

Designing Community Places and Public Spaces for Children



Who will be using the space?

- Children
 - Wide variety of ages
 - Babies
 - Preschool
 - Early Readers
 - Middle Grades
 - Pre-teen
- Parents, families, child care workers
- Staff
- Where will the teens be?

What will it house?

- Collections – board books, picture books, easy to read, paperbacks, hardcover fiction, non-fiction, reference, media
- Comfortable seating
- Study space
- Computers – appropriate for children's ages
- Display space – market place for children's materials

Staff Consultation

- What has been learned from other library building projects?
- What are the desires of staff?
- What has everyone been waiting for?

Public consultation

- Guided by Public Consultation Policy
 - **Public meetings**
 - **Focus groups**
 - **Community outreach**
 - **Open houses**
 - **Comment forms**
- Really listen!



Focus Group Methodology

- Small age range
- Mix of boys and girls
- Users and non-users if possible
- Start with an ice breaker
- Utilize a children's librarian or staff member who is comfortable with children
- Establish your questions first

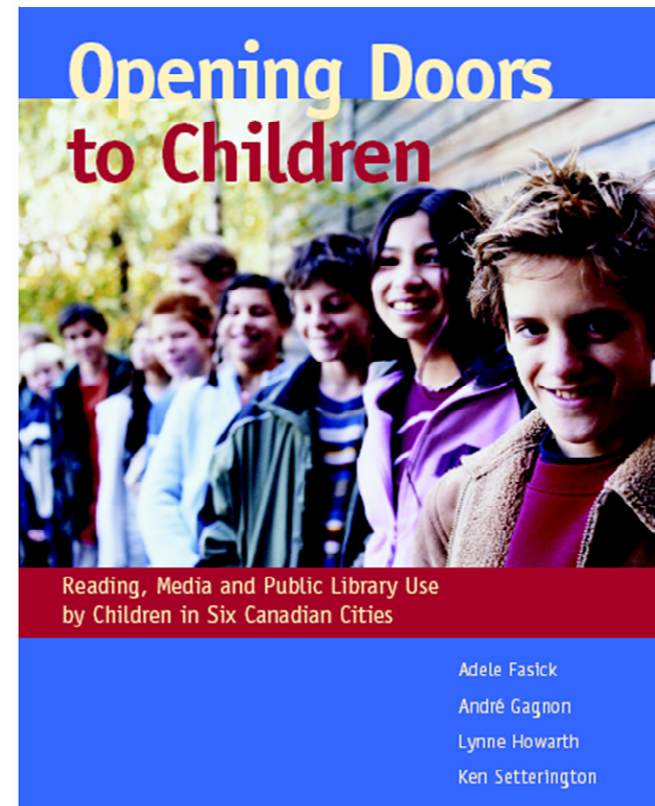
Focus Group Sample Questions

1. Can you remember a visit to the public library that you especially enjoyed? What made it so great? Is there anything you would change at the library that may make things better when you go?
2. If you could design a library for kids, what would it look like?
Be ready with coloured pencils and paper – let them draw or write
 - What kinds of books would your library have?
 - What other things besides books would you have in your library
 - What kinds of programs would your library have for kids

Note: Additional questions, probing the same areas may come up during the focus group discussions

Focus group responses from Opening Doors to Children

- In Halifax, Hamilton, Regina, Toronto and Vancouver children identified the need for
 - More computers
 - More places to sit and work
 - More colour
 - Coat hooks

