

## TORONTO PUBLIC LIBRARY – PROGRAMS FOR CHILDREN & FAMILIES

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Toronto Public Library (TPL) has a strong commitment to the well being of the children of Toronto and their families. For 100 years the Library has offered innovative and relevant resources, programs and services that have evolved with the changing needs of children and their families.

### IMPORTANCE

The Library's goals are to promote literacy, support educational achievement and lifelong learning, and inspire a love of reading.

### STATUS / TRENDS (2010)

The number of children who registered for a card increased, as did circulation of children's materials and attendance at children's programs.

- ü Approximately 71.3% or 252,204 of Toronto's children (ages 0 to 12) are currently registered cardholders with the Toronto Public Library.
- ü 36,871 children registered for a library card, a 2.8% increase over 2009.
- ü 48.4% or 171,213 children used their library card at least once in 2010 to check out materials. This is a 25.6% increase over the previous year.
- ü Children checked out 6,154,374 items, a 1.9% increase.
- ü More than 9 million children's materials circulated, representing 27.9% of annual circulation.
- ü 14,515 children's programs offered to 448,699 children. Attendance increased 4.6%.

### SERVICES, SUPPORTS AND INITIATIVES

Librarians with expertise in children's and family literature and literacy work in 99 branches across the City. The Library has leveraged partnerships with the City of Toronto, the Toronto Public Library Foundation, the Ontario Ministry of Culture, other levels of government and local community agencies to deliver efficient and effective community based services and programming that reflect the needs of local communities.

#### Collections

The Library provides more than 2.1 million items in many formats and languages to assist children in reading as well as relevant materials to complement school assignments.

#### Dial-a-Story (416-395-5400)

Toronto Public Library's telephone story service for children provides stories for younger children (7 and under) and for older children (up to 12) 24 hours a day. Stories rotate on a daily basis so children hear a different story every day. Stories are available in 12 languages, including English, French, Cantonese, Gujarati, Italian, Mandarin, Polish, Portuguese, Spanish, Somali, Tamil and Urdu.

- Answered 271,265 calls or 743 callers a day.

#### KidsSpace

The Library's website for children provides fun facts and educational games, homework help, online stories, links to children's websites, and information for parents and teachers.

- There were 268,239 visits, a decrease of 19.9% and the number of items examined decreased 36.5%.

### **KidsStop**

KidsStop is an interactive learning environment designed for parents and children. Specially selected activities encourage the development of early literacy skills through play.

- KidsStop areas are currently available at four branches.

### **Ready for Reading**

Ready for Reading supports families and caregivers of children from birth to 5 years, in the development of early literacy skills and encourages a lifelong love of books and reading.

The program focuses on developing six early literacy skills. Building on current research in early literacy, workshops for parents, caregivers and daycare staff teach how to read with children and early literacy techniques to use at home. Professionally selected materials in a variety of languages are available in 99 locations.

To enhance access, programming is offered at community based locations including workplaces and locations where parents work or meet; and for marginalized communities in shelters, community centres and Toronto Community Housing complexes.

- ü 8,529 story-time programs were held and 243,021 children and parents attended; an increase of 12.8% and 20.3% respectively.

### **Leading to Reading and Homework Support**

Leading to Reading is a reading support program for children in grades 1 to 6 who are reading below their grade level or require help with their homework. Children receive one-to-one help once a week to help with their reading, writing or homework. Children are encouraged to learn and practice their skills in a fun environment. Tutors are mentors providing children with confidence and motivation.

- In 2009-2010 school year, there were 21,333 one-to-one sessions conducted with 1,157 students and 993 volunteer tutors at 37 locations.
- In the summer of 2010, there were 4,104 one-to-one sessions conducted with 869 students and 641 volunteer tutors.

### **English Can Be Fun**

English Can Be Fun is a summer program for newcomers to help children ages 7 to ten get ready for school in September. Children learn English with games and activities and get familiar with using the library. Classes are held twice a week for 1.5 hours each session. The program is available at 25 branches.

- In 2010, average attendance was 298 students.

### **Kids@Computers**

In partnership with Toronto Social Services (TSS), the award-winning Kids@Computers program provides children in low-income families, who graduate from the program, with a free computer and one year of free high speed internet service. To graduate from the program, children and parents have to attend two training sessions at the library. Parent attendance is mandatory for one session.

Training covers computer literacy instruction and highlights the basics of web use and research skills, with emphasis on accessing good information.

- ü 827 out of a possible 900 children graduated from the program, a 92% graduation rate.
- Of the 900 registered attendees, 663 (74%) students already had library cards and 21 (2%) participants received their first library card as a result of this program.

### **TD Summer Reading Club**

Available at all 99 branches and online, the TD Summer Reading Club is a theme-based reading club that encourages children to build and sustain their reading skills during the summer. Local programs engage children.

Ü 32,664 children registered for the TD Summer Reading Club in 2010 and received an activity kit with riddles and word games. This is a 15.4% increase over 2009. 15,296 boys and 17,368 girls registered.

### **Story and Book Programs** *to encourage and foster a love of reading*

- On August 28, 2010, over 1,000 people attended Toronto Public Library's first annual **Book Bash!**, a Canadian children's literature festival in partnership with the Toronto Public Library Foundation, promoting reading and local literary expression.
- At branches throughout the City, the Library hosted readings by noted children's authors including Barbara Reid, Eric Walters, Ken Oppel, Loris Lesinsky, Shane Peacock, Marthe Jocelyn, Linda Garfield and Jean Little.

### **Kindergarten Outreach**

Toronto Public Library provides outreach to kindergarten children in partnership with the Boards of Education to encourage registration, visits and the use of our materials. In priority neighbourhood schools, children and parents also benefit from the *Welcome to Kindergarten* programming with the Learning Partnership.

- In the 2008/2009 school year, TPL staff visited 42,780 kindergarten students in 2,217 classes in 524 Toronto schools.