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LIBRARY CORNER

Owasso library a Family Place for young children

By Jennifer McQuade Branch Manager Owasso Public Library

The Owasso Public Library is a Family Place library providing services and spaces for families with young chil-

What is a Family Place Library?

Family Place Libraries provide a welcoming community environment with resources families need to nurture their children's development during the critical first years of life, focusing on children ages 0-3 and their parents or caregivers.

Libraries are ideal places to bring together information and education resources as well as help parents discover other community services and programs.

Why the focus on such young ages?

Studies suggest the brain of a 1-yearold more closely resembles an adult brain than a newborn brain, and that intellectual capacity is not fixed at birth. Neuroscience indicates the majority of 'wiring' of the brain comes after birth.

By age 3, the wiring of a child's brain is at 90 percent. Therefore, these first three years are the most important time for learning early literacy skills

All of this is located in one place so the parent can browse these items while their child plays or looks at books. We want parents and children to stay for a while and spend some time together reading or playing at the library.

In September, we will offer a series called 1,2,3, Play with Me: a parent/ child workshop. This is a 5-week program providing an early childhood setting for parents and toddlers filled with toys, art activities and books.

This signature program of a Family Place Library is unique because it focuses on both the parent and the child. Parents are encouraged to play with their children during the workshops.

Resource professionals are available at each workshop to answer any questions parents may have about that week's topic in a relaxed, fun environment. The resource professionals are people trained and/or certified specialists in the areas of child development, speech and language, nutrition, play, movement and music.

The workshop encourages parents to use library resources and supports them as the primary educators of their children. Our hope is after completing the 5-week series, parents will leave more confident in their abilities as their

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as a Family Place library?

There are several different areas of the library involved in Family Place. Last year we redesigned our children's area to be more open and inviting.

We moved shelving to make more space, bought new comfortable furniture, and provided educational toys. We hope it now is an area that encourages interaction, imagination and socialization.

We have a Family Place parenting collection in the children's area, which includes books on parenting, information on encouraging early literacy skills at home, bibliographies and information from community agencies of interest to parents

a.m. Fridays, Sept. 19, 26 and Oct. 3, 10 17. Class size is limited. Registration is required and is for the five week series Call (918) 549-7624 to register.

How do we provide these services?
The Family Place project is made possible by a grant from the U.S. Institute of Museum and Library Services. The Owasso Library is one of 28 in the nation selected to develop the Family Place Libraries model of early childhood and family services that has been successfully implemented in over 380

libraries in 27 states. In addition to the Owasso branch, three other Tulsa City-County Library branch libraries were funded and are piloting this program in the Tulsa area.

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