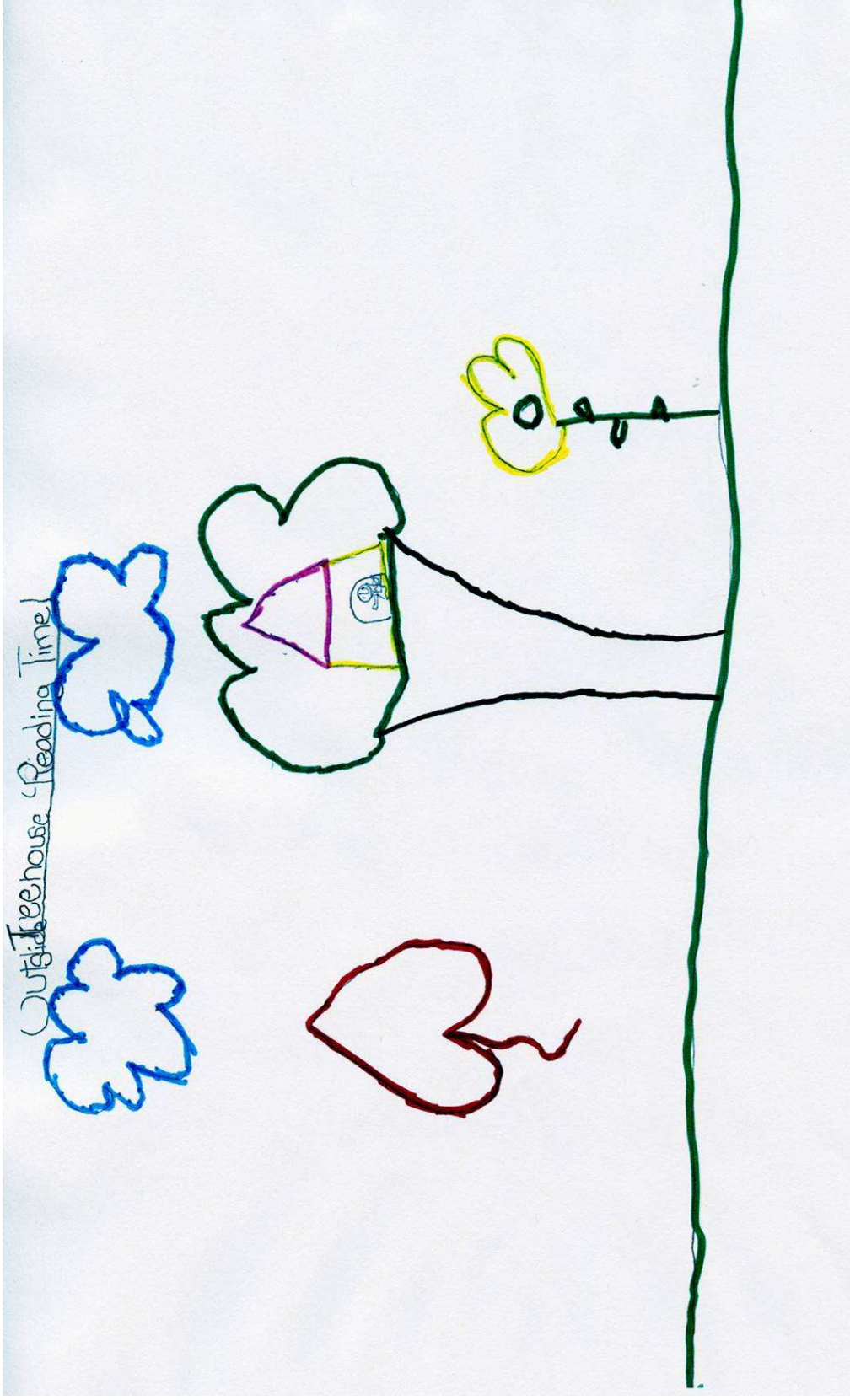


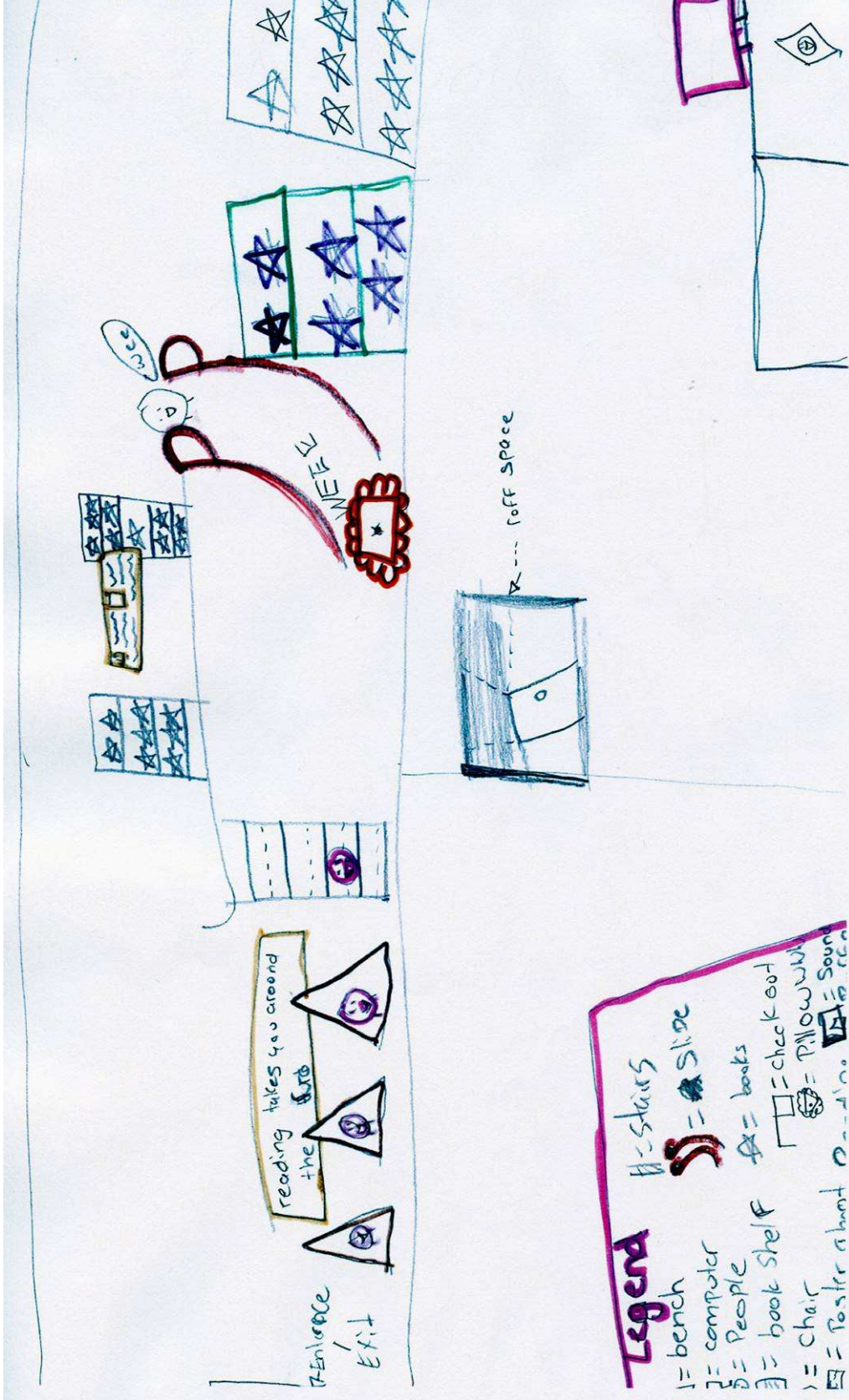
Ides.

- have the letter.
- Have some teaching books.
- BIOGRAPHY.
- fairy tale
- industry.
- literacy.
- not littering books.
- Having to save the Earth or Mother Earth.
- fantasy.
- Non fiction.
- fiction.

