



A Regular Meeting of
the Richmond Hill Public Library Board
will be held in the boardroom at Central Branch
on Thursday, February 19, 2026 at 4:00pm

AGENDA

1.0 Call to Order

2.0 Land Acknowledgement read by Board Chair

We are gathering on lands that have been home to First Nations Peoples from time immemorial. We acknowledge that what we now call Richmond Hill is on the Treaty Lands and Territory of the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation and the Mississauga and Chippewa Nations of the Williams Treaty. We also recognize that we are on part of the traditional territories of the Haudenosaunee and the Huron Wendat.

We would also like to acknowledge all First Nation, Inuit and Métis peoples from across North America, also known as Turtle Island, who now reside in the City of Richmond Hill. We are committed to rebuilding constructive and cooperative relationships.

3.0 Regrets

4.0 Opening Remarks Board Chair

4.1 Adoption of Agenda

5.0 Disclosure of Pecuniary Interest and the General Nature Thereof

6.0 Delegations

None

7.0 Approval of Consent Agenda Items

All Consent Agenda Items (*) are considered to be routine, which require no discussion or debate, and are recommended for approval by the Chair. They may be enacted in one motion or any item may be held for discussion.

7.1 Library Board Draft Minutes – October 16, 2025*

7.2 Library Board Intellectual Freedom Steering Committee Minutes – November 20, 2025*

7.3 Library Board Meeting Dates January to December 2026*

8.0 Reports

8.1 2025 Q3 Financial Report SRLIB 26.01

8.2 Revised Room Rental Rates Report SRLIB 26.02

**8.3 Creating Vibrant Kids' Corners Through Play-based Learning Report
SRLIB 26.03**

9.0 Presentations

9.1 Toys with Impact: Creating Vibrant Kids' Corners

- Jordan Lynam, Emma Kristensen

10.0 New Business

10.1 New Motions

11.0 CEO Updates – B. Gorman

12.0 General Business Information

12.1 RHPL Updates

- RHPL March/April 2026 program guide:
<https://www.rhpl.ca/programs-and-events/program-guide>.

13.0 Date of Next Meeting

The next Regular Meeting of the Library Board will be held on:
Thursday, March 26, 2026 @ 4:00 p.m. at Central Branch

14.0 Adjournment

*Please advise Bruce Gorman or Toula Myriklis of regrets
for attendance by noon of the day of the meeting at e-mail:
bgorman@rhpl.ca and tmyriklis@rhpl.ca*



The Richmond Hill Public Library Board
Thursday October 16, 2025

MINUTES - DRAFT

The Richmond Hill Public Library Board held a regular meeting on Thursday, October 16, 2025, at 4:00 p.m. via teleconference and at the Central Branch, Richmond Hill, Ontario.

Present: Mona Shahnazari, Chair
Jennifer Paige, Vice Chair
Stephen Chait
Councillor Carol Davidson
Shelly Wu

Staff: Bruce Gorman, CEO
Joshua Dyer, Director, Collections & Community Engagement
Yunmi Hwang, Director, Branch & Customer Experiences
Shawn Dillon, Finance & Administrative Assistant
Toula Myriklis, Executive Assistant & Governance Coordinator

Regrets: Jason Cherniak
Councilor Castro Liu
Councilor Scott Thompson

Guests: Haley Leung, Financial Management Advisor
Lisa Chen, Manager, Financial Planning and Analysis, City of Richmond Hill

1.0 Call to Order

The Chair called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m.

2.0 Land Acknowledgement

We are gathering on lands that have been home to First Nations Peoples from time immemorial. We acknowledge that what we now call Richmond Hill is on the Treaty Lands and Territory of the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation and the Mississauga and Chippewa Nations of the Williams Treaty. We also recognize that we are on part of the traditional territories of the Haudenosaunee and the Huron Wendat.

We would also like to acknowledge all First Nation, Inuit and Métis peoples from across North America, also known as Turtle Island, who now reside in the City of Richmond Hill. We are committed to rebuilding constructive and cooperative relationships.

