

ENGAGING BABOONS IN THE LIBRARY

Putting Theory into Practice

DEBRA J. KNOLL



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DEBRA J. KNOLL is a former children's librarian and academic instructor. Her research has focused on the development of infants and toddlers and its implications for children's librarianship.

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FOREWORD

THE NEW YORK TIMES RECENTLY FEATURED A STORY ON THE FRONT PAGE with the headline “Long Line at the Library? It’s Story Time Again.”¹ The author, Winnie Hu, reported a 28 percent increase in storytime attendance at New York City public libraries. We learn about library clerks pressed into duty as stroller parking attendants and about parents telling prospective nannies that they expect them to take their children to library storytime. Sari Feldman, president of the American Library Association, is quoted as saying that these enhanced storytimes for very young children are part of a nationwide phenomenon of libraries transforming themselves into learning centers.

Anyone who has been working in or studying public libraries over the past decade or so has to have noticed the sea change in attitudes and services devoted to babies and toddlers. Many libraries have converted public space into places where very young children and their caregivers can find interactive games and educational toys ranging from play kitchens to puzzles and bead stringers. Board books are now standard additions to children’s collections. Storytimes, as noted, have morphed into age-appropriate occasions for early literacy activities of all kinds with waiting lists of children whose caregivers are eager for them to attend. Stimulated and supported by Every Child Ready to Read, the curriculum developed by the Association for Library Service to Children and the Public Library Association, children’s librarians have taken on the role of teaching parents how to be their children’s first teachers and guiding caregivers about how to support those efforts.

Many manuals and guidebooks are now available to help librarians create early childhood play spaces and present enhanced storytimes that facilitate the learning of infants, toddlers, and preschoolers. In *Engaging Babies in the Library*, Debra Knoll adds the missing pieces to those practical handbooks. She provides well-researched tips and advice for dealing with the emotional needs and the often mystifying behavioral manifestations of those needs in babies and toddlers. Many librarians are comfortable in their roles as storytellers but a little

less confident about interacting with a crying baby and her anxious mother standing at the reference desk while adults using the computers glare at them. What about the father who doesn't know what restroom he should use with his two-year-old daughter? Or the mother looking for a quiet, private place to nurse her newborn? Or the big brother who is clearly not happy with the arrival of an adorable sibling?

Knoll gives sensible, sensitive advice for all these situations and more. She provides clear time lines for the physical, emotional, intellectual, and social development of young children. Occasional sidebars help to bring developmental issues to life with anecdotes taken from real-life experiences in libraries. For readers who are inspired to implement this more holistic approach to service to these youngest patrons and their caregivers, she provides carefully constructed Baby Steps and Big Steps for each topical area.

All of us who care about children would stand up and cheer if all public libraries could take the Big Steps to ensure that babies and toddlers are served with the commitment and competence Knoll describes here. In fact, we would like to see *all* children, from birth through adolescence, served by librarians who have the expertise and resources to meet their physical, emotional, intellectual, and social needs. Debra Knoll herself acknowledges that this is a highly challenging goal right now. However, just having the vision articulated by her is a Baby Step toward achieving it.

—Virginia A. Walter
UCLA Department of Information Studies

Note

1. Winnie Hu, "Long Line at the Library? It's Story Time Again," *New York Times*, November 1, 2015, www.nytimes.com/2015/11/02/nyregion/long-line-at-the-library-its-story-time-again.html?_r=0.

INTRODUCTION

AT FIRST BLUSH, THE VERY IDEA OF COMBINING BABIES WITH LIBRARIES is somewhat oxymoronic—it would seem that they just don't go together. This sentiment is a carryover from the early days, when babies, children, and even teens were not only unwelcome, they were not *allowed* into libraries. Thankfully, those in the profession of children's librarianship championed their inclusion, and today's library culture enthusiastically welcomes them all. However, the long-ago prejudicial attitude that accompanied those outdated sentiments and former practices is still strongly influencing the way many families with babies and toddlers *perceive* the library. On the other hand, babies as library *patrons* is a relatively recent notion. It wasn't very long ago that, as a matter of policy, a child needed to be able to write his full name in order to be issued a library card. Now, some libraries are inviting newborns to acquire one.

