THE POWER OF

PLAY

Designing Early Learning Spaces
ALA Editions purchases fund advocacy, awareness, and accreditation programs for library professionals worldwide.
Contents

Acknowledgments ix
Preface xi
Introduction xv

I. THE MAGIC BEHIND THE DESIGN
Chapter 1 Harnessing the Play Dimension ................................. 1
Chapter 2 A Jumping-Off Place ........................................ 5
Chapter 3 Activating the Power of Play ................................. 11
Chapter 4 Guideposts for the Journey .................................. 17
Chapter 5 Spruce Up and Lighten Up ................................. 29
Chapter 6 Simple Practices ........................................ 39

II. PLAY-AND-LEARN DESTINATIONS
Chapter 7 Play Pioneers .................................................... 53
Chapter 8 Storyville ......................................................... 67
Chapter 9 The New Frontier ........................................ 83

III. MINDFUL PLANNING AND CREATIVE DESIGN
Chapter 10 First Steps to Success ........................................ 89
Chapter 11 Fundamental Design Considerations ...................... 99
Chapter 12 Creating Playscape Champions .......................... 109
Chapter 13 Embrace Your Ideal .......................................... 115
Chapter 14 A Whack on the Side of the Head ...................... 121
Chapter 15 Planning Secrets for Play Environments .............. 127
Chapter 16    Your Design Crew                 139
Chapter 17    Toy Trouble                   153
Chapter 18    Play Roundup                  157

Afterword  165

APPENDIXES

Appendix A   Suggested Reading              167
Appendix C   Sample Survey for Libraries That Currently Offer Play-and-Learn Spaces 171
Appendix D   Sample Activity Plan           173
Appendix E   Sample Logic Model            177
Appendix F   Sample Evaluation Plan         179
Appendix G   Sample Guidelines for Cleaning Play-and-Learn Spaces 181
Appendix H   Storyville Survey Results      183
Appendix I   Sample of Guiding Principles for Early Literacy Library Environments 187
Appendix J   Sample Activity Sheet          189
Appendix K   Companies and Resources        191
Appendix L   Sample Play-and-Learn Guidelines 193

About the Authors  197
Index          199
To Sarah Long, my friend and mentor, who taught me the benefits of a playful mind

—Dorothy

For all the children and their grown-ups who come to the library to read, play, learn—and discover

—Marisa

To the staff at our firm, whose talent and dedication make work a joy

—Jim
Acknowledgments

We’d like to thank the following play champions:

DEDICATED FOLKS
Everyone in the Programming & Outreach Services Department of Carroll County (Maryland) Public Library, in the Youth Services Department and Storyville at Baltimore County (Maryland) Public Library, and at James Bradberry Architects.

VERY THOUGHTFUL FRIENDS AND COLLEAGUES
Clara Bohrer, Enid Costley, Kathy Deer, Dr. Betty Bardige, Dana Bejerke, Joanna Redman, Janet Portman, Amanda Roberson, Buff Kahn, Beth Heltebridle, Jill Bickford, Wendy Resnik, Tracey Stoebel, Hallie Rich, Sarah Hinkle
Scott Reinhart, Stephanie Szymanski, Lisa Picker, Stephanie Zinger, Stan Whiteman, Sarah Mintz, Emily Carl, Andy Davenport, Blake Ratcliffe, Tony Candia, Tim Forloine, Maureen Hartman
Darrell Robertson, Ghis Hockensmith, June Bitzel, Renee Brown, Peg Pond, Nancy Haile, Cindy Christin, Sara Grove, Rich Bowra, Dr. Steve Herb, Dr. Sara Willoughby-Herb, Lindsay Edwards, Nancy Gregg
Saroj Ghoting, Dr. Betsy Diamant-Cohen, Micki Freeney, Kathleen Reif, Janis Cooker, Kim van der Veen, Marie Slaby, Christina Kuntz, Cindy Ahmann, Nadine Rosendale, Patty Sundberg, Bryan Hissong, Jillian Dittrich
Maxine Gasser, Tammy Coulter, Kathy McAlley, Victoria Strickland-Cordial, Marty Staton, Lisa Tyson, Marcy Sims, Katie Cerqua, Lynn Wheeler, James Kelly, Muffie Smith, Tony Eckard, Paula Isett, Liz Sundermann
Elaine Meyers, Stephanie Shauck, Michele Morrison, Anna Varakin, Judy Nelson, Christy Estrovitz, Maren Ostergard, Susan Nehman-Anderson, Dr. Susan Neuman, Dr. Donna Celano, Lisa Guernsey, Cen Campbell, Tess Prendergast
Irene Briggs, Connie Wilson, Elaine Czarnecki, Barbara Klipper, Carrie Banks, Jenna Nemec-Loise, Betsy Brainerd, Dr. Marianne Martens, Pam Taylor, and Jessica Brown
In memory of Dr. Eliza Dresang.

