



Newsletter - March 2012

Ethe Toy Library, Belgium

Message from the President of ITLA

Hola, Hello, Ça va,

I hope you had a nice Christmas and New Year season. This is the second newsletter we are doing electronically and we hope you like it.

It is about time to celebrate World Play Day on May 28. It would be worth thinking about what is happening with respect to the Law of the play of children and adolescents - how this right sometimes is not allowed to children by parents, teachers and adults in general that do not understand how vital it is to play.

It is also important to think of ways that our Governments, International Organizations take into account the work that the toy libraries in the world do about defending the right to play but especially the spread of and respect for all rights of children.



Monica playing in a park
World Play Day 2011

We invite you to make World Play Day a big day, highly publicized and full of activities that everyone can enjoy regardless of age. We invite you to make traditional games for adults to remember back to when they were children and played. Invite governments, organizations working for human rights, toy libraries and families to recognize the day of the toy libraries and toy librarians so that we achieve a happy and meaningful celebration for all our population.

And when this event it is done please send your reports and photos so we can make our traditional report that can be shared to all the world.



We are re-developing the WPD logo - which will incorporate the new ITLA logo. It will be available soon on ITLA's website



I give a special welcome to the new ITLA board who are all professionals in toy library matters and who are going to be working very hard with me to achieve our goals and to strengthen ITLA. They are introduced to you on pages 3 - 5 of this Newsletter.

Abrazos, hugs, accolade

Mónica Juárez Soria
ITLA's President

In this issue

	Page
• President's message	1
• Hong Kong Toy Story	2
• The new ITLA Board	3
• Report on the 12th International Toy Library Conference, Brazil, 2011	6
• The 17th Toy Librarian Summer School, Cholet, France	8
• A National Study of Toy Library Users	9
• Toy Review	10
• USA Toy Library Conference 2011	11
• Book Review	12

HONG KONG TOY STORY

Anton Wan - Assistant Director, Playright Children's Play Association,

18A Block F, 3 Lok Man Road, Chai Wan, Hong Kong. anton@playright.org.hk

Playright Children's Play Association (Playright) is a charity which seeks to enrich the life of every child through quality play. We believe that Playright is the voice of children concerning their right to play, that play unlocks the full potential of our children and is a vital part of childhood that will enrich the future for them. Playright has been advocating for the development of toy library provision in Hong Kong since the 1990s. In this article, I would like to share some updates about the development of the Playright toy libraries as well as some newly-developed play provisions for the children of Hong Kong.

PlayScope - "Seeing play from every angle"

First of all, the opening of HSBC Playright PlayScope (www.playscope.org.hk), Playright's own toy library, has clearly shown our strategy of serving families in local communities.

Its slogan "Seeing play from every angle" means PlayScope allows children to have a comprehensive play experience. Parents and children can experience the value of play here through the rich provision of quality toys, references, innovative play tours, play groups as well as the unique Playcircle with interesting themes being changed from time to time throughout the year.



Moreover, we are also honoured to have different organizations and schools come and visit us, which provides an opportunity for us to share with them how to develop toy libraries in their settings. Next time you come to Hong Kong, you may pay a visit to the biggest public toy library on the second floor of Hong Kong Central Library. You will see how children of Hong Kong play with their families in the public library through the provision of a rich variety of toys and a colourful play area.

About Playright

Playright Children's Play Association (Playright), established in Hong Kong in 1987, is a charity which seeks to enrich the life of every child through quality play. We make a difference in the lives of children by encouraging them to play. We further seek to demonstrate to parents, teachers, policy makers and the public at large that quality play is vital if the full range of the child's developmental and other needs is to be successfully met.

Through action, research and publicity covering four strategically related areas – Advocacy, Play Resources, Play Outreach and Play Environments – we are helping to unlock the full potential of children in Hong Kong and elsewhere in Asia. We will be hosting Playright's annual fundraising playday event, Walking on Air 2012, on 26 February at Cyberport, Hong Kong. Keep track on the progress on www.playright.org.hk

The first Mobile Toy Library in Hong Kong

There are several new toy library projects or programmes in Hong Kong. One of the local charities in Hong Kong, Po Leung Kuk, has recently developed a mobile toy library serving children residing in public estates. We are impressed by business sponsorship for this project in partnership with the Housing Authority, which is the statutory organization running public housing estates for low income families in Hong Kong. Our Playright colleagues visited this project and were delighted to see children enjoying borrowed toys at home, and to see children have opportunities to play with quality toys.

