

New Central Library: Patterns for Youth Spaces

## **Patterns for Youth Spaces in the New Central Library**

- 1. Programming Spaces**
- 2. Child-Friendly Places**
- 3. Teen-Friendly Places**
- 4. Public-Friendly Places**
- 5. General Guideline Patterns**



## 1. Programming Spaces

### Three Types of Program – Storytimes, Performances, Group Activities

- **Problem...** Public programs at the Library fall into three broad categories, and if the spaces we have to perform them are not suited, we cannot meet this core service need.

- **Solution...** Ideally, create independent spaces that are perfectly suited to these needs. Alternately, make sure any flexible spaces can meet all three of these needs well.

#### Storytimes

##### Storytime Area

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- **Problem...** Needs to be cozy, free from visible and audible distractions, large enough for a group, but not as intimidating as a “stage.”

- **Solution...** (Here is one way of filling in the pattern - Should be separate from other areas, possibly a room within a room, a glass enclosed room with windows on three sides, starting at three feet high – parents can feel comfortable leaving children alone because they can look in on them. Children will be freed from distractions due to the low wall beneath the glass. Space will be cozy with wall murals, murals on the glass, hanging toys and other objects on the ceiling (insects? Nature? Maybe a mural of grass on the one wall with the grass mural continuing around the room --- oversized insects, like the children have been shrunk down and are now the size of ants...overhead large mobile dragonflies and butterflies hanging from the ceiling) Public entrance at the back, cabinets or tables to display books and realia. movable picture book shelves – move out the picture books to provide a larger space for the children’s programs)

#### Performances

##### Children’s Programming Stage

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- **Problem...** Children need to sit on the ground for children’s shows and parents need seats with backs

- **Solution...** Must have a very low stage (one step up) for visibility and safety, with seating around the perimeter (Murphy bed style?) for caregivers. Floor must be soft for children to sit on, but durable, replaceable, and washable (if food is to be allowed in the space)

- **Problem...** Room must be able to be darkened for puppet and shadow shows.

- **Solution...** Theatre must be a separate, closed-off room with dimmable lighting, with a professional light and sound system booth for special effects during performances

- **Problem...** Exiting children/parents during a performance can be distracting.

- **Solution...** Exists near the back of the room away from the stage area, ideally with some kind of “light lock” or curtain covering the alcove where the door is located to keep the light from the opening doorway from distracting those watching the performance.

- **Problem...** Overcrowding at some performances can be difficult to control, and people disrupting performance by coming in late

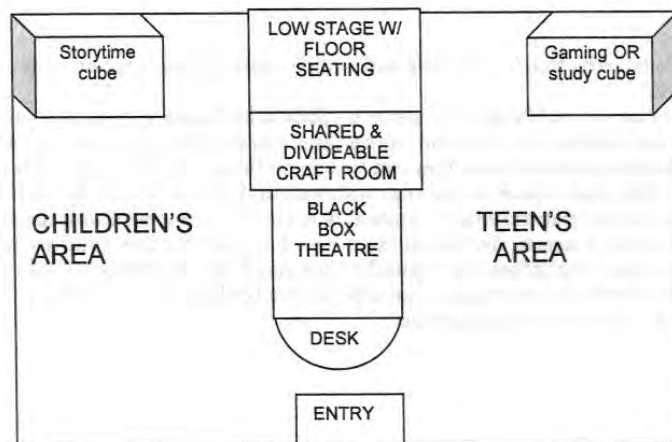
- **Solution...** One way doors so staff has the option to exercise “no re-entry” or disallow additional entrants to a performance by making the door lock when people try to re-enter (would still be open for those exiting).

