

Study Tour of the California Library Literacy Service and Early Learning Library Programs



**Submitted by Anna Boland, recipient of
the Barrett Reid Victorian Library
Scholarship
June 2007**

Background and Overview

In 2006 I was awarded the Barrett Reid Scholarship to conduct a study tour of The California Library Literacy Service provided by the California State Library. As Community Literacy and Engagement Officer at the Hume Council Library Service, I was interested in investigating models for the provision of literacy services by libraries.

Armed with a number of key questions/issues for investigation, I planned an itinerary comprised of a number of library services throughout California and the California State Library Development Services Unit which administers the California Library Literacy Service.

Key Questions

The key questions were:

- Is there a national library literacy strategy and how does the CLLS fit in. Are libraries key movers?
- What strategies are in place to reach their target groups.
- How do they promote and market their programs.
- Funding
- Evaluation
- Family Literacy/ Adult English Program- how integration of the programs is working to provide a common set of outcomes for parents and children together.
- Cultural relevance of programs and services –what strategies are in place.?

Itinerary

My study tour was conducted from 11 April to 30 April. Key contacts and networks developed from the study tour are as follows:

Contacts	Purpose	Resources collected
South San Francisco Library Service Holly Fulghum-Nutters Coordinator Project Read	Interview re Project Read	
Pat Jarvis Families for Literacy Service Coordinator	Interview re Learning Wheels Program and Families for Literacy program	Program resources
Ann Mahon Childrens Services Manager	Interview and observed Bouncing Babies Program	Educational material for parents
Kelli Pearson, Childrens Services Coordinator, Start Now Program,	Interview re Start Now program	Program resources

SSF Library Learning Centre		
Vision Literacy Santa Clara County Library Pat Lawson –North Program Manager Mexican American Community Services Agency Youth Centre	Interview re Vision Literacy Observed adult literacy program	Information kit on Vision Literacy
Martin Luther King Jr Library, San Jose Joint university/community library Debra Books for Little Hands Rosemarie Leon	Tour of facilities Interview re program	Information kit
Bring Me a Book Foundation Donna Hall	Interview re Foundation and tour of facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information kit • DVD on Foundation • DVD on First Teachers Course
Mountain View Library Prime Time Program	Observed program	Information kit on Prime Time
Redwood City Public Library Kathy Endaya Director Project Read	interview	Information kit on Project Read
Solano County Library <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fairfield Civic Centre Library Sandy Tosti Literacy Program Manager Lorene Hamasaki, FFL Coordinator • Fairfield Cordelia Library 	Interview re CLLS, Early Learning is Fun and Reach Out and Read Program Observed FFL Program monthly event	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FFL Book and Activity kits • Educational material for parents on early literacy • Fun Packs and Parent Tip resources
California State Library Library Development	Interview re CLLS and Early Learning for Families Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • P.A.R.E.N.T.S Program Guide for Family Literacy

<p>Services Bureau Sacramento Jackie Brinkley Suzanne Flint Library Programs Consultants</p>		<p>Programs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DVD Literacy Adult Learners Perspectives • Developmental Milestones of Early Literacy (produced by Reach Out and Read) • Hear and Say Reading with Toddlers
<p>San Mateo County Library, Department of Youth, family and Literacy Service Martina Tello, Raising a Reader Program Coordinator</p>	<p>Interview re Raising a Reader</p> <p>Observed Family Literacy program in Half Moon Bay and Raising a Reader Kindergarten</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read Aloud- award winning DVD • Let's Read Together! -Parent Early Literacy Guide
<p>Fresno County Public Library Literacy Services Centre Coordinator Jim Teague, Aprendo Van Rebecca Wade, Literacy Services Coordinator Abby Rivera, Coordinator Families for Literacy</p>	<p>interview</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Program Resources • Educational material for parents on early literacy
<p>County of Los Angeles Public Library Headquarters Penny Markey Youth Services Coordinator Tina Carwile, Emergent Literacy Coordinator</p>	<p>Interview re Family Place library program</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information kit on Programs and Family Place Libraries.
<p>Angelo M. Iacoboni Library Los Angeles</p>	<p>Observed Family Place library Program Workshop</p>	

In this paper I will outline:

- The role played by the California State Library in positioning libraries as a leading provider of literacy services,
 - California Library Literacy Service
 - Additional literacy programs initiated by the CSL –Prime Time and Reading is Fundamental.
 - Emergence of literacy units within libraries
- The impact of recent research on brain development and early learning and the development of an integrated approach to providing services to families with young children and early childhood services
 - Early Learning with Families
 - Family Place Libraries
- Library book services to early childhood and social services
 - Raising a Reader
 - Books for Little Hands
 - Bring Me a Book Foundation
- Application to Victorian Libraries



