

## ДИСКУССИЯ • DISCUSSION



Статья • Article

X. Lin

### Books and readers in the children's Library

**Abstract:** This study was conducted to examine the impact of events and projects at the Wuhan Children's Library to promote reading and attract children to the library. The study discusses the important role of children's library in encouraging children's zest for reading. The purpose of the study was to investigate how the concept of "Books Are Designed for Reading" allows the Wuhan Children's Library to engage proactively with readers by finding books for readers or by meeting readers to actively promote books. Based on the application-oriented concept and children's reading needs, the Wuhan Children's Library carried out a dynamic integrated model of book collection. It was found that besides improving the systems of library book collections and reader services, there are some initiatives introducing the library, promoting books, helping more readers to discover and to enjoy the library and to love reading. The voluntary service system allows the Wuhan Children's Library to provide the latest publications through cooperation with writers and publishers. Various focused reading promotional activities resulted in large numbers of readers who rely on and are fond of the library. This analysis is expected to be useful for any library in the formulation of library development programs and planning of new children's library development schemes for young users.

**Keywords:** Wuhan Children's Library, children's reading needs, reading promotion activities, book collection, voluntary service system

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**Lin Xiang**

Wuhan children's Library,  
64 Nanjing Road, Jiangnan District, Wuhan, 430014, China,  
Director of activities  
e-mail: 52376394@qq.com

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С. Линь

## Книги и читатели в детской библиотеке

Сян Линь

Детская библиотека

Нанкин-роуд, район Цзянган, № 64, Ухань, провинция Хубэй, 430014, Китай,

директор по библиотечной деятельности

e-mail: 52376394@qq.com

**Аннотация.** В статье рассматривается роль детской библиотеки в поощрении интереса детей к чтению. Цель работы – выяснить, как концепция «Книги предназначены для чтения» позволяет Уханьской детской библиотеке активно взаимодействовать с читателями, находя для них литературу и встречаясь с ними для активного продвижения книг. Исследование было проведено в целях изучения влияния мероприятий и проектов Уханьской детской библиотеки на продвижение чтения и привлечение детей в библиотеку. Основываясь на концепции, ориентированной на потребности детей в чтении, библиотека разработала динамичную интегрированную модель книжного фонда. Было установлено, что, помимо совершенствования систем библиотечных книжных фондов и обслуживания читателей, существует ряд инициатив, знакомящих юных посетителей с библиотекой и пробуждающих в них любовь к чтению. Волонтерская система, внедренная в библиотеке, позволяет знакомить пользователей с книжными новинками, организовывать встречи с интересными авторами и лучшими издателями. Результаты исследования будут полезны библиотекам при разработке программ развития и работы с юными читателями.

**Ключевые слова:** Уханьская детская библиотека, потребности детей в чтении, мероприятия по продвижению чтения, сбор книг, система добровольного обслуживания

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The significance of a library depends upon the books and people reading these books. As a comprehensive specialized library with a collection of up to a million books and 500,000 digital editions, Wuhan Children's Library serves millions of readers aged 0–18 years (Fig. 1). It provides 700 various reading activities connected to “The Year of Childhood” program every year.

Our library is a central resource of documentation and research for the local community. It services millions of children both locally and in surrounding

areas. It utilizes book collections for display and research as well as promoting children's reading under the practical concept of “Books Are Designed for Reading”. Not satisfied with the traditional service model of waiting passively for readers to engage with the library, our staff introduces our library more proactively by finding appropriate books for readers and meeting readers' book needs. The use of library books is maximized through the help of the librarians' guiding readers through library services and offering.



Fig. 1. Wuhan Children's Library

### I. Application and Research Focused Book Collection System for Children Orientated Library

Among the first independent libraries in our country, our library has a 60 year history of a complete children's books collection system and a clear history of success. In the early years there was an enormous collection of children's series books, telling literary stories with pictures depicting the stories in the library (Fig. 2). This type of children books with outstanding pictures and literary compositions had been Chinese children's favorites before 1990s. Children series books have gradually become less relevant through the passage of time. With the great variety of children's books, some of them tend to be diversified. As the early heritage – children's series books have been honored as the precious collection in our library and play an important role in research of history, literary and picture books. In recent years, themed children's book exhibitions, based on research of children series books, have been warmly welcomed by the general public, awakening the memories of 70- and 80-year-old adults and the curiosity and interest of children (Fig. 3).

Based on the application-oriented concept and children's reading needs, our library carried out a dynamic integrated model of book collection. Literary and art books and collections are in high demand in the library.



Fig. 2. Children serial book



Fig. 3. Children serial books Exhibition



Fig. 4. Picture book

Since 2010 picture books have become the favorite of 7 years old children, resulting in a rise of lending amounts. The library purchasing department works closely with the book circulation department to track and to satisfy readers' needs.

Furthermore, we collect various kinds and types of books as diversifying as possible to meet the needs of different readers (Fig. 4). In the practice of the concept "Best Books for Readers" the book recommending channel has been opened in the reading room to satisfy the needs of even minority groups of readers. Also, we use internet and ask for readers' feedback so the uptodate information supplied promptly to the book acquisition department. The fast-tracked purchasing and sorting process ensures that the target books reach the readers quickly.

As a specialized children's library, we conduct research on children's literature under the concept of application-satisfied method, focusing on children's education books around the world, offer literature services for experts and scholars, engaged in local children's education: primary, secondary schools and colleges. Picture books have become the focus of our collection and research due to their popularity. Picture books play the leading role in reading promotion activities such as "Little-Footprint Story Club", "Online Book Club", etc. (Fig. 5).