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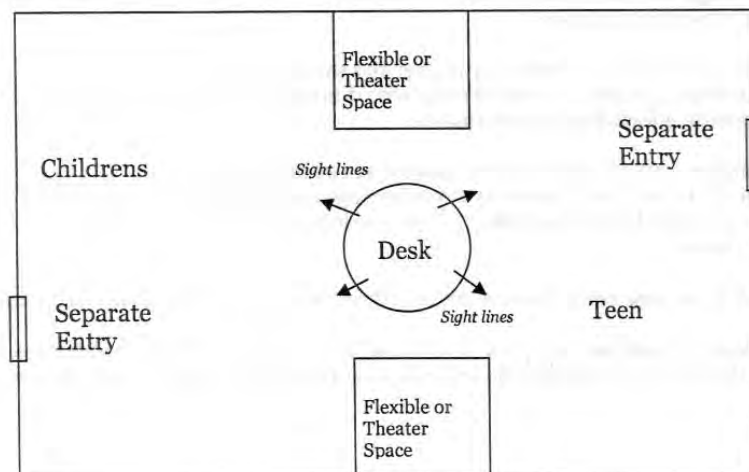
### Shared Performance Space

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- **Problem...** tables and chairs too heavy and bulky to remove easily, safely, and without damage
- **Solution...** durable, light-weight, attractive stacking and folding furniture
- **Problem...** Current performances are limited by facilities and technology
- **Solution...** Provide professional level lighting, sound booth, dressing rooms, puppet show storage, and prop/costume storage room,
- **Problem...** Puppet and costume-making are projects that require a great deal of workspace
- **Solution...** Provide work surfaces, tool and supply storage, as well as puppet-making and costume-making work areas for programming team



### Alternate layout:





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### Auditorium Theater

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- **Problem...** Performances are activities that work best in a special space, dark so that other spaces can be light.
- **Solution...** Create an Auditorium Theater for the Library or for the Youth Area, where performances are ideal.

### Presentation Space in the Public Area

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- **Problem...** Presenters must control crowds indoors. Presenters need to be able to see the audience enter the theatre's space throughout the program and there must be plenty of seating for large crowds. Large crowds necessitate aisles for quick and easy egress, regardless of whether audience members are on the floor or in chairs. Note: An amphitheatre or stage in the public area such as the one at the Ruiz branch is appropriate for a school library but not for public libraries. An amphitheatre in the middle of the children's space offers only two presentation options for presenters – sit/stand in front of the “bleachers” or sit on them and seat the audience on the floor. The presenter, when sitting at the bottom, is forced to look up at the crowd and their back is to the entrance. This does not allow them to see the audience as they enter or leave the space.

- **Solution...** Build the theatre space in its own room.  
Have a whole separate activity center

### Black Box Theater (Teen)

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- **Problem...** a separate performance space is needed as well as meeting space for programs
- **Solution...** black box theater can be used as a meeting space or craft room when not in use as a theater
- **Problem...** no place for performances to take place
- **Solution...** black box theater can that can be used in many different ways: craft room, meeting room

### Group Activities

#### Craft Room

26

- **Problem...** Some children's and teen activities can be messy, noisy and potentially hazardous to books
- **Solution...** An Art and Science room with glass walls, cabinets, sinks, lots of lockable storage, washable tables, some low tables and some adult height, washable flooring, wall space for displaying art, lots of power outlets including some in the middle of the floor, washable stackable storable seating

#### Materials Storage in Craft Room

25

- **Problem...** Crafts would benefit from having the ability to store the most common materials nearby.
- **Solution...** Create built-in storage in the craft room so that it's easier to plan, stage, and clean up crafts.
- **Problem...** Need common area for staff space near craft storage to work on program materials,
- **Solution...** Have large tables, laminator, die-cuts, copier with craft materials, include computer for multi-staff use- color printer for flyers, toy-box checkout

#### Functional Craft Room

21

- **Problem...** Sinks are often used in crafts. Ovens can be also. Tables and chairs are moved around frequently. Large workspaces are needed. Materials storage, flexible work surfaces, and display space are needed.
- **Solution...** Include sinks in craft room. Have in-the-wall lockable storage cabinets to house supplies. Consider an oven for craft room. Consider Murphy bed style tables and seating for craft room. Include storage, work surfaces, and displays.