STORYVILLE CHAMPIONS
Lynn Lockwood, Mary Hastler, Judy Kaplan, Debbie Wheeler, and James Fish

EDITORIAL
The superb Jamie Santoro, who gave us permission to play; Russ Damian; and all the rest of the brilliant folks at ALA Editions

FABULOUS FAMILIES
Adreon, Ron, Mom and Dad, Gina, Marianne, and Jim

SPECIAL THANKS
To Carroll County Public Library’s Children’s Services Supervisors for the play-and-learn center survey, and their ongoing support and enthusiasm; and to the outreach staff for the puppet show passage from “The Billy Goats Go Down the Ocean, Hon!”
To the staff at the Enoch Pratt Free Library’s Central Branch (Baltimore, Maryland) and Maryland’s State Library Resource Center.
Imagine a group of four-year-olds watching the following scene from “Three Billy Goats Gruff.” (If you’ve heard this before, make up your own version.)

**POLLY THE PONY.** ([approaching the bridge and saying with the audience]) TRIP TRAP TRIP TRAP!

[Troll jumps out and startles Polly, who neighs loudly in surprise.]

**TROLL.** Stop right there! Who’s that trip trappin’ over my bridge?

**POLLY.** Howdy, y’all. It’s just me, Polly the pony. I’m heading back to Chincoteague Island to see my friend, Misty. Now, Mr. Grump, what are you stopping me for? This is a free bridge.

**TROLL.** Maybe before, but not anymore . . . ([singing to the tune of “Old MacDonald”]) I’m the Troll, so pay my toll. Ha ha, ha ha, ha! It costs a buck, so hey, pay up. Ha ha, ha ha, ha!

**POLLY.** That tune sounds so familiar . . .

**TROLL.** Familiar, shamiliar. Where’s your money, honey?

**POLLY.** Well, I do have a quarter. Is that enough?

**TROLL.** Twenty-five cents don’t make a dent. When you get a dollar, give me a holler. [Goes back to booth]

**POLLY.** [To audience] Oh my, what am I gonna do now? I’ll never get over that bridge. [Enter Billy Jean the Billy Goat, representing herself and her two billy goat brothers.]

**BILLY JEAN.** Hey Polly, you want to cross the bridge too, right? We don’t have enough money for the troll toll either, but we’ve got a great idea.
POLLY. I sure do. What’s your idea?

BILLY JEAN. We’re looking for a few folks to put their money with ours. We’ll cross together in a CARPOOL! Why don’t you join us? When we have a dollar, we’ll cross the bridge together.

POLLY. Whoop-dee-do! I do believe I will. Here’s my quarter [flips a “quarter” (a cardboard prop that is attached by a piece of black yarn); it hangs over the edge of the stage for audience to see]. Now, do we have a dollar?

BILLY JEAN. Let me see . . . our quarter plus your quarter? . . . How many is that, kids? [Audience shouts] Right, that’s only two, and that equals fifty cents. We need four quarters to make a dollar. It looks like we’ll be waiting here awhile longer.

POLLY. Oh, well.

BILLY JEAN. Polly, we’ve set up a wading pool. It’s right over there [motions offstage with hoof]. Why don’t you take a dip and stay cool while we wait? I’ll stay here and see who else comes along.

[As POLLY jumps offstage into the “pool,” water squirts into the audience.]

Afterward the stage lights go down and the regular lights come up, the puppeteers divide the children into groups of three, give out puppets, and encourage the children to retell or act out the story.

The first group spends their time putting the puppets on and off their hands and talking about who gets to wear which puppet.

The second group yells trip, trap, trip, trap over and over.

The third group acts out part of the scene with everyone chiming in, “I’m the Troll, so pay my toll. Ha ha, ha ha, ha!”

The fourth group mimics the puppeteers’ voices and gestures taking turns so that everyone gets to play each role. “Want to join us in a CARPOOL?” “Whoop-de-doo! I sure do!”

The fifth group acts out the scene, then one child says, “Hey, let’s pretend we live in a jungle. Polly will be a zebra.”

“Okay!” shouts another, “the Troll can be a lion.”

“Yes, and Billy Jean can be on safari, but she gets lost.”

“The lion jumps out of the bush and tries to scare her, but Billy Jean can run fast.”

“Remember that story about the lion and the mouse? Let’s get Polly and Billy Jean to help the lion when he gets tangled up in a vine, then the three of us can be good friends.”

While all the groups enjoyed the activity, the last group took the puppets as props and fully engaged their imagination in this play activity. The word play in the last several hundred years has commonly referred to “recreation.” The original usage, however, referred to engaging oneself. This definition, to engage in experiential hands-on activities, is how we will use the word play in this book.
Research confirms that play is important for children’s growth and development. You may notice—on your travels, while visiting your doctor’s office, or when walking through an international airport—more and more play areas designed specifically for very young children. Some areas are thoughtfully created while others seem hastily assembled, makeshift spaces built only with good intentions. We encourage libraries to seize the opportunity and grasp the potential of filling up public spaces with interactive play materials, comfortable seating, puppets, dress-ups, rhyming games, storybooks, and other props to engage children. Designing early learning places extends beyond the library into library gardens, the community mall, the homeless shelter, and the local grocery store. It’s not the space or even the activity in play that makes the difference; it’s what you do with the space to create a “place” that will magnetically draw children into the kind of play that engages and inspires them.