A Toy Library with parenting programme

Another project "Loving family, Love-to-play" (www.hkspc.org) is being operated by another local charity, Hong Kong Society for the Protection of Children, which is very experienced in providing services to children and families at a grass-roots level. Children can borrow toys and parents learn how to play with these toys with their children. The beauty of this project is that it emphasizes the importance of parent training in play as well as parenting skills for the holistic development of children.



Learning from Taiwan

With so many new toy library developments in Hong Kong, I was honoured to have an opportunity to be a guest speaker and to share all these developments at the International Toy Library Symposium in Taipei held in May, which was organized by Taiwan Toy Library Association. I was impressed by the toy library development in Taiwan which has been going for more than 20 years. There are now more than 50 toy libraries operating in different parts of Taiwan with different models. You may learn more from their website, www.toylibrary.tw or visit this Association when you visit Taiwan next time.

We still have a lot to do in developing toy libraries in Hong Kong. We believe that they will benefit a lot of parents and children, especially

Introducing the ITLA Board for the period 2011 - 2014

ITLA President - Mónica Juárez Soria - Mexico



Mónica has been a consultant in toy libraries since 1996 and has assisted in the establishment of 130 toy libraries. She is also a trainer in toy librarianship and has trained 150 toy librarians. Mónica is a member of the Mexican Child & Adolescent network.

She has a degree in Economics and 3 Diplomas in play & childhood.

She received training as a toy librarian at the University of Mexico and ATZAR in Spain.

Mónica ran her own toy library for 14 years. She is the president of the Mexican Toy Library Association - Fundación México Juega A.C. (**Mexico Plays**) and served as ITLA secretary from 2008 - 2011



Vice President - Cynthia Morrison - South Africa



Cynthia has a BA Honours degree in Speech Therapy and Audiology.

She founded Active Learning Toy & Leisure Libraries - South Africa in 1993 and retired as the director in 2011.

She has written a manual on using graded toys in child development and developed training courses on this and on toy library administration.

She was elected to the ITLA board in 1999 and served as president from 2002 - 2011

Secretary - Profa Dra Vera Melis Paolillo - Brazil



Vera has a Masters degree in Education and a PhD in Educational Management and Teacher's Education

She is the Head of Department and Coordinator for the undergraduate and master's degree in education at Mackenzie University, and a researcher in the area of Childhood.

Vera coordinated UNESCO in Sao Paulo and is the president of OMEP /BR/SP.

She has published several articles & books. Vera is a member of the board of ABBri (the Toy Library Association of Brazil)

Treasurer - Leonor Santos - Portugal



Leonor is a clinical psychologist/psychotherapist.

She is the coordinator of the Play Activity Department - Child Support Institute in Lisbon.

Leonor is a specialist in the ESAR toy classification system.

World Play Day Coordinator - Alice Lucot - France



Alice has been the director of the National Toy Library Association in France for 19 years.

She organises the Summer University in France annually and organised the 11th International Toy Library Conference in Paris in 2008.

Alice produces the LUDO Toy Library Magazine.

She is very involved in advocacy to ensure the recognition of toy libraries in France.

She is a trainer in several areas including toy library training, play activities, organizing play spaces etc.

Leonor is involved in research and has published several articles.

She is a member of the European Toy Libraries Group



Introducing the ITLA Board for the period 2011 - 2014

Link List Coordinator - Assistant Professor Dr. Isik Kamaraj - Turkey



Isik is a faculty member in the Department of Early Childhood Development at Marmara University in Istanbul.

She opened the first toy library in Turkey in 1999 and organised the first National Toy Library Conference in Turkey in 2011. She organised the first (and later) World Play Day events in Istanbul.

Isik is a member of the European Toy Library Group.

She has written several papers on, for example, *Toy Libraries in Early Childhood* and *Toy Libraries as a valuable support in Society for Everyone*

Member - Dr. Noriko Minejima, M.D. – Japan

Noriko is a medical doctor specializing in pediatrics.



After retiring as head of CHUOAIJEN, a Rehabilitation Center for Disabled Children in 2011, she now works as a pediatrician at the National Rehabilitation Center for Disabled Children in Tokyo. Her speciality is early intervention for disabled children

Noriko is the director of Shinjuku Toy Library "AIJEN" in Tokyo.

She is the Vice-President of the Japanese National Council of Toy Libraries (JNCTL) and has been involved in toy library activities as a volunteer for 29 years.

Member - Jean-Pierre Cornelissen – Belgium



Jean-Pierre is a founder member of ITLA.

He was its first President and served as Vice President for several years

Through his parliamentary experience he has assisted in all ITLA's constitutional matters.



