



READING OWLS INTERNATIONAL
Creating Readers... for Life

LIBRARY MANUAL

HOW TO GUIDE

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Library Overview

Welcome to your new library!

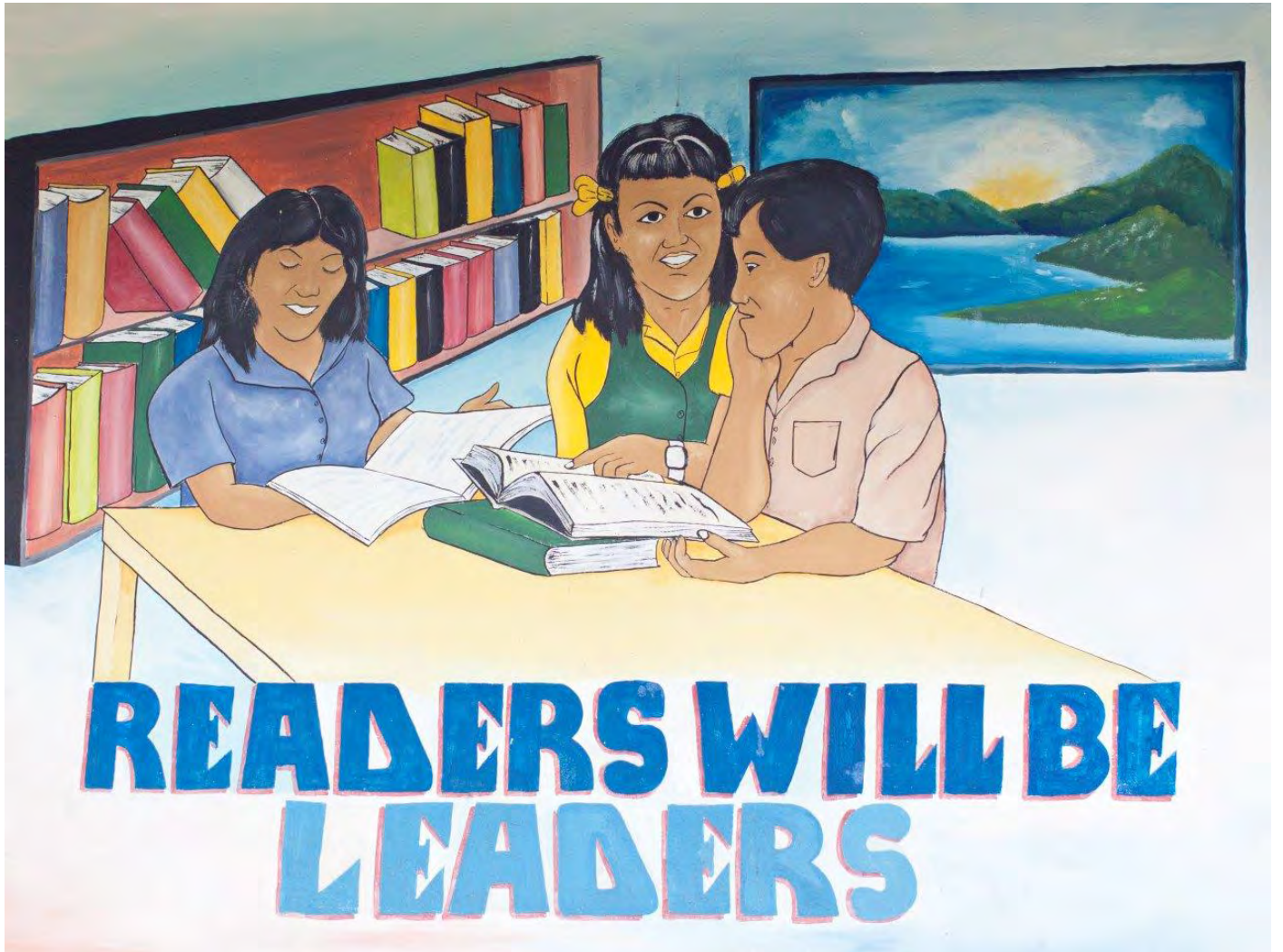
Reading Owls is proud to have partnered with you on this journey to bring a thriving lending library to life in your school or organization. Your commitment to this project is one of the most powerful gifts you can ever give to your students. Your library will enhance all of the work being done in the classroom to foster a love of reading, which in turn will help students develop their literacy skills and ultimately, open up new worlds of possibility and opportunity in their lives.