South San Francisco Library Community Learning Centre



**Family Place Library
Redwood City Public Library**

1. California Library Literacy Service (CLLS)

Introduction

In 1984 the California State Library created the California Library Literacy Service. Since the first Adult Literacy program was implemented, three additional literacy programs have been added, as the need to target new groups has arisen. As a result of this, libraries in California have positioned themselves as a major provider of literacy services to the community. This has been made possible by the key role taken by the California State Library in initiating, advocating and partnering with libraries to implement these programs.

In a recent report to the State Legislature, State Librarian Sue Hildreth stated, "We must ensure that literacy services are viewed locally as core library services, in the same way as information and children's services are considered core services." This approach to literacy services implemented in California is mirrored in the national literacy strategy of the American Library Association. Literacy is one of the 5 key action areas adopted by the ALA to fulfil its mission of providing the highest quality library and information services to all people.

I observed three components of the CLLS at 10 libraries and 16 sites across California.

Adult Literacy (Project Read)

Adult literacy services are provided in 101 public library jurisdictions in over 800 literacy service centres around the state of California. This consists of one on one or small group tutoring in literacy of adult learners. Library literacy staff provide outreach and support services such as recruitment, initial and ongoing training and coordination of volunteer tutors and learners. The tutoring is largely provided in the libraries which are easily accessed in most communities and attract people who may not otherwise visit a library. Literacy program coordinators are careful to make a distinction between literacy and ESL, which is a federal government responsibility. Learners need to have some basic English skills to be eligible to be tutored. Some literacy services provide leadership courses for advanced learners through other agencies with whom they partner. For example, Vision Literacy provides leadership courses through the Henry Hoffman Leadership Institute.

Tutors

Volunteers are recruited to be tutors and there are quarterly training sessions for tutors. Training is comprehensive and covers all aspects of literacy tutoring including:

- understanding learning styles,
- teaching phonics,
- learning sight words,
- increasing reading comprehension,
- practicing syllabication,
- honouring diversity,
- teaching basic life skills

- developing learner-centered lesson plans.

The volunteer contribution is immense and with 11,008 volunteers donating 556,681 instructional hours to 18,908 adults in 2005/6 (Report to the California State Legislature, Susan Hildreth, State Librarian, March 2007)

Workshops are offered at some libraries for tutors and learners on a range of subjects. For example, the South San Francisco Library offers workshops on phonics, spelling, measuring and voting to name a few.

Computer labs were also available at a number of sites I visited where learners could learn basic computer skills or use programs to help with reading, spelling and phonics.

Families for Literacy (FFL)

In 1988 the California State Legislature added the Families for Literacy component to the CLLS in order to break the inter-generational cycle of low literacy. It came to the attention of program managers that many of the people who attended the program were specifically undertaking the program to enable them to read to their children, help them with their homework and to be generally involved in their child's education. This led to the creation of the Families for Literacy Program. The adult is tutored in reading children's books and free children's books are given away. To qualify, families must have at least one child under the age of 5. Specifically the FFL program provides:

- Literacy services for the adult caregiver
The adult caregiver is tutored in reading aloud to their child and strategies for engaging their child in the book. At Solano County Library I observed book kits given to parents in the program. Initially the tutor and learner practice reading the book in the kit. The kit is then taken home for the learner to read to their child and keep for their home library. The kits consist of a children's book, suggestions for before and after reading, games with words, activities and rhymes based on the book theme.
- Parenting education- at South San Francisco Library, workshops offer information to parents on a range of topics, including child safety, parenting and nutrition. At SSF Library, parents can have separate a meeting with a parent educator.
At Fresno County Library there was information and training for parents on topics such as the benefits of reading with children, selecting books for children, how to read to children, how to encourage reading, writing and learning in the home.
- Parent and child time together- Monthly events are held for families in the program. I observed a monthly event at the Solano County Library which involved a meal, story reading, educational activities, childrens book giveaway and information about the library.
- Orientation to the library and other community resources
- Free book distribution made possible by local grants and donations. At SSF Library, bookcases are given to the families to house their home library.