Conference Coordinator - Prof. Youngsook Suh – Korea



Youngsook is a professor at Sookmung Women's University in the Child Welfare Department. Her research area is early childhood care and education and she has been a member of government policy committees in this area.

She is the Chairperson of the Korean Toy Libraries Association and of the Afternoon School Care Association.

For many years, she has led the "TV Turn-Off Week" movement which challenges parents to have more time to play with their children.

Youngsook is leading the conference committee as they plan the 14th International Toy Library Conference which will take place in Seoul, Korea in 2014.

Member - Giorgio Bartolucci Ghelli – Italy



As a member of trade unions, Giorgio opened the first toy library in Italy in 1977.

He is the director of the International Toy Library Centre in Florence. Giorgio is also the founder and Editor in Chief of the bimonthly "La Ludoteca", journal of the Italian toy libraries.

He researched toy libraries in Italy in 1990 and 1998.

Giorgio is involved in the European Project on toys for disabilities. He visits toy libraries around the world and attends many related conferences and events – e.g. ITRA, ICCP, Nuremburg Toy Fair etc.

Giorgio was the Editor of the ITLA newsletter for many years.

Introducing the ITLA Board for the period 2011 - 2014

Member - Aina Khor – Malaysia



Aina is the president of the Malaysian National Toy Library Association

She is the founder director and CEO of the Asia Community Service

Aina is experienced in toy libraries for children with special needs.

She is a member of the Asian Group Network of Toy Libraries

Aina has served on the ITLA board since 1999. She set up the first ITLA website and assists with various technological tasks.



Member - Desiree Mtshweni – South Africa



Desiree is a qualified librarian and holds the position of Assistant Director, Department of Sport, Arts & Culture, Directorate Library, Information & Archive Services, North West Province.

In the past 10 years she has promoted and developed over 90 toy libraries at Community Libraries in the province.

Due to her efforts, the master plan for every new library built in the province includes a toy library. Desiree has ensured that all the toy librarians and the administrative staff in her department have received training on the use of toys and toy library administration

She is the national chairperson of the steering committee of Active Learning Libraries – South Africa

Member - Dominique Dumeste – France



Dominique is a toy librarian working in a mobile toy library in the French Alps.

She has a University Diploma in toy libraries and speaks English, French & Spanish.

Dominique is a member of the board of the Regional French Toy Library Association.

She has organized 3 international mobile toy library conferences.

About the ITLA Board:

Board members are elected for a 3 year term of office - from one conference to another. At each conference, the General Assembly of ITLA members is held during which the election of the board takes place.

Before each conference, a notice about the General Assembly is sent to members. Nowadays, a nomination form for board members is also sent out. Each nominee board member must be a member of ITLA, must be nominated by 2 other members and must provide a description of their background and what they feel they can do for ITLA and toy libraries. Although current board members are eligible for re-election, they also need to be re-nominated.

The Nominating Committee, which includes the past president, at least one board member and one general ITLA member, screens all the nominations and puts forward the names of the nominees to the General Assembly.

The board members generally communicate via email. Halfway between the conferences an interim board meeting is held. Board members have to pay their own travel and accommodation costs, so accepting the nomination to stand for election as an ITLA board member requires a considerable financial commitment. As you will have seen, board members have to travel from Latin America, Asia, Africa & Europe, depending on the venue. If you would like to contact any of the board members, go to the ITLA web site at http://www.itla-toylibraries.org/pages/about_itla/

Results from the XII International Toy Library Conference

São Paulo , Brazil, October 2011

Organization

President: Vera Barros Oliveira - Brazil

Scientific Committee

President: Edda Bomtempo – Brazil

Aidyl M. Q. Pérez–Ramos – Brazil

Ai–Na Khor – Malaysia

Alice Lucot – France

Giorgio Bartolucci – Italy

Ilka Dias Bichara – Brazil

Luana Carramillo Going – Brazil

Maria Borja i Sole – Spain

Pat Atkinson – UK

Renate Fuchs – Switzerland

Executive Committee

President: Nylse Helena S. Cunha – Brazil

Beatriz Picolo Gimenes – Brazil

Drauzio Viegas – Brazil

Maria Cecília Aflalo – Brazil

Marilena Flores Martins – Brazil

Marylande Peres G. Franco – Brazil

Tania Fortuna – Brazil

Vera Melis Paolillo – Brazil

Master of Ceremonies: Vera Melis Paolillo

Participants

Total Participants: 361 persons

Number of Countries that participated: 15

- America: Brazil, Argentina, Colombia, Mexico
- Europe: France, Italy, Spain, Portugal, Denmark, Sweden
- Asia: Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, India
- Africa: South Africa

