

# Children's Services Competencies

(Excerpted from [Competency Index for the Library Field](#), compiled by WebJunction)

The library plays a very significant role in the lives and development of children and in the interactions with their families, schools and caregivers. Covering the territory from infancy to tweens requires a robust set of skills and knowledge.

(Note that these competencies build on the general adult competencies and other public services. Statements are included here only if they have a specific application to children.)

## Children's Services & Outreach

<b>Competency: Children's Services &amp; Outreach</b>	<b>Designs and implements library services to meet the needs and interests of children in the community</b>
<b>Associated Skills and Knowledge</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Analyzes demographic and other data collected about the community and develops a wide variety of services to meet the needs and interests of children and their families and caregivers</li> <li>▪ Ensures that policies and procedures for children's services are aligned with federal, state and local law and with the library's policies and procedures</li> <li>▪ Provides services and spaces appropriate to the developmental needs of children</li> <li>▪ Solicits and considers the opinions and requests of children when planning, implementing and evaluating programs and services</li> <li>▪ Partners with organizations within the institution or in the community that have compatible goals and objectives to serve children, and develops cooperative services and programs to extend and enhance children's and family programs</li> <li>▪ Identifies and maintains regular communication with agencies, institutions and organizations serving children in the community</li> </ul>
<b>Competency: Children's Services &amp; Outreach</b>	<b>Articulates and communicates to stakeholders the needs of children to receive quality library service</b>
<b>Associated Skills and Knowledge</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Designs, implements and evaluates ongoing public relations directed toward children and their caregivers, with recognition of the diversity of the community</li> <li>▪ Models and promotes a welcoming, supportive and nonjudgmental attitude toward children and their families and caregivers</li> <li>▪ Promotes awareness of children's services to other staff members and contributes to their orientation and training in relation to the delivery of those services</li> <li>▪ Promotes awareness of children's services within the library governance structure and lobbies for inclusion in the library's plans and budget processes</li> <li>▪ Ensures that the needs of children are considered in overall library planning,</li> </ul>

	including the application of ADA regulations and the appropriate access to resources and services
<b>Competency: Children's Services &amp; Outreach</b>	<b>Defines and implements outreach services to increase children's and families' use of library services and to reach underserved populations</b>
<b>Associated Skills and Knowledge</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Identifies children (individuals and groups) underserved or not yet served (those with disabilities, home-schooled, institutionalized, remote, non-English speaking, low literacy, etc.)</li> <li>▪ Determines the particular needs of each target audience, designs a variety of programs and services to match their needs, and promotes them with targeted marketing</li> <li>▪ Establishes an environment in which children receive courteous service and are encouraged to use the library and participate in library programs</li> </ul>
<b>Competency: Children's Services &amp; Outreach</b>	<b>Works with parents, caregivers and other adults who serve children</b>
<b>Associated Skills and Knowledge</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Understands the importance of informing and coordinating with a variety of community members who work with children (parents, educators, daycare providers, etc.)</li> <li>▪ Builds and updates knowledge of available resources that may serve the needs of children, families and caregivers</li> <li>▪ Identifies the need to educate adults who care for children and offers a variety of resources to help them provide improved care and guidance</li> </ul>
<b>Competency: Children's Services &amp; Outreach</b>	<b>Uses Web tools and social networking communities to engage with and provide age-appropriate services to children (see also: Technology: Core Skills &gt; Core Web tools and Technology: Systems &amp; IT &gt; Web Design &amp; Development)</b>
<b>Associated Skills and Knowledge</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Understands and articulates the importance of introducing children to age-appropriate online tools and environments</li> <li>▪ Investigates Web tools and social networking communities oriented toward children, and evaluates them for their potential to enhance learning and meet information needs of children</li> <li>▪ Understands the unique opportunities, norms and limitations of online engagement for children, and establishes guidelines for the use of social networking tools appropriate to the library setting and to the age groups</li> <li>▪ Assists children in accessing online children's programs, using Web tools and participating in social networking communities</li> </ul>