4.0 Opening Remarks – Board Chair

The chair remarked that Robin Fribance accepted a new role at the Hospital for Sick Children Foundation; her last day at the library was October 15th. The Board acknowledged the contributions provided by Ms. Fribance to the library. It was clarified that the strategic planning process and strategy team oversight will be under the direction of Bruce Gorman going forward.

4.1 Adoption of Agenda - Motion

Motion: 25:49 THAT the Richmond Hill Public Library Board adopts the agenda.

Moved by: S. Chair
Seconded by: J. Paige
Carried

5.0 Disclosure of Pecuniary Interest and the General Nature Thereof

None

6.0 Delegations

None

7.0 Approval of Consent Agenda Items*

All Consent Agenda Items () are considered to be routine, which require no discussion or debate, and are recommended for approval by the Chair. They may be enacted in one motion or any item may be held for discussion.*

Motion: 25:50 THAT the Richmond Hill Public Library Board approves the items within the consent agenda:

7.1 RHPL Board Meeting Draft Minutes – September 18, 2025*

Moved by: C. Davidson
Seconded by: J. Paige
Carried

8.0 Presentations

None

9.0 Reports

9.1 Richmond Hill Public Library 2026 Capital and Operating Budgets SRLIB 25.19

Motion: 25:51 THAT the Richmond Hill Public Library Board approves the Amended Draft Capital and Operating Budgets and recommend them to City Council for funding consideration.

Moved by: C. Davidson
Seconded by: S. Chait
Carried

10.0 New Business

10.1 New Motions

10.1.1 Collection Development Capital Account Transfer Report SRLIB 25.20

MOTION: 25:52 **THAT** the RHPL Board receives report SRLIB 25.20 for information.

Moved by: J. Paige
Seconded by: C. Davidson
Carried

11.0 CEO Updates – B. Gorman

B. Gorman provided a verbal update with information regarding the Oak Ridges Library Children's area, events recently held at the Central branch, including a College and University fair that was very well attended with more than 550 participants. During Ontario Public Library week (October 19-25), the library will be hosting visits from local MPs, Mr. Menegakis, MP Aurora/Oak Ridges/Richmond Hill, and Mr. Ho, MP Richmond Hill South.

12.0 Date of Next Meeting

The next Regular Meeting of the Library Board will be held on:
Thursday, January 15, 2026 @ 4:00 p.m. at Central Branch.

13.0 Adjournment

Motion: 25:53 **THAT** the meeting be adjourned

Moved by: J. Chait
Seconded by: C. Davidson
Carried



RHPL Board Intellectual Freedom Steering Committee Draft Minutes

Thursday November 20, 2025 at 3:00pm

Location: Virtual

Members In Attendance:

- Jason Cherniak, RHPL Board Member
- Mona Shahnazari, RHPL Board Member
- Scott Thompson, Councillor & RHPL Board Member
- Shelly Wu, RHPL Board Member
- Bruce Gorman, CEO

Staff:

- Josh Dyer, Director, Content & Engagement
- Yunmi Hwang, Director, Branch & Customer Experience
- Jordan Lynam, Manager, Content & Community Engagement
- Toula Myriklis, Executive Assistant

Guests/Presenters:

- None

Member Regrets:

- None

1. Agenda Review and Adoption

Motion: That the Intellectual Freedom Steering Committee adopt the agenda.

Moved by: M. Shahnazari,

Seconded by: S. Thompson

Carried

2. Approval of Minutes

Motion: That the committee approve the DRAFT Intellectual Freedom Steering Committee Minutes of April 8, 2025

Moved by: S. Thompson

Seconded by: J. Dyer

Carried

3. Election of the Chair of the Intellectual Freedom Steering Committee

Motion: That Jason Cherniak be elected as Chair of the RHPL Intellectual Freedom Steering Committee.

Moved by: M. Shahnazari

Seconded by: S. Thompson

Carried

4. Election of the Vice Chair of the Intellectual Freedom Steering Committee

Motion: That Shelly Wu be elected as Vice Chair of the RHPL Intellectual Freedom Steering Committee.

Moved by: S. Thompson

Seconded by: M. Shahnazari

Carried

The committee reviewed the Terms of Reference regarding further nomination of roles. It was clarified the Executive Assistant will act as recording secretary for the committee; a nomination is not required for this staff role.