Libraries are reinventing themselves to offer play-and-learn opportunities to families through early literacy storytimes, special parent-and-child activity programs, interactive resources, and dynamic places located inside and outside libraries. This book outlines easy methods to create early learning spaces not only in a library, but also in a museum, doctor’s office, church classroom, or airport—and how best you can respond to your community needs and do so within your organizational capacity. We hope it will help you create vibrant spots for play—or portkeys, if you will—to enthuse children into entering a whole new world of learning and discovery.
The purpose of this play-filled guide is to offer ideas that are eye opening, practical, and adventurous. To us these strategies have proven their worthiness, their playability, during our combined experience of over eighty-five years in public libraries, schools, and the world of architecture. We offer these ideas and concepts to help you think through what is working and what is not working in your situation and community. Enjoy the process as you meld purposeful play into your nooks, rooms, and wings. Our goal is to fill a space in a way that parents and young children naturally know what to do as they play and learn together.

Maria Montessori, the famed physician and educator, once said, “Play is a child’s work.” The question is not whether play is valuable—it is—or whether libraries can be a focal point for children’s learning through play—they most certainly are. Rather, the question should be, How can parents and caregivers inspire children to learn through purposeful play? Libraries can debate the fact that designing and maintaining play areas is challenging and perhaps even complicated—or you can relax, bounce ideas off each other, and savor this joyful work. Stop being a professional librarian for a moment and enter the play dimension. Remember what it was like to ride your tricycle or dig in a sandbox or play house. After all, the goal of play—whether in a small or large space, inside library buildings, or in the community—is to have fun. So ponder these ideas, enjoy yourself, and relish the process. It’s clear to us that each situation is different and you will have to find your own budget possibilities, space potential, and creative spark. But like in the Harry Potter novels, you can find the right ingredients for magic and create a child’s portkey to travel into the powerful world of play.

Try looking at a reading nook in your library with a fresh perspective. Perhaps you have a dozen picture books and two children’s chairs. How can you reinvent this
space and put some potential for fun and play into it? What about the parents’ role in play? How can you fill up this space so that children know what to do and parents want to stay with them? What can you do so that children are free to choose play activities and parents are empowered about what they can do to inspire a sense of discovery? By asking effective questions such as these, you can dress up, spruce up, and elevate the quality of your reading nook at low cost and low maintenance. Imagine now that for $300 you’ve expanded your reading nook to include a box of shape sorters, a bag of puppets, five green and speckled frogs with log, and a board with magnetic letters and numbers. You add an adult-size chair or loveseat. You have just created your portkey for play that will magnetically draw children to want to play and charm parents into joining the fun.

As head of programming and outreach for Carroll County (Maryland) Public Library, Dorothy Stoltz was blown away when she met Marisa Conner in 2007. Dorothy spearheaded a successful early literacy training study in 2005, the first library research-tested study in the United States. Marisa, coming from a school system, brought fresh eyes to the potential of libraries, joining the Baltimore County (Maryland) Public Library first as preschool specialist, then as youth services coordinator. Dorothy enjoyed an opportunity to coauthor two books, one about early literacy training, and one on picture books about childhood challenges. In the meantime Dorothy watched Marisa develop Baltimore County Public Library into a superb example of how a library can transform space of any size—from the end of a shelving unit to a 2,000-square-foot area—into an enchanted play spot for billy goats, nesting dolls, and speckled frogs. Jim Bradberry—who writes mystery novels in his spare time—is founder of James Bradberry Architects in Pennsylvania. Jim worked with Marisa to design two large spaces to become magical interactive early learning centers, Storyville at the Rosedale Branch and Storyville at the Woodlawn Branch.

The three of us formed a collaborative team to write this book with the aims:

- to encourage libraries to design practical and enlightening early learning centers for any size space and within budget;
- to give tips on unleashing your library’s potential to create interactive children’s areas in and outside your building;
- to motivate caring adults to help young children develop a sense of discovery; and
- to energize adults and children alike to pursue the lifelong enjoyment of learning.

The book is divided into four parts:

**PART ONE: THE MAGIC BEHIND THE DESIGN.** We summarize the research behind play and its importance in young children’s lives. It describes the ingredients for a successful play-and-learn area.
PART TWO: PLAY-AND-LEARN DESTINATIONS. Learn from some of the best models in the country. Explore the “new frontier” of new media and young children.

PART THREE: MINDFUL PLANNING AND CREATIVE DESIGN. Here are the nuts and bolts of transforming empty space into a destination for families. We offer an easy guide to designing your space—small, midsize, or large in dimension and budget. We offer tips on pulling it all together—engaging library staff and community partners, hiring architects and contractors, and creating fairy-tale endings.

PART FOUR: APPENDIXES. You’ll find a vendor list, tips for cleaning toys, sample plans, and more to supplement your project. Selected appendixes and additional content are available for free at ALA Web Extras (www.alaeditions.org/webextras).

None of these parts is meant to tower over the others. Nor do they stand by themselves; each part plays a role in contributing to the whole dimension of play.

As libraries continue to compete with television, technology, and commercial endeavors, staying focused on a library’s purpose to develop human potential is our best response. Transforming underutilized public spaces into dynamic early learning places is a great starting point to help families do their best for their children. Once you begin working with the ideas we present in this book, there is no limit to the magic you can discover and release—within your financial means and space dimensions—to change your public spaces into wondrous places and simultaneously respond to community needs. Indeed, having fun, colorful, and effective spots or portkeys of play may change family attitudes and behaviors and help generate unexpected financial support for your library. We’ve written this book to reveal your potential to fill up neglected spaces and transform them into joyful places to help parents inspire their children to learn. Your best ideas come from within you, not just from a book, no matter how well written. May your ideal play-and-learn center be the result of your questioning and discovering the power you have to make it a reality.
PART 1

The Magic behind the Design
HERE ARE AN INFINITE NUMBER OF ROOMS, CRAWL spaces, nooks, and crannies in the play dimension. Each one is waiting to be discovered. Any search will be greatly rewarded. The beauty of play either indoors or outdoors is that each child defines it. They learn to make choices about play based on what interests them. We invite you to explore the vast possibilities of the play dimension. Such an exploration is a personal journey, but this book can be your guide. During this adventure you and your colleagues will examine the meaning and benefits of play and how to apply this to your needs.

