Early Literacy
@ Your Small Library:
Maximize Your Space

Ready to Read Resource Center | AKLA 2019
Agenda

• Making a Plan
• Storage Solutions
• Seating
• Recycling/ DIY
• Using Wall Space
• Using Outside Space
• Shipping to Alaska
• Real-Life Examples
“Richness of experience, not tidy perfection, is the point of the whole thing.”

– Katherine Whitehorn

“Well-designed spaces should reflect the style, cultural values, and architectural heritage of the surrounding community. Each [space] should also reflect the personality of both the children and the adults who work there.”

– Vicki Stoecklin
Making a Plan
Making a Plan

• Perfect ≠ reality
• Needs of your patrons
• Space available
• Declutter first
• Sketch it out
What Makes a Good Space?

- Inviting/ welcoming
- Predictability
- Clear paths to activities/ empty space
- Well-defined boundaries
  - Low shelves
  - Carpets
What Makes a Good Space?

- Enough opportunity for movement
- Freedom for exploration
- Variety/ flexibility
- Accessible
Important Considerations

- Items should not present obstacles for children with special needs or disabilities
- No sharp edges or rough surfaces
- Items should not be easily moveable by small children/ wheels are lockable
- Easily cleaned/ sanitized
Storage Solutions
Storage Solutions: Books

- Child-height for access
- Forward-facing for recognition
- Ready to Read Resource Center book kits
  - Rotating board and picture books
  - Borrow through the consortium/ ILL
  - [www.readytoreadak.org](http://www.readytoreadak.org)
Storage Solutions: Toys

• Play boxes instead of giant play sets
  • More easily replaceable
  • Keeps a variety
  • https://www.alsc.ala.org/blog/2013/03/play-boxes-mini-playspaces-in-your-library/
• Clear containers/ visible labels
Storage Solutions: Games/ Puzzles

- Bags instead of boxes
- Rolling carts
- Drawer systems
- Racks and hangers for dress-up
- Trays
- Shelving end caps
Additional Concerns
Seating

- Floor rugs
- Cushion seats
- Seating as storage
- Child-height table and chairs
  - Round vs rectangle
  - Plush vs plastic
- Somewhere for grown-ups to sit

By Robbie R. on Amazon review for ECR4Kids SoftZone Floor Cushions with Handles
Recycling/ DIY

- Community artisans
- Milk crates
- Cardboard boxes
  - Construction paper
  - Contact paper
- Plastic jugs
- DIY play tables
- Tension rod puppet theater

@earlychildhooded on Instagram
Using Wall Space

It’s Free Real Estate
Using Wall Space

- Interactive panels
- Bulletin boards
- Felt boards
- Peg boards/ s-hooks
- Magnetic/ chalkboard paint
- Floating shelves
- Vibrant colors
Using Outside Space

- Seasonal activities
- Gross motor activities
- Environment-themed activities
  - Gardening
  - Conservation
Shipping to Alaska
(a.k.a. “nothing in life is fair”)
Shipping to Alaska
(a.k.a. “nothing in life is fair”)

- Community Playthings
  - 5% of price (ANC, FAI, JUN)
  - 30% of price on road system
  - Not a good option for rural communities

- Lakeshore
  - “20% of product total”
    - Exceptions: oversize fees apply, additional shipping outside of Anchorage (even if on the road system)
    - Not recommended

- Melissa & Doug
  - Sliding scale based on product total (oversize fees apply)
  - Does not ship to freight forwarders
  - Will ship to PO Boxes
Shipping to Alaska
(a.k.a. “nothing in life is fair”)

- Kaplan
  - 25%+ of price
  - Extra for “truck items”

- Brodart
  - Requires a quote prior to shipping

- Montessori Services
  - [www.montessoriservices.com](http://www.montessoriservices.com)
  - Sliding scale based on product total

- Etsy
  - Unique, handmade items
  - Shipping depends on individual seller preference
Real-Life Examples

From Actual Small Places in Alaska
(Not Some “Small Town” in the Lower 48)
Aniak
Dillingham
Kenai
Kenny Lake
Port Lions
Unalaska
Questions? Contact Me

Samantha Blanquart
Early Literacy Outreach Librarian
Ready to Read Resource Center
Anchorage Public Library/ Alaska State Library

(907) 343-2970
ready@muni.org
www.ReadytoReadAK.org