Fig. 5. Picture Book Story Activity

## II. Reader Service System Focusing on Children's Reading Promotion (李维, 2013)

Everything we do as librarians is for our readers. Readers' satisfaction is the highest standard of our work. In recent years we have been constantly working to improve the reader service system, to enrich book collections, to simplify lending procedure, to cultivate convenient and comfortable reading atmosphere. Intelligent lending service has been implemented with the full use of advanced reader service and management technology. A city-wide pass-through service was established with internet technology and the city's public library network. Meanwhile we've provided free online digital books for readers unable to get to the library. Now our library is proud to have a digital book collection of up to 500 thousand picture books, animation, video and other multimedia digital editions, which is much greater than paper book collections. Immersive, interactive and imaginative digital books are much more suited to children's nature, they have

become the best supplement to paper books. The measures above have fulfilled our commitment: "Finding Books for Readers" (Fig. 6).

Besides improving the systems of library book collections and reader services, we work hard to find readers for the books and help readers explore the libraries. We adjusted the traditional passive service model by introducing the library, promoting books, helping more readers to discover and to enjoy the library and to love reading. We have built up gradually our children reading promotion system through years of exploration and experimentation.

The significance of this system is that the library is proactively connecting books with readers by presenting interesting activities to promote children's reading. The system covers the whole process of children's reading.

First, we have established a cooperative relationship to promote books with numbers of producers as children book writers and national children book publishers.



Fig. 6. Digital Books

Secondly, we have established inter-library cooperative partnerships with local and domestic libraries, providing children reading services.

Thirdly, we have established reading promotion cooperative relationship with local kindergartens and schools (教育部 文化部 国家新闻出版广电总局, 2015).

Fourthly, we have established teams of volunteers for reading promotion and a voluntary service system. Lastly, we have maintained a large readership after many years of providing reader services.

Based on the voluntary service system, we are able to provide the latest publications through cooperation with writers and publishers. We organize writers and book editors to go to campuses and libraries and talk directly with readers (温志伟, 2022). The coverage of reading promotion activities has been doubled through our work in inter-library partnerships. Various focused reading promotional activities resulted in large numbers of readers who rely on and are fond of the library. By the way, more and more readers come to the library and make use of the library.

The volunteer groups of the library readers should be mentioned. Members of our reading promotional volunteer groups come from the library's audience who have loved the library after bringing their children to the library to read books and taking part in the activities and then wanting to be the library reading promoters. Therefore, we have set up a volunteering platform for them to tell stories and recommend books for more children. Furthermore, they go with us, library workers, to urban and rural schools and even schools in the deep mountains to share their joy of reading on the teaching platforms. They have become not only book readers but also members of library workers.

With the support of the voluntary service system, we have created a series of brand activities to promote children reading in recent years (Scheme 1).

The Ma Liang Cup Children's Painting and Calligraphy Contest and Story King Contest have been held for

40 years. More than 300 games of Little-Footprint Story Club–Weekend Picture Book Storytelling for younger readers have been held for 10 years.

The activities of Motivative Seeds Reading Promotion have traveled thousands of kilometers sending books and reading activities to school, communities, and villages through walking Wuhan streets, entering to the suburbs of the countryside and even the province's deep mountain schools.

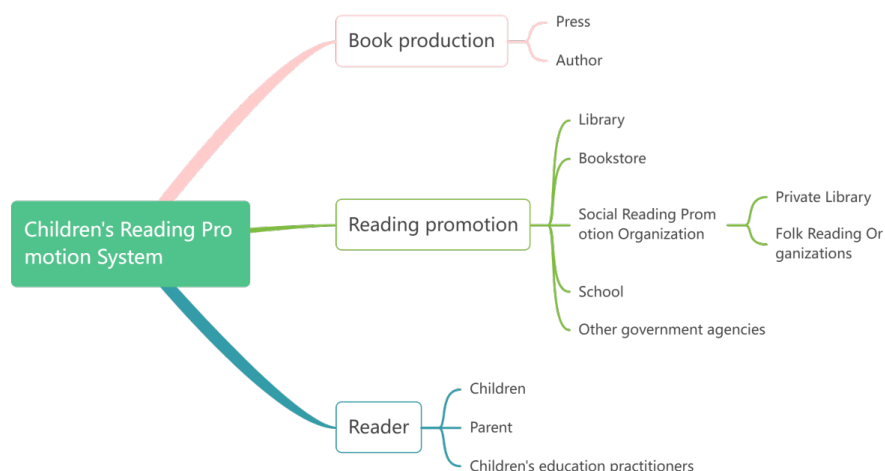
Tusen Ord–creative activities for children's reading continued for many years among children ages of 5 to 12 is the pioneer for reading activity for children's imagination.

Since covid-19 began in 2020, Online Book Club has led the new fashion of online reading to meet readers online every weekend and become the leading resource of library online children's book promotion activities. The marvelous presentations of Music & Reading, combining children's book reading with a live concert, have broadened the boundaries of the reading promotion.

The activities of Intangible Cultural Heritage Reading Club combining passing on the skills with reading have helped children feel the charm of traditional culture.

The activities of "Parents and Children Reading Together – the Most Beautiful Childhood" have brought the fragrance of books for more parent-child families by launching radio parent-child reading programs, inviting audio works and holding family reading shows. We have had numerous brand reading activities as "Little Dream with You at the Movies", "Online Carnival", "I am a child of the Yangtze River", etc.

Story books connect with readers every day in libraries. More colorful, more vivid, more lovely stories are being told and read in Wuhan Children's Library. Meanwhile, we hope that our international cooperation will become a new component in our children's reading promotion system and make it possible for children around the world to communicate between countries in reading activities.



Scheme 1. Children's Reading Promotion System

*The author has read and approved  
the final manuscript.*

**Conflict of interest**  
*The author declares that the  
article has no conflicts of interest.*

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