*Information Resources for Children*

<p><b>Competency: Information Resources for Children</b></p>	<p><b>Builds a collection designed to meet the needs and interests of children</b></p>
<p><b>Associated Skills and Knowledge</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Applies knowledge of the community and solicited input from children, families and caregivers to build a children’s collection that is diverse, current and relevant</li> <li>▪ Demonstrates comprehensive knowledge of the library’s children’s and other relevant collections (subject ranges, age, size, level, strengths and shortcomings) and applies the knowledge to the decision-making process</li> <li>▪ Demonstrates broad knowledge and appreciation of children’s literature, including authors and publishers</li> <li>▪ Establishes criteria for evaluation (content, educational value, entertainment value, literacy value, age-appropriateness, etc.) of children’s materials in all genres and formats</li> <li>▪ Evaluates, recommends and applies collection policies for children’s materials consistent with the library’s general collection development policies, including policies to handle challenges to materials</li> <li>▪ Ensures that community information resources address the needs of children and their families and caregivers</li> <li>▪ Displays and markets materials to be attractive and enjoyable to children, as well as convenient to use</li> <li>▪ Ensures that the collection reflects the diversity of the community, and helps to familiarize children and their families with other perspectives (ethnic, racial, gender, socio-economic, sexual preference, etc.)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Competency: Information Resources for Children</b></p>	<p><b>Establishes and pursues strategies to stay informed about current and relevant information resources to meet children’s evolving needs</b></p>
<p><b>Associated Skills and Knowledge</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Pursues a variety of information sources, including popular media, to keep current on topics relevant to children and families and to identify key changes in their needs and tastes</li> <li>▪ Connects with children, families and others who work with children to stay informed about new materials, resources and technologies</li> <li>▪ Maintains the quality and relevance of the collection through ongoing evaluation of the currency and physical condition, and recommends materials for acquisition or deselection</li> </ul>

<b>Competency: Information Resources for Children</b>	<b>Facilitates children’s requests for information and provides accurate and appropriate answers</b>
<b>Associated Skills and Knowledge</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Understands and practices effective reference interviewing skills particular to soliciting actual and unstated needs and protecting the confidentiality of children</li> <li>▪ Addresses the information-seeking behaviors and needs of children without bias across the spectrum of age, race, gender, ethnicity, ability or economic status; responds to questions regardless of their nature</li> <li>▪ Identifies opportunities for instruction and empowers children to improve their own information-seeking ability</li> <li>▪ Establishes effective measures to manage Internet and other electronic resources that provide children with appropriate access</li> </ul>
<b>Competency: Information Resources for Children</b>	<b>Connects children and their families and caregivers with resources that encourage reading</b>
<b>Associated Skills and Knowledge</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Creates booklists, read-alikes, read-arounds, book-talks, displays, electronic documents and other special tools to appeal to children</li> <li>▪ Identifies and uses a variety of online and print children’s readers’ advisory resources to identify materials</li> <li>▪ Maintains an ongoing knowledge of major new authors, fiction genres, nonfiction subjects and current releases, including media and genres of particular interest to children (magazines, manga, AV, etc.)</li> <li>▪ Seeks input from children, families and caregivers to inform future recommendations</li> <li>▪ Collaborates with families, schools and other community groups to promote reading and literacy to children</li> <li>▪ Understands the theories of reading development for children (including early and emergent literacy) and the reading curriculum used by community schools</li> </ul>

### *Children’s Programming*

<b>Competency: Children’s Programming</b>	<b>Designs, implements and sponsors library programs that offer information, special skills or entertainment for children and their families and caregivers</b>
<b>Associated Skills and Knowledge</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Uses a variety of methods to determine the interests and needs of children, families, caregivers and others who work with children in the community (obtains demographic data, surveys users and non-users; follows news and entertainment sources; collects input from frontline staff and community organizations that work with children, etc.)</li> <li>▪ Designs a wide variety of programs appropriate to the identified interests and developmental needs of children, recognizing the breadth of needs from very early childhood to tweens</li> <li>▪ Demonstrates creativity, openness to new ideas, knowledge of a variety of</li> </ul>

	<p>tools and techniques, and a sense of humor</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Identifies program venues outside of the library that appeal to children</li> <li>▪ Evaluates all programs, soliciting feedback from children and families, and uses those results to improve future programs for children</li> </ul>
<p><b>Competency: Children's Programming</b></p>	<p><b>Develops and promotes gaming programs for children and families</b></p>
<p><b>Associated Skills and Knowledge</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Understands and promotes the value of games for children (educational, cognitive stimulation, social value, reaching underserved, etc.)</li> <li>▪ Investigates the options for gaming programs (through research, benchmarking with similar organizations, consulting with parents and caregivers, etc.) and makes informed choices about age-appropriate games for children</li> <li>▪ Identifies a variety of games appropriate for children (board games, video games, group games, etc.), creates interesting and engaging game-based programs, and invents creative ways to promote them to the target audiences</li> <li>▪ Develops gaming programs to accomplish specified objectives (e.g., bringing families to the library, bridging cultural gaps, etc.)</li> <li>▪ Evaluates the outcomes of children's gaming programs, involves families and caregivers in the evaluation process, and recommends improvements for future efforts</li> </ul>