BUSTED! Showing enthusiasm for reading, even to newborns, predicts stronger readers.

- Pre-K children can copy letters and shapes, imagine or retell stories, and learn from adult behavior.
- For ages 0-3 at the library:
- Passive programming like coloring and interactive displays.
 - Board books, easy readers, and upward as a child's reading ability advances.

Exploring the Literature

How do librarians decide what to collect?

- Publications like the *School Library Journal* and *Kirkus Reviews* provide vetted reviews of newly published titles. Librarians rely on these to make purchasing choices.
- Librarians MUST know their constituents to have the best chance of building both popular and informative collections.

Growth and Adaptation

- New themes and genres emerge regularly from the publishing industry and patrons encouraging groupings like 'middle school', 'graphic novels' and even local museum passes to be added to a collection.



Books I loved as a kid were still in circulation! I also discovered new favorites like the 2023 Caldecott winner "Hot Dog" by Doug Salati.

Takeaways

- I am interested in pursuing a Master's Degree to become a full-time public or elementary school children's librarian. Children bring joy to the work and I appreciate the combination of whimsy and deeply profound messages in children's literature.
- Observing and meeting kids gave highlighted the different stages of childhood development which solidified my understanding of psychology concepts.
- As institutions, public libraries are important because they provide access to information for all.