If we play the guitar, we can strum a Mozart sonata or pluck out a few chords of Cat Stevens’s “Where Do the Children Play?” If we play a card game, we can enjoy solitaire or Oklahoma ten-point pitch in teams. When we “play with someone,” we may be joking or toying with them or tapping a ping-pong ball back and forth. We may “play the fool,” “play it by ear,” “play both ends against the middle,” “play the market,” “play it cool,” or “play our part.” We can “play musical chairs,” “play devil’s advocate,” or “play it safe.” We can even “play it for all it’s worth” or “play Silly Billy.”

The play dimension is not something new; we all explored it as a child. However, our capacity for being lighthearted and using our imagination effectively may have been squelched somewhere along the torturous path of growing up. “Grow up!” we were told. Children are often taught to become skeptical, pessimistic, and hypercritical, instead of discerning, optimistic, and good-natured. A mature outlook, as many
great thinkers from Socrates to Mr. Rogers have taught, is to lead a well-examined and joyful life. Give yourself permission to play a “Silly Billy” and have fun.

From the 1890s through the 1920s, Andrew Carnegie reinvented the American public library by donating millions of dollars to build libraries—1,689 total—across the country. Carnegie’s library designs encouraged communication with a librarian and did away with closed stacks. Library patrons were free to browse the stacks and discover books on their own. In the 1930s community outreach was the next library reinvention, promoting intellectual, social, and cultural information for all. Libraries embraced young children after World War II with a special focus on storybook programs or storytimes that included rhyming and sing-along activities. By the mid-1950s, libraries such as Newark (New Jersey) Public Library created a list of learning opportunities found in storytimes, for example, listening to and following instructions; leading a group; being a follower; thinking and talking about problems; learning rhymes, jingles, songs, games, and dances; and, what caught our eye, playing with others.

Why all the fuss about play?

Play is important because it lets children control their choices. Most children can’t wait to become an adult. They ponder, “When am I going to make my own decisions and create my own results?” Many of us can probably remember emulating adults and the world around us when we were children—pretending to prepare a delicious dinner, building a fort out of cardboard boxes, playing “teacher” to help others learn, “writing” a letter to Grandma using our best scribbling skills, and fighting off the bad guys in a game of World War II. Each game involved essential rules developed in the moment by us as children. The rules were practical yet open for revision. Each situation was fresh, exciting, and full of possibilities. Fun activities allowed us to choose, decide, imagine, create, negotiate, collaborate, and be productive, as well as be inspired to explore and discover more nooks and crannies of the play dimension.

Play. Let’s play with this word. What images come to mind? Who do we see? What are the people doing? What is the energy behind their actions? Whatever scenario we envision there are sure to be common threads: enjoyable activity, engagement, movement, joy, friends and family. Play is a universal, natural, and desirable state of being. As we play, our inspiration and innermost joy flow freely, nurturing our minds and souls. Our intuition and creativity come into play. As adults, most of us work hard all week just to have some of our own playtime or a chance to rejuvenate and recharge ourselves on the weekends. Young children, however, need play as their primary activity, to build their bodies, minds, and psyches. For children, play is their work, and they will eagerly spend all their waking hours engaged in it.

Providing play opportunities may seem a little contrary to what we in libraries have traditionally thought about ourselves. Still, the idea of play—teaching parents about the importance of play, changing our library environments to include play, and offering take-home kits of play materials—has worked in libraries and can make the library a more inviting place. In today’s world, libraries are striving to engage
visitors in new ways. We find ourselves competing with commercial ventures, television, and the entertainment industry. Creating a type of library playground or gateway to ingenuity will engage young visitors and families, hopefully hooking them on libraries now and in the future.

“As we offer more play opportunities in library settings, we’re asking if it’s possible to measure the value of the play-and-learn centers,” says Marie Slaby, grants coordinator at Frederick County (Maryland) Public Libraries. “Our hope is to create a snapshot that can demonstrate a correlation between using the centers and family engagement. How do parents and children benefit from playing and reading in the centers together? Do children become more creative because of their library play experiences?”

Play means “to engage in.” It is the optimal atmosphere for learning. Based on this definition of play, one of our goals as librarians is to motivate adults to play with their children. Let’s transport that joyful energy of play into our library and community settings.

Gazing into the Play Dimension Architecturally

Here’s a story about Olivia, a five-year-old, and her friend at play. All they needed for their setup were a few items—cardboard bricks, toy horses, a ceramic chess set, and a deck of playing cards. They constructed a castle, building it on a chair and ottoman. The castle was simple enough, a few walls made of the cardboard bricks. And to adorn each corner of the castle, what else—a rook from the chess set. The castle had a stable, and in it, they made sure that the sleeping thoroughbred had a friend, a knight chess piece. In the king and queen’s chamber, the showpiece included corresponding playing cards for the little pillows and headboards, denoting which bed belonged to whom. Their clever and inventive undertaking shows it’s not what you end up with that counts, but it’s what you start with that engages you in play. It reinforces the idea that rules were made up on the spot, connections were made, spontaneity ruled.

