

What is a Toy Library?

A toy library is a service that provides communities with access to a selection of quality toys, games, puzzles and learning aids.

The toy library can operate in 2 ways:

- "Borrow & Return" basis – which encourages active play at home and at school
- "Come & Play" basis – which offers play sessions at the toy library. A toy library may offer both options.

Why is providing access to play so important?

- play helps children to develop physically, mentally, socially and emotionally
- play brings joy and laughter to children and adults. It is a powerful tool for reducing stress
- children learn life skills such as concentration, perseverance, resilience and flexibility through play by imitating, exploring, inventing (creating), solving mini problems and co-operating



- physical, active play is vital to good health

Toy libraries support many, but especially the following articles of the UN Convention on the Rights of a Child as ratified by the South African Government:

- Article 31 – the right of the child ...to engage in play and recreational activities appropriate to the age of the child...
- Article 28 – the right of the child to education ...on the basis of equal opportunity



A "Borrow and Return" Toy Library

Tshepang - Free State



A "Come & Play" Toy Library



A Mobile Toy Library

Lesedi Toy Library Bus

Children exchanging toys at Pebbles Mobile Toy Library



Africa needs mobile toy libraries.

They can offer either a "Borrow and Return" or a "Come & Play" service or both.

ALL-SA'S Services:

Information

Become a member to receive our magazine, the International Toy Library Association Newsletter and to obtain discounts on our training courses, workshops and conferences.

- starting & managing a toy library
- national database of toy libraries
- play materials and toy suppliers
- magazine and website

Training – practical and hands-on

- Skills Development Through Play Actions
- Toy Library Administration
- Using Play Materials to Support Children with Barriers to Learning
- Making Improvised Toys



Quality Assurance

- programme for helping toy libraries to offer excellent services
- networking meetings for toy librarians
- email/telephone help desk for advice & support
- biennial conferences

Consultancy

- involvement in planning a toy library
- needs assessment of play materials and recommendations on toy selection
- in-service assistance with various aspects of setting up a toy library

"Come & Play" Toy Library

- offers play sessions in a safe environment to all children including those in care centres, disability centres, pre-schools, local children from Hillbrow, Yeoville and the Inner City – 12 803 visits by children in 2009.
- our outreach service provides play sessions at two HIV/Aids ARV clinics and a play/information session at a Well Baby clinic

Advocacy initiatives for

- more toy libraries nationally
- safe play spaces, especially municipal playgrounds, for all children
- the development of toys reflecting African Life and Culture