Nevertheless, the profession is still grappling with what it means to serve babies and toddlers, along with their diverse family units, in the more general sense. Also, professionals are continuing to explore how to further encourage the development of pre- and early literacy skills, so important to the mission of librarians. As the profession has adapted over the years and has adopted literacy as one of its primary missions, it only makes sense to entice these families into what has long been perceived as the "no baby zone" of the public library. Finally, today's librarians are also being invited into the role of media mentor, wherein they are called upon to assist parents in using electronic devices positively in order to enrich and educate even the youngest members of our society. Bridges are being built all over the library landscape to broadcast that babies and toddlers, siblings, and caregivers all belong in the library. But what is the librarian's role and involvement once these new patrons arrive?

SERVING BABIES AND FAMILIES IN THE PUBLIC LIBRARY

There is much to consider if providing quality service to babies, toddlers, and caregivers is to be a goal of public librarianship. As *places* for these services to be encouraged and enriched, library spaces require careful thought. If such an area were to be developed, what would be the requisite features? How would it fit into the children's area as a whole? Because babies do not engage library spaces alone, what sorts of amenities, if any, should the library provide in this area for accompanying care providers? And babies often bring with them their preschool-age siblings. Do these siblings, too, have a place nearby? If so, what would be required in that additional space? If such a space were indeed to be created, what other problems might it attempt to solve? What would the entire process of creation and implementation entail? Who would build the space? And who would pay for it?

Extending children's librarianship services to babies, toddlers, and care providers would also need to be reexamined, perhaps to reevaluate priorities, goals, and practices. For example, the librarian would need to be familiar with infant and early childhood developmental processes. As one committed to the mission of children's services, the professional would also need to understand the earliest processes involved in emerging literacy skills. She would also need the skill to interact fluidly with each baby along with the care provider and any other accompanying family member, especially the toddlers and preschoolers who are also in various stages of rapid development along similar trajectories. How would this new service look, and how would it unfold in the daily activity in the library? How would it alter, extend, or change what is currently being practiced?

Answering these questions, solving any identified problems, and embracing the challenges they present to the profession is a very tall order. However, to do so, in very real terms and very real ways, has the potential to impact positively the lives of these baby patrons in very deep, brain-based ways, as well as to modify the direction of library space planning and applied librarianship. And embracing this challenge could truly alter for the better the course of the lives of children growing up in today's society. To seriously commit to this change and to fully address the challenges, taking steps to invoke a real sense of welcome is long overdue and, for many children today, *very* necessary. Although librarians have intuited this challenge for quite some time, they may be unclear about how to proceed.

HOW THIS BOOK CAN HELP

Engaging Babies in the Library focuses squarely on the *how* of providing quality library service to babies and families. There is no longer a question about *why*, as research

continues to churn out supporting evidence of the vast learning that is occurring in babies and toddlers. As public institutions and entities, children's library spaces and the librarians who serve them have the unique opportunity to foster healthy growth and development for this population, promoting positive impact on a very broad scale. Embracing this challenge and including it in daily practice further advances the profession while also creating a stronger voice of advocacy for children. Win-win-win. Making these changes happen, however, is another thing altogether.

Chapter 1 tells the story of how one library and two librarians came to better understand what is involved in serving babies, toddlers, and care providers. Each of the next four chapters opens with a short discussion of differing aspects in the developing life of a baby. Chapter 2 addresses physical growth and associated needs. Chapter 3 discusses issues that arise as babies develop emotionally. Chapter 4 presents various components of the growing intellect. Chapter 5 addresses the importance and significance of social growth and exchanges.

The information presented in the Developmental Time Line sections is culled from several well-respected sources, including *Blackwell Handbook of Childhood Cognitive Development* and the highly respected Zero to Three: National Center for Infants, Toddlers, and Families website, which reports on and makes available original child development research.¹ The time line elements were chosen for their application to the profession. They were also chosen as a means to highlight how quickly a baby's brain develops and advances as well as perhaps to invoke a feeling of awe and respect for the various processes. The information provided in these pages does not pretend to cover the breadth, depth, or scope of all that the growing baby is experiencing and what ongoing research is illuminating. The discussions included in each chapter relate to how these developmental processes present themselves while the baby is visiting the library with his family.

The Baby Steps sections offer service tips and suggestions that librarians can easily or inexpensively adopt or implement. The Big Steps sections invite librarians to think creatively about what may be possible with further investment, support, funding, and collaborative efforts.

Chapter 6 begins with an overview of what the profession upholds as standard quality librarianship and how this concept may be interpreted in keeping with service to babies and families. The chapter concludes with a call to continue the conversation, to reignite the passion for fully including children—and babies—in libraries. The chapter charges the profession to transform policy and practice in ways that advocate for babies and families and to heed the call to make life better for them. The stories included are true, with names changed to protect privacy.

