

READING AND LITERACY FOR ALL:

QUALITY INDICATORS FOR
EARLY YEARS LITERACY PROGRAMS
IN VICTORIAN PUBLIC LIBRARIES

Contents

02 Introduction

04 Early years literacy: The challenge

05 Quality standards for early years literacy programs

06 EY1 – Sound educational underpinning

07 EY2 – Fun and enjoyable for all participants

08 EY3 – Model effective reading behaviours to children and their family members or carers

09 EY4 – Competent, passionate presenters

09 EY5 – Inspire a love of reading and words

10 EY6 – Target and involve both children and their family members or carers

10 EY7 – Story-based

11 EY8 – Facilitate access to library collections and services

11 EY9 – Complement other early years services

12 EY10 – Effective evaluation processes

13 EY11 – Respond appropriately to local needs and conditions

14 Assessment

15 Using the quality standards checklist

17 Checklist: Quality standards for early years literacy programs

26 Impact evaluation framework for early years literacy programs

27 Performance indicators

28 Data collection, analysis and reporting

31 Appendix: Early years literacy toolkits and resources

Introduction

In 2015 State Library Victoria and Public Libraries Victoria Network published *Reading and literacy for all: A strategic framework for Victorian public libraries 2015-18*. This framework included recommendations for an early years literacy program that engages Victorian children and their families in building early literacy skills and encouraging a love of reading. The full set of recommendations is outlined in *Reading and literacy for all: Early years program recommendations*, which is available at slv.vic.gov.au/read-program and plvn.net.au.

Quality indicators for early years literacy programs in Victorian public libraries focuses on two key priorities outlined in the recommendations:

- an industry-agreed, stakeholder-endorsed quality framework that articulates minimum and best-practice standards for public libraries' early years literacy programs
- a consistent and outcome-focused approach to evaluating the impact of those programs.

In addition to providing an overview of the current literacy challenge in Victoria and the context for public libraries taking a more integrated and authoritative sector-wide approach to early years literacy programming, this document provides comprehensive information on all aspects of the quality indicators:

Quality standards

- [detailed descriptions](#) of each of the 11 quality standards and their assessment criteria
- an explanation of the [assessment process](#)
- instructions on scoring and [using the quality standards checklist](#)
- a [sample assessment](#)
- the [quality standards checklist](#) (a separate form is available at slv.vic.gov.au/read-program)

Impact evaluation framework

- [performance indicators](#) and measures for evaluating the quality, reach, uptake and impact of early years literacy activities
- [information on data collection](#) (including responsibilities), reporting and analysis.

Quality indicators: Roles and responsibilities

Every Victorian public library service is responsible for maintaining and continuously improving the quality of its early years literacy services. That is:

- engaging with the community and understanding its need for early years literacy services
- developing appropriate services to respond to the identified community need
- resourcing quality delivery of early years literacy services
- delivering appropriate early years literacy services
- measuring and evaluating local participation in and impact of early years literacy services
- assessing, at least annually, service quality and delivery and contributing to statewide assessment of public libraries' early years literacy services.

State Library Victoria and Public Libraries Victoria Network are responsible for:

- developing and maintaining the early years literacy quality indicators, the quality standards for early years literacy programs, and the impact evaluation framework
- facilitating access to relevant program development and workforce development opportunities
- facilitating cross-sector collaboration and innovation to enhance the quality and alignment of libraries' early years literacy services
- annually compiling and analysing self-assessment data captured by public libraries
- annually reporting on and showcasing participation in, delivery of and the impact of public libraries' early years literacy services
- fostering strategic connections with relevant early years sector stakeholders
- advocating at a sector and statewide level on behalf of public libraries.

Definitions

Early years – between birth and six years
[Note: the standard definition is birth to eight years, but in the context of the quality indicators the focus is on birth to six years]

Early years literacy programs – 'core' library programs with a specific focus on early years literacy (for example, storytime, Rhyme Time, Sing Along, Baby Bounce)

Early years literacy services – library programs and activities, regular and one-off, with a specific focus on early years literacy; can include children's collections – notably board and picture books

Families and carers – people such as parents, grandparents, older responsible siblings, adult friends and caregivers

Library service – a regional library corporation, a municipal library service, or State Library Victoria

Library services – library collections (physical and virtual), programs, events, facilities, spaces, technology access and other ancillary services

Participants – children and adults (family members and carers) participating in an early years literacy activity

Early years literacy: The challenge

Victoria's public libraries and State Library Victoria make a unique contribution to early years literacy. Every week many thousands of pre-school-age children across the state participate in storytime and similar library programs that inspire a love of reading and teach foundation literacy and reading skills. These programs also model effective reading behaviours and encourage adult family members and carers to read to and with their children on a regular basis.

These are important skills and behaviours: literacy is an essential life skill for Victorians of all ages. It is fundamental to all learning, a building block of education and development, and integral to economic, civic and social participation.

While Victorians' performance on key literacy measures is as good as our national peers', it has shown little sign of improvement over the past decade. At the same time, literacy levels in the world's top-performing nations are improving rapidly.

Early learning participation in Australia is among the lowest in the developed world. Recent increases in investment in early childhood education have not yet resulted in high levels of participation.

- Only 18 per cent of three-year-old Australians participate in early childhood education, compared with an OECD average of 70 per cent. (Australia ranks 34th of 36 OECD countries.)
- Data from the Australian Early Development Census indicates that 16 per cent of Victorian children of pre-school age are developmentally 'vulnerable' or 'at risk' in the domains of language and cognitive skills.

Parents and carers are a child's first teachers, and the home environment (in particular the extent to which children acquire literacy skills and habits from the adults raising them) is the key to early childhood literacy. Children who are read to six or seven times a week have a literacy level almost a year ahead of children who are not read to at home. However, not all children have parents who are able to read to them or who can afford to purchase books or provide them with literacy-based activities. Children from poorer families and those from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds are most at risk of starting school with fewer literacy prerequisites.

Children who start school behind typically stay behind: if a child is a poor reader at the end of Year 1, there is a 90 per cent chance that they will still be a poor reader at the end of Year 4. It is therefore imperative that children be actively supported in their language and literacy development and encouraged from an early age to love reading. Beyond the direct literacy benefits, reading contributes positively to personal wellbeing, health, social and economic outcomes.

Public libraries have a natural advantage in supporting reader and literacy development. Libraries are, and always have been, places of and for learning – places that promote and encourage a culture of reading by providing universal access to books and related programs for people of all ages and interests.

