

## South Dublin County Libraries Children's Services

### Policy Document 2010-2015

South Dublin County Libraries have invested much time and resources into creating a high standard of library provision for the children of the County. There are children's sections in each of our service points. The Children's Services librarian, based in Library Headquarters, provides an advisory and consultation service to the primary schools located in the County and delivers talks and presentations on request. The Children's Service Committee helps co-ordinate the delivery of services in our branches. In addition an extensive development programme is delivered each year, which encourages and fosters reading and promotes the greater use of library services. The Children's Zone on the library website, [www.southdublinlibraries.ie](http://www.southdublinlibraries.ie) provides 24 hour access to a range of virtual services to the children of the County and has a vital role to play in the area of social inclusion. Objective 8 of *South Dublin County Libraries Development Plan 2007-2011* outlines a framework for a modern, holistic and dynamic library service for the young people of the County.

#### South Dublin County in context.

South Dublin County contains the large urban centres of Tallaght, Lucan, Condalkin and Adamstown, old village centres such as Palmerstown, Rathfarnham Templeogue and the rural villages of Rathcoole, Saggart, Newcastle and Brittas. South Dublin County is predominantly urban based, has a higher than average unemployment rate, a higher than average birth rate, a higher proportion of single parents and also more young mothers than the nation as a whole.

A larger than average international community resides in South Dublin County.

A Live Register update provided to the South Dublin County Development Board showed the total unemployed in South Dublin in January 2008 was 9,453. At the end of November 2009 the total unemployed had increased to 23,705. This represents an increase of 150%.

#### Key Statistical Information:

<b>Population of South Dublin County Council</b>	
Total	246,935
11 years and under	43,645
12-17 years	20,544
Total 0-17	64,189 (26%)

National Census 2006

<b>South Dublin Schools Statistics 2008/2009</b>		
	No of Schools	No of Pupils
Primary	100	29,848
Post Primary	33	17,834
Special	6	364

Department of Education and Science

## **Policy on services to children**

This Policy, formulated under a series of relevant themes, along with the accompanying Action Plan, form the basis for service delivery to children in South Dublin County for the next five years.

### **Reading and Literacy**

South Dublin County Libraries recognises that reading and literacy are at the heart of our services. Thus we will continue to seek out new and innovative ways to encourage children of all reading abilities. Our aim to inspire a lifelong love of reading among children and young adults underpins all our activities, displays, promotions and programme of events.

### **Access and Inclusion**

We aim to provide a service that is inherently and equally accessible to all our junior users, their parents and carers and to ensure that every effort is made to create a welcoming, open, friendly atmosphere throughout the library service.

### **Digital Literacy**

The Library Service aims to provide up-to-date and age-appropriate materials and equipment to support children's digital literacy. It will promote the use of digital resources as one of many avenues to support children's literacy and learning development and enjoyment of same. It will also provide assistive technology and use it to enable children of a range of abilities to participate fully in library services. Lastly, it will provide support for Digital Family Learning Projects.

### **Library Website and Digital Book Service**

South Dublin County Libraries has designed an award winning website that encompasses the very popular Children's Zone. It is our policy to promote library services to children through our specially designed interactive website. We aim to ensure that information is current and presented in an easy to use, attractive and child-friendly format. The Online Research section of the website is an excellent resource for use both at school and at home.

### **Resources**

The Library Service caters for the cultural, homework and informational requirements of children and young people by the provision of a wide range of materials in all formats. With this aim in mind, South Dublin County Libraries strives to ensure that sufficient funds are made available to enable the development and maintenance of adequate and relevant collections for children and young adults. We aim to ensure that monies dedicated to the purchase of children's materials are utilised in such a manner that the stock is wide-ranging and kept up-to-date. Criteria for stock selection are

outlined in the Stock Policy Document. In addition we will ensure that a policy of regular evaluation of the stock for children and young adults is undertaken.

### **Space**

Each library provides adequate space for junior/teenage users. This space will be a bright and welcoming area that creates a relaxed atmosphere and allows for reading, study, events and exhibitions. We will ensure that the space is an integral part of the overall library area and allows easy access for all users. All stock, furniture and equipment will be child-friendly and mindful of children with special needs. We aim to ensure that the layout is flexible and allows for future developments and changing needs.

### **Culture and Imagination**

South Dublin County Libraries provides a programme of diverse, quality events throughout the year for children and young adults. This programme aims to foster imagination and enhance cultural, learning and recreational interests for all ages, and to encourage increased use of the library resources by children. Events are free of charge and open to everyone.

### **Promotion**

Library space, resources and services for children are promoted through the local and national media, library mailing lists and contact with interested groups including local schools. Our website [www.southdublinlibraries.ie](http://www.southdublinlibraries.ie) is used to promote and to provide 24/7 access to children's services and events. All services to children are promoted throughout the primary schools network.

### **Family Learning**

Family Learning is recognized as a vital area of service delivery across South Dublin County Libraries. We will continue to work with external agencies, community groups, and with internal stakeholders such as the Community Department of South Dublin County Council to deliver quality Family Learning Programmes.

### **Child Protection**

South Dublin County Libraries hope that all children will find the library a warm and welcoming place. As the library is a public building and in the interest of child safety, a separate Safe Child Policy will be drawn up in line with Child Protection Policy in the wider organisation.

### **Staffing and Training**

Effective and professionally managed children's libraries require trained and committed staff. The Children's Services Librarian plays an invaluable role in the delivery of services. Ideally each service point will also have two people responsible for this area.

The Children's Services group advocates that an active programme of ongoing staff training and professional development in children's and youth services be maintained. With regard to child safety, all library staff will be kept abreast of guidelines in this area and receive training in same.

**Conclusion**

South Dublin County Libraries aim to foster and nurture a love of books and reading among the children of the County. We hope this love of books will remain with these children throughout their lives and that they will use their library as a resource to support lifelong learning and reading for pleasure.

South Dublin Children's Services Group  
April 2010.