This book invites you to open, expand on, and continue conversations about ways in which children's librarians can rise to the challenge of providing quality service to babies, toddlers, and care providers. I also hope that the information

in this volume can be used at the planning table to assist children's librarians in justifying their requests and suggestions for support, and for acquiring adequate funding and staff hours, as the investment in these lives promises so much in return. The book also emphatically encourages libraries to reevaluate children's library spaces and carve out a little bit of room for the library's littlest patrons, the babies, *along with* adequate spaces for their slightly older siblings and caregivers. Providing quality service to families with babies and toddlers presents its own unique challenges. Nevertheless, there is no portion of our society that is more important, more vulnerable, and more delightful to work with, and for whom our efforts will have the greatest positive impact—for many years to come.

Note

1. Usha C. Goswami, ed., *Blackwell Handbook of Childhood Cognitive Development* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2003); Zero to Three: National Center for Infants, Toddlers, and Families, www.zerotothree.org.



LIBRARIANSHIP FOR BABIES

From Problems to Potential

THE VILLAGE OF LOUDONVILLE IS BEAUTIFULLY SITUATED IN the rolling landscape of northeastern Ohio, at the southernmost tip of Ashland County. The Loudonville Public Library is not only the pride of but also the center of activity in this small, rural community. As is common, this little village has become economically challenged, with jobs and services continuing to close and migrate to the larger cities and towns nearby. The library's patron base includes those of the Amish and Mennonite traditions, and the library is the frequent destination for a bustling home-school population. The meandering Mohican River edges the west side of town and flows southeastward through one of the largest camping and canoeing areas in the state. Because the broader area surrounding the village receives sketchy Internet and phone service, residents and tourists alike frequently use the library for Internet access as well as for informational and recreational purposes.

The children's department of the Loudonville Public Library is a lively place. Two full-time children's librarians were providing services to the children in the community when the subject of providing service to babies, and by extension their care providers, really began to be considered. We were also trying to stay abreast of the recent initiatives coming from within the profession about assisting parents in the task of raising readers. If babies and toddlers are indeed experiencing substantial brain growth and development, what could we do to better serve and assist them? Most of the focus of these initiatives remained on the slightly older three- to five-year-olds. We sensed the need was intense, but the way to proceed remained elusive.

PROBLEMS AT THE LOUDONVILLE PUBLIC LIBRARY

One day a gentle yet seismic shift began in our thinking as a result of a simple question. Tabitha, the mother of two boys, one about two years old and the other a three-month-old, asked, “Is there somewhere in the library where I can go to nurse my son?” Oddly enough, the answer was “No, not really.” Yes, there were soft, comfy chairs, and the mother was invited to use those, but they were in immediate view of the circulation desk. She was fine with that but sensitive enough to be concerned about the comfort level of the elderly couple at the checkout counter nearby. She was then invited to use a small study room in the adult section, but because she had a toddler in tow, she didn’t want to “invade” that space. Hmm. A temporary fix was put in place, and a rather chagrined pair of children’s librarians began to explore ways to solve the problem—and consider the need.

As thoughts and conversations continued, other issues began to be identified and better defined. For example, there were problems for the families of babies and toddlers. There was no cohesive place to congregate, and caregivers and playmates seemed to be all over the place. The noise, clutter, and activity were situated near the center of the library, alongside the circulation area, making it difficult to contain enthusiastic yet perfectly normal outbursts of excitement or emotion. Such eruptions often led to discomfort or embarrassment on the part of parents, who then felt the need to extend unnecessary apologies to staff. Infants in carriers were frequently seen resting on the floor right in the middle of general foot traffic, posing a safety hazard for all. Also, mixed-age groups contended for space, with toddlers and upper elementary school-age children in the same area, causing frequent clashes.

The adult computer workstation was over *there*, the AWE children’s educational computer workstation was forty feet over *there*, and a designated play area for preschool-age children was yet another forty feet over *there*, with no clear sight lines. The family, by virtue of the library’s interior layout, was forced to split up into separate parts of the building, so the adults were unable to closely monitor their children’s activities. The placement of the various computers also led to unattended-child situations or created infant- or toddler-oriented, low-level distractions in the adult area. And, because the computers faced away from the open room, it was difficult for care providers to keep their children in sight.