Library Overview

To support your efforts, this guide is designed to provide practical suggestions for setting up and maintaining your organization's library, including a system for sorting and labeling the books, tips for organizing the bookshelves, an overview of a borrowing policy and advice for selecting and training library volunteers. All of the recommendations contained in this guide were selected with an eye toward minimizing the costs associated with setting up and maintaining the library. While it is true that there may be more automated systems available, we believe that the most important ingredient to a successful library is the simple idea of children borrowing and reading books.

The prospect of creating a library may feel daunting, but don't despair! With the right team of volunteers (teachers, parents and a few responsible students), along with this guide, you will have all of the necessary ingredients for building a library that everyone is proud to call their own, and one that will be enjoyed by many future generations of students, too. And remember, Reading Owls is here to support your work each step of the way, as you help us to create readers...for life!

**Elaine and Easton Dickson, founders of *Reading Owls International*
(201) 500-OWLS**





Get the Books Ready

Sort the Books

- Color-code the sections (using labels). Colors are an easy way to make sure the books are divided by level, which makes it easy for kids and teachers to find the books they need and return them in an organized fashion.
- Put fiction and non-fiction together, and sort books alphabetically in the following categories:
 - **Level 1: Yellow - Kindergarten and Grade 1**
Large font, few words on each page and lots of pictures
 - **Level 2: Blue - Grades 2-4**
Several sentences, medium font size, and sometimes fewer pictures. Short chapter books included.
 - **Level 3: Green Grades 5-6**
Full pages of small font sizes, more advanced vocabulary, and generally no pictures.
 - **Reference: Red**
Place any non-fiction books that you do not want children to take out of the library in Reference (but only the ones that are geared towards Grades 5 and 6; all other non-fiction books can go in the Level 1 (K and Grade 1) pile or the Level 2 (Grades 2-4). If you have an abundance of reference books you can categorize them by subject area, such as: Animals, Body and Health, History, Autobiographies, Caribbean/Black Literature, and so on.
 - **Teacher: Orange**
Mature books, curriculum books, charts, and supplies.
- Organizing books for re-filing is a great way to get parent volunteers, students, and the community involved. Volunteers should be given an overview of the library, and trained on its use. They should also be able to file alphabetically and numerically. Once trained, volunteers can come in at their convenience, or on a schedule based on CPS' library needs.

Get the Books Ready

Organize the Bookshelves



- Choose the best location for each of the five sections in the library. For example, place the Level 1 (Kindergarten and Grade 1) books lowest on the shelves, making them easy for the younger children to reach. And locate the Teacher section higher up and removed if possible from high-traffic areas.
- Gather a group of volunteers to color code the books; place a dot on the lower part of each book's spine, near the bottom, and cover each dot with clear tape to secure it. Work on one color section at a time. Use the school stamp twice on each book—once at the front on the inside cover and again at the back. It is often difficult to stamp children's books with glossy finishes; in this case, put the school stamp on the outer edge of the pages.

Get the Books Ready



LABEL THE BOOKSHELVES

- Labeling the shelves makes it easier for the kids and teachers to find books. Create labels and glue the labels on top to designate the color and/or subject of each section.
- Consider creating special sections, such as Adventure, Animals, or for series books such as Junie B. Jones, Captain Underpants, and Hardy Boys.
- To entice students, be sure to highlight the eye-catching books. Display a number of books that have exciting covers with their covers facing out, either flat on the shelves or standing.
- Teaching resources should be organized in a similar fashion by subject manner. This will help teachers know what resources they have by helping them access them easier. For e.g.: Language Arts (LA), and Social Studies (SS), Charts and Supplies.

READ

The sun did not shine. We looked! Then we saw him
It was too wet to play. We sat in on the mat! We looked!
So we sat in the house We saw him! The Cat in the Hat!
All that cold, cold, wet day. And he said to us, "Why do you
I sat there with Sally. There like that?" "I know it
We sat there, we two. Wet and the sun is not sunny.
And I said, "How I wish we could have good fun
We had so much to do. How some
Too wet to play. Would play."
And too cold. Now some new
So we sat in. In the Hat.
We did not. Will show
So all we. Other Will
Sit! Sit! Sit! Sit! I said. Then Sally
And we did not. And what to say.
Not one little bit. Out of the house
And then Something. Our fish said, "No! No!"
How that bump made

Dr. Seuss

Tips for creating a great library space



Display prime books
outward facing



Tips for creating a great library space



- Make the spaces colorful and inviting. Consider inviting a local artist to paint a kid friendly mural.
- Decorate your library with art projects and posters created by the children. Also, book reports and posters about reading contests could be prominently—and proudly—displayed.
- Have comfortable seating and zones. Children love places where they can relax and float away into a good book. Make a “reading corner” with a comfy rug and pillows its own zone, in addition to a zone with a reading table and chairs. This is an opportunity to get parents involved as many parents love to make rugs and pillows.
- Display new, popular, themed, as well as culturally relevant books. Students are much more likely to check out books by looking at the book cover.