Public libraries are free, open to all and widely accessible across the state. Public libraries have rich collections, active and engaging programs, and staff who actively encourage and support library users to read, access information and improve their language and digital literacy skills. The combined power of these factors underpins the strength of the public library network as an agent for improving reading and literacy outcomes in ways that other organisations or networks cannot.

Quality standards for early years literacy programs

In order to strengthen and broaden the contribution public libraries make to early years literacy outcomes, State Library Victoria and Public Libraries Victoria Network, in consultation with stakeholders, have established a set of standards for early years literacy programming. Implementation of this quality framework will assure public libraries, their partners and major stakeholders, and the community that the library programs young children and parents regularly attend are not only fun, but also explicitly contribute to improved literacy outcomes.

Building on the comprehensive range of early years literacy activities that currently occur in Victorian public libraries, the quality standards focus on two opportunities for strategic improvement:

1. **Quality.** Ensure that Victorian public libraries' early years literacy activities are of a high quality and can be clearly shown to contribute to improving literacy outcomes for children who participate.
2. **Alignment.** By ensuring consistency in provision across public libraries, enable the Victorian public library sector to speak confidently about the value it adds to literacy outcomes and encourage more young Victorians and their families to engage with and benefit from these programs.

STANDARDS MAINTENANCE

State Library Victoria and Public Libraries Victoria Network will periodically review the checklist with relevant stakeholders and partners to ensure that it represents a thorough and up-to-date statement of minimum and best practice in early years literacy programs for public libraries. For example, the educational standards in the framework will be kept up to date with the Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework (VEYLDF) and the National Quality Standard for early childhood education and care, through collaboration with the Department of Education and Training.

Enhancing quality and alignment will provide a strong base from which public libraries can together develop new elements of their literacy programs that are responsive to the needs of children and families; and augment and complement services and programs provided through the Victorian early years education sector in line with relevant Commonwealth and state government policies.

The quality standards for early years literacy programs in Victorian public libraries describe the essential features of effective early years literacy services in public libraries. The standards are divided into two levels for assessment purposes; level 1 standards are more highly weighted than level 2. See [Using the quality standards checklist](#) later for more information about this.

Level 1 standards

- EY1 [Sound educational underpinning](#)
- EY2 [Fun and enjoyable for all participants](#)
- EY3 [Model effective reading behaviours to children and their family members or carers](#)
- EY4 [Competent, passionate presenters](#)

Level 2 standards

- EY5 [Inspire a love of reading and words](#)
- EY6 [Target and involve both children and their family members or carers](#)
- EY7 [Story-based](#)
- EY8 [Facilitate access to library collections and services](#)
- EY9 [Complement other early years services](#)
- EY10 [Effective evaluation processes](#)
- EY11 [Respond appropriately to local needs and conditions](#)

Each of the 11 standards is described in the following pages. There is an acknowledged interaction and interdependency between the standards.

Libraries should use the [quality standards checklist](#) (also available as a separate form at slv.vic.gov.au/read-program) to assess the quality and alignment of their early years literacy services.

EY1 – Sound educational underpinning

Public libraries' early years literacy activities should be fun and enjoyable for all participants and explicitly seek to improve children's literacy skills and outcomes – directly, through participation in program activities, and indirectly, through encouraging reading in the home. It is therefore important that early years literacy activities have a sound educational underpinning and reflect contemporary early childhood educational practice.

The [Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/providers/edcare/Pages/veyladf.aspx) (VEYLDF; www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/providers/edcare/Pages/veyladf.aspx) is an approved framework that is consistent with the National Quality Standard for early childhood education and care. The VEYLDF identifies:

- eight key practice principles designed to advance all children's learning and development from birth to eight years.
- five early years learning and development outcomes for all children.

The practice principles integrate the pedagogy that forms the basis of the Early Years Learning Framework for Australia with the P–12 Principles of Learning and Teaching (which informs the work of teachers in Victorian schools), and are categorised as collaborative, effective and reflective:

Collaborative

1. **Family-centred practice.** Professionals engage in family-centred practice by respecting the pivotal role of families in children's lives.
2. **Partnerships with professionals.** Professionals use multidisciplinary approaches to provide better support to families and draw on the skills and expertise of their peers.
3. **High expectations for every child.** Professionals believe that every child has the ability to learn and develop. Having high expectations is especially important in achieving better outcomes for the most vulnerable children.

EY1 ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

The library's early years services:

- clearly promote the family as a child's first teacher
- acknowledge and value the potential for learning and development of all participants
- promote respectful relationships and responsive engagement in learning
- recognise equity and diversity in selection, presentation and visual representation of program materials, resources and activities
- are provided in a safe and stimulating environment
- use approaches and provide resources that support development of language, communication, literacy and reading skills
- balance play-based learning with adult-directed activities.

Effective

4. **Equity and diversity.** Children's personal, family and cultural histories shape their learning and development.
5. **Respectful relationships and responsive engagement.** From birth, secure attachments formed through warm and respectful relationships with familiar adults are fundamental to children's learning and development.
6. **Integrated teaching and learning approaches.** Professionals recognise the need to provide integrated teaching and learning approaches.
7. **Assessment for learning and development.** Professionals assess the progress of children's learning and development.

Reflective

8. **Reflective practice.** Professionals become more effective through critical reflections and a strong culture of professional enquiry.

The VEYLDF's early years learning and development outcomes provide a shared language for early childhood professionals and families to use when planning activities:

1. Children have a strong sense of identity.
2. Children are connected with and contribute to their world.
3. Children have a strong sense of wellbeing.
4. Children are confident and involved learners.
5. Children are effective communicators.

Libraries are not part of the formal education system and are not bound by formal pedagogical frameworks and standards. However, to the extent that public libraries' early years literacy services contribute to the development of language and literacy skills, the design, development and delivery of these services should recognise and be consistent with the practice principles and outcomes articulated by the VEYLDF.

EY2 – Fun and enjoyable for all participants

Public libraries can significantly contribute to early years literacy outcomes when they engage and encourage children and their family members or carers to participate regularly in library programs. Repeat attendance is more likely when the programs are fun and enjoyable for all participants – that is, when they offer experiences both child and adult want to come back to.

Library staff know that many factors contribute to the enjoyment of early years literacy programs (including features that are described in more detail in other standards within the quality indicators):

- a warm welcome
- presenters who have a love of learning and can engage others in learning
- opportunities for interaction between the presenter, children and their family members or carers
- activities that support early years learning and respond to the differing needs of participants – dynamic and energetic when appropriate, and quiet and reflective at other times
- interesting reading materials, learning resources and props
- physical design features (e.g. furniture, floor coverings, backdrops, acoustics) and use of space that support young children's engagement in learning
- culturally appropriate activities, materials and settings.