The children’s librarians were also grappling with problems. Trying to provide quality service for the entire children’s area basically amounted to crowd control. How was this working in conjunction with meeting professional goals, delivering information, and fostering pre- and early literacy skills? Frustration was mounting. Yet another specialized committee, task force, or workshop was being formed. Yes, we knew that these issues were important. We truly wanted to be agents of change. But what could we *do*? More of the same efforts obviously

wasn't enough. The situation for the children was made even more urgent when statewide funding cuts resulted in reduced staff hours in the children's department. Now the librarians had to solve the problem of providing quality service to this population even as staffing, funding, and support for programming opportunities began to evaporate.

As time marched on and babies graduated into toddlers and then preschoolers, the sense of urgency to do something became stronger. We went searching for the perfect solution. Surely some library somewhere had it all: a place for infants to have access to books and be free to move about *and* an adjoining area for appropriate toddler and preschool play *and* a place for an adult to nurse a baby or access an Internet workstation—all at the same time. However, what we envisioned couldn't be found within the known library environments that were investigated. Although many beautiful children's library areas existed with a focus on play and literacy as well as places that allowed babies to crawl around a little, a sense of cohesiveness in providing spaces and services for the entire family package was lacking.

We took our search for the ideal space outside the world of libraries and found inspiration by visiting children's museums. These museums are typically devoted to creating opportunities for children to explore learning environments that highlight science and technology. We were looking for ways to meld the concept of contained educational play with appropriate library conduct and interactivity that enhanced overall development and fostered pre- and early literacy skills. In a startling moment of lucidity, it came to us to reverse the order of operations. Structured "pretend" libraries are available in children's museums to assist children in learning about science. Maybe we could create a small museum-like structure that could be incorporated into the library, with the goals of fostering general healthy development and encouraging emerging pre- and early literacy skills! Perhaps, too, with the right design, some of the other problems we had identified could be addressed.

Consultation with children's museum designers helped to bring more focus and clarity to our thinking. First, the Institute of Museum and Library Services *does* include children's libraries, confirming our conviction that a well-planned, museum-like structure might have a justified place in libraries. Second, we reflected on the profession itself, recognizing that library services should not be limited because of age. Therefore, children's librarians should provide access to books by the babies themselves. We also wanted to incorporate components that would encourage pre- and early reading development. And we wanted to entice nonusers into the library. We could see how this simple solution could address many of these challenges and solve existing space issues and problems. Finally, we needed a clear, overarching philosophy on which to ground our thinking. As we reflected on and discussed the physical, emotional, intellectual, and social components of child development, we determined that, much to our surprise,

our ultimate goal was to create an environment that would foster developing social interactions and skills. All the other aspects of development fell into place as secondary, natural outcomes of this goal.

With our imaginations in high gear, we began to picture a beautifully rendered space just for babies. The area, by design, would also gently transition to allow for toddler play, and then on into a section devoted to preschooler pretend play. The area would provide babies with a safe space where they could move about, out of their carriers, allowing access to materials that are published specifically for them. It would include a few research-based pre- and early literacy interactive components. The general area would also include basic amenities for the care-providing adult, who could discreetly nurse a baby or access an Internet workstation and still be able to monitor the activity and whereabouts of older children. The location was to be separate from the general service area, where noise and clutter would be contained and disruptions to the public curtailed. This envisioned play space in the library would be intentional, permanent, and aesthetically pleasing, thus sending an intrinsic message of respect for and welcome to this population, hopefully reaching nonusers. It would be available to all families any time the library doors were open and would level the social playing field by serving the neglected child as well as the child who is doted upon.

THE DREAM BECOMES A REALITY

The building and installation of the Early Literacy Play Space (ELPS) took quite a long time to accomplish. The project faced the typical variety of challenges, such as others' inability to grasp the goals and concepts, resistance to change, lack of funding, and a rapid turnover in administration. As we sought ways to carve out room for the installation of such a space, a few hard decisions had to be made. The housing of magazines, paperback books, and a small reference section had to be reconsidered, reallocated, or downsized. All in all, despite space limitations and with a bit of creative reallocation, room was made, and with little overall collateral damage to existing collections.