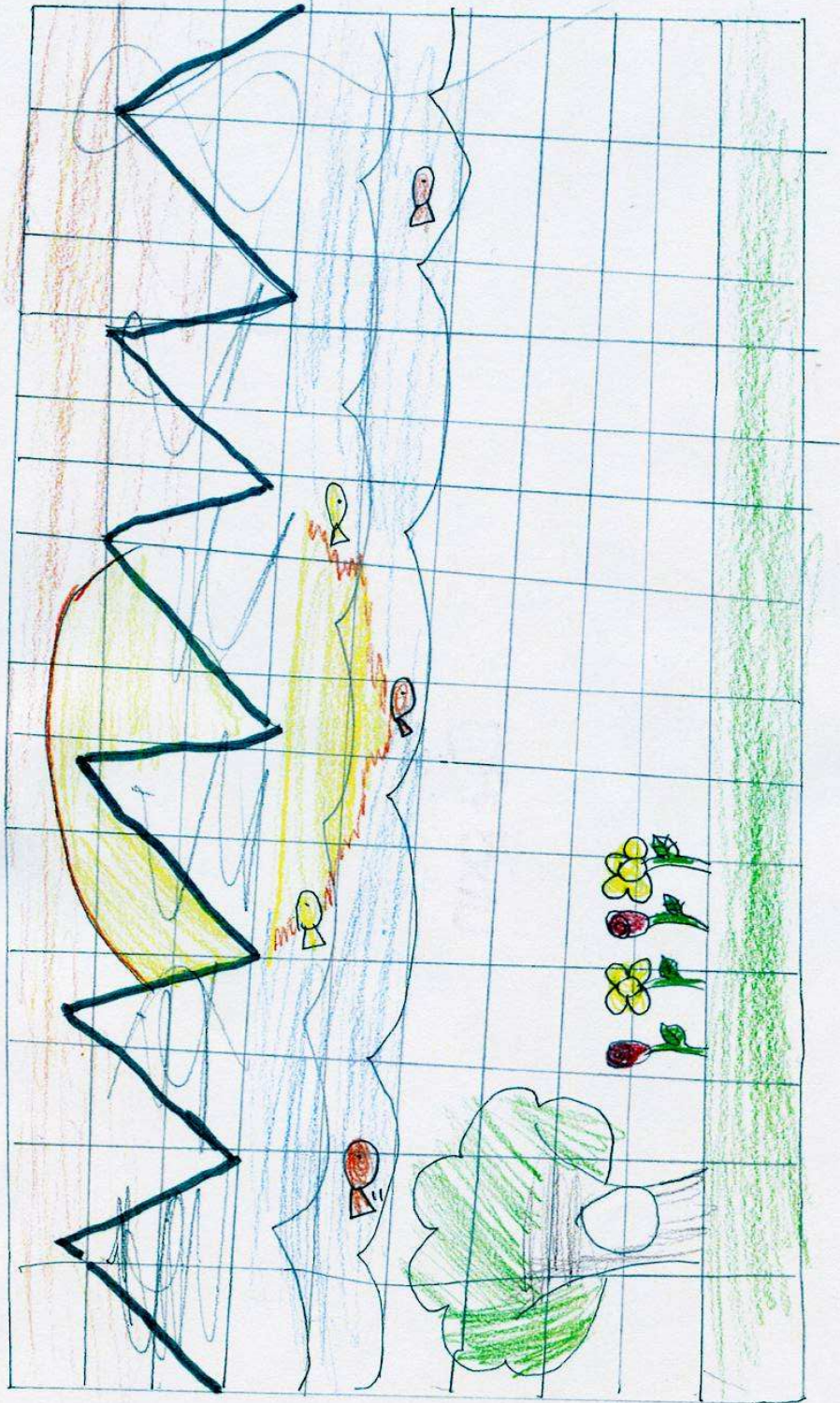
Library Plans

- Dollhouse and it has to be of the building
- Slide (4 meter) or less
- Wall with pictures we brew
- Drawing Contest (like for best character Drawing, or posters.
- Reading Contests Like Read 3 chapter books and 2 easy readers then talk to the staff






THE KIDS WAYS



Library Ideas

- If you give your books in, you get ice-cream 🍦
- ~~Contests~~
- Contests
- Kids furniture 
Candy Machine
- Play area
- Adult area - talk about bussiness
- Outside - Playground
- Teachers tell stories
- Smart board
- If it is our birthday you get a birthday cake
- Slushi Machin

Library ideas!! or Picture!!

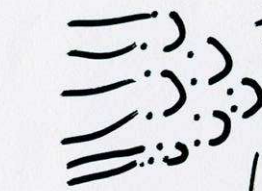
1 → Sushi Machine!! 


2 → get read by teachers 

3 → if you Make a Mess you have to clean it up!! 

4 → Plays every week 

5 → HAVE

6 → lots of computers 

7 → get to donate anything 

libraries (ideas)

- an automatic sensor candy machine.
- contest winner gets to have books for 7 weeks.
- Meet the Author day, (If you come on 3 Author days you get a prize).
 - presentation for kids who are new to the library.
 - Get a new user name for the computers.

Library's role

- Important to their communities, including economic value
- Provide valuable community and meeting space; home away from home
- Should add to the soul and life of the community; beautiful and welcoming

Building program since amalgamation (1998)

- 16 branches renovated
- 11 branches reconstructed, with 8 relocated
- 2 new branches built and 2 more new branches in process



Runnymede



Runnymede



St. James Town



Malvern



Beaches



Jane/Dundas



Cliffcrest



Jane/Sheppard



Jane/Sheppard



Jane/Sheppard



Kennedy/Eglinton



Kennedy/Eglinton



Bloor/Gladstone



Bloor/Gladstone



Bloor/Gladstone



Bloor/Gladstone



Riverdale



Thorncliffe



Thorncliffe



Thorncliffe



Thorncliffe



Thorncliffe



Thorncliffe



Thorncliffe



Thorncliffe



KidsStop

- Part of Ready for Reading program
- Literacy rich interactive centres
- Children ages 0 – 5 and parents play, learn and have fun together
- Environment helps children develop reading readiness skills

KidsStop

- Located in library branches
- Different theme in each location
- Striking threshold
- Exciting architectural feature
- Specific activities
- Promote six pre-literacy skills

KidsStop

- Single visual identify
- Consistent signage
- Merchandizing
- Donor recognition
- Adjacent to pre-school area and collections