Conferences/Presentations:

- Opening Conference – Toy Library: A New Existential Posture – Nylse H. S. Cunha, founder and Vice-President of ABBri, Brazil
- I Magna Conference – The Dialog Between Art and Ludic present in the Toy Libraries – Natalia Pais, Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, Lisboa, Portugal
- II Magna Conference – Researches in Toy Libraries: Results and Present Trends – Tizuko Morchida Kishimoto, USP Faculty of Education, Brazil
- III Magna Conference – Games: Their Rhythms, Regulations and Operations – Lino de Macedo, University of Sao Paulo Institute of Psychology, Brazil
- IV Magna Conference – Toy Libraries in Spain: Between Continuing and Change. Its Application on Society – Maria Borja y Solé, Barcelona University, Spain
- V Magna Conference – ITLA: Its Trajectory, Changes and Achievements – Cynthia Morrison, Past President of ITLA, South Africa

II International Meeting Of Toy Library Researchers

President: Tizuko Morchida Kishimoto

Brazilian Ludic Presentations:

I – Chico dos Bonecos (Chico's Puppets)

II – Maracatu (NE Brazilian Dance & Musical Presentation)

III – Brazilian Regional Toys and Games – Renata Meirelles

International Presentations: Spontaneous Ludic and Musical Presentations of different Countries present in the Main Auditorium.

Oral Communications:

Oral Communication I – The Toy Librarian Training

Oral Communication II – Playing and the Toy Library: Mind-Body Integration

Oral Communication III – Education, Health and Culture

Oral Communication V – Creativity & Diversity in Ludic Areas

Each Oral Communication contained an average of six presentations

(Continued on page 7)

Results from the XII International Toy Library Conference São Paulo , Brazil, October 2011(continued from page 6)

Roundtables:

Roundtable I – Toy Libraries In The World

Roundtable II – Play And Games In Toy Libraries

Roundtable III – Toy Librarian Training

Roundtable IV – New Ways For Toy Libraries

Roundtable V – Toy Libraries In Universities

Roundtable VI – Hospital Toy Libraries: Their Benefits

Roundtable VII – Experiences In The ABBri Branches: Hospital, School and Itinerant Toy Libraries

Roundtable VIII – Toy Libraries For Everyone

Roundtable IX – Contribution of Education and Health Professionals for The Toy Libraries

Each Roundtable contained three presentations.

Posters:

Session I: Hospital Toy Libraries

Session II: University, School Toy Libraries and Toy Librarians' Training

Session III: Miscellaneous

Total: 37 Posters

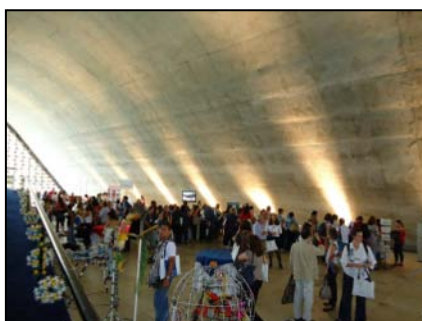
ITLA work

- Board meetings -10/11 October
- 1st Meeting of National Organizations
- Link Persons Meeting
- General Assembly with the election of the new ITLA Board members. Korea made a wonderful presentation of its beautiful Country and was chosen as the host of the next and XIII International Toy Library Conference.

Images of the 12th International Toy Library Conference in São Paulo



The main auditorium



The foyer during tea time



A break-away session



Play during an interval



Cultural exchanges make international conferences so worthwhile



The tradition of handing over the rope of Conference Flags representing each of the 13 host countries. From left to right - new ITLA President, Monica Juarez, Prof. Vera Barros Oliveira (Brazil), Prof. Youngsook Suh (Korea)

More images of the 12th International Conference in Brazil can soon be seen on the ITLA web site - www.itla-toylibraries.org

THE 17TH TOY LIBRARIAN SUMMER SCHOOL, CHOLENT, FRANCE

The French summer school, held from 4 to 8 July 2011, included the following presentations:

THE ROLE OF THE TOY LIBRARIAN AS A FACILITATOR OF PLAY

Speaker: **Imma Marin**, Creative Director, Marinva, Barcelona, Spain. (Toy library manager and developer, reviewer of games and toys, events organiser, creator of video games).

- Play, an activity that involves behaviour and arouses emotions.
- To facilitate play requires a full understanding of child development and the structure of play, but also of one's own playful abilities.
- Reflection upon one's own way of playing leads to self-knowledge and a clearer understanding of the key aspects of one's involvement.

PLAY TO LEARN TO LIVE!