The project was broken down into three stages. The first and most urgent step was to develop the baby area because babies had the least in the way of developmentally appropriate space and yet were learning and growing the most rapidly. Funding was gained through the generous contributions of local community members, foundations, and service organizations. A library design team was hired, and, after several discussions and planning sessions, building commenced. From the moment this first stage of the space was complete, we knew we were on to something. The area became much more than the sum of its parts, as families immediately occupied and enjoyed the space. It fairly pulsed with welcome, while stimulating interactions among a variety of age ranges and

abilities. Because the area was so suitable for their holistic needs, families were often inclined to remain in the library for long periods, thereby extending healthy developmental interactions and play. To our surprise, creation of the space also expanded the very practice of librarianship in that we, as librarians, could encourage, engage in, and expand these play experiences. These abilities, in turn, ushered in a new way of thinking about the future of the profession itself and about what quality librarianship for this population really entails.¹

The second stage of the project was to design and construct a computer workstation. It would allow an adult to sit next to a preschooler who could also engage in instructional, computer-related activity with grown-up assistance nearby. Elegantly designed and constructed by a team of local builders, and with exquisite attention to details that were meant to passively educate and encourage play, the “ticket booth” component was happily received. For many adults, its availability invokes a sense of relief as they can attend to what they need to do and still have their toddler children engrossed in play nearby, away from less tolerant adults. The slightly raised platform on which the workstation sits allows for slightly better visibility into the area. And there is room enough for an infant in a carrier to be set down and not be in the middle of foot traffic. Success, in that more problems were solved!

The third and final piece, more in keeping with the museum-like structure described earlier, was by far the most challenging to design and construct. Because the component was to be a structure more in keeping with a children’s museum, we sought out a local company known for its efforts to create interactive learning environments and museum structures. Company leaders found the idea intriguing and were willing to tackle the construction of what we had envisioned—a challenge to build, indeed, because the unit, although very compact, contains numerous pre- and early literacy skill-enhancing components and pretend-play opportunities.² As the developing infants quickly grow into toddlers and then preschoolers, they are gently invited to play in more sophisticated ways, always with a mild emphasis on pre- and early literacy-enhancing activity. The entirety of the ELPS fits into a twenty-by-thirty-foot area toward the back of the children’s department. (For more information, see note 2.)

The ELPS was instantly popular and continues to be so. As families become familiar with the area, they are quickly drawn to it and, somewhat amusingly, once through the library’s door, hurry to get “back there” with their little ones. Also, many of the problems identified have been addressed and successfully resolved. The ELPS is frequently a go-to place for mothers, grandparents, campers, and others, all looking for somewhere to go to “get out of the house,” “come in from the rain,” or “find relief from the heat.” Social exchanges, so very important to this population, are more easily conducted, as parents and caregivers gather in the area, meet for the first time, plan play dates, share stories, offer encouragement to each other, and otherwise find a place to just relax. And for many

members of the community, there is no “entry fee” prohibiting use. The public library is still free and open to all.

One of the primary successes of the play space is that it is indeed inviting to those who usually do not use the public library. Loudonville is a small town, and we know our patrons fairly well. Since the inclusion of this space, we see new faces regularly as previously nonusing families are spreading the word about the library and its sense of welcome as a place for babies and toddlers. As time has gone by, the area has also been used in ways unanticipated. For example, the area has been identified by behavioral intervention specialists as a neutral place to meet with families and practice new skills. It has also been used for conducting gentle physical therapy exercises for children with disabilities. It has been identified as a safe, neutral place for supervised parental visitations. And it is used as an observation area for students studying infants and toddlers in a natural environment at various stages of development. The caregivers love the go-to area, the children are greatly benefited and have a grand time at play, and the librarians are deeply gratified by having so many problematic issues resolved. The community of Loudonville entrusted its librarians with this challenge, believed in the dream, and backed it with the funding necessary to make real change happen. The dream became reality—ideas came together, space was built, and the public was invited into this special environment. And it worked.

THE ELPS AND LIBRARIANSHIP

From a simple request to nurse a baby, to the conception of how to best alter spaces for this population, to the concrete reality of the ELPS, seven years passed. During those long years of laboring over the different stages of the project, the understanding and practice of what librarianship means to this population continued to unfold, evolve, and define itself. For example, as families gravitated to their area, they often created the perfect scenario for an impromptu story, song, or puppet play. As babies played, the librarians were able to just hover about, marveling at what they were observing and, in doing so, gently informing and inspiring caregivers. By extension, opportunities to draw attention to the Every Child Ready to Read initiative’s educational components naturally arose within these social exchanges. The overall service model became much more fluid and holistic, assisting all these patrons simultaneously.