5. Intellectual Freedom Working Group Update – J. Lynam

Key Discussion Points / Options Considered / Criteria Used in Decision-Making

- The minutes of the May 15th meeting and September 18th meeting were provided to the committee.
- J. Lynam provided an update regarding the matters discussed at the May and September working group meetings. Of note was feedback received from

patrons in an adult writing circle who felt uncomfortable with a 16-year old participant. Review of MFIPPA (Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act) states a 16-year old is able to make their own decisions in relation to privacy. In consideration of the feedback, the library will be implementing a teen writing circle. A disclaimer is in place for all programs that some programming may not be suitable for younger participants.

Motion: That the committee receive the IFWG updates for information

Moved by: S. Thompson

Seconded by: S. Wu

Carried

6. Adjournment

Motion: That the meeting be adjourned at 4:00 pm

Moved by: S. Thompson

Seconded by: S. Wu

Carried



2026 Library Board Regular Meeting Dates

Board Meeting Date	Board Meeting Location	Board Meeting Time
Thursday, February 19, 2026	Central Library	4:00 pm
Thursday March 26, 2026	Central Library	4:00 pm
Thursday, April 16, 2026	Central Library	4:00 pm
Thursday, May 21, 2026	Central Library	4:00 pm
Thursday, June 18, 2026	Central Library	4:00 pm
Thursday, September 17, 2026	Central Library	4:00 pm
Thursday, October 15, 2026	Central Library	4:00 pm
Thursday November 19, 2026 <i>(if needed)</i>	Central Library	4:00 pm



Subject: 2025 Third Quarter (Q3) Financial Report

For: Receipt

Date: February 19, 2025

Report #: SRLIB26.01

To: Richmond Hill Public Library Board

From: Bruce Gorman, CEO

SUMMARY

Financial updates are provided to the Library Board on a quarterly basis. The attached Financial Reports, for the period ending **Sept 30, 2025**, reflect the expenditures and revenues to date compared to the annual budget. The year-to-date actuals are also presented alongside the approved budget for comparison purposes.

As a general guideline, revenues and expenses are assumed to occur evenly throughout the year. Given that the Q3 reports cover 9 months (January–September), the general benchmark for actual spend is approximately **75% of the total annual budget**.

Attached documents include the Statement of Operations and Current Capital Project Status.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Richmond Hill Public Library Board:

1. Receive the **2025 Third Quarter (Q3) Financial Report** for the period ending Sept 30, 2025.

1.0 RATIONALE

The attached financial reports highlight RHPL's financial results and position as of Q3 2025. Additional commentary is provided below regarding key variances from the budget.

2.0 Revenues

As of the end of the third quarter, RHPL has generated approximately **68.7%** of total budgeted revenues. This level is modestly below the Q3 benchmark and reflects the structure of revenue realization across the year.

- General Revenues (fees, room rentals, program revenues, and materials sales) are at **79.0%** of the annual budget. This stronger-than-benchmark performance is primarily attributable to a significant individual donation for Oak Ridges Children's Area, as well as commission revenues associated with film productions using Library facilities.
- Provincial and Other Grants are at **1.7%**, consistent with established grant disbursement patterns, where funds are typically received later in the fiscal year.

- York Region District School Board (YRDSB) Funding is at **100.0%**, in line with the approved funding schedule.

- Transfer from the R&R Reserve Fund is at **75.0%**, aligned with planned quarterly allocations supporting collection development.

Overall revenue performance remains consistent with historical patterns and is expected to align with budgeted levels by year-end.

3.0 Expenditures

As of September 30, 2025, RHPL has spent **68.1%** of its approved annual operating budget, modestly below the Q3 benchmark of **75%**. This position reflects a combination of deliberate pacing in discretionary expenditures and the fact that certain planned expenditures have not yet been incurred.

- Personnel expenditures are at **70.9%**, remaining within expectations for Q3. Staffing levels continue to align with operational requirements, and personnel costs are tracking predictably against the approved budget.

- Collection Development expenditures are at **70.3%**, reflecting the planned ordering and invoicing cycle. Annual spending is expected to align with budgeted levels.