Speaker: **Patrice Huerre**, hospital psychiatrist, psychoanalyst, author of numerous books, including *It's Game Time!*

- The creation of the ability to play. Play: its value at different stages of life.
- The current state of play Impediments ... and some remedies!

HOW TO READ AND EXPLAIN THE RULES OF GAMES

Speaker: **Nathalie Manent**, head of the Toy Library, Manosque Municipality.

- The speedy analysis and understanding of the workings of written rules.
- The demonstration of a way of explaining rules.

NEW 2011 GAMES / TOYS

Speaker: **Lia-Sabine Laverrière** organiser of the toy library at the P.Larousse Elementary School, Paris

- Introduction of new 2011 games / toys.
- Relationships between makers, designers, and distributors.

CREATIVITY THROUGH PLAY and WHAT HAPPENS IN A GAMES DESIGN WORKSHOP

Speaker: **Serge Laget** Education Adviser at the Vaucluse and game designer (Knights of the Round Table, The Broom!, Mare Nostrum etc.

* Design for learning and socialisation at school.

- Design for building personality and self esteem.
- The idea of discovery in games
- Practice in small groups and presentation of the results.
- A look at existing games.

SYMBOLIC PLAY IN TOY LIBRARIES

Speakers: **Nathalie Raucous**, lecturer in the Science of Education at University of Paris 13, researcher at the laboratory of experience and **Nadege Habermusch**, co-director of the Association of Games Library, Ludomobile and Training at St Denis

- Symbolic play: its components, trends and cultural basis.
- Toys: some resources to develop for symbolic play.
- A setting and the organisation necessary for its creation.
- The associated relationships.

HOW TO ORGANISE A LOCAL PLAY EVENT

Speaker: **Anne-Marie Chaminade**, head of the Municipal Toy Library Cagnes-sur-Mer

- Design and set up of an event highlighting local characteristics.
- * Mobilise and encourage partnerships
- * Publicity for events

NOVA CHILD: WHEN INNOVATION IS CHILD'S PLAY

Speakers: **Arnaud Bonnet**, responsible for development and promotion, **Rénauld Lafarge**, head of the the observatory of Nova CHILD (e.g. Pole Enfant) Cholet Nova CHILD, a European network bringing together business, education and research, committed to the welfare of children aged 0 – 12 years *Overview of the latest innovations identified by the Nova CHILD Centre*

DIGITAL CHALLENGE FOR TEENAGERS: BETWEEN EXCESS AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF IDENTITY

Speaker: **Michael Stora**, psychologist, psychoanalyst and co-founder of the Observatory of Digital Worlds Blog culture

- Persistent worlds: vast multi-player online games.

- Video games and social networks.
- The place of toy libraries in a digital culture.



ITLA is glad to share the content of courses held throughout the world. We can discover what other countries feel are useful topics. We will all gather ideas of topics that we ourselves, wherever we are, could put on the Agenda for our own courses and conferences.

What would be so meaningful is if a toy librarian that has attended a particularly interesting course would write a brief report on the topic, so that we can all learn a bit more. Our challenge, of course, is translating the report. However, using Google translator we can at least get a sense of what was discussed.

Let ITLA know what your views are on this. Contact Maxine at news.itla@gmail.com

A NATIONAL STUDY OF TOY LIBRARY USERS

Lucie K. Ozanne, Julie L. Ozanne and Paul W. Ballantine

The following is an abridged summary of the report into New Zealand toy libraries. If you would like a copy of the full report, please contact the Office.

office@toylibrary.co.nz

Our thanks to Lucie for undertaking this research and providing us with her findings.

Abstract

Communities throughout the world generally hold that children have a fundamental right to play. In fact, a long history of public policies and laws seek to promote play by providing a range of financial and material resources. Toy libraries are an important resource that can provide children with vital developmental tools for play by allowing families to borrow toys in a process similar to public book libraries. A two stage study, including both a qualitative and a quantitative stage, was conducted in New Zealand to explore the range of meanings and benefits provided to toy library users. In the qualitative stage, nineteen in-depth interviews were conducted with parents, and supplemented with fifteen brief interviews with children, who frequent toy libraries to explore how families use the toy libraries to gain a variety of benefits and construct different social meanings. In the quantitative stage, the authors use quantitative data from 397 toy library members to explore why members choose to participate and to determine their level of satisfaction with toy library services in New Zealand. The quantitative stage reveals four groups – Socialites, Market Avoiders, Quiet Anti-Consumers and Passive Members. The Socialites enjoy the social benefits of active participation in their library. The Market Avoiders also perceived social and community benefits, are interested in sharing, and are the least materialistic of the groups. The Quiet Anti-Consumers feel a sense of belonging to their toy library and hold strong anti-consumption, frugality and sharing values. The Passive Members are not socially involved, nor did they hold strong anti-consumption values.

