

ICPL TOYS & GAMES COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT PLAN – 4/2007

1. Collection Description

The Toys & Games collection consists of puzzles, puppets, doll characters based on books, blocks, flash card sets, and other realia intended to be for educational use with young children. These items receive heavy use by infants, preschoolers, and primary age children and are also used by early childhood teachers and care-providers. Materials selected help children learn about themselves and the world they live in. Use of educational toys can help kids develop important pre-reading as well as social skills. Free access to such materials also helps adults who work with children provide more diverse, enriched early childhood learning environments. The collection is housed in hanging plastic bags in separate shelving in the Children's Room. Two other collections, story time kits and parent teacher materials, have ties to the toy collection and its intended users.

2. Exceptions and Scope

Special attention is given to durability, safety, size, number of pieces, upkeep, and cost in selection of toys to circulate. Items with cheap parts that can be easily damaged and toys with very small pieces that a toddler could swallow are avoided. CR staff check pieces with a round toy measuring device to prevent accidents. Most puzzles and block sets are usually made of wood or strong plastic – if they have multiple pieces, preference is given to those that are still useful should a piece go missing. Puppets and book characters should be plastic or made of fabric that can be placed in a washing machine. Flash card sets should be easy to use even without directions. In general, selection preference is given to educational realia that are award winning or well reviewed, that are for use by younger children, and those of a higher cost and quality than mass-market toys. Jigsaw puzzles, children's board games, and toys requiring batteries are not selected.

3. Audience

The intended audience for this collection is primarily infants, toddlers, and preschoolers with some use by primary age children. Adults who live or work with children also check out educational toys to use in childcare or class room settings. Certain types of toys are intended to be used with large groups of children (for example, rainbow parachutes or rhythm band sets) while others engage single children in play (puppets and blocks).

4. Size and Duplication

As of April 2007, there were 254 items in the Toys & Games collection. There are few toy titles with more than one copy. FY06 circulation was 3,455 with a turnover rate of 13. Selection emphasis for the small collection is on breadth. Because of the small collection size and the odd physical dimensions of many toys, it is not shelved in any particular order. Types of toys in most demand include rhythm band and musical instruments, parachutes for outside games, multicultural topic toys, puzzles, puppets, and binoculars.

5. Maintenance

Toys & Games is a no-growth collection. In house use of circulating toys is not encouraged, but bags are often opened and pieces may go missing. This is more of a challenge in our new facility, since families with young children love to play while visiting. The collection has never grown beyond 300 items (the capacity of its shelving unit.)

This nonprint collection has an average budget of \$800, but does get extra money at times for replacement orders. Most toys are durable and can withstand higher annual turnover rates that would wear out fragile print formats. Worn out toys or those with missing pieces are usually replaced by different toys rather than searching for replacement pieces. Toys are batch ordered several times a year from catalogs or websites featuring quality merchandise. Constructive Playthings, Childcraft Educational Corporation, and Lakeshore Learning are good sources. Demco and Folkmanis is an excellent source of puppets. Local educational toys stores supply specialty items. Few gift items are added.

Item purge is run once a year, however very few items fail to circulate. The collection is evaluated for condition at times of low circulation (such as December.) At this time, many of the puppets are washed and other toys are cleaned with the help of volunteers.

April 20, 2007