- Contracts and Services expenditures are at **50.7%**, reflecting lower year-to-date spending within discretionary service and IT-related line items.

- Materials and Supplies expenditures are at **54.5%**, consistent with operational consumption patterns across the system and a deliberate caution towards discretionary spending.

- Transfer to the R&R Reserve Fund is at **75.0%**, aligned with planned quarterly allocations and consistent with approved budget assumptions.

Overall expenditure patterns reflect prudent financial stewardship and controlled expenditure sequencing.

Richmond Hill Public Library Reserve Activity

- **Donation and Bequest Reserve Fund:** Balance remains **\$703,943** as of Q2, unchanged and undesignated.
- Special Purpose Reserve: Balance is **\$331,350**.

Q3 Summary

As of the end of the third quarter, RHPL's financial results remain stable and within expected ranges for this stage of the year at **68.1%** of budget. Expenditures and revenues continue to track consistently against the approved annual budget, with observed variances reflecting normal expenditure patterns across the organization.

Spending in several categories remains below the Q3 benchmark, consistent with the Library's measured approach to expenditure management and the sequencing of planned activities throughout the year. Revenue performance continues to align with historical trends and approved assumptions.

Overall, Q3 results indicate steady operations and effective financial stewardship, with no material issues identified at this stage of the fiscal year.

1.0 **ATTACHMENTS**

1. RHPL Statement of Operations for the period ended September 30, 2025
2. Current Capital Project Status



2025 Operating Results
RICHMOND HILL PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD
Overall Summary

	2024	2025	2025	Variance	Actuals %
	Actuals	YTD Actuals	Approved	Fav/(Unfav)	to Budget
			BUDGET		
Expenditures					
Personnel	8,001,626	5,969,379	8,418,600	2,449,221	70.9%
Collection Development	1,121,595	583,322	829,300	245,978	70.3%
Contracts/Services	1,190,859	652,918	1,288,100	635,182	50.7%
Materials/Supplies	389,558	211,188	387,200	176,012	54.5%
Transfer to R&R Reserve Fund	535,600	294,450	392,600	98,150	75.0%
Total Expenditures	11,239,237	7,711,258	11,315,800	3,604,542	68.1%
Revenues					
Provincial/Other Grants	(179,671)	(4,737)	(270,900)	(266,163)	1.7%
General Revenues	(155,104)	(152,479)	(192,900)	(40,421)	79.0%
YRDSB Funding	(316,200)	(356,100)	(356,100)	-	100.0%
Transfer from Reserve	(516,200)	-	-	-	0.0%
Transfer from R&R Reserve Fund	(1,071,300)	(588,975)	(785,300)	(196,325)	75.0%
Total Revenues	(2,238,470)	(1,102,291)	(1,605,200)	(502,909)	68.7%
Net Budget	9,000,766	6,608,967	9,710,600	3,101,633	68.1%