You can augment the possibilities for such spontaneity in your venue. Have fun putting together a toy box of items for your nook or cranny. Try picking four things and see what children can do with them. Think of the popular Food Network show Chopped, in which the competing chefs are given a basket of disparate ingredients—say, lemons, pickles, peanut butter, and orzo. From these ingredients they are to make a meal. The only thing standing between the chef or the child is the limits of their imagination. Our money is on the child!
DOROTHY STOLTZ, MLS, coordinates programming and outreach services at Carroll County (Maryland) Public Library. She spearheaded a successful early literacy training study for Carroll using home child-care providers and three- and four-year-olds. This research-tested study showed statistically significant increases in early literacy skills of children. With more than thirty years of experience in public libraries, she oversees early literacy training, peer coaching, programming, mobile services, community outreach, and grant projects, including “Parents as Teachers,” at her library. She is coauthor of two ALA Editions books, Every Child Ready for School—Helping Adults Inspire Young Children to Learn (2013) and Tender Topics: Picture Books about Life’s Challenges (2013). In 2011 she became a member of the ALSC/PLA Every Child Ready to Read Oversight Committee and chairperson in 2014/15. She earned her MLS at Clarion University of Pennsylvania.

MARISA CONNER, MEd, coordinates the programming and services for children and youth at Baltimore County (Maryland) Public Library. She created Early Learning Activity Centers in all nineteen branches at BCPL and designed the learning components for both Storyvilles, BCPL’s award-winning early childhood learning environments. She brings twenty-seven years’ experience in education and over nine years’ experience in public libraries to her work. She has presented workshops and trainings on creating play spaces in libraries at state, regional, and national conferences, including Virginia, Montana, New York, Maryland, PLA, ALA, and to the 2011 national children’s conference in Denmark, BOEFA. She studied early childhood, elementary and special education, and school administration at Towson University (Maryland), Loyola College of Maryland, and the Johns Hopkins School of
Education (Maryland). She taught at Johns Hopkins University for over eight years. In 2014 she became a member of the ALSC/PLA Every Child Ready to Read Oversight Committee.

James Bradberry, AIA, LEED, is an award-winning architect/author and principal of James Bradberry Architects, located in Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania. He was educated at Auburn University, the University of Pennsylvania, and Cambridge University, where he was a Fulbright and Lusk Fellow. He has taught architecture at Yale, the University of Pennsylvania, and the Technical University of Nova Scotia, and his work has been published in the US and abroad. His firm has designed several noted interactive learning environments for children, including two Storyville projects for the Baltimore County Public Library, and the Cotsen Children’s Library at Princeton University. He is the author of four novels—*The Seventh Sacrament* (1994), *Ruins of Civility* (1996), *Eakins’ Mistress* (1997), and *The 32nd of December* (2014). He lives in Philadelphia.
Index

A
ABC blocks and letters, 48, 49
abstract thinking, 124
active learning environment. See play-and-learn environments
activity center in West Bloomfield Township Library, 57–58
activity sheet, sample, 189
Alice's Adventures in Wonderland (Carroll), 6
allies and champions for playscapes, creating, 109–113
alphabet bags, 107
American Library Association (ALA), 7, 15
Anderson, Debbie, 59
Anderson, Megan, 160
Anderson-Newham, Susan, 160
animal houses (sample activity sheet), 189
apps (electronic media applications), 83–86
architectural inversions, 107
Association for Library Service to Children (ALSC), 85, 110
autism, 160

B
“B-I-N-G-O,” 44
Baby Garden (Storyville area in Baltimore County Public Library), 69–70
Bacon, Francis, 6
Baltimore County (Maryland) Public Library, 159, 161, 163, 173–179
See also Storyville area
Banks, Carrie, 117
Bardige, Betty S., 20
baskets for organizing toys, 34–35
Bejerke, Dana, 61
Bickford, Jill, 57
bins for organizing toys, 34–35
block play, 158
blocks, 106
Bohrer, Clara, 54, 58, 68, 129, 134
books
active learning environment, abundance of toys and books in, 20
reading list, suggested, 167–168
in Storyville area (Baltimore County Public Library), 80
Bookscape, 68
Boynton, Sandra, 85
Bozeman (Montana) Public Library, 158
Bradberry, Jim, xvi
Bridgetown Library (example), 13–15
Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See? (Martin), 47
bubble diagrams, 146
budget
and design process, 104–107
large play-and-learn environments for $100,000 and up, 134–136
midsize playscapes for $10,000 to $100,000, 129–134
overview, 137–138
play materials, 137
purchase, selecting items for, 33
small play centers and nooks and crannies for $0 to $10,000, 127–129