The right to play is a child's first claim on the community. Play is nature's training for life. No community can infringe that right without doing deep and enduring harm to the minds and bodies of its citizens.

David Lloyd George (1926)

Introduction

Lloyd George asserted that children's right to play is a fundamental right of citizenship (Powell and Seaton 2007). Children's right to recreation was formally affirmed by The Declaration on the Rights of the Child (UN General Assembly 1959). Play was again acknowledged as a basic right of children worldwide in the United Nations Conventions on the Rights of the Child (UN General Assembly 1989), which by the end of 2008 was signed by 192 nations. Thus, communities throughout the world generally hold that children have a fundamental right to play. In fact, a long history of public policies and laws seek to promote play by providing a range of financial and material resources. Toy libraries are an important

resource that can provide children with vital developmental tools for play by allowing families to borrow toys in a process similar to public book libraries.

Although toy libraries have been in existence since the 1930's and New Zealand has one of the highest numbers of toy libraries in the world, second only to Switzerland, very little is known about the benefits of participation in toy libraries. In order to address this gap in the literature, a two part study was undertaken.

Limitations and Conclusions

Although we attempted to capture a range of experiences with the toy library, by sampling a range of large and small libraries, our findings are likely more representative of lower middle class to upper middle class families. Families of lower socio-economic levels may utilize toy libraries in different ways and derive different benefits. For instance, research in the U.K. conducted in areas of economic and social disadvantage found that parents valued the toy libraries as a "gateway to other opportunities" and an accessible form of work experience (Capacity and Play Matters 2007, p. 15). However, additional research is needed to understand how toy libraries impact the relationship to the marketplace for consumers with fewer resources.

Public policy makers who are concerned about levels of materialism and the negative impact of the marketplace on children's lives should find these results useful (Linn 2005). The qualitative results suggest that parents are concerned about the intrusion of the marketplace on childhood, but they have attempted to restrict that intrusion through their use of the toy library. Also, based on the many benefits reported by parents, toy libraries offer a potentially valuable community resource that should be more widely available. Public policy makers should recognise that toy libraries can provide access to toys that are well suited to support children's intellectual, physical, and social development particularly in communities marked by concentrated economic disadvantage.

In terms of recommendations for those responsible for operating toy libraries in New Zealand, first they should be commended for the very high degree of satisfaction reported by the nearly 400 respondents who completed the national survey and the interviewed parents.

Respondents report a high degree of satisfaction with the fees charged by toy libraries, the number of toys they may borrow and the length of borrowing period, with the duties required of them as toy library volunteers, and most importantly with the condition and selection of toys they may borrow. Parents also feel they may save money by utilising their toy library, can access a large number of toys and can try toys before they buy them. Many also report feeling connected to their toy library and that it is fun to participate in the duties of their toy library.

However, the results of both stages of this study suggest that toy libraries could more effectively target toy library users. For example, toy libraries could communicate to Socialites the social benefits of participating in a toy library. Conversely, by recognising that these social aspects are not as important to Passive Members, toy library members in this group may find it desirable to pay a higher subscription fee if it allowed them to forgo toy library duties.

As Neil Postman (1982, xi) states: "Children are the living messages we send to a time we will not see." Local community toy libraries support our youngest citizens' first claim on the community—the right to play. Moreover, toy libraries extend this right to include the right to play with diverse material objects that challenge children in a safe environment with significant social interaction, which are all important for early childhood development.

In conclusion, our findings suggest that parents are actively engaged socializing their children by using toy libraries to mediate the influence of the market on their children.

These parents find the toy library to be a stress-free alternative to buying in the marketplace providing their children with greater influence to pursue a wide range of toys and develop diverse skills.

While past research suggests that children are becoming more market savvy (Gunther and Furnham 1998) and sophisticated consumers (Valkenburg and Cantor 2001), our findings suggest that parents intervene to diminish the impact of the market on their children. Parents appreciated the non-commercialised space of the toy library that offered a safe haven for exploration and growth through the sharing of collective goods.

While strong yet different ideological themes were found throughout the qualitative data, they represent the parents re-appropriating the original meaning and the more traditional benefits espoused within toy libraries (Dockrell and Wilkinson 1989). Moreover, these findings suggest a potentially more relevant and invigorating direction that toy libraries and other communities of sharing might use to attract a broader and more committed set of patrons.