The library should aim to provide a fun, interactive atmosphere ('there is a buzz') that fuels children's imaginations and instils a lifelong love of reading.

EY2 ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

The library's early years literacy activities:

- are joyful experiences that encourage high levels of involvement and engagement
- are positive shared experiences for children, their family members or carers and the presenter
- are welcoming and inclusive, ensuring that the interests, abilities and culture of participating children and adults are recognised, respected and valued.

EY3 – Model effective reading behaviours to children and their family members or carers

There is growing consensus in the early years literacy field about the range of skills that children must have before and as they learn to read. These include:

- print motivation – thinking that books and reading are fun
- print awareness – recognising print and understanding how books work
- letter knowledge – understanding that each letter has its own name and sounds
- vocabulary – knowing the names of things
- narrative skills – being able to tell stories and describe things
- phonological awareness – being able to recognise and play with the smaller sounds that make up words.

Best-practice approaches encourage library staff to model effective reading behaviours for family members and carers (for example, how to sit, share books and interact with a child); how to ask questions; how to select books; and how to make visits to the library fun for the whole family.

The design, development and delivery of libraries' early years literacy programs should:

- reflect an understanding of adults' and children's different learning styles
- explicitly incorporate and display techniques that develop pre-literacy skills
- explicitly incorporate activities that help to develop family members' or carers' understanding of how they can develop their child's literacy skills
- explicitly incorporate activities aimed at building the confidence of family members or carers in developing their child's literacy skills.

EY3 ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

The library's:

- program developers and presenters understand effective early years literacy teaching principles
- program developers and presenters understand and employ adult teaching principles to influence family members and carers
- program delivery explicitly and specifically employs techniques for developing effective adult-to-child reading behaviours
- programs engage family members and carers in reading behaviours that are appropriate to the ability and literacy level of their child
- programs help to build family members' and carers' confidence in, knowledge of and attitudes to reading and storytelling in the home reading environment.

EY4 – Competent, passionate presenters

Public libraries must ensure that the people presenting their early years literacy programs (whether they be library staff or volunteers) have the necessary knowledge, skills and enthusiasm to perform their role in an effective manner. (See, for example, *Competencies for librarians serving children in public libraries*, published by the Association for Library Service to Children, a division of the American Library Association – www.ala.org/alsc/edcareers/alsccorecomps.) Relevant professional development and support should be provided where necessary.

Effective presenters enhance the way in which children and adults engage with early years literacy activities. They should:

- enjoy working with children and be able to convey that enjoyment in the way they interact with all participants
- be warm and energetic, with a welcoming and engaging manner
- display a passion for learning and teaching
- understand the development of language and communication skills in early years, as defined in the collaborative, effective and reflective practice principles described in the [VEYLDF](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/providers/edcare/Pages/veyladf.aspx) (www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/providers/edcare/Pages/veyladf.aspx).

EY4 ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

Presenters of early years literacy activities:

- have a theoretical understanding of the development of language and communication skills in early years
- are fluent readers and/or storytellers
- are expressive, energetic and engaging
- understand and are able to adapt to the interests and needs of the audience – participating children and their family members or carers
- enjoy and are confident working with children and their family members or carers.

EY5 – Inspire a love of reading and words

The main purpose of public libraries' early years literacy programs is to inspire in children a love of reading, words and language. A child who is encouraged and enabled to read is a child who is empowered to learn.

Libraries can achieve this through the thoughtful and explicit alignment of a number of service elements:

- reading materials and resources that are level appropriate, interesting and engaging
- activities and a presentation style that engages participating children in the reading experience
- program presenters who are knowledgeable, skilled and enthusiastic about working with children and their family members and carers
- showcasing and facilitating access to the library's collections
- involving family members and carers in program activities
- encouraging family members and carers to read with the child at home and to develop a collection of the child's favourite books at home
- delivering programs in spaces that positively contribute to the children's experience of reading.

Several of these features of effective early years literacy programming are described in more detail in other quality standards.

EY5 ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

The library's early years literacy services:

- foster a love of reading among participating children
- use level-appropriate reading materials and related resources to engage participants
- share with families and carers knowledge of quality and level-appropriate children's reading materials
- use and promote the library's children's and parenting collections that are relevant to local community needs
- use, wherever and whenever possible, a dedicated children's space.

EY6 – Target and involve both children and their family members or carers

Public libraries have a unique opportunity to promote early years literacy development by involving families and carers in a way that demonstrates best practice in early literacy development. That is, libraries can help families and carers learn how to help their children develop literacy skills by providing information and support and, where possible, training.

Libraries can achieve this by:

- actively engaging and involving family members and carers in early years literacy activities
- ensuring storytime and equivalent programs engage family members and carers as well as participating children
- demonstrating effective reading behaviours that can be used at home
- modelling techniques that strengthen adults' capability to read independently to their child at home
- helping adults see the benefits of assisting children to join in and stay focused
- encouraging social interaction before or after early years literacy activities
- providing simple, positive resources and guidelines for adults where appropriate.

This dual adult-child focus should be an explicit feature of the design, development and delivery of early years literacy services.

EY6 ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

The library's design, development and delivery of early years literacy services:

- explicitly aim to engage participating children and their family members or carers in the activity
- explicitly aim to improve language and reading behaviours and outcomes for participating children
- explicitly aim to model appropriate language and reading behaviours to participating family members and carers
- explicitly aim to build the knowledge, skills and confidence of participating family members and carers to support their child's language and reading development, and use modelling behaviours to support this.

EY7 – Story-based

Storytelling is an effective and interesting way of developing language, communication and literacy skills. It is also a powerful way of encouraging children to develop and use their imagination. Storytelling includes, but is not limited to, reading books; it also encompasses a long-held tradition of oral storytelling.

Recognising the interests and needs of their communities, public libraries should develop early years literacy services that include:

- a focus on words, language, communication and reading
- both oral and written storytelling
- different modes of storytelling (e.g. reading, rhyme, song) and ways to enhance storytelling (e.g. dance and movement, symbolic play, multimedia)
- opportunities for creativity and improvisation
- where possible, opportunities for participating children and adults to recommend stories, activities and collection items.

EY7 ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

The library's early years services:

- use stories to foster language development, communication and literacy skills
- recognise, value and use both oral and written storytelling as appropriate
- use a range of methods and modes of engaging with stories
- promote reading as a valuable way of telling stories.

EY8 – Facilitate access to library collections and services

The impact of libraries' early years literacy activities is demonstrated by the extent to which they inspire a love of reading and words and contribute to increased reading away from the library (for example, child reading level-appropriate books, parent reading to child at home). Early years literacy activities therefore need to be connected with the library's early years collection (for example, board books, picture books, eresources for young children).

