



PlayAction Guide

Toy Libraries

Toy libraries are found throughout the UK and overseas, and offer services to local families based on regular toy loan for a nominal fee (sometimes for free). They provide toys that have been carefully selected to enhance learning skills, be challenging and fun. Members of the toy library are able to borrow these toys, encouraging exploration and development of new skills. Play opportunities are provided in a befriending, non stigmatising informative environment for parents and carers, childminders, nurseries and playgroups. Toy libraries provide a resourceful base for professionals too, such as health visitors and speech therapists to undertake checks in a non-threatening atmosphere and provide a superb resource for home visitors. Parents/carers and children have contact with other families, in which they are able to receive friendship, information, advice, and support. Toy libraries provide the opportunity for children and adults of all abilities to play together, nurturing a respect and understanding of similarities and differences.



Toy libraries are found in places where they are most accessible to families, including family/community centres, nursery/primary schools, health clinics/centres and public libraries. Today there are over 1000 toy libraries serving around 125,000 families in the UK. We also show pictures from Toy Libraries in Zambia, Romania, New Zealand and the U.S.

The NATLL (National Association of Toy and Leisure Libraries) can advise on how to set up a toy library, or give details on the whereabouts of local toy libraries. The Association's range of publications covers toy choice, good practice guides for toy library organisers, and ideas on play activities that relate to educational targets. Training courses are held regularly around the country, and can be specifically arranged for local authorities and other organisations. Topics on offer range from the value of play to how to run a toy library, as well as specialist workshops on adapting toys to meet the needs of children and adults who are disabled. Accredited training linked to S/NVQ in Library and Information Services is offered by NATLL in conjunction with the Council for Awards in Children's Care and





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Education (CACHE). NATLL also provides a Quality Assurance programme.

Sure Start is a Government initiative which aims to work with parents and children to promote the physical, intellectual and social development of pre-school children to ensure that they are ready to flourish when they get to school. Toy libraries help support all the Sure Start objectives and can form part of the core service. NATLL can provide information on how toy libraries meet the Sure Start objectives.



Toy libraries, leisure libraries, local authorities and individuals are welcome to join NATLL. Benefits include advice, support and regular information mailings; discounts on NATLL's publications, training and other events; access to unique insurance cover and a special Members Helpline which provides advice, information and support on every stage of starting and developing a toy library plus special offers from toy manufacturers.

For further information about toy libraries or NATLL (to whom thanks for this information) please contact:



National Association of Toy & Leisure Libraries, 68 Churchway, London NW1 1LT. The National Helpline provides information, advice and support via telephone, email, fax or letter to anyone planning, setting up and running toy/leisure library services. The service also supplies Starting a Toy Library (SATL) packs, Helpsheets and Information sheets.



For further information please contact the Helpline: tel: 020 7255 4616 fax: 020 7255 4602 e-mail: helpline@playmatters.co.uk Website www.natll.org.uk

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