Mobile Library Literacy Services

Another component of the CLLS that was added to the CLLS in 2000 is the Mobile Library Literacy Service which was developed in partnership with California Children and Families Commission, now known as First 5 California, with an initial grant of \$2.1 million. These are learning vans which bring library literacy services and preschool activities to families and their preschool aged children who are isolated or lack transport and experience language barriers. Through the literacy services provided by the vans, libraries partner with a range of agencies to provide literacy services. Two such services I visited were:

- The South San Francisco Learning Wheels Van is a preschool classroom with computers for children, educational toys, white board, community information, free books for distribution. The Learning Wheels Van makes weekly visits to Head Start programs, low income housing developments, health clinics and kindergartens and conducts storytimes and distributes books.
- The Fresno County Library the Aprendo Van is devoted solely to the Families for Literacy Program and is a way of reaching isolated migrant communities. The clientele of the van are parents and caregivers, Head Start and day care staff. Jim Teague, the coordinator provides short workshops on early learning, brain development and reading aloud. He gives books away to parents as part of the program. Day care centres and Head Start Programs are also provided with books to read to the children and then to be given to the children to take home for the parents to read to them.

The vans generally do not loan books, they are specifically for literacy activities. The services they provide are storytimes, educational games, book giveaways, workshops and modelling for parents on early literacy and reading to their children and a range of other educational activities such as puppet shows. Computers are available for families to access educational software and the internet.

Funding for CLLS

In 2005/6 the State of California allocated \$5 million to support CLLS. Local libraries generate nearly four times this amount and \$20.1 million was raised in support of library literacy programming from cities, counties and partnerships, foundations fundraising etc.

The CLLS funding formula consists of three parts which reflect the CLLS mission and values:

- A *baseline* amount (currently \$10,000) for each of your approved CLLS program components (Adult Literacy, Families for Literacy (FFL), English Language and Literacy Intensive (ELLI) and/or Mobile Library Literacy Services (MLLS)) that reflects the importance of each library having enough funds to provide a minimum level of local literacy staffing and services.

· A *per capita* amount per adult learner (currently \$70/student) served in the previous year that reflects the fact that Adult Literacy Services are the heart of our service and are the basis for all other literacy services.

· A *match* (currently 12 cents /\$1.00 local) on local funds raised and expended for adult literacy services - reflecting a commitment to a continuing State/Local partnership, and to providing an incentive for increased local support for adult literacy.

Literacy Units

The California Library Literacy Service program has led to the growth of large literacy services units within libraries. Two such units I visited are:

Vision Literacy Santa Clara County Library

Vision Literacy started in 1985 as a service of the Santa Clara County Library and currently serves all Santa Clara County libraries and the City of Mountain View Public Library. Vision Literacy has a core staff of four, including the Program Manager, Communication and Events Coordinator, Financial Services, Administration officer and a number of contract tutors and literacy specialists. Vision Literacy receives funding of over \$700,000 per year from a range of foundations, government funding bodies and fundraising. The Sobrato Foundation provides office space free of charge to non profit organisations, including Vision Literacy.

Vision Literacy provides Adult Literacy and Families for Literacy programs. In the 2005/6 financial year 239 adults were tutored in literacy. As well as one on one tutoring they provide small group tutoring. I observed the literacy program at the Mexican American Community Service Agency Centre (MACSA). This programme was a partnership between MACSA, Vision Literacy and a child care agency, Choices for Children. This partnership allowed Vision Literacy to target some of the most disadvantaged families and provide literacy services.

Vision Literacy partners with other agencies to provide resources for their programs. Vision Literacy is part of an adult learning consortium with Bring Me a Book Foundation which supplies children's books to Vision Literacy for their Family Literacy Program. In the 2005/6 financial year 285 books were given to families in the Program.

Through partnerships with a range of organisations, Vision Literacy provides a range of services in addition to Adult Literacy and FFL including:

- Corrections Literacy – literacy instruction is provided to inmates of the Elmwood facility of the Department of Corrections.
- Transition Literacy- literacy services are available to people who attend substance abuse programs.
- Community Learning Centre- this is partnership between Vision Literacy and the Santa Clara Valley Medical Centre and the Plane Tree Health

Library and provides people with limited literacy a range of health information in different languages and adult literacy services.

Project Read -Redwood City Public Library

Project Read was established in 1987. Four full time literacy staff positions are built into the library's operating budget. Five hundred and fifty clients are currently served in the four program service areas which are:

- Adult literacy –one on one or small group tutoring
- Families for Literacy – designed to serve a difficult-to reach population who are referred through elementary and preschools-namely families with preschoolers or kindergarten children with at least one parent reading at less than a seventh grade level.
- Families in Partnership Program – a drop out prevention program offering one to one tutoring for 1st through 12th grade children. Students are identified by teachers and school staff and parental approval and support is needed. Tutors are encouraged to use the library as a resource, Project READ provides books, magazines and instructional materials.
- Kids in Partnership Program- A one to one after school intervention program that matches academically at- risk teen tutors with academically at-risk elementary students.