Some links of interest regarding this research - provided by Prof Julie L. Ozanne, one of the researchers:

- university publicity: <http://www.pamplin.vt.edu/magazine/spring11/toylibraries.html>
- a radio interview: <http://withgoodreasonradio.org/2011/09/the-kids-are-alright/>

TOY REVIEW

Mirror Chimeabout - from Eduplay

This is a very popular toy with the families attending The Toyhouse Centre, London, UK.

It consists of a wooden stand hung round with 12 strips of unbreakable mirror Perspex, each with a small metal bell attached.

Just a touch sets the reflections dancing and the bells softly jingling, providing audio visual stimulation and encouraging curiosity and further exploration.

Although fun for all children, the ease of movement makes it good for very young children or those who may have a disability. The toy is a good mix of natural and manmade materials, making it both tactile and pleasing to the eye, encouraging eye and hand coordination and fine motor skills.

It is easy to grip and light enough for even a young child to lift or move, increasing the movement of the strips and sound as they knock together and the bells jingle. A slip resistant mat could be used if you wanted to stabilise the toy.

You could get similar learning outcomes by using materials from your environment such as shells, pebbles or pieces of wood and threading them onto cord, allowing freedom of movement when touched.

Light reflection and sound could be increased by adding foil, bottle tops or buttons.



Jess having fun while learning

Julie Morgan,
Deputy Manager: Toyhouse, Tower hamlets, London, UK
Julie.morgan@toyhouselibraries.org.uk

Lucky Fourth Conference Delivers a Winner

It was the 7th May, the day of the Kentucky Derby, and all wagers were on the USA-TLA and Turrell Childcare and Early Learning Center conference in Paramus, N.J., U.S.A., happening in the daytime hours before the race. Entitled, “*Ready, Set, Explore!*” the conference looked anew at hands-on learning. It was the fourth conference sponsored by the two organizations, and the polish showed.

Some 55 attendees shut the door on one of America’s better spring days and bet their Saturday on a great indoor event. It did not disappoint – the evaluations revealed that each speaker offered content that was fresh and valued.

Three celebrity spokeswomen, trusted names to the USA-TLA, took over the podium for 90 minutes and gave attendees new tools for preschool teaching.

First was Nina Hillery, infant/toddler specialist, formerly with First Steps, Child Care Connection in Akron, Ohio, and before that, for 25 years, head of the Toy and Resource Center, also in Akron.

Hillery Homes In on Letting Go

In Hillery’s workshop, attendees spent 45 minutes creating artwork – self-portraits and other creations with buckets of materials Hillery provided. They chatted about what it was like, trying to fit into their preschoolers shoes, when given paper, scissors, crayons, yarn, ribbon and other materials to work with. They learned that when authorities (i.e., teachers) “let go,” those in their care (i.e., students) become creative problem-solvers.

“These exercises demonstrated the meaning of ‘hands-on,’” said Hillery, “by providing accessible materials so children are working with what they are interested in. This leads to longer attention spans and greater learning opportunities.



Participants totally focused on the activity

“This is play through art, and the typical outcome is that the child is engaged--not just doing something mechanically, but actively concentrating on and enjoying the process. That’s the difference: the learning is self-directed at a very young age.”

Peals of laughter rocked the room as attendees paired off for a “hand-dance” mirroring game. Following the beat of music playing in the background, one of the two-some took the lead and “danced” with her hands, palms facing her partner’s palms. Her partner, in turn, mirrored with her hands. No hand-touching was allowed as the four hands moved in the pantomime.

Redleaf calls for reflection on play value

Rhoda Redleaf, instructor and author who has spent much of her life teaching childcare providers, came next to the podium and spoke about the diminished play opportunities in childhood today in America. She emphasized how this lack is bearing out in adulthood with a deficit in creativity and some forms of leadership. She quoted a story that ran in *Newsweek* magazine in 2010.

“For the first time, research shows that American creativity is declining.” She read from the opening salvo of the article that pointed to the latest results from the Torrance Tests of Critical Thinking that assess Americans’ “CQ” - creativity quotient.

“Measuring the CQ involves a series of simple tests to track divergent thinking and other problem-solving skills. These are scored based on fluency, flexibility, originality, and elaboration. First developed by E. Paul Torrance, researchers have been administering these tests to children as well as tracking their successes as adults since the 1950s. ... The correlation to lifetime creative accomplishment was more than three times stronger for childhood creativity than childhood IQ.”quoted Redleaf.

She noted that although not a perfect assessment of creativity, the CQ scores of kids do seem to be a prediction of their “creative accomplishments” as adults.