Furthermore, as we delved into infant and early childhood research studies, serendipitous observations of babies in the library reemphasized what researchers were reporting, expanding our sensitivity to and appreciation for what babies were attempting to accomplish. For example, we would watch an infant just learning to walk, maintaining his balance with his entire body trembling with exertion,

gleeful, while holding a book in an effort to present it to his mommy. This simple exchange demonstrated his efforts to move about (physical development) and delight in his success (emotional expression). It also demonstrated his attempts to communicate (intellectual growth) and share with his adult (social exchange). We could now better appreciate how these simple encounters, easily overlooked in the past, were revealing the complex learning that was happening in baby's brain. We were learning that it was perhaps more appropriate to congratulate baby for his stunning success than to simply applaud him for his adorably executed gestures and efforts.

We were also introduced to a higher form of advocacy specific to this population. Even as we were studying these magnificent brain growth and development processes, we were made more aware of the serious challenges to healthy outcomes many members of this population are facing in today's social and cultural contexts. The vast potential of a child's gain in (or lack of) brain growth became a much more vital concern (see the feature "The Beauty of the Developing Brain"). Because children's librarians serve every child, we began to take more

The Beauty of the Developing Brain



As baby plays on her tummy at the library, she is fully absorbed in isometric exercise, with head and legs raised and arms outstretched to maintain balance. A stranger, the librarian, approaches. Baby darts a quick glance over to mother to gauge mother's reaction and is assured that this stranger is welcome. The librarian presents baby with a board book. Reaching toward it with fascination throws baby's whole body off balance, and she quickly adjusts to the situation. She adapts her strategy, grapples with the book, and rolls to her back so she can have a closer look. The entire episode transpires in seconds. This mild, routine interaction with the librarian illustrates many things. It demonstrates to baby's mother that the librarian acknowledges and values their visit, it introduces baby to a pre-literacy enriching event, and it opens the door for future social exchanges, as baby recognizes the librarian as a safe "other" in her growing social world.

The seemingly minor event of a baby grasping for a book illustrates the exquisite interplay of the various aspects of development that converge to create a foundation on which the baby will continue to grow. Each child is developing in physical, emotional, intellectual, and social ways, and these separate features of development, teased out, make it possible to discuss them in manageable ways, but baby brain growth occurs holistically, dynamically, and in very sophisticated patterns. Like a slowly turning kaleidoscope, every little exchange and interplay present yet another stunningly beautiful example of the elegance of this phenomenon.

affirmative steps to get the word out that babies and toddlers belong in the children's library, perhaps urgently so. This book is an outgrowth of the many discoveries and deepened convictions we experienced. What started out as an effort to solve many of the problems associated with serving babies, toddlers, and care providers ultimately brought about an entirely new way of perceiving this population and invited the opportunity to modify what it means to deliver respectful, quality library service.

The whole idea of creating a space that everyone could enjoy together seems so very simple. It is doable and *necessary*. It doesn't require a great deal of space, although larger libraries could certainly entertain that idea. Furthermore, the initial investment in a well-planned play area, relatively speaking, really isn't that expensive when considering the many years of service it will provide and the hundreds of lives that potentially will benefit in very deeply embedded, brain-based ways. Indeed, some libraries may struggle with how to alter existing environments, but there are still ways in which even minor modifications to existing spaces can help. Making sure that outlets are covered and sharp corners are addressed is an excellent first step, as is making provisions for babies to independently move about and access books.

A professional librarian, sensitive to the interchanges that are transpiring between, say, a toddler and a care provider, and then offering a tissue to soothe a tear-streaked face, may be making a seemingly small contribution, but that very gesture sends a message of comprehension of and respect for this group. By investing even little pieces of time and attention in these individuals, children's librarians have the opportunity to add their own unique influence on these developing little brains.

As the library profession is quite aware, it is sometimes very necessary to make a radical shift in approaching and implementing services in order to apply research findings, to maintain relevancy, and to follow cultural shifts. The discussions in the following chapters came about as a result of studying babies in action, by directly observing how research bears itself out in real time, and by making small advances into the world of babies. The discussions are offered in an effort to further explore thinking about this vulnerable group and to encourage librarians to consider just how very meaningful service to babies, toddlers, and their families can be.

Notes

1. Library Design Associates, www.librarydesign.com/contact.html.
2. Loudonville Public Library, www.loudonvillelibrary.org; Splashmakers, www.splashmakersllc.com/Splashmakers_LLC/Splashmakers_LLC.html.

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