**Parents’ Night Out Programs Key Information**

The Vancouver Public Library *Parents’ Night Out* programs were developed to meet the needs of parents and to contribute to the early literacy development of children in our communities.

**Priorities**

* Inspire and support a community of learning
* Connect people with each other and our city

## Goals

## Implement more flexible, patron-centred service models to inspire and support a *community of learning* and a culture of reading.

## Expand the Library’s *commitment to* children, teens, and families so that all are inspired by diverse opportunities for learning, creativity, and community engagement.

## We also know that some parents in our communities might be experiencing isolation and have limited social opportunities to develop friendships with their peers. We know that child-rearing is hard work and children are notorious for their constant need for attention.

## Building on the success of a similar idea at a community outreach program at a women’s residence, we decided to offer an in-library parents’ evening of felt-story craft-making where we would offer

## An adults only environment (offering a break from childcare)

## Healthy snacks and hot tea

## Informal social atmosphere where they had time to chat and establish social connections

## Informal learning about early literacy development

## Before the Parents’ Night Out Program

## Advertise and register up to 15 participants (or less depending on room size)

## Call registrants the day before to remind them

## Emphasize there is no childcare available – adults only time!

## Prepare materials for each participant (felt colours, pattern, words to story, scissors, glue)

## Prepare refreshments table: Hot herbal tea, bowl of fruit, plate of cookies

## At the Parents’ Night Out Program

## Welcome participants and invite them to have some tea and snacks

## Seat them at tables where they can hear and see facilitator

## Begin by talking to parents briefly about the value of interactive early literacy, give some easy examples about how that might look in different scenarios

## Demonstrate the felt-board resource you are going to make

## Place it on board, recite a poem or story that goes with it

## Sometimes the felt pieces can be used with multiple rhymes, songs or activities

## Briefly identify how this resource might facilitate or reinforce early literacy learning (vocabulary development; narrative skills; phonological skills etc.)

## Demonstrate “how-to” make a felt story

## Pin or tape pattern to felt

## Cut around the pattern to make the felt

## Embellish with Sharpie markers (outline, eyes, other details as needed).

## Let group get to work, offering advice or help as needed.

## If time at the end, teach a few songs or rhymes from the handout you have prepared.

## Evaluation forms

## Suggestion for Felt board story craft-making

## Fish bowl and fish

## Barn and farm animals

## Mouse and houses

## Duck and trucks

## The Parents’ Night Out program content has been expanded and adapted to include other topics of interest, some of these are:

## Early learning apps

## Oral storytelling

## School age homework help resources

## We have found that parents are enthusiastic participants in library programs that celebrate, recognize and support their important roles as their children’s first and most important teachers. Programs like *Parents’ Night Out* are easy to adapt to various community characteristics and we believe that other public libraries have extensive resources that can be effectively shared with parents by offering similar programs.