Redleaf encouraged the audience to reinvigorate playtime in the classroom. She also asked participants to group-up and outline some cost-effective field trips they could undertake with the children they teach. The groups offered such suggestions as field trips to grocery stores, hotels, and public libraries. By examining these operations in detail, children learn about science, math, reading, safety and many more aspects of the social life surrounding them.

(Continued on page 10)

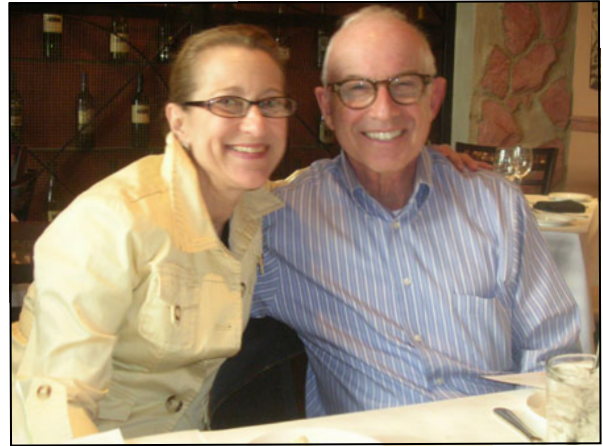
Eslinger tempts audience with top-of-the-line toys

Leslie Eslinger, education and product development specialist for Becker School Supply in Penn., led an exploration of a variety of toys. Entitled "What's on your Toy Shelf and Why," Eslinger, who headed a childcare program in Philadelphia for many years that supported low-income families, began with an examination of "old favorites" -- Hula hoops, Silly Putty and Lincoln Logs, toys that have withstood the test of time. Each one scored high in play value and triggering the imagination. Eslinger looked at the transformation of Mr. Potato Head, originally a potato from the garden, and how through technology and innovation, it retains a contemporary feel and value. She covered a selection of educational, colorful, fun and durable toys in her presentation.

Ms. Eslinger's creative thinking is also revealed in a book she wrote called, "Theme Kits Made Easy." In this excellent compendium she provides a wide sampling of themes for teachers to use in lessons on geography, science, history, math, storytelling and the like.

At the end of the day...thumbs up

Summarizing the conference, chair Sandy Richards, head of the Turrell Childcare & Learning Center, said, "We thank Nina, Rhoda and Leslie for their wonderful workshops and for providing the attendees with important information that supports their teaching."



Leslie and Martie

BOOK REVIEW

From neurons to neighborhoods: the science of early childhood development

By Jack P. Shonkoff, Deborah Phillips
National research Council, Institute of Medicine, 2000

Amazon reviews:

"How we raise young children is one of today's most highly personalized and sharply politicized issues, in part because each of us can claim some level of "expertise." The debate has intensified as discoveries about our development-in the womb and in the first months and years-have reached the popular media.

How can we use our burgeoning knowledge to assure the well-being of all young children, for their own sake, as well as for the sake of our nation? Drawing from new findings, this book presents important conclusions about nature-versus-nurture, the impact of being born into a working family, the effect of politics on programs for children, the costs and benefits of intervention, and other issues.

The committee issues a series of challenges to decision makers regarding the quality of child care, issues of racial and ethnic diversity, the integration of children's cognitive and emotional development, and more. Authoritative yet accessible, "From Neurons to Neighborhoods" presents the evidence about "brain wiring" and how kids learn to speak, think, and regulate their behavior. It examines the

effect of the climate-family, child care, community-within which the child grows."

"The product of a two and one half year investigation involving 22 members of the Committee on Integrating the Science of Early Childhood Development. This committee is part of the National Academy of Sciences. The funding for the study came from a wide range of public and private sponsors. The best minds in the fields of neurobiological studies and behavioral and social sciences converge to create the "SCIENCE" of early childhood development.

The old "nature vs. nurture" battle is revisited as well as the impact of culture on development. This book contains an in-depth discussion of the latest early brain development information. Research well-documents the fact that the first years of life are important! They build the base for future development.

"Windows of opportunity" do not "close" at certain ages making learning impossible. However, learning of some skills is easier in early life. The effort to develop these skills past the "window of opportunity" involves not only more work but the extra cost of intervention.

Environment is important to early learning. Relationships, however, are the core of it all in early childhood. This book clearly spells this out so policy makers and businesses will know what is necessary in the making of our next generation."

We hope you have enjoyed this edition of the ITLA Newsletter. Thanks to all the contributors. Please send comments, articles, reports, website links of interest, book and toy reviews to Maxine: news.itla@gmail.com