Clients are referred by schools, social services and private industry.

Project Read works closely with corporations who provide donations, grant funding, volunteers, including tutors, office help and outreach and serve as advisory board members. Redwood City Project Read has collaborative partnerships with sixty six organisations and corporations.

Non Profit Organisation Tax Status

Both Vision Literacy and Redwood City Project Read have established a non profit 501(c) 3 organisation to encourage donations and fundraising. These organisations are called Friends of Vision Literacy and the Redwood City Friends of Literacy, respectively.

When an organization is a registered organization with the Internal Revenue Service as a nonprofit organization 501(c) 3, people can make donations of money or goods to the organization and write off the value of their donations on their income tax returns. It is a tax advantage to an individual or a business to be able to claim on their annual tax reporting that they donated money to a church or nonprofit organization. A number of the literacy services I visited had established these organisations for fundraising purposes.

In summary the key elements of the California Library Literacy Service Programs are:

Volunteer based

- The tutors are voluntary and training was provided by the library itself.

Local need

- Each program was adapted to meet the needs of their own community. For example, Redwood City Public Library has two literacy programs targeting specifically children and teenagers at risk of dropping out. Some literacy services I visited provided corrections literacy services to inmates at local prisons.

Book Giveaways

- All Families for Literacy Programs distributed free books to families at monthly events and to parents tutored in the programme. The books were funded through grants and foundations.

Cultural relevance

- In many of the programs I visited, a large proportion of the people receiving literacy services were from the Spanish/Mexican population. Bilingual Spanish/English children's books were made available to families. Bilingual storytimes were held as part of the Families for Literacy Programs. Spanish speaking staff were employed in libraries and all promotional and educational material was in Spanish and English.

Evaluation

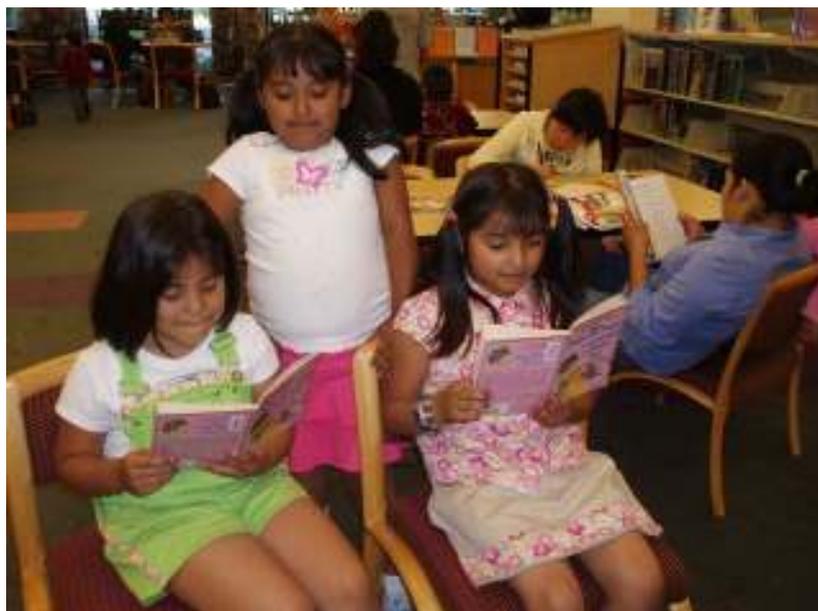
- The CLLS is monitored by tracking the goals attained by participating adult learners. At the start of tutoring the learner identifies their goals in undertaking the library tutoring. For example, they may be interested in learning to write a letter, read to their child, vote or use the internet. These goals are then tracked in terms of progress and the date the goal is achieved is recorded.
- In addition, focus groups are held annually and surveys are held twice a year. Each service is required to submit six monthly reports containing information on each literacy service and the number of adults, families attending, ethnicity, referrals, agencies partnered with and nature of the partnership, number of tutors recruited, hours, ethnicity and number of tutor training workshops, number of Family for Literacy events, outreach and educational programming at other venues.
- A three year longitudinal research project studied families in the Adult Literacy services component of the CLLS who were also participating in the Families for Literacy component of that service. Some of the key findings were:
Learners grew more confident, more orientated toward learning and literacy, more elaborative in their discussions of their lives and more talkative about their children; learners increased numbers of people in their social networks: learners overwhelmingly said their goals were to help their children and they reported that the effects on their children were positive. Tutors also benefited in a number of ways.