There are widely acknowledged social, cultural, educational and economic benefits associated with library use. The library's early years literacy services should, as far as possible, promote awareness of and encourage wider use of other library services. The complementary nature of library services is demonstrated through the alignment of:

- early years literacy activities
- collections development functions
- collection presentation and display
- school holiday programs
- other library programs that may appeal to families and carers of young children
- library membership policies and systems.

EY8 ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

The library's early years literacy programs:

- encourage children and their family members or carers to borrow collection items as take-home resources
- encourage children and their family members or carers to explore use of other library programs and services
- are supported by policies and processes that encourage and facilitate easy access to library membership.

EY9 – Complement other early years services

Collaboration between public libraries and other providers of early years services not only improves efficiency in service delivery, but has the potential to boost innovation.

Schools, kindergartens, childcare centres, community centres and many welfare agencies (such as The Smith Family, with its Let's Read program) have an interest in improving literacy outcomes for young children. Public libraries can work with these organisations to:

- avoid duplication or overlap of services
- align or pool resources for program design, development and delivery (e.g. encourage other providers to use or reference the library's early years collections)
- promote one another's services and direct potential users/clients to the appropriate organisation (e.g. through cross-linkages and referrals from websites)
- develop innovative programs that optimise reach, engagement and impact on early years literacy outcomes.

In order for this to happen it is important that all collaborators understand one another's motivations, objectives, capabilities and obligations.

EY9 ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

The library:

- is aware of and understands the role and purpose of other providers of early years services
- works with other providers of early years services to improve outcomes for all children through a mutual understanding of one another's objectives
- works cooperatively with other providers of early years services to actively promote and support their complementary services.

EY10 – Effective evaluation processes

The design, scheduling and delivery of early years literacy services should draw on the knowledge, expertise and experience of library staff, coupled with information about local demand and capability, and evidence about the effectiveness of current services. That is, the continuous improvement of early years literacy services should be informed by data on:

- the demographics, needs, capabilities and aspirations of the local community, as identified and defined through local strategic planning processes
- the quality, uptake, reach and impact of current services, including feedback from participants (see the [impact evaluation framework](#)).

This data should then be fed into the periodic review of the library's early years literacy services, a review that should examine:

- program design, delivery and scheduling
- early years collections
- library capability and resources
- community and educational partnerships and alliances.

Review and evaluation of library processes might involve a range of staff and external stakeholders.

EY10 ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

The library:

- systematically collects data on the quality, uptake, reach and impact of its early years literacy services, as outlined in the [impact evaluation framework](#)
- analyses its data to inform service improvement
- reviews its early years literacy services at least annually to improve service quality
- has clearly defined expectations and quality benchmarks for its early years services.

(See 'Using the quality standards checklist' for a [sample assessment](#) against this standard.)

EY11 – Respond appropriately to local needs and conditions

The first 10 quality indicators are considered to be ‘common’ (or standard) across library services in terms of their application to early years services in different settings. EY11 is also a core quality standard, though it addresses areas that are likely to give rise to significant variation between library services in the way they design, develop and deliver their early years programming.

Early years literacy services must reflect and respond to local needs and circumstances in terms of:

- knowledge and understanding of community needs and aspirations – e.g. census, Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA), Australian Early Development Census (AEDC), and CALD settlement area data
- library resources and capability – including financial resources, facilities, collections and personnel (which may include staff and volunteers)
- local early years networks and partnerships – e.g. with Maternal and Child Health (MCH) nurses, kindergartens and schools.

To reach the growing number of children unable to regularly attend and benefit from library programming, libraries should take their programs into the communities, to where the children are. This may include child-care centres, schools, community organisations or parks.

Go into the community. If public libraries only serve those who come into the library, they are ‘preaching to the choir’. These families already know the importance of literacy. To really have an impact, public libraries must go into the community to reach the families who do not go to the library.

Judy MacLean, *Library preschool storytimes: Developing early literacy skills in children*

Research suggests that, when feasible, children should be taught in their primary language. Maintenance of first language(s) is important for children’s identity, wellbeing, communication and learning. Best-practice programming in public libraries recognises bilingualism and multilingualism as an asset and supports children to maintain their first language(s) and learn English as an additional language.

Ultimately, it is up to each library service to determine when, where and how it delivers early years literacy services:

- **When** – morning vs afternoon; weekdays vs weekends; duration
- **Where** – at the library; at partners’ premises; via outreach mode, in the community
- **How** – reading, singing, activities; onsite vs online; multimedia
- **Target audience** – age levels; abilities; community languages; community cultures

ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

The library:

- has knowledge of and responds to the needs, capabilities and aspirations of the local community, as identified and defined through local strategic planning processes
- aligns and targets its early years programs and their mode of delivery to local community needs and aspirations
- assigns an appropriate level of available resources to early years programs
- participates and collaborates in local early years networks
- provides its early years staff with access to professional development to ensure that they have the required competencies.

Assessment

Library services are responsible for self-assessing their early years literacy services. Library services that have undertaken one or more self-assessments are encouraged to participate in an extended assessment process involving a self-assessment followed by a peer-review of their self-assessment.

Should they choose to complete it, the peer assessment be the library service's official Quality Indicator assessment.

A [quality standards checklist](#) has been developed to aid the self-assessment process. It is expected that within each library service the checklist will be completed collectively by a review group, which might include the Service Manager, the Children's Services Librarian (or equivalent), presenters of early years literacy programs and branch managers. The composition of the review group is a decision for each library service.

For reporting purposes, the Service Manager is responsible for signing off on the library service's self-assessment. The inaugural audit against the quality standards will occur in early 2016. Thereafter, it is expected that libraries will conduct self-assessments on an annual basis (in July or August each year) to feed into production of a sector-wide report and statement of participation and impact.

Email your completed quality standards checklist, in pdf format (use the separate form at [slv.vic.gov.au/read-program](#)), to public libraries team at State Library Victoria (publiclibraries@slv.vic.gov.au). All subsequent completed checklists must be emailed to Public Libraries Victoria Network.

It is expected that the inaugural audit will demonstrate that some libraries already meet and exceed many of the criteria within the quality standards, while other libraries may at this time only partly meet the criteria. The collective results of these assessments will:

- provide a clear statement on the current quality of libraries' early years literacy services
- indicate priorities for statewide and localised investment in program development and professional learning.

Libraries may choose to use the checklist in other ways to support local continuous improvement processes (for example, to assess early years literacy services at a branch level or on a branch-by-branch basis).

