

How to: Set up a 'Toy Library' Project



1. Organise your group to do a survey of local parents in the community to find out:
 - ▶ When would be the best times for the toy library to open? Which days of the week? What times? Should it be holidays or term time or both?
 - ▶ Which ages of children should you cater for?
 - ▶ What would be an accessible annual joining fee?
2. You may wish to visit other groups who have set up or expanded their toy library through the Waste Action Grant Programme. By discussing your project plans with these groups, getting some tips from them and using the information gained from your survey, you should be able to put together an outline project proposal including the following information:
 - ▶ Will you need paid staff or volunteers?
 - ▶ How many families will you aim to recruit as members?
 - ▶ What age group will you target?
 - ▶ How will you promote your project? Will you put adverts in the local papers?
 - ▶ How many and what kind of toys will you need? Where will you purchase your toys? Will you accept donations?
 - ▶ Where will you store your toys? Will you need to purchase containers and if so, what kind?
 - ▶ How will you ensure your toys are the correct standard? Will you clean each toy before and after it is loaned out? Will you only purchase toys with the appropriate safety standard?
 - ▶ How will your toy library operate? Will you itemise each toy and log them being loaned out on a computer or a paper system?
3. For advice on how to set up a toy library, other grants that are available, training and health and safety issues, you can contact the National Association of Toy and Leisure Libraries (NATLL).
4. For advice on trading legislation and required health and safety standards of toys in Edinburgh, you can contact Trading Standards at The City of Edinburgh Council.
5. Now you need to attach some figures to your outline project plan. Research venues (consider cost, access and toy storage facilities), you'll also need to get quotes for insurance, and consider running costs. Shop around to find best value. Contact your local papers to find out their advertising rates, and/or a local design agency to get quotes for leaflets and posters.
6. Now you are ready to apply for a Waste Action Grant and may wish to contact the Waste Education Officer on: 0131 469 5070 or email: wasteaction@edinburgh.gov.uk to discuss your application.

CONTACTS

NATLL – National Association of Toy and Leisure Libraries – Advice, grants, training
0131 664 2746 | www.natll.org.uk

The City of Edinburgh Council – Trading Standards
0131 200 2000 | trading.standards@edinburgh.gov.uk | www.edinburgh.gov.uk

Gorgie Toy Library – Home-Start Edinburgh South Central
0131 347 2881 | homestart.edinsc@btconnect.com | <http://www.home-start.org.uk/>

Casselbanks Toy Library
Elizabeth Gillies | 07879284375 | Casselbank Kids Toy Library, South Leith Baptist Church, 5a Casselbank Street, Leith, EH6 5HA

Portobello Toy Library
Eilidh Scott | Toy Box Chairperson | portytoybox@yahoo.co.uk

Case Study: Home Start Edinburgh South Central (HSESC)

Who are they?

HSESC is a voluntary organisation that coordinates the provision of a Toy Library to members from the local community. Through this project it helps to promote a healthy upbringing for children in many ways in addition to providing toys, these include healthy eating talks, encouraging creativity through arts and crafts and English classes to increase social cohesion. Specifically, with regard to waste awareness, they wanted to decrease the quantity of toys going to landfill by encouraging their donation to the project.

What project did they do?

They set up a toy library with a minimal membership charge, which would allow parents to borrow up to 4 items each month, to ensure children would have a stimulating environment to grow and develop. Talks and workshops were also organised to increase the effectiveness of the centre providing help and support to parents.

How much funding did they get?

The toy library project received £2392.00.

What did they spend the funds on?

The money was split between paying for rental space for the toys, purchasing a laptop for administrative work, promotional material printing and the postage costs for distribution.

How did their project work?

The aim of reducing toys going to landfill was achieved by promoting the new service to local residents, charities and agencies who then began to donate their toys. The promotion was done through an advert in the Gorgie & Dalry Gazette and the distribution of 1500 leaflets.

Any top tips or feedback?

1. It is really worthwhile spending a long time getting everything organised before you start - it will pay off!
2. Consider using catalogues: we have a number of catalogues, colour co-ordinated by toy type,

with accompanying photographs for people to select their toys. Each toy also has a coloured dot that indicates how much it will cost to borrow. Toys are stored either in plastic zip folders or fabric bags with photographs and contents list.

3. Consider having lots of volunteers; it takes time to thoroughly clean all toys on return and also locate toys for borrowing.
4. We would suggest using a computer data base programme to record lending. Slips of paper can be used for parents/carers to write down catalogue number and toy description.

Contact group

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