Supporting Users with Children in the Academic Library

Hello!

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Hello!

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Hello!

I am Colette Leier

I am the Executive Officer for the York University Libraries.

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Agenda

- Users with children
  - Student parents
- Supporting users with children at:
  - U of T Libraries
  - Ryerson University Library
  - York University Libraries

Children in academic libraries?!

Children have not been a group traditionally served by academic libraries, but users with children are a growing population and welcoming them is a matter of equity and inclusion.

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Student parents

Population and needs

Population of student parents

- Invisible population
- Population growing faster than non-parenting students
- 13% of Ontario's undergraduates (estimated)
- 11%-16% varying by province in Canada
- Nearly half of Canadian grad students identified family obligations as an obstacle

Student parent demographics

- Diverse
- No systematic survey
- Same characteristics as non-parenting students with additional challenges
- More likely to be older than traditional aged
- More likely to be married, female, and a part time student

Student parent challenges

- More likely to suffer stress and burnout
- Less likely to complete their degree
- Three main obstacles:
  - Financial pressures
  - Child care
  - Time management

"Institutional policies normalise the figure of the 'carefree' student and simultaneously marginalise student parents within higher education."

-Marie-Pierre Moreau
"Regulating the Student Body/Ies: University Policies and Student Parents,"
British Educational Research Journal

Institutional supports

- Universities centered around “traditional” students
- Supports include primarily nursing rooms and family services offices
- Some institutions have fee based campus daycare centres
- Children generally not welcomed on campus, though tolerated in certain situations

What are academic libraries doing?

- Updating usage policy and website language to welcome users with children
- Improving remote access
- Expanding hours to be more available
- Creating welcoming spaces
- Providing activity kits
- Programming

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Supporting users with children at U of T

"UofT libraries should provide special study spaces for students with children. I have seen this in multiple university libraries and for a world-class university as UofT this should be a manageable task. "

- Graduate student, UTL LibQUAL Survey, 2016

Family Study Space

Photo: Julian Mitchell/University of Toronto Libraries

Photo: Francesca Kennedy/University of Toronto Libraries

Photo: Francesca Kennedy/University of Toronto Libraries

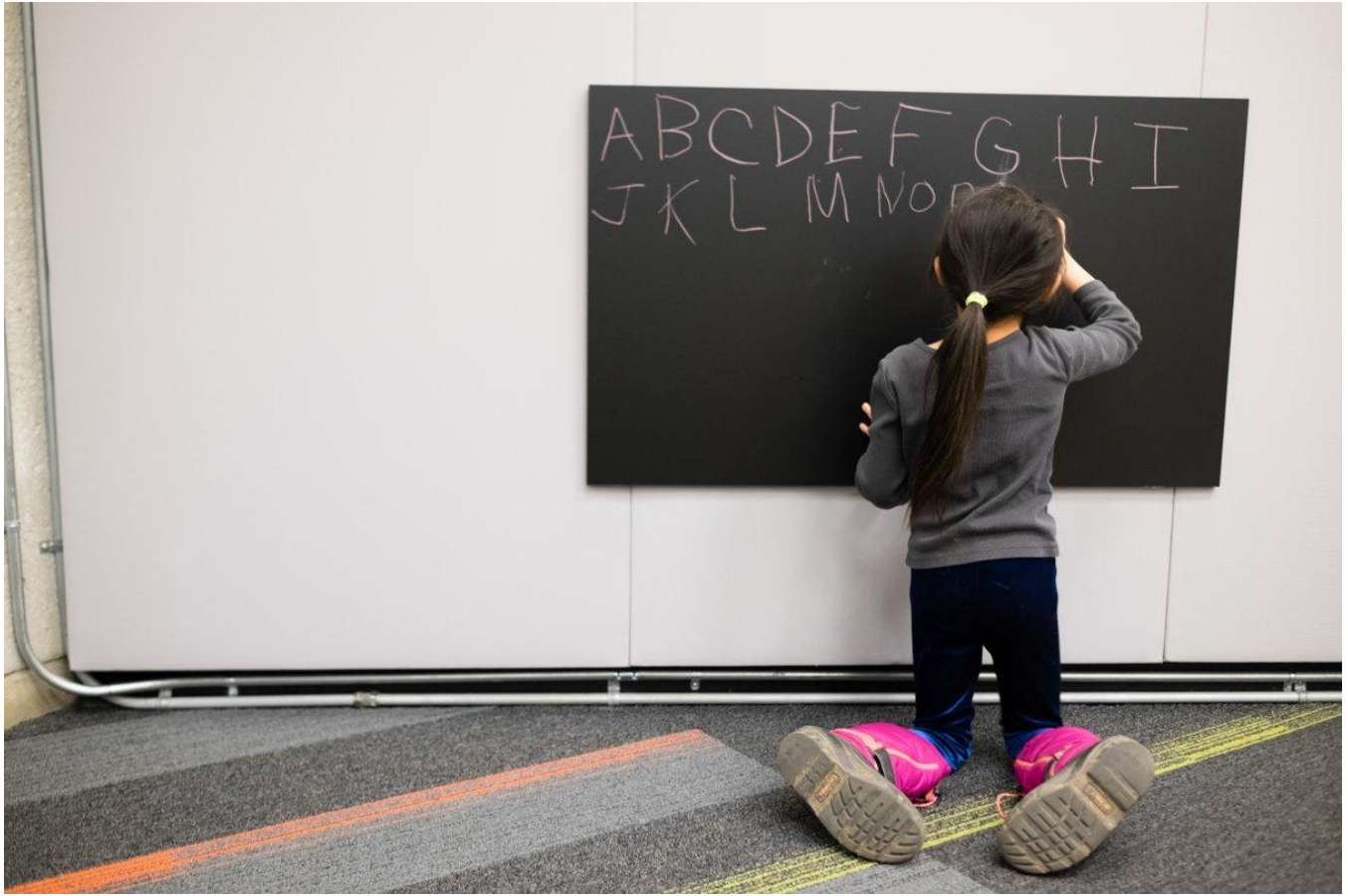

Photo: Geoff Vendeville/University of Toronto

Programming

Photo: Rick Madonik/Toronto Star

Collaborations & Advocacy

Photo: Geoff Vendeville/University of Toronto

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Supporting users with children at Ryerson