Libraries that demonstrate through their self-assessments that they satisfy the requirements of the quality framework are eligible to use the READ Quality Assurance logo.

Using the quality standards checklist

The quality standards checklist is a tool for libraries to assess the quality and alignment of their early years literacy services. It is included within this document and is also available as a separate form at [slv.vic.gov.au/read-program](#).

The checklist presents a series of between five and eight criteria against each of the 11 quality standards. The checklist requires an assessment to be made against each criterion. In assessing each criterion it is expected that the library will rate the overall performance of its early years literacy services. There are five assessment options for each criterion.

SCORING

ASSESSMENT	DEFINITION	SCORE
Exceed	Services are of a higher standard than the criterion and/or go beyond the expectations of the criterion.	4
Fully meet	Services are in line with the criterion.	3
Substantially meet	Services are of a good quality but do not quite meet the criterion.	2
Partly meet	There is evidence that this criterion is understood and recognised in the design and delivery of the service, but there is significant scope for improvement.	1
Do not meet	There is no evidence that this criterion has been incorporated into service design and delivery.	0

For assessment purposes, the quality standards are classified as either level 1 or level 2. Level 1 standards (EY1 to EY4) are more heavily weighted, and this is reflected in the weighting for each criterion. To determine the score for each standard:

1. select the assessment score for each criterion
2. multiply the criterion score by the weighting factor indicated
3. add the criteria totals for the standard.

As part of the statewide analysis and reporting of Victorian public libraries' early years literacy services, the criterion assessments will be aggregated to a 'whole of standard' level for each library service, as well as to a 'whole of library' level. The aggregate assessments for individual library services will not be published.



CRITERIA	ASSESSMENT (one per criterion)					SCORE (assessment x weighting)	
	DO NOT MEET	PARTLY MEET	SUBSTANTIALLY MEET	FULLY MEET	EXCEED	WEIGHTING	TOTAL
	0	1	2	3	4		

EY2 – Fun and enjoyable for all participants

The library's early years literacy activities:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are joyful experiences that encourage high levels of involvement and engagement 				3		5	15
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are positive shared experiences for children, their family members or carers and the presenter 					4	4	16
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are welcoming and inclusive, ensuring that the interests, abilities and culture of participating children and adults are recognised, respected and valued 		2				2	4

TOTAL FOR EY2

35

In order to satisfy the requirements of the quality framework and be eligible to use the READ Quality Assurance logo, libraries will need to achieve a total score of at least 33 for each level 1 standard, and 16 for each level 2 standard.

EVIDENCE

Libraries are encouraged to briefly record or reference evidence to support the assessment against each criterion. The assessment checklist might look like the following example.

CRITERIA	ASSESSMENT (one per criterion)					COMMENT
	DO NOT MEET	PARTLY MEET	SUBSTANTIALLY MEET	FULLY MEET	EXCEED	
	0	1	2	3	4	

EY10 – Effective evaluation processes

The library:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Systematically collects data on the quality, uptake, reach and impact of its early years literacy services, as outlined in the impact evaluation framework 				3		Contributes to annual PLVN data collection. Implemented participant satisfaction survey.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analyses its data to inform service improvement 				3		Program review conducted in April. Revised child/parent activities.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reviews its early years literacy services at least annually to improve service quality 			2			Program review conducted in April (first in 3 years). Scheduled for April next year.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Has clearly defined expectations and quality benchmarks for its early years services 		1				No current measures or targets. Targets to be set in next Library Plan.

Checklist: Quality standards for early years literacy programs

The quality standards checklist is a tool for libraries to assess the quality and alignment of their early years literacy services. It is available as a separate form at slv.vic.gov.au/read-program. See [Assessment](#) and [Using the quality standards checklist](#) for detailed information and examples.

It is expected that within each library service the checklist will be completed collectively by a review group, the composition of which is a decision for each library service. For reporting purposes, the Service Manager is responsible for signing off on the library service's self-assessment. Email your completed quality standards checklist (use the separate form) to public libraries team at State Library Victoria (publiclibraries@slv.vic.gov.au). Subsequent completed checklists must be emailed to Public Libraries Victoria Network.

The checklist presents a series of between five and eight criteria against each of the 11 [quality standards](#), which are described in detail earlier in this document. The checklist requires an assessment to be made against each criterion. In assessing each criterion it is expected that the library will rate the overall performance of its early years literacy services. There are five assessment options for each criterion.

ASSESSMENT	DEFINITION	SCORE
Exceed	Services are of a higher standard than the criterion and/or go beyond the expectations of the criterion.	4
Fully meet	Services are in line with the criterion.	3
Substantially meet	Services are of a good quality but do not quite meet the criterion.	2
Partly meet	There is evidence that this criterion is understood and recognised in the design and delivery of the service, but there is significant scope for improvement.	1
Do not meet	There is no evidence that this criterion has been incorporated into service design and delivery.	0

For assessment purposes, the quality standards are classified as either level 1 or level 2. Level 1 standards (EY1 to EY4) are more heavily weighted, and this is reflected in the weighting for each criterion. To determine the score for each standard:

1. select the assessment score for each criterion
2. multiply the criterion score by the weighting factor indicated
3. add the criteria totals for the standard.

In order to satisfy the requirements of the quality framework and be eligible to use the READ Quality Assurance logo, libraries will need to achieve a total score of at least 33 for each level 1 standard, and 16 for each level 2 standard.

Libraries are encouraged to briefly record or reference evidence to support the assessment against each criterion.

Level 1 quality standards

CRITERIA	ASSESSMENT (one per criterion)					SCORE (assessment x weighting)		COMMENT
	DO NOT MEET 0	PARTLY MEET 1	SUBSTANTIALLY MEET 2	FULLY MEET 3	EXCEED 4	WEIGHTING	TOTAL	
EY1 – Sound educational underpinning								
The library's early years literacy activities:								
• Clearly promote the family as a child's first teacher						3		
• Acknowledge and value the potential for learning and development of all participants						1		
• Promote respectful relationships and responsive engagement in learning						1		
• Recognise equity and diversity in selection, presentation and visual representation of program materials, resources and activities						1		
• Are provided in a safe and stimulating environment						2		
• Use approaches and provide resources that support development of language, communication, literacy and reading skills						2		
• Balance play-based learning with adult-directed activities						1		
TOTAL FOR EY1								

CRITERIA	ASSESSMENT (one per criterion)					SCORE (assessment x weighting)		COMMENT
	DO NOT MEET	PARTLY MEET	SUBSTANTIALLY MEET	FULLY MEET	EXCEED	WEIGHTING	TOTAL	
	0	1	2	3	4			