Book Checkout System

Borrowing Policy

- Introducing a check out system at your school is vital for a lending library. Many kids have never had the opportunity to take books home or to even read books for pleasure on their own time.
- Make it as simple as possible because you want it to be easy for teachers, a responsible student (or other designated monitor) to do on their own. Again, this might be a great opportunity for parental and community involvement!
- Decide how many books each student can check out at a time, and how long a student can keep a borrowed book. A week is about the right length of time for most students to read a book.
- A system as simple as sheets of paper in a binder, pocket cards by class, or a notebook can be used to record the students' grade, name, and the title of the book/s. When they are returned, cross it off or initial so it is known which books are still missing. Using an excel spreadsheet is another option, but this choice might limit the pool of persons to select as library monitors.



Book Checkout System

Borrowing Policy



- For books used in the library, students can set them in a designated area on top of a counter to be re-shelved. For books that have been checked out, there should be a clearly labeled box or bin labeled, "Return Checked-Out Books Only." Students should have their returned books checked by the librarian, a teacher or parent volunteer, and crossed off their card before placing them in the return box. The librarian, teachers or volunteer will return these books to their designated shelves.
- Decide on an appropriate fee or consequence if books are lost or returned after the due date. Returning books on time teaches the kids responsibility and an understanding of community.

Library Rules

QUIET



PLEASE

**No playing in the
library.**



Organizing the Operation of the Library

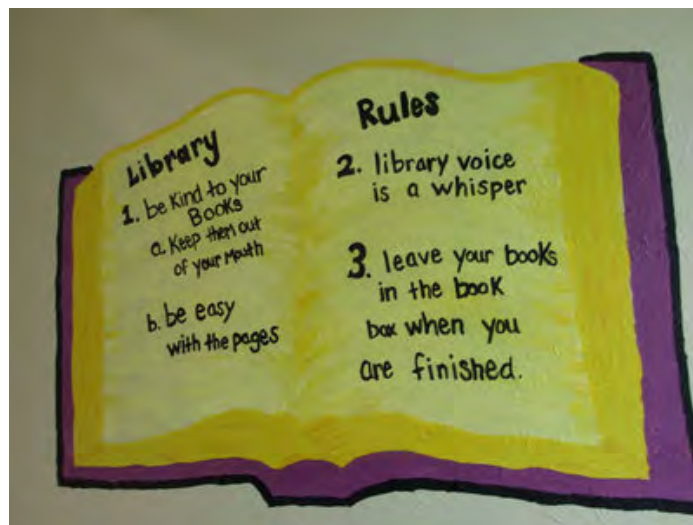
OPENING THE LIBRARY:

- Give tours to all students and teachers when your library first opens, and to all new students and teachers thereafter. Parent and community volunteers should also receive instruction when they sign up.
- Pick 10 to 15 responsible, respectful, and mature (usually 5th grade and above) to train as student librarians.
- Decide when you want to hold your training session and how many sessions it might take. Send a letter home with student librarians to get their parent's permission to stay after school.
- Remember to explain:
 - the parts of the book
 - how to care for books
 - where to find information
 - any rules, especially about borrowing books.
- Print or make badges for student librarians, and train student librarians. Recruit teachers to work with students in the library. Pair student librarians with the teachers who have signed up. You may also pair two students or use a parent or community volunteer.
- Introduce your student librarians to the school at an assembly and inform the school what their job will be in the library.
- Decide which day the library schedule will start and announce that to the school.

Library Opening



- Send a letter to parents about the library opening and the Library Rules
- Post the Library Rules in each classroom
- Post library day and time in each classroom
- Set a date for the grand opening of your library—invite the media, education officials, community members, local businesses, and former teachers and students.





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Reading Incentives



Providing rewards for kids to read is a great way to create and promote motivation among the kids.

Reading competitions come in many shapes and sizes, with the aim of spicing up literature and giving children an incentive to open a book. Giving a recognition for most books read in a month is one competition example. Using a chart or graph that marks the number of books a child has read gives him or her a sense of accomplishment, and will motivate others to join in.

Small tokens such as a pencil, notebook or bookmark can create extra motivation.

Additional Resources

1. [Managing a Library](#) - S M Dhawan (UNESCO document)
2. [Libraries for All! How to Start and Run a Basic Library](#) by Laura Wendell (UNESCO document)
3. [How to Set Up and Run a Small Library in Africa](#) - African Library Project
4. [Sample Policies from the American Library Association](#) (ALA)
5. Creating Policies for Results: From Chaos to Clarity (book) - long-term nice to have