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### Teen Gaming Place

20

- **Problem...** Gaming is best done in a specialized environment.
- **Solution...** Make a space that's great for gaming. Make sure it can adapt over time to changes in gaming technology.

### Program Space Near Teen Area

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- **Problem...** Programs need their own spaces, ideally close to other activities but separate enough for sound differences.
- **Solution...** Create program space that is adjacent or near to Teen area.

(Items below were submitted after the voting process.)

### Rehearsal Space

- **Problem:** Some groups in Youth Services need a flexible space large enough for movement and rehearsal.
- **Solution:** Create a large flexible space that can be used for rehearsals.



## 2. Child-Friendly Places

### Child Friendly Places

36

- **Problem...** Children's and Teen's library needs are different than those of adults
- **Solution...** Have separate floor for children's / youth areas than those for adults -- perhaps half a floor devoted to teens and the other half of the floor devoted to children, separated by a theatre/performance space in the middle joining the two

### Shelving Area

28

- **Problem;** Shelving is not adaptable for different items.
- **Solution;** Shelving can be adjusted for different items (including backs of shelves so items don't slide behind).  
movable picture book shelves  
high density shelving – southwest solutions.com

### Quiet Spaces, Louder Spaces (Childrens)

26

- **Problem...** Study and computer spaces are too close to noisy parts of the library
- **Solution...** Designate noise levels for different areas of the library. Create spaces that are appropriately noisy or quiet for the space's activity.

### Desk Presence

22

- **Problem...** It is easiest to serve customers, and for them to find help, if there is an identifiable place where Librarians can be, separate from their back-office spaces.
- **Solution...** Make sure there is a Desk Presence in the youth library, that it is easily identified, and that customers can intuit that the space is for Librarians and not customers (ie, make sure it doesn't encourage customer walk-throughs or usage as laptop space when unstaffed.)

### Furniture to Scale

22

- **Problem...** Small children climb on furniture too big for them, creating a safety hazard and making the children feel unwelcomed.
- **Solution...** Create a space where there is furniture just the right size for children to use safely and enjoyably.

### Safety, Visibility, Soundproofing

21

- **Problem...** Safety and visibility of children
- **Solution...** The children's area needs to be physically defined by walls, glassed walls, windows, and/or other sound-proofing materials. The area needs to be visible from the exterior, to ensure the safety of the children.

### Shelves with Backs On Them

21

- **Problem...** books fall through the back of the shelf and are lost
- **Solution...** make sure all shelves have backs

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### Minimize the Need for Book Carts, or Provide Space for Book Carts

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- **Problem:** most of our collection lives on bookshelves waiting to be reshelfed
- **Solution:** Ideally, create visible pre-sorting shelves, to minimize the need for book carts altogether. Alternately, create space for book carts to live so they don't block walkways and shelving.

### Proper Proportions

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- **Problem...** Spaces the wrong size for children will be uncomfortable and intimidating to them.
- **Solution...** Make sure room dimensions are in proportion to their customers, that furniture sizes fit them, and that adults can still move comfortably.

### Safe, comfortable, and clean flooring (carpet tiles)

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- **Problem...** Children who are learning to walk need safe, soft flooring. Children in general need no-slip flooring. The library community needs quiet(ish) flooring. With food allowed in the Library, materials must be washable.
- **Solution...** Soft spongy carpet tiles that can be replaced and easily cleaned.

### Safe, comfortable, and clean flooring (example: bamboo)

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- **Problem...** Carpet is fine, but not all areas need carpet and variety in flooring is good for wear and tear.
- **Solution:** Explore materials other than carpet for high-traffic, high-mess areas. Craft areas, walkways, food areas. Example: bamboo or stained & sealed composite-board for flooring in areas that do not need carpet, because it can be easily cleaned, it wears extremely well, it's made of sustainable material, it lends variety to the same old carpet tiles, and it has a warm, welcoming feel.