EY2 – Fun and enjoyable for all participants

The library's early years literacy activities:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are joyful experiences that encourage high levels of involvement and engagement 						5		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are positive shared experiences for children, their family members or carers and the presenter 						4		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are welcoming and inclusive, ensuring that the interests, abilities and culture of participating children and adults are recognised, respected and valued 						2		

TOTAL FOR EY2

EY3 – Model effective reading behaviours to children and their family members or carers

The library's:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Program developers and presenters understand effective early years literacy teaching principles 						2		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Program developers and presenters understand and employ adult teaching principles to influence family members and carers 						2		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Program delivery explicitly and specifically employs techniques for developing effective adult-to-child reading behaviours 						2		

CRITERIA	ASSESSMENT (one per criterion)					SCORE (assessment x weighting)		COMMENT
	DO NOT MEET	PARTLY MEET	SUBSTANTIALLY MEET	FULLY MEET	EXCEED	WEIGHTING	TOTAL	
	0	1	2	3	4			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Programs engage family members and carers in reading behaviours that are appropriate to the ability and literacy level of their child 						2		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Programs help to build family members' and carers' confidence in, knowledge of and attitudes to reading and storytelling in the home reading environment 						3		

TOTAL FOR EY3

EY4 – Competent, passionate presenters

Presenters of early years literacy activities:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have a theoretical understanding of the development of language and communication skills in early years 						2		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are fluent readers and/or storytellers 						2		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are expressive, energetic and engaging 						2		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understand and are able to adapt to the interests and needs of the audience – participating children and their family members or carers 						2		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enjoy and are confident working with children and their family members or carers 						3		

TOTAL FOR EY4

Level 2 quality standards

CRITERIA	ASSESSMENT (one per criterion)					SCORE (assessment x weighting)		COMMENT
	DO NOT MEET	PARTLY MEET	SUBSTANTIALLY MEET	FULLY MEET	EXCEED	WEIGHTING	TOTAL	
	0	1	2	3	4			

EY5 – Inspire a love of reading and words

The library's early years literacy services:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Foster a love of reading among participating children 						3		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use level-appropriate reading materials and related resources to engage participants 						2		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Share with families and carers knowledge of quality and level-appropriate children's reading materials 						1		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use and promote the library's children's and parenting collections that are relevant to local community needs 						1		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use, wherever and whenever possible, a dedicated children's space 						1		

TOTAL FOR EY5

EY6 – Target and involve both children and their family members or carers

The library's design, development and delivery of early years literacy services:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explicitly aim to engage participating children and their family members or carers in the activity 						1		
--	--	--	--	--	--	---	--	--

CRITERIA	ASSESSMENT (one per criterion)					SCORE (assessment x weighting)		COMMENT
	DO NOT MEET	PARTLY MEET	SUBSTANTIALLY MEET	FULLY MEET	EXCEED	WEIGHTING	TOTAL	
	0	1	2	3	4			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explicitly aim to improve language and reading behaviours and outcomes for participating children 						2		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explicitly aim to model appropriate language and reading behaviours to participating family members and carers 						2		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explicitly aim to build the knowledge, skills and confidence of participating family members and carers to support their child's language and reading development, and use modelling behaviours to support this 						3		

TOTAL FOR EY6

EY7 – Story-based

The library's early years services:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use stories to foster language development, communication and literacy skills 						2		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recognise, value and use both oral and written storytelling as appropriate 						2		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use a range of methods and modes of engaging with stories 						2		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote reading as a valuable way of telling stories 						2		

TOTAL FOR EY7

CRITERIA	ASSESSMENT (one per criterion)					SCORE (assessment x weighting)		COMMENT
	DO NOT MEET	PARTLY MEET	SUBSTANTIALLY MEET	FULLY MEET	EXCEED	WEIGHTING	TOTAL	
	0	1	2	3	4			

EY8 – Facilitate access to library collections and services

The library's early years literacy programs:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage children and their family members or carers to borrow collection items as take-home resources 						3		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage children and their family members or carers to explore use of other library programs and services 						3		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are supported by policies and processes that encourage and facilitate easy access to library membership 						2		

TOTAL FOR EY8

EY9 – Complement other early years services

The library:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is aware of and understands the role and purpose of other providers of early years services 						3		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Works with other providers of early years services to improve outcomes for all children through a mutual understanding of one another's objectives 						3		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Works cooperatively with other providers of early years services to actively promote and support their complementary services 						2		

TOTAL FOR EY9

CRITERIA	ASSESSMENT (one per criterion)					SCORE (assessment x weighting)		COMMENT
	DO NOT MEET	PARTLY MEET	SUBSTANTIALLY MEET	FULLY MEET	EXCEED	WEIGHTING	TOTAL	
	0	1	2	3	4			

EY10 – Effective evaluation processes

The library:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Systematically collects data on the quality, uptake, reach and impact of its early years literacy services, as outlined in the impact evaluation framework 						2		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analyses its data to inform service improvement 						2		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reviews its early years literacy services at least annually to improve service quality 						2		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Has clearly defined expectations and quality benchmarks for its early years services 						2		

TOTAL FOR EY10

EY11 – Respond appropriately to local needs and conditions

The library:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Has knowledge of and responds to the needs, capabilities and aspirations of the local community, as identified and defined through local strategic planning processes 						1		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Aligns and targets its early years programs and their mode of delivery to local community needs and aspirations 						2		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assigns an appropriate level of available resources to early years programs 						2		

CRITERIA	ASSESSMENT (one per criterion)					SCORE (assessment x weighting)		COMMENT
	DO NOT MEET	PARTLY MEET	SUBSTANTIALLY MEET	FULLY MEET	EXCEED	WEIGHTING	TOTAL	
	0	1	2	3	4			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participates and collaborates in local early years networks 						1		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides its early years staff with access to professional development to ensure that they have the required competencies 						2		

TOTAL FOR EY11

Summary

Level 1 quality standards

TOTAL

EY1	Sound educational underpinning	
EY2	Fun and enjoyable for all participants	
EY3	Model effective reading behaviours to children and their family members or carers	
EY4	Competent, passionate presenters	

Level 2 quality standards

TOTAL

EY5	Inspire a love of reading and words	
EY6	Target and involve both children and their family members or carers	
EY7	Story-based	
EY8	Facilitate access to library collections and services	
EY9	Complement other early years services	
EY10	Effective evaluation processes	
EY11	Respond appropriately to local needs and conditions	

Does the library service meet the minimum requirement of **33** for each **level 1 quality standard**? YES NO

Does the library service meet the minimum requirement of **16** for each **level 2 quality standard**? YES NO

If the answer to both questions is Yes, the library service is eligible to use the READ Quality Assurance logo, which will be supplied by the Public Libraries Division, State Library Victoria.