Image credit: by Hafuboti

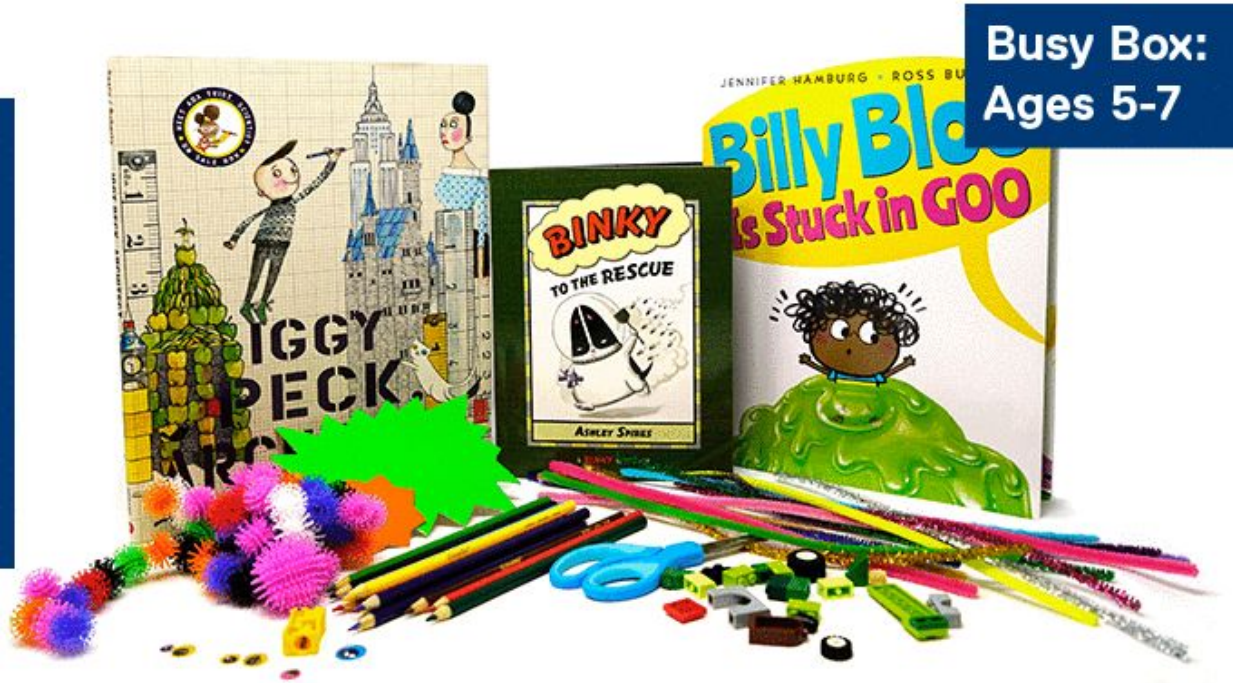
Services you can offer when you have:

- Limited space
- A small budget
- Enthusiastic staff
- Campus partners

Busy Boxes

introducing

BUSY BOXES!



Ryerson University Library & Archives

Because Libraries are for EVERYONE!

MAGNETIC BLOCKS
BUSY BOX
HORRIBLE SCIENCE
BULGING BOX OF BOOKS

BUSY BOX
HORRIBLE SCIENCE
BLOCKS

Collections

Never Give Up
BOY DRESS
PRIDE
Counting on Community
Eenie Meenie
Minie Moe
the stars in the sky
to the fish in the sea
PING STONES
Yitzi
Mom and Mum are getting Married!
Little Wen
Tulip
My Heart
Fills With Happiness

Ryerson University
Library
TODAY I FEEL...
ALL ARE WELCOME

Ryerson University
Library
TODAY I FEEL...
#DisplayYourPride Award
All Are Welcome
My Princess Boy
LOVELY
Mustache

I Am Invited to a Party!
Wimpy Kid
MY FIRST BOOK OF
Edward Underwood
Ilo, Goodbye Window
Norton Juster Chris Raschka
My Princess Boy
EXCEPT WHEN THEY
Mine.
Queen Nadine
This Beach Is Loud!
WHAT MAKES A PARK
Red House Tree House
POWWOW
Were the First
I Am Just
DRESS LIKE A GIRL
A family is a family is a family
Blackflies
ECR 4 Kids

Programming

Ryerson University
Your pride is our pride
Supporting inclusion of people of diverse sexual orientations, gender identities and gender expressions
ryerson.ca/positive-space
Fay & Fluffy's
Storytime
READING IS
FUN-DAMENTAL

Shaking our sillies out!

Storytime resources

- Jbrary.com
- School Library Journal
- Association of Children's Librarians
- Social Justice Books

Other resources on diverse children's literature here.

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Supporting users with children at York University

The York University Libraries embraces services that enhance the experience of our users and we hope [that] this service will make it easier for the parents of very young children to attend York.

The Family Room at Scott Library

A quiet space in our community

- Private space, for one-on-one time for families
- Welcoming space with basic necessities to help care for children
- Children's books/other materials available

Accessibility

- Easily accessible and centrally located
  - Library hours;
  - No booking required;
  - Close proximity to staff.

*A **welcoming space***
in our University
Community

Thanks!

Any questions?

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Credits

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