Supporting Users with Children in the Academic Library
Hello!

I am Jesse Carliner

I am a Communications and User Services Librarian at the U of T Libraries.

You can find me at @jessecarliner or jesse.carliner@utoronto.ca
Hello!

I am Kyla Everall

I am a User Services Librarian at Robarts Library.

You can find me at kyla.everall@utoronto.ca
Hello!

I am Jane Schmidt

I am a liaison librarian at Ryerson University Library.

You can find me at @janeschmidt or jschmidt@ryerson.ca.
Hello!

I am Colette Leier

I am the Executive Officer for the
York University Libraries.

You can find me at leierc@yorku.ca
Agenda

- Users with children
  - Student parents
- Supporting users with children at:
  - U of T Libraries
  - Ryerson University Library
  - York University Libraries
Children in academic libraries?!

Children have not been a group traditionally served by academic libraries, but users with children are a growing population and welcoming them is a matter of equity and inclusion.
Student parents
Population and needs
Population of student parents

- Invisible population
- Population growing faster than non-parenting students
- 13% of Ontario’s undergraduates (estimated)
- 11%-16% varying by province in Canada
- Nearly half of Canadian grad students identified family obligations as an obstacle
Student parent demographics

- Diverse
- No systematic survey
- Same characteristics as non-parenting students with additional challenges
- More likely to be older than traditional aged
- More likely to be married, female, and a part time student
Student parent challenges

- More likely to suffer stress and burnout
- Less likely to complete their degree
- Three main obstacles:
  - Financial pressures
  - Child care
  - Time management
"Institutional policies normalise the figure of the ‘carefree’ student and simultaneously marginalise student parents within higher education."

-Marie-Pierre Moreau
“Regulating the Student Body/ies: University Policies and Student Parents,”
British Educational Research Journal
Institutional supports

- Universities centered around “traditional” students
- Supports include primarily nursing rooms and family services offices
- Some institutions have fee based campus daycare centres
- Children generally not welcomed on campus, though tolerated in certain situations
What are academic libraries doing?

• Updating usage policy and website language to welcome users with children
• Improving remote access
• Expanding hours to be more available
• Creating welcoming spaces
• Providing activity kits
• Programming
Supporting users with children at U of T
"UofT libraries should provide special study spaces for students with children. I have seen this in multiple university libraries and for a world-class university as UofT this should be a manageable task."

- Graduate student, UTL LibQUAL Survey, 2016
Family Study Space
Photo: Francesca Kennedy/University of Toronto Libraries
Programming
Supporting users with children at Ryerson
LIBRARIES ARE FOR EVERYONE

Image credit: by Hafuboti
Services you can offer when you have:

- Limited space
- A small budget
- Enthusiastic staff
- Campus partners
introducing
BUSY BOXES!

Because Libraries are for EVERYONE!
Collections
Programming
Shaking our sillies out!
Storytime resources

- Jbrary.com
- School Library Journal
- Association of Children’s Librarians
- Social Justice Books

Other resources on diverse children’s literature [here](#).
Supporting users with children at York University
The York University Libraries embraces services that enhance the experience of our users and we hope [that] this service will make it easier for the parents of very young children to attend York.
The Family Room at Scott Library
A quiet space in our community

- Private space, for one-on-one time for families
- Welcoming space with basic necessities to help care for children
- Children's books/other materials available
Accessibility

- Easily accessible and centrally located
  - Library hours;
  - No booking required;
  - Close proximity to staff.
A welcoming space in our University Community
Thanks!

Any questions?
You can find us at:
@jessecarliner or jesse.carliner@utoronto.ca
kyla.everall@utoronto.ca
@janeschmidt or jschmidt@ryerson.ca
leierc@yorku.ca
Bibliography and further reading


David Macdonald and Martha Friendly, “Developmental Milestones: Child Care Fees in Canada’s Big Cities 2018” (Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, 2019).
Credits

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