Impact evaluation framework for early years literacy programs

Introducing a statewide minimum standard for early years literacy activities puts Victorian public libraries in a much more powerful position to evaluate the quality, reach, uptake and impact of those activities, and to use this information for strategic and advocacy purposes. A consistent and outcome-focused approach to evaluation is critical in:

- improving the quality and alignment of libraries' early years literacy services
- demonstrating the contribution and value of public libraries to improving early years literacy outcomes in Victoria.

The impact evaluation framework identifies relevant library, library sector and educational indicators that will be measured and monitored on an ongoing basis. This section provides information on:

- [performance indicators](#) and measures for evaluating early years literacy activities
- [data collection](#) (including responsibilities), reporting and analysis.

It is understood that libraries are just one change agent in a complex and dynamic environment; this will be acknowledged in the interpretation of data against the recommended indicators.

Performance indicators

State Library Victoria and Public Libraries Victoria Network, in consultation with stakeholders, have established a set of performance indicators to represent the range of data that will best support sector-wide decision-making.

Indicator	Measure
Quality	1. Percentage of Victorian public library services with early years literacy services that meet the minimum standards described by the quality indicators
	2. Average number of hours of early years literacy programs delivered in Victorian public libraries each week
	3. Feedback from family members and carers and satisfaction with libraries' early years literacy programs
Uptake	4. Average number of children participating in early years literacy programs in Victorian public libraries each week
	5. Average number of adult family members or carers participating in early years literacy programs in Victorian public libraries each week
	6. Turnover rate (loans per collection item) for board books, picture books and ebooks for pre-school-age children
Reach	7. Percentage of pre-school children aged 0 to 6 years who regularly participate in early years literacy programs in Victorian public libraries
Impact	8. Percentage of children aged 0 to 6 years who are read to every day
	9. Percentage of children who start school 'at risk' or 'developmentally vulnerable' in the domains of language and communication
	10. Percentage of Foundation (Prep) students whose literacy levels on school entry are assessed as being at or above standard

This set of indicators will be reviewed (and revised as necessary) on an annual basis.

Data collection, analysis and reporting

The method for collecting, analysing and reporting information against each of the performance indicators is described on the following pages. In the case of some indicators, data will be collected by the library service and reported to Public Libraries Victoria Network as part of the annual collection of library statistics that occurs in August/September each year. In the case of other indicators, data will be collected centrally from external sources by Public Libraries Victoria Network.

1. Percentage of Victorian public library services with early years literacy services that meet the minimum standards described by the quality indicators

Data source	Public libraries
Frequency	Annual
Method	Public libraries conduct annual assessment of their early years literacy services using the quality standards checklist. Results are forwarded to Public Libraries Victoria Network as part of the annual collection of library statistics. Public Libraries Victoria Network aggregates and analyses results.

2. Average number of hours of early years literacy programs delivered in Victorian public libraries each week

Data source	Public libraries
Frequency	Annual
Method	Public libraries report average number of hours of scheduled early years literacy programs per week. For example, a library service runs one 45-minute storytime each week at each of its six branches plus a weekly 30-minute Rhyme Time activity at its two largest branches (6 x 45 mins + 2 x 30 mins = 5.5 hours per week). Estimates are forwarded to Public Libraries Victoria Network as part of the annual collection of library statistics. Public Libraries Victoria Network aggregates and analyses results.

3. Feedback from family members and carers and satisfaction with libraries' early years literacy programs

Data source	Public libraries
Frequency	Annual
Method	Public libraries capture feedback from adult participants via a short satisfaction survey (say, from a sample of programs at different branches throughout the year). Questions might address child and adult engagement with the program, frequency of attendance, home reading behaviours and suggestions for improvement. The survey must include an overall satisfaction rating out of 10 (0 = low, 10 = high). Survey results are aggregated and analysed by the library service. Overall satisfaction ratings are forwarded to Public Libraries Victoria Network as part of the annual collection of library statistics. Public Libraries Victoria Network aggregates and analyses results.

4. Average number of children participating in early years literacy programs in Victorian public libraries each week; and

5. Average number of adult family members or carers participating in early years literacy programs in Victorian public libraries each week

Data source	Public libraries
Frequency	Annual
Method	<p>Record or estimate the total number of children participating in the libraries' early years literacy programs each week. This might be through a count at every program every week or counts at a sample of programs during the year. Record or estimate the number of children who 'participate' as opposed to those who are in attendance (e.g. a 3-year-old participating in storytime vs a baby sibling in a pram). Similarly, record or estimate the total number of adult family members or carers participating in the programs. Children and adults who participate in more than one program during a week should be counted for each separate participation.</p> <p>Totals are forwarded to Public Libraries Victoria Network as part of the annual collection of library statistics.</p> <p>Public Libraries Victoria Network aggregates and analyses results.</p>

6. Turnover rate (loans per collection item) for board books, picture books and ebooks for pre-school-age children

Data source	Public libraries
Frequency	Annual
Method	<p>Via the library services' LMS report:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• the total number of collection items specifically targeted at pre-school-age children• the total number of loans of those collection items during the year. <p>Data is forwarded to Public Libraries Victoria Network as part of the annual collection of library statistics.</p> <p>Public Libraries Victoria Network aggregates and analyses results.</p>

7. Percentage of pre-school children aged 0 to 6 years who regularly participate in early years literacy programs in Victorian public libraries

Data source	Public libraries, ABS
Frequency	Annual
Method	<p>Participation data is provided by public libraries in response to indicator 4.</p> <p>Population data is accessed by Public Libraries Victoria Network from Australian Bureau of Statistics on an annual basis.</p> <p>Public Libraries Victoria Network compiles data and analyses results.</p>

8. Percentage of children aged 0 to 6 years who are read to every day

Data source	-
Frequency	-
Method	<p>This information is not currently captured. However, an opportunity for regular data collection does exist through the scheduled assessments of young children by Maternal and Child Health (MCH) nurses. MCH staff undertake 10 assessments of children's physical and emotional development, including assessments at 18 months, 2 years and 3.5 years.</p> <p>Public Libraries Victoria Network will liaise with the Department of Education and Training (DET) to determine whether an additional question related to reading in the home could be included in the 2- and 3.5-year MCH assessments.</p> <p>DET aggregates and reports MCH data annually by LGA.</p>

9. Percentage of children who start school 'at risk' or 'developmentally vulnerable' in the domains of language and communication