Partnerships

Partnerships were central to the work done by libraries in the CLLS. One of the key agencies libraries partnered with were early childhood services. Libraries provided training for child care staff on early literacy development and information on library programs and services. Also libraries outreached their literacy services to early childhood services through the use of the mobile library literacy service vans.

- Libraries partnered with schools, Head Start Programs, health clinics and a range of early childhood organisations and outreached storytime and educational services to these organisations and invited their clientele to library programs. This enabled libraries to target hard to reach groups who may not be traditional library users.
- Local funding partnerships generate much of the funds needed to provide the literacy programs. The California First 5 Commission is a key funder of literacy activities. Local First 5 committees operate throughout California and distribute funds to local projects. Many of the library projects I saw were funded by the local California First 5 committees.
- The California First 5 Commission was created as a result of tax on sales of tobacco with funds being distributed to programs and services that focus on the first 5 years of a child's life.
- Funding partnerships also included a range of private foundations and local businesses. The extent of this additional funding is clear from the following examples:

The Santa Clara County Library (Vision Literacy) receives \$90,533 funding from the State CLLS funding and raised an additional \$709,110 in 2005/6. The Solano County Library received \$71,568 and raised locally an additional \$592,366 for their literacy services. (Report to the California State Legislature, Sue Hildreth, March 2007 p12.)



Mountain View Public Library

Additional literacy programs sourced by the California State Library

The California State Library's strategy has been to identify additional potential sources of funding and avenues to increase other resources such as in-kind gifts. The CSL sources literacy models and when funds become available, offers staff training and funds to participating libraries who are interested in implementing the programs. Below are two such programs.

Prime Time

One program model I observed at the Mountain View Library was the Prime Time Program. The CSL purchased the Prime Time Program, developed by the Louisiana Endowment for the Humanities and offered this to interested libraries. The program runs for about 6-8 weeks and consists of reading, discussion and storytelling at public libraries. The sessions are facilitated by a storyteller who reads the book and a scholar who leads the discussion. High quality books are researched by the Endowment with humanities themes. Child care is provided for children who are preschool and younger. The storyteller models reading aloud and after the reading, the whole group, including adults and children, discuss the issues in the book, led by the scholar. The sessions also include information on the library- programs, parenting resources, etc. At the end of the session families are given a book that will be read and discussed at the next session. The session I attended also had someone reading the book in Spanish as participants were mostly Spanish speaking.

Reading is Fundamental

In 2005/06 there was an increase in local library literacy programs' ability to give away high quality childrens' books to participating families due to a federal Reading is Fundamental grant secured on behalf of the local programs by the California State Library. The RIF grant allows California libraries to serve 10,000 at-risk children throughout the state by providing them with new, high quality, age appropriate books that they personally select for their home libraries through distribution events that also include fun motivational activities that link books and reading with positive experiences that will excite their interest in reading.

Fourteen library jurisdictions participated in the RIF grant in it's first year, 2006. They distributed over 30,000 free books -- a minimum of 3 books each to 10,000 at risk children. RIF provided \$49,500 and local libraries provided a total matching share of \$16,500 to accomplish this. The California State Library will receive the same award for 2007.



Prime Time Program at Mountain View Public Library

2. Early Childhood Models

Recent research on brain development and the importance of the first few years for future learning has had a tremendous impact on libraries in California. I observed two models of early learning, one developed by the California State Library – Early Learning for Families(ELF) which has been implemented by a number of the libraries I visited and the Family Place model developed by Middle County Library in New York and which I observed at the Los Angeles County Library Service.

Early Learning with Families (ELF)

ELF is a new program that has been developed by the California State Library Development Unit to encourage libraries to target families with children 0-5 and to partner with early childhood services. There is a national focus on investment in the 0-5 years and libraries have taken up the challenge. Suzanne Flint, who was involved in the Reach Out and Read Program, researched early learning library approaches to services and developed this program in consultation with a number of libraries and early childhood professionals. The ELF model aims to position libraries as family centered, early learning environments that offer families and their young children stimulating opportunities for play and early learning. Although the specifics of ELF libraries may vary greatly, all share the following strategic components.