C
Campbell, Cen, 85
Carnegie, Andrew, 2, 17–18
carpet tiles, 106
Carroll, Jenny, 161
Carroll, Lewis, 6
Carroll County (Maryland) Public Library, 18, 96, 112, 131, 158, 162, 164, 193–196
Casa dei Bambini (Children's House), 8
CDs, children’s musical, 45
Celano, Donna, 39, 50, 86
chair-and-a-half, 103, 106
champions and allies for playscapes, creating, 109–113
changes in active learning environments, creating frequent, 25
Chicago Public Library, 164
The Child’s Place for Children with Special Needs, Brooklyn Public Library, 117
Christin, Cindy, 158
cleaning
activity center, guidelines for, 181
toys, 36, 155
Cold Spring Public Library (example),
11–12, 15
Colonial Heights (Virginia) Public Library, 160
color, use of, 100–102
Comenius, John Amos, 6
comments from librarians and community
members, 157–164
community input, 140, 157–164
companies and resources, list of, 191
computer devices, 85–86
computer programs, 83–86
Conaway, Brenda, 54
cancept plan, 147
concepts and use of toys, 155
Conner, Marisa, xvi
Construction Zone (Storyville area in
Baltimore County Public Library), 18, 74
containers for organizing toys, 34–35
contractor, hiring, 142
control, children and, 25
Cooker, Janis, 156
Costley, Enid, 158
County of Los Angeles Public Library, 59
Creative Think, 123, 126
“The Creative Whack Pack” (von Oech),
123
creativity
abstract thinking, 124
deo Bono’s Six Thinking Hats, 125
imagination and creativity in setup of
toys, 155
metaphors, using, 122
overview, 121–122
whack your thinking to increase, 123
crew for design project, establishing, 90–91
curiosity and learning, 9

dark elements in fairy tales, fables, and
traditional stories, 6
Dauphin County Library System, 54
deo Bono’s Six Thinking Hats, 125
Deerr, Kathy, 59, 161
Descartes, René, 6
design crew. See also designer
community input, 140
establishing, 90–91
staff input, 139–140
tips for, 143
design process. See also planning process
alternate plans, 148
bubble diagrams, 146
budget, 104–107
color, use of, 100–102
concept plan, 147
final plans, 149, 151
floor plans, 150
furniture and furnishings, 103
observation and reflection skills used
in, 99–100
3-D floor plans, 152
venue matrix, 144–146
design strategies
for families to use space on their own,
31
overview, 24–27
designer
choosing, 142
hiring, 141–142
ideal playscape, creation of, 119
interviewing, 141
sample meeting plan with, 143–144
Diamant-Cohen, Betsy, 36
Down on the Farm theme, 137
dramatic play, 5–9


e-books, 84, 86
Early Literacy Activity Center project
activity plan for, 173–176
evaluation plan for, 179
logic model for, 177
early literacy environments, guidelines for,
187
early literacy learning activities, 111
Early Literacy Storytimes @ your library
(Ghoting), 65
easy-to-use playthings, 21–22
Edwards, Michelle, 163
“The Eency-Weency Spider,” 44
Ehler, Lois, 100
electronic media applications (apps), 83–86
Emerson, Chantal, 160
engaging and welcoming families, 30–33
Estrovitz, Christy, 162
Every Child Ready to Read initiative, 7, 15,
25, 39, 85, 110, 158
Every Child Ready to Read Ning, 39, 50
easy-to-use playthings, 21–22
examples. See samples
eexisting space, changing, 25, 30


eairy tales, fables, and traditional stories,
dark elements in, 6
Families of Children with Special Needs: A
How-To-Do-It Manual for Librarians
(Banks), 117
Family Place Libraries, 58–61, 161
Family Place Training Institute, 61
“The Farmer in the Dell,” 44
Feinberg, Sandy, 58
INDEX 201

final plans, 149, 151
Fish, Jim, 68
deflexibility in active learning environments, 25
“Floor Games” (Wells), 9
floor plans, 150
Fred Rogers Center for Early Learning, 85
free play, 5–9
Froebel, Friedrich, 7–8
funding for playscapes, 109–112
furniture and furnishings
overview, 103
and use of toys, 155

G
Ghoting, Saroj, 65
Gibbon, Gail, 100
Giving Our Children a Fighting Chance: Poverty, Literacy, and the Development of Information Capital (Neuman and Celano), 86
Gloucester County (Virginia) Public Library, 163
grandparents, 58
grants, 17
Grazing Meadows Village Library (example), 12–13, 29–30
greeting families, 31
Gregg, Nancy, 40
Gressco, 135
Grow Up Reading initiative, 58
Guernsey, Lisa, 83
guidelines
cleaning the activity center, 181
designing play-and-learn environment, 24–27
eyearly literacy library environments, 187
function of your playscape, 20–23
overview, 18
planning process, 136
purpose of your playscape, 18–20
sample guidelines for play-and-learn environment, 193–196
staff engaging families, 196

H
Harry Potter series, 6–7, 84
Hartman, Maureen, 61
Helldorfer, Ann-Marie, 16
Heltebride, Beth, 162
Hennepin County (Minneapolis) Public Library, 49, 61–64, 128, 187
Herb, Steven, 54
“Hey, Diddle, Diddle,” 44
higher-level thinking, 124
HighScope curriculum for early learning, criteria for active learning adapted from, 20–23
Hinkle, Sarah, 161
history of play and learning in libraries
Family Place Libraries, 58–61
Hennepin County Public Library, Minnesota, 61–64
overview, 53–54
Phoenix Public Library, Arizona, 64–65
West Bloomfield Township Library, Michigan, 54–58
Home Living area (Storyville area in Baltimore County Public Library), 74–77