Data source	Primary schools
Frequency	Every 3 years
Method	<p>The Australian Early Development Census (AEDC) provides a national snapshot of children's development at the time they commence their first year of full-time school. The AEDC is held every three years; the third collection took place between May and July 2015. The census involves teachers of children in their first year of full-time school completing a research instrument that collects data relating to five key areas of early childhood development – one of which is 'language and cognitive skills', and another 'communication skills and general knowledge'.</p> <p>AEDC results are published at LGA and small-area level on the AEDC website (www.aedc.gov.au).</p> <p>Public Libraries Victoria Network compiles data and analyses results.</p>

10. Percentage of Foundation (Prep) students whose literacy levels on school entry are assessed as being at or above standard

Data source	Primary schools
Frequency	Annual
Method	<p>Victorian government primary schools now conduct a literacy assessment of every student enrolled in Foundation (Prep). This occurs through a one-on-one English Online Interview conducted by the teacher during term 1 of the student's Foundation year. Each primary school reports the results of testing (number of students, distribution of results) to DET annually. This information can be accessed for legitimate research and analysis purposes.</p> <p>Public Libraries Victoria Network compiles and aggregates data to LGA level and analyses results.</p>

Appendix: Early years literacy toolkits and resources

Books Build Connections toolkit

<https://littoolkit.aap.org/about/Pages/home.aspx>

This toolkit was developed in the USA to help GPs and paediatricians support their patients – parents, carers and grandparents – to develop good practices for sharing books with children, and through this develop children’s language skills and promote future school success. The toolkit includes a range of resources that could also be used by librarians; for example, *Resources for talking about reading with families with low literacy levels*. Links are provided to organisations and websites offering useful information to practitioners who promote early years literacy. These include the website of the Center for Early Literacy Learning (CELL), which offers resources for those who work with children under the age of five who have identified disabilities or developmental delays and are at risk for poor outcomes.

Every child ready to read @ your library

www.everychildreadytoread.org/about

This toolkit was developed by the Public Library Association and the Association for Library Service to Children in the USA to educate parents to nurture pre-reading skills in their children. The tool is informed by early years research and went through a rigorous process of development – including pilot testing with families. Six years after the initial release of the toolkit in 2004 a detailed evaluation found that Every Child Ready to Read was well regarded and considered to be a high-quality product that has an impact on parent behaviour. A second edition was released in 2011.

The toolkit provides a variety of branded supporting materials that have been developed for the US market. If this material were to be adopted by Victorian public libraries it would need to be customised for the Australian environment.

Early Reading Connects family involvement toolkit: Encouraging a love of language, stories and reading (birth to 5)

www.literacytrust.org.uk/resources/practical_resources_info/717_archive_resource-early_reading_connects_toolkit_2009

The UK National Literacy Trust developed this toolkit to support those working with children under the age of five. It brings together easy-to-access resources and ideas from a wide range of early years organisations, settings and practitioners, to help those working with young children to encourage a love of language, stories and reading amongst babies, toddlers and young children; engage and involve the children’s families in this process; share good practice and resources; and build their confidence in supporting children and their families.

Early Words toolkit: Prepare your child from birth for reading and writing

earlywords.info/toolkit/

This NSW toolkit is targeted at parents but has many resources that will also be useful for librarians. The Early Words development team included an occupational therapist, a primary school teacher and a speech pathologist, and drew on expertise from paediatricians, early childhood educators and other early literacy projects. The Early Words five top tips gives help across nine developmental stages, with looking and listening; talking; singing and rhyming; reading; and drawing and writing.

First 5 Forever

plconnect.slq.qld.gov.au/resources/children-and-young-people/first-5-forever

First 5 Forever (formerly Best Start) is a universal family literacy program aimed at supporting stronger language and literacy environments for children from birth to five years and their families. Its key goals are to support parents and primary caregivers to be their child’s first and most important teachers, and to provide increased access to resources they need through public libraries. A number of fact sheets have been developed to support implementation of the program, such as ‘Story Time’, ‘Key Messages for Parents and Primary Caregivers’, and ‘Baby Rhyme Time’. A downloadable video for library staff provides an overview of a storytime session.

Guidelines for library services to babies and toddlers

www.ifla.org/publications/ifla-professional-reports-100

The purpose of these guidelines developed through the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) is to help public libraries in various countries to implement high-quality children's services. The guidelines are intended as a tool for both trained and inexperienced librarians who have the responsibility of serving families with babies and toddlers. The guidelines cover issues such as materials and selection criteria, environment, evaluation, and best practices from across the world. Section Three provides a checklist against which libraries can assess their services for babies and toddlers.

Transforming preschool storytime: A modern vision and a year of programs

www.alastore.ala.org/pdf/DiamantCohenTPS_sample.pdf

This manual was written by two librarians working in public libraries in the USA. It is based on the premise that children learn best through repetition, and that the best way to forge new connections in the brain is by building on something that is already learned. The manual examines ways to use books creatively but repetitively in preschool storytime programs, and provides sample sessions, book and activity recommendations, resource lists and extension suggestions. The first section provides an introduction to the theory of and research into how children learn, and shows how this understanding can be used to transform preschool storytime.

Zero to Three: Early literacy and language tips and tools

www.zerotothree.org/child-development/early-language-literacy/tips-tools-early-lit-and-lang.html

Zero to Three is a nonprofit organisation in the USA that provides parents, professionals and policymakers with the knowledge and know-how to nurture early development in children. Its mission is to ensure that all babies and toddlers have a strong start in life. 'Early literacy and language tips and tools' provides a range of resources promoting early literacy and language skills in very young children.

Other resources

Baby Bounce: The Little Big Book Club way to begin literacy for children 0-2 years, by Susan Hill (University of South Australia): www.unisanet.unisa.edu.au/staff/SueHill/Babybounce.pdf

Building literacy before school: The Little Big Book Club @ your library: Training and development program handbook, by Susan Hill (University of South Australia): www.lga.sa.gov.au/webdata/resources/files/Born_to_Read_Your_Library_-_Handbook.pdf

Competencies for librarians serving children in public libraries (Association for Library Services to Children, a division of the American Library Association): www.ala.org/alsc/edcareers/alscorecomps

Early childhood literacy and numeracy: Building good practice (Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations): www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/documents/earlyyears/buildinggoodpractice.pdf

Early literacy framework and strategy for Australian public libraries (Australian Library and Information Service, Public Libraries Advisory Committee): www.alia.org.au/sites/default/files/documents/advocacy/ALIA-PLAC-Early-Literacy-Framework-Strategy.pdf

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The quality indicators were developed by State Library Victoria and Public Libraries Victoria Network through statewide consultation. The Department of Education and Training and the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority were also consulted during the development process.

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