- Family friendly space and policies
- Family focused and developmentally appropriate programming
- Resources and services that meet the needs of the whole child
- Children's Services and Literacy Services partnerships
- Community outreach and collaborations
- Outcomes driven results and evolution. (see Appendix 2 for ELF principles and details)

In the first year, the CSL offered training to library administrators and staff to raise awareness of the importance of early childhood development and learning. Participating libraries were asked to bring 3 people including a person from children's services, literacy and a decision maker. Libraries were asked to implement an early learning/literacy plan and outreach strategy for their library to better serve families with young children and early childhood services. To develop and establish the programme, the CSL collaborated with a number of major stakeholders including, California Department of Education's Child Development Division, First 5 California Children and Families Commission, California Public Television and a range of other peak early childhood organisations.

The ELF program is now moving into its second year. A number of libraries I visited had participated in the training with the following outcomes.

South San Francisco Library

As a result of their participation in the ELF training, SSF implemented three key strategies.

- ❖ Introduction of Bouncing Babies Program-storytimes were improved by targeting parents with educational information on early literacy. Participants are given a folder of supporting information. This folder contains:

- Handouts of song lyrics, words to rhymes and fingerplays used in the sessions so they can be used at home.
- Information in a question and answer format re benefits of Bouncing Babies Program in terms of emergent literacy and social skills
- Booklists of books used in the sessions.
- Developmental milestones of early literacy information sheet

I observed the Library's Bouncing Baby Program for babies 0-18 mos. The children's services librarian explains to the parents why they do certain things and this is reinforced with a message displayed during the session.

- ❖ In addition the Library was promoting its role as a community centre and resource by having local community newspapers, flyers and brochures on community services.
- ❖ Provision of onsite training to Family Day Care Providers

Solano County Library

The Solano County Library also participated in the ELF training provided by the California State Library. As a direct result of this training they implemented four measures.

- Workshop for child care providers- the workshop focused on research on early brain development, early language and literacy development and behaviours, ways to share books with babies/toddlers and library resources and programs.
- Emphasis on the role of children's librarians in educating parents as well as children. As a result of this storytimes are enhanced with more explanation eg "You've noticed that I have repeated –repetition is good. One of the libraries is handing out laminated teddy bears with rhymes and the tip of the day. Parents can collect 12 tips altogether and put them on a ring. The Tip of the day related to sharing books with children with advice such as "Set aside special time to read such as bedtime."
- Library Fun Packs- The Fairfield Cordelia Library Branch developed Library Fun Packs for parents and caregivers to borrow. The Fun Packs consist of 5 books on a theme, book of rhymes, ideas for follow up activities and games based on the theme, CD, puppets. They are made for the 0-2 and 3-5 age group. The contents are enclosed in a child's size see through plastic backpack and are located on shelves located near the library entrance.

Fresno County Public Library

This library also participated in the ELF training. As a result of this, workshops are being held for parents and caregivers on early literacy skills including phonological awareness, letter knowledge, print awareness, vocabulary and narrative skills and how parents can support the development of these skills.

Family Place Library

I visited the County of Los Angeles Library which is implementing the Family Place Library model in a number of its library branches. Family Place is an approach to library services targeted to children 0-5 and their caregivers. It was developed by Middle County Library in New York and focuses on developing a family-centred library service and community/library partnerships in support of families. I visited the Angleo M. Iacoboni Library in Los Angeles which had recently launched its Family Place program. The Family Place program expands the traditional role of library children's services and is characterised by:

- A bright welcoming space for young children and their caregivers.
- A collection of books, educational toys, videos, music for babies toddlers parents and service providers
- The library as a resource centre for parents providing Information, programs and resources on parenting, emergent literacy, early childhood development.
- Outreach to new and underserved populations
- A cornerstone of the program was the five-week parent /child workshop featuring local professionals, such as nutritionists, speech and language therapist and child development experts, who serve as resources for parents. I attended a parent workshop at the Angleo M. Iacoboni library. A number of activity stations were set up around the room such as play doh, puzzles, educational toys. The workshops run for six weeks and instead of having professionals speaking to the parents as a group, they approach each parent individually and ask them if they have any concerns or questions about their child's development and engage them in conversation about their child's needs.



Parent/child Workshop



Family Place Library
A bright welcoming space for children and their caregivers

3. Library book services to early childhood and social services

Two libraries and one foundation I visited focused on providing books to workplaces, families or early childhood services

Raising a Reader- San Mateo County Library Martina Tello

Raising a Reader is a national book bag program first trialled in San Mateo Library in California. I interviewed Martina Tello and visited a kindergarten that used the Raising a Reader resources. Book bags are provided to child care centres, family day care providers, kindergartens, Head Start programs and other early childhood services. Twenty-five book bags are provided containing 4 books in each. The idea is that the book bags are rotated over the year to each family for home reading.