I
imagination and creativity in setup of toys, 155
imaginative play, 5–9
Informatory of the Mother School, (Comenius), 6
Institute of Museum and Library Services, 58
interaction, opportunities for, 32–33
inventory of items, 35–36
inversions, architectural, 107

J
Jackson, Lue, 164
Japikse, Carl, 124
joyful energy of play in active learning environment, transporting, 24–25

K
Kahn, Buff, 164
Keller, Helen, 26
Kent State University School of Library and Information Science, 85
kindergarten, origination of term, 8
King, Cheryl, 163
King County (Washington) Library System, 163
King & Queen Branch Library, 164
Klipper, Barbara, 160
Kuntz, Christina, 158

L
language and learning, 40–43
large play-and-learn environments for $100,000 and up, planning process for, 134–136
learning and curiosity, 9
Leichtman, Robert, 122
letter knowledge, 111
librarians
champions and allies for playscapes, creating, 109–113
comments from, 157–164
sidelines, when parents and librarians should remain on the, 32
libraries, changes in, 2. See also history of play and learning in libraries
Library of Virginia, 158

www.alastore.ala.org
INDEX

The Library (Storyville area in Baltimore County Public Library), 80
Linder, Toni, 23
“Little Thumb a Little Plum: The Fingers Named” (Froebel), 8
The Little Engine That Could (Piper), 47
Lockwood, Lynn, 68

M
magnetic activities, 104–105
Martens, Marianne, 85
Martin, Bill, Jr., 47
“Mary Had a Little Lamb,” 45
Mary Riley Styles Public Library, 161
Maryland Model for School Readiness, 68
Matthews (Virginia) Library, 158
McCormack, Carol, 158
meaningful play, 5–9
metaphors, using, 122
Meyers, Elaine, 39, 64
Middle Country Public Library (Centereach, New York), 58–59
midsize playscapes for $10,000 to $100,000, planning process for, 129–134
mission of library incorporated into design process, 89–90
Montessori, Maria, 8, xv
Montessori Method, 8
Moo, Baa, La La La! (Boynton), 85
Mother Goose playscape in West Bloomfield Township Library, 57
Mother's Play Songs (Froebel), 8
“Mother's School” (Comenius), 6
The Mother's Book (Pestalozzi), 7
“The Muffin Man,” 44
Munro, Hector Hugh, 165
musical instruments, 45

N
narrative skills, 111
National Association for the Education of the Young Child (NAEYC), 85
Nelson, Judy, 163
Nemec-Loise, Jenna, 164
Neuman, Susan, 39, 50, 86
nooks for reading in Storyville area of Baltimore County Public Library, 80
Norfolk (Virginia) Public Library, 60–61
Not a Box (Portis), 128
nursery rhymes, 7

O
observation
of existing space, 25, 30
of others, children learning from, 19
optimism in planning process, 26–27
Orbis Pictus (Comenius), 6
organizing toys, 154
Ostergard, Maren, 163

P
parents
sidelines, when parents and librarians should remain on the, 32
signs with school-readiness tips for parents, changing, 25
Pestalozzi, Johann, 7
Pete the Cat series, 84
Philippe Starck's Bubble line, 103
Phoenix (Arizona) Public Library, 64–65
phonological awareness, 111
Pierce County (Washington) Library System, 163
Pierce County (Washington) Public Library, 160
Piper, Watty, 47
Pittsburgh Plate Glass Company, 101
planning process. See also design process guidelines for, 136
large play-and-learn environments for $100,000 and up, 134–136
midsize playscapes for $10,000 to $100,000, 129–134
mission, incorporating library’s, 89–90
play materials, 137
project costs, 137–138
small play centers and nooks and crannies for $0 to $10,000, 127–129
space needs, determining, 91–97
Plato, 5, 121
play
overview, 1–3
power of play, activating, 11–16
purposeful, 5–9
play-and-learn environments
abundance of toys and books in, 20
basic characteristics of, 33–37
champions and allies for, creating, 109–113
changes in active learning environments, creating frequent, 25
choices in playthings, 22
comments from librarians and community members on, 157–164
design strategies for, 24–27
easy-to-use playthings, 21–22
function of your, 20–23
funding, 109–112
guidelines, 18–23, 193–196
HighScope curriculum for early learning, criteria for active learning adapted from, 20–27
ideal environment, creation of, 115–119
large play-and-learn environments for $100,000 and up, 134–136
midsize playscapes for $10,000 to $100,000, 129–134
overview, 20
purpose of your, 18–20