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### Teen Lounge (Soundproofed, Visible Into, Snack-Friendly)

21

- **Problem...** Teens want a big space where they can make some noise and be themselves in groups.
- **Solution...** Create a big space which has some sound insulation, and is snack-friendly, for events and activities.
- **Problem...** Adults take over teen seating and space.
- **Solution...** Adults can only enter teen area accompanied by a teen, or by permission of library staff (to access books).

### Book / GN Display Alcoves

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- **Problem...** Shelving is at a premium, and teens like to sit in smaller spaces for privacy and autonomy.
- **Solution...** Create alcoves with shelves, open on one side (in a C or U shape), so that a small group of teens could sit and read right next to books and graphic novels. Use them to break up the monotony of long ranges of shelves while allowing radial sight lines into them.

**Problem:** Graphic novels are being placed on the same shelving as everything else and fall over repeatedly.  
**Solution:** Shelving that is more solid than the current metal movable ones and more sturdy bookends or other material for holding books up. Consider wooden, bookstore-type shelving.

### Plenty of Room

19

- **Problem...** Teens want to feel like they have flexibility of movement, as well as choice in where they go and what they do.
- **Solution...** Create bigger and smaller spaces, where teens can be quieter in small groups or louder in big groups. Interlock them so that there is variety and choice.

### Small Quiet Spaces and Big Louder Spaces (Teen)

18

- **Problem...** Teens who are talking are too close to teens who are reading or studying.
- **Solution...** Create areas where teens can gather and talk or make noise, separate from quiet reading areas ... "gaming box" – glass-walled cube that houses teens participating in louder activities
- **Problem...** Teens want places to be themselves and find quiet, as well as louder places.
- **Solution...** An option would be to flip the Quiet spaces/louder spaces above --- have a series of small private reading rooms for teens who want quiet, and have the main area be noisier

### Inside Green Space

17

- **Problem...** while inside people are disconnected from most life in our environment – for teens this may cause increased agitation i.e. E.O Wilson biophilia hypothesis
- **Solution...** create a small indoor area that evokes outside life by placing planted plants, having a skylight or doing other things to bring it closer to outside life

### Many People, Separate Groups / Variety of Different Spaces and Places

14

- **Problem...** Teens want a variety of places to be and people to meet.
- **Solution...** Encourage diversity by creating places for lots of manageable smaller groups. Manage giant clusters and crowds by creating spaces for smaller groups to form. Find ways to encourage different people in different places... and to make sure teens feel safe and welcomed in their space.



## 4. Public-Friendly Places

### Customer-Usable Spaces (Plugs, etc (as at ANV))

27

- **Problem...** Study kiosks and tables need power and connectivity.
- **Solution...** Make sure adult workspaces are wired and flexible, with outlets at table height and comfortable dimensions.

### Family Friendly Places

27

- **Problem...** Parents and/or caregivers don't have comfortable seating to read to or with their children.
- **Solution...** Create small reading areas with comfortable seating away from traffic patterns to allow for parent/child reading.

### Shelving Sized Proportionate to Materials

26

- **Problem:** Graphic novels are being placed on the same shelving as everything else and fall over repeatedly.
- **Solution:** Shelving that is more solid than the current metal movable ones and more sturdy bookends or other material for holding books up.
- Problem:** Picture books and oversized books stick out of narrow shelves
- Solution:** Deeper shelving with backs, and taller spaces between shelves so all materials can stand up

### Hike & Bike Trail Entry Welcomes Customers

26

- **Problem...** If there is no easy access to the Library from the adjacent Hike & Bike trail, we will lose customers and present an alienating face to the public.
- **Solution...** Create a welcoming entry foyer adjacent to the Hike & Bike Trail, perhaps small and customized for those customers. Give it easy access to water fountains, restrooms, places to sit, and the rest of the Library.

### Family Friendly Bathrooms

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- **Problem...** Families with small children have to share bathrooms with adults.
- **Solution...** Create family bathrooms throughout the library, particularly in youth area.