The Program includes:

- Training for child care staff
- Inclusion of family literacy activities in child care or kindergarten curriculum
- Annual Raising a Reader Early Literacy Conferences
- Parent workshops
- *Read Aloud* video for parents

The initial cost of the Book Bag Program is \$2500 for participating agencies. The Program targets at risk families through the agencies listed above.

Books for Little Hands

Books for Little Hands was a service of the City of San Jose Public Library, provided to early childhood services. There were a number of different components to the service including:

- Curriculum Ideas/Themed Kits- large plastic tubs contained books on a theme eg ABC's Shapes & Colours and Zoo animals. The themed kits also contain games, finger puppets, cassettes, videos and activity ideas. These theme kits are exchanged monthly at the library.
The Library has a collection of 23 different themes to choose from.
Services can reserve Theme Kits 6 months in advance to fit in with their curriculum planning.
- Classroom Book Bags are also provided monthly with 20 preselected children's books for classroom use.
- The service is free but the Library requires that lost books be paid for.

Bring Me a Book Foundation

This foundation provides access to books for low income families through two core services:

- Establishment of libraries in non profit agencies including kindergartens, homeless shelters and waiting rooms by supplying a bookcase and 30-50 children's books, audiotapes to go on the bookcase. High quality children's books are chosen and the book selection is customised according to the age and cultural background of the children.
- The Foundation also creates a lending library in the workplace by supplying business with book bag libraries in the workplace and

community organisations. These libraries contain 220 children's books, 5 shelf bookcase, 65 canvas bags with company logo, library database, 65 plastic barcoded tags, library training video, parent videos, Training manual, laminated list of books, employer and employee training.

The cost of a Lending Library Program for workplaces is \$9000. The cost of a small bookcase with 35 books and the Parent Teacher course to a non profit agency is \$1000. Bring Me a Book Foundation makes grants applications and fundraises in order to obtain funds needed to provide the service.



3. Library Fun Packs –Solano County Library

4. Application to Victorian Libraries

There are many aspects of the library literacy services and programs that I visited on my study tour that have application to Victorian Librarians.

Family Literacy

Family Literacy is broadly defined in the US. The US Congress defines it as integrating the following components:

- Interactive literacy activities between parents and their children
- Equipping parents to partner with their children in learning
- Parents literacy training that leads to economic self-sufficiency
- Appropriate instruction for children of parents receiving parent literacy services.

Many research studies on family literacy show that children, parents, families as units and the broader community benefit.

In Victoria, adult literacy services are funded through Adult Community and Further Education (ACFE) and implemented through a range of agencies such as neighbourhood houses and TAFE. ESL programs are provided to recently arrived migrants for up to 5 years after arrival. There is potential for libraries to partner with these organisations to provide family literacy programs as part of their ESL or literacy programs. Such models already exist, eg NMIT, Victorian Cooperative of Ethnic Childrens Services and the Hume Global Learning Village library Service partner to provide an ESL/ family literacy program at the Broadmeadows Library. In this model there is an ESL class(with content of teaching materials based on topics related to child development and early literacy), playgroup activities, parent and child time together interacting around songs, books and literacy activities. Such models could be expanded with funding from existing ESL program funding.

Early Learning Model

One of the most exciting initiatives I observed on my study tour was the development of the library as an early childhood development and parenting resource, targeting families/caregivers of children 0-5, as illustrated by the Family Place and Early Learning for Families Programs. The development of an early learning model/framework for Victorian libraries with key components identified and appropriate resourcing would be a key community capacity building initiative. Public libraries are uniquely positioned to help families, caregivers and child care providers acquire the skills and resources to effectively interact with children and support their early learning. Both the Family Place approach and Early Learning for Families (ELF) have elements in common and these would be part of any model. Any such model would need to be developed in conjunction with early childhood representatives.

Outreach and partnerships

Libraries played a leadership role in the provision of literacy services and were a resource for all early childhood services and other programs such as Head Start or health clinics. Mobile Library Literacy Services eg learning vans, were a strategy used for outreach and there were many benefits of linking and resourcing with other agencies including targeting non traditional library users.