www.alastore.ala.org
small play centers and nooks and crannies for $0 to $10,000, 127–129
support from adults, 23
verbalization, allowing for, 22
“Play at the Library: Supporting Early Learning” (PowerPoint presentation), 18
playdough, 50
play materials. See toys
playfulness, using your own, 24
playscapes. See play-and-learn environments
“Plump! Down Falls My Baby: The Falling Game” (Froebel), 8
portal in West Bloomfield Township Library, 55–56
Portis, Antoinette, 128
Portsmouth (Virginia) Public Library, 163
power of play, activating, 11–16
Prendergast, Tess, 118
Princeton University Library, 68
print awareness, 111
print motivation, 111
project costs, 137–138
Public Library Association (PLA), 85, 110
puppet theater, 105
puppets, 44–45
purposeful play, 5–9
Puyallup (Washington) Public Library, 158
puzzles, 107
Q
Quarryville (Pennsylvania) Public Library, 61
Queens (New York) Library, 161
R
Raymond, Terry, 60
reading, playing and learning through, 45–47
reading list, suggested, 167–168
rearranging existing space, 25
Red Leaf, Yellow Leaf (Ehlert), 100
Redman, Joanna, 61
Rehm, Diane, 53
Reinhart, Scott, 96
The Republic (Plato), 5
request for proposal (RFP), 142
request for qualifications (RFQ), 141
Resnick, Wendy, 64
resources and companies, list of, 191
respect and spirit of helpfulness, approaching families with, 31–32
Roberson, Amanda Ellington, 156
Rosedale Branch Storyville of Baltimore County (Maryland) Public Library. See Storyville area in Baltimore County Public Library
rotating playthings and furnishings, 33–34
roving librarian technique, 118
“Row, row, row your boat,” 44
rugs, colorful children’s, 105–106
S
safety measures for play items, 36
samples
activity plan, 173–176
activity sheet, 189
evaluation plan, 179
logic model, 177
meeting plan with a designer, 143–144
survey for libraries that currently offer play-and-learn spaces, 94–95, 171–172
survey for libraries that do not currently offer play-and-learn spaces, 93, 169
San Francisco Public Library, 160, 162
Schiller, Friedrich, 7
Screen Time: How Electronic Media—From Baby Videos to Educational Software—Affects Your Young Child (Guernsey), 83
seating, 92
seating for two, 106
Shakespeare, William, 7
Shippensburg University, 54
sidelines, when parents and librarians should remain on the, 32
signs with school-readiness tips for parents, changing, 25
singing, playing and learning through, 44–45
Slaby, Marie, 3
small play centers and nooks and crannies for $0 to $10,000, planning process for, 127–129
smartphones, 84
Smith, Jim, 68
Socrates, 5
Socratic method of asking questions, 124
space needs, determining, 91–97
special needs children, 117, 160
spontaneity, encouraging, 3
St. Mary’s County (Maryland) Library, 128, 156, 161, 164
staff
engaging families, guidelines for, 196
input, 139–140
training, 117–119
Staunton (Virginia) Public Library, 163
Stoltz, Dorothy, xvi
The Store (Storyville area in Baltimore County Public Library), 78–79
Storytimes for Everyone! (Ghoting), 65
Storyville area in Baltimore County Public Library
Baby Garden, 69–70
books in, 80
INDEX

Storyville area in Baltimore County Public Library (continued)
Construction Zone, 74
creating a Storyville in your library, 74
funding for, 111
Home Living area, 74–77
The Library, 80
nooks, reading, 80
overview, 18, 44, 49, 67–69, 134
The Store, 78–79
survey results, 183–186
The Theater, 79
Toddler Bay, 71–72
Toddler Woods, 72–74
support from adults in active learning environment, 23
surveys
for determining space needs, 92–97, 169, 171–172
Storyville survey results, 183–186
Szymanski, Stephanie, 131

T
tables, 84
Talk to Me, Baby! How You Can Support Young Children’s Language Development (Bardige), 20
talking, playing and learning through, 40–43
Tazewell County (Virginia) Public Library, 159
Teacher’s Guide for Read, Play and Learn! Storybook Activities for Young Children (Linder), 23
technology issues, 83–86
Tell Me, Tree (Gibbon), 100
The Tempest (Shakespeare), 7
The Theater (Storyville area in Baltimore County Public Library), 79
themes, 137
thinking things through, 124
3-D floor plans, 152
“Three Little Pigs,” 45–46
“The Three Billy Goats Gruff,” 47
Through the Looking Glass (Carroll), 6
Toddler Bay (Storyville area in Baltimore County Public Library), 71–72
Toddler Woods (Storyville area in Baltimore County Public Library), 72–74
toys
abundance of toys and books in active learning environment, 20
cleaning, 155
concepts and use of, 155
easy-to-use playthings, 21–22
furnishings and furniture and use of, 155
imagination and creativity in setup of, 155
organizing, 154
overview, 137, 153–154
safe for all ages, 36
traditional stories, dark elements in fairy tales, fables, and, 6
train station play-and-learn area, 131
Tyson, Lisa, 159

U
Using Children’s Books in Preschool Settings (Herb and Willoughby-Herb), 54
“Utilize the Energy of Color” (Pittsburgh Plate Glass Company), 101

V
value-added thinking, 124
vendor list, 191
venue matrix, 144–146
verbalization, allowing for, 22
Vita, Frances, 61
vocabulary, 42–43, 111
von Oech, Roger, 123, 126

W
Wadham, Tim, 158
Wanser, Terry, 60
welcoming and engaging families, 26, 30–33
Wells, H. G., 9
West Bloomfield Township (Michigan) Library, 54–58, 68, 129–130
whack your thinking to increase creativity, 123
A Whack on the Side of the Head (von Oech), 123
What’s the Big Idea? (Japikse), 124
William K. Sanford Town Library, 16
Willoughby-Herb, Sara, 54
Woodlawn Branch Storyville. See Storyville area in Baltimore County Public Library
work group. See design crew
Work Sampling System (WSS), 68
writing, playing and learning through, 48–50

Y
Youth Services Department, William K. Sanford Town Library, 16