S. Walter Stewart



“Bare Bones” KidsStop Space



Ramp Leading to Children's Area



KidsStop Threshold with Flashing Lights



KidsStop Threshold with Flashing Lights



Rocket Ship Feature and Alphabet Table



Rocket Ship Cozy Corner



Rocket Ship Puppet Stage



Nursery Rhyme Wall of Blocks



Nursery Rhyme Wall of Blocks



Activity Cubes



Activity Cubes



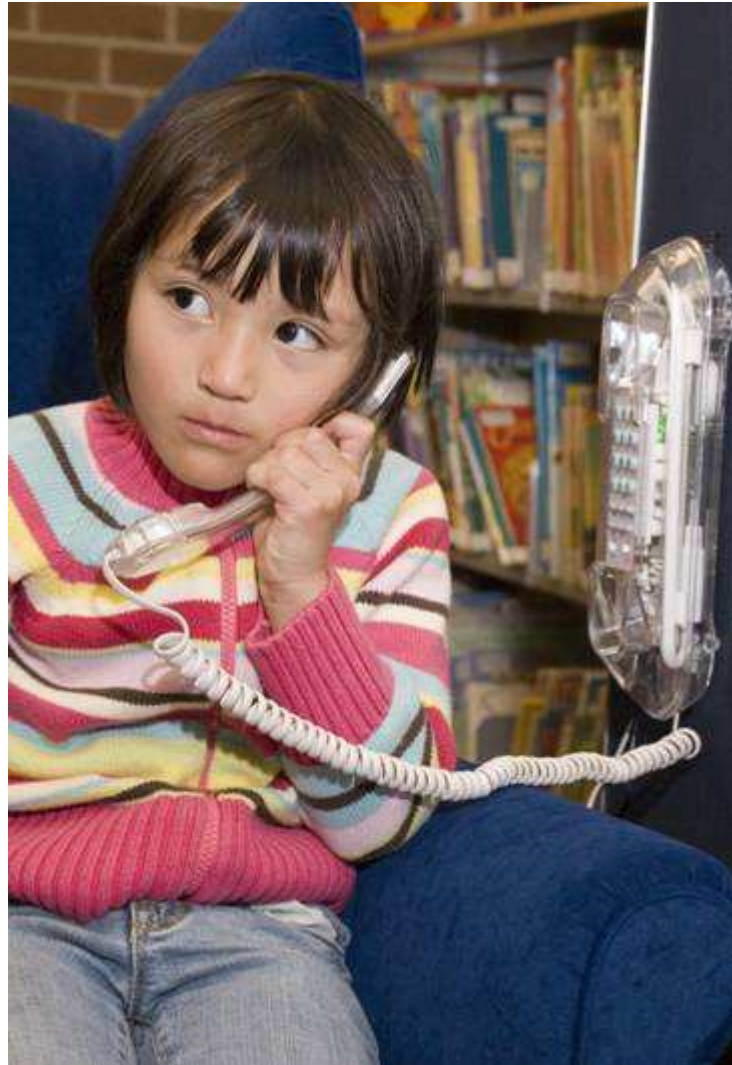
Storytelling Computers



Storytelling Computers



Dial a Story



Read Me a Big Book



Ready for Reading Materials Prominently Displayed



We Love Our KidsStop!



Thorncliffe Branch – KidsStop Threshold



Reading Theme



Activity Panels



Activity Panels



Activity Panels



Ready for Reading Display



Big Book



Dial-a-Story



Alphabet Table



Early Books Close By



What have we learned?

- Have a vision, demand the best, and stay the course
- Respond to the unique features of each building and community
- Engage customers and staff
- Keep politicians on side
- Try something new

Trends

- Destinations
- Community connections
- Community gathering
- Collaborative
- Interactive
- Self-Service
- Retail/Browsing
- Green

Important considerations

- Zone the space
- Good sight lines
- Traffic patterns
- Collection size
- Number of computers
- Seating

Important considerations

- Beautiful, colourful, fun and delightful
- Extend the library outside the building
- Art
- Daylight
- Good lighting
- Shelving height
- Space for merchandising

Important considerations

- Specific spaces for display
- Areas for publicity and promotion
- Interactive elements
- Durability
- Themes
- Carpet
- Furniture

Important considerations

- Small service desks
- Quiet study space
- Collaborative and interactive spaces
- Good staff work spaces
- Design for change
- Design green
- Keep it looking good

For more information

- Presenters:
 - Anne Bailey, Director, Branch Libraries
abailey@torontopubliclibrary.ca
 - Ken Settingington, ksettingington@gmail.com

- Photo credits:
 - **Steven Evans, Insight Media, Brenda Liu/A-Frame Inc., MJM/ZAS Architects, Shai Gil Insite Photography, Toronto Public Library**