The California State Library and local libraries saw collaborative relationships with regional, statewide and national literacy-focused organisations as a way to achieve their strategic directions and to increase resources and funding. Libraries in Victoria need to continue to position themselves as leaders in the provision of literacy services and to develop strategic partnerships to maximise their profile in the broader community, including other government agencies and stakeholders.



Family Place Library

A collection of books, educational toys, videos, music for babies toddlers parents and service providers



Family friendly environment

Appendix 1

Information on additional programs observed

Start Now

Start Now is a homework club which involves parents and children provided by the Community Learning Centre, South San Francisco Library. It also has a focus on modelling positive parenting and providing parenting education. The program operates on 2 nights per week from 5:30-7:30. Twenty children attend and at least one parent. The children are in grades one or two with child care for younger siblings. They have developed a number of take home bags on a range of themes including time, fractions, seed sack, etc. Sessions are structured as follows:

Introduction

At the start of every session there is an informal discussion with parents, children and facilitators sitting in a semi circle; the facilitator asks participants what they did with their bags over the week. This discussion is followed with a storytime.

Main Session

There is a theme for every session, with a question re the theme eg What makes you feel stressed? The children discuss this with the parents and write and draw their answers in their journal. The children then do their homework, helped by their parents who are supported by facilitators. Facilitators also model ways to relate to children. Short parent workshops are held where parents can discuss issues. The Start Now program runs over the school year and is extremely popular.

Reach Out and Read

Solano County Library also participates in the Reach Out and Read Program. The Reach Out and Read Program is similar to the Bookstart Programs in Australia and is delivered by paediatricians. The Reach Out and Read Program has 3 components

- The Paediatrician speaks to parents about importance of reading aloud to their babies and gives parents a free culturally and developmentally appropriate book.
- Volunteers are trained to read aloud in doctors surgeries to parents and children.
- Every time the parent visits the paediatrician for a well baby visit(well baby visit are equivalent to the regular visits to Maternal and child Health) they are given a free book.
- It has been found that receiving the information from the paediatrician who is seen as an expert is particularly effective as parents trust the advice given.

Appendix 2
Early Learning with Families (ELF) @ Your Library
Applying ELF Principles

A. Parents are recognized as the experts of their own children, receive support for their role, and are with opportunities to share ideas and concerns.

- Parents have an opportunity to network with other parents.
- Parents are encouraged to participate in storytimes and playtimes.
- Places in the library are created for parents to gather and talk.
- Parents/caregivers are supported and encouraged to interact with their children by cuddling, talking, singing songs, sharing books, playing looking and listening with their children.

B. Children are encouraged to experiment and explore in order to learn about the world around them.

- Opportunities for spontaneous investigation and experimentation are offered.
- Programs and spaces are provided that encourage imagination, stimulate language, introduce music, and inspire creativity.
- Parents/caregivers are encouraged to extend learning through continued exploration and creation at home.

C. Play is an integral part of library services and is recognized as critical at the development of early literacy skills.

- Playtimes are incorporated into Children's Services with a focus on supporting the development of the whole child.
- Children have access to learning materials that provide opportunities for discovery and unstructured play.
- Play activities are often child-driven with parents encouraged to follow their children's lead.

D. Evidence based child development information is shared with parents and caregivers.

- Tip sheets are distributed, ideas are discussed, and suggestions are made during library events that relate to everyday activities that parents can replicate at home.
- Parent-led workshops are organized and parents are encouraged to share ideas.
- Parents/caregivers are connected to community experts and resources that can respond to their questions and concerns about parenting and child development.

E. Partnerships are established between and among library services and community agencies.

- Within the library Children's and Literacy services work together in support of the ELF initiative.
- Library staff receives information about ELF and provide input on the best ways to implement ELF.
- Community partners offer parenting expertise and resources; libraries offer space, program and resource materials; together awareness for the importance of early learning can be increased, access for families to services and resources can be expanded, and parent/caregiver abilities to meet the needs of their very young children can be enhanced.

F. The library is established as a welcoming, family friendly environment.

- Trained library staff responds to parent/caregiver questions in an open, facilitative manner aimed at strengthening the family.
- Physical space is friendly and fun with collections conveniently located and furniture appropriate for families with infants, toddlers and young children.
- Accommodations are made for the special needs of families, including restroom, changing tables, private spaces for breast feeding, storage for strollers, and space for families to gather and children to play.
- Children's learning materials and books are developmentally appropriate for infants, toddlers and preschoolers.
- Parenting collections are in languages that reflect the community and are located in the Children's section to make for more convenient access.
- Library policies are reviewed and modified in order to encourage families with young children to utilize library materials and services.