Attachment 2

BUDGET APPROVAL YEAR	PROJECT NO.	PROJECT DESCRIPTION	APPROVED BUDGET	SPENT TO DATE	NET BUDGET UNDER (OVER) (Budget - Spent)	AVAILABLE BUDGET (Budget -Spent to Date)	OUTSTANDING COMMITMENTS	BUDGET AVAILABLE AFTER
2019	P/000617	2019 Maker Space Equipment CE	\$25,000.00	\$6,905.80	\$18,094.20	27.62%	\$17,745.00	\$349.20
2024	P/000620	Collection Development	\$508,306.28	\$227,457.62	\$280,848.66	44.75%	\$92,257.06	\$188,591.60
2025	P/000620	Collection Development	\$175,000.00	\$0.00	\$175,000.00	0.00%	\$0.00	\$175,000.00
2020	P/000783	Collection Inventory	\$141,600.00	\$97,212.09	\$44,387.91	68.65%	\$0.07	\$44,387.84
2021	P/000794	Cash Registers / POS System	\$68,600.00	\$69,504.64	-\$904.64	101.32%	\$19.98	-\$924.62
2021	P/000795	Website Redesign	\$300,000.00	\$225,364.70	\$74,635.30	75.12%	\$38,012.48	\$36,622.82
2022	P/000796	Strategic Plan	\$100,000.00	\$67,821.00	\$32,179.00	67.82%	\$19,919.90	\$12,259.10
2023	P/001050	Data Strategy Execution and Expansion	\$250,000.00	\$250,000.00	\$0.00	100.00%	\$0.00	\$0.00
2023	P/001051	Customer Relationship Mgmt Solution	\$250,000.00	\$9,106.51	\$240,893.49	3.64%	\$0.00	\$240,893.49
2023	P/001052	New Brand Identity Implementation	\$150,000.00	\$131,499.41	\$18,500.59	87.67%	\$0.01	\$18,500.58
2023	P/001053	DEI Strategy Execution	\$50,000.00	\$20,390.16	\$29,609.84	40.78%	\$0.00	\$29,609.84
2023	P/001054	Innovation Transformation	\$100,000.00	\$60,603.46	\$39,396.54	60.60%	\$39,161.64	\$234.90
2024	P/001197	Digital Strategy Pilots and Implement.	\$175,000.00	\$69,973.82	\$105,026.18	39.99%	\$0.00	\$105,026.18
2024	P/001198	Express Branch Pilot	\$150,000.00	\$46,154.52	\$103,845.48	30.77%	\$0.00	\$103,845.48
2024	P/001199	Oak Ridges Library Public Furniture	\$80,000.00	\$61,871.91	\$18,128.09	77.34%	\$5,949.22	\$12,178.87
2024	P/001219	RHPL Strategic Planning	\$100,000.00	\$0.00	\$100,000.00	0.00%	\$98,270.43	\$1,729.57
2025	P/001301	CE - Furniture, Fixtures and Eqp.	\$422,900.00	\$1,729.92	\$421,170.08	0.41%	\$8,044.13	\$413,125.95
2026	P/000620	Collection Development	\$537,700.00	\$0.00	\$537,700.00	0.00%	\$0.00	\$537,700.00



Subject: Revised Room Rental Rates

For: Approval

Date: February 19, 2026

Report #: SRLIB 26.02

To: Richmond Hill Public Library Board

From: Yunmi Hwang, Director of Branch and Customer Experiences

SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to seek Library Board approval for proposed changes to the Library's room rental rates.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the Richmond Hill Public Library Board approve the proposed revised room rental rates

RATIONALE

The Library's meeting rooms are an important community resource and are widely used by the public. While meeting rooms continue to be well utilized by community groups, the Library also balances external bookings with internal operational needs, including library programming, study halls, and other customer services.

Room rental rates are reviewed periodically to ensure they remain aligned with market conditions, reflect consistency across spaces, and support the Library's operational needs. The recent review included a comparison to neighbouring public libraries including Vaughan and Markham Public Libraries, and City-owned facilities of similar

size and function. The review confirmed that the proposed rates are consistent with comparable facilities in the region.

In addition, the proposed changes introduce greater consistency in pricing by aligning rates more closely with:

- Room size and capacity
- Available equipment and amenities
- Overall functionality of the space

This approach ensures a fair and transparent pricing structure for customers while supporting efficient use of library spaces.

Financial and Service Impact

The proposed changes are not expected to negatively impact room usage and may help ensure more sustainable and appropriate use of meeting spaces. Updated rates may also contribute modestly to cost recovery associated with space use and maintenance.

ATTACHMENTS – Comparative Summary Table

Room Type	Current Library Rate (Hourly)	Proposed Library Rate (Hourly)	Surrounding Libraries / City Facilities Range	Notes
Central Room A	Non-Profit \$20	Non-Profit \$22.50	Non-Profit \$18-30	Aligned with market rates
	Commercial \$40	Commercial \$42.50	Commercial \$20-45	
Central Room B	Non-Profit \$20	Non-Profit \$22.50	Non-Profit \$18-30	Aligned with market rates
	Commercial \$40	Commercial \$42.50	Commercial \$20-45	
Central Room A&B	Non-Profit \$30	Non-Profit \$40	Non-Profit \$40-65	Adjusted for size and equipment availability
	Commercial \$60	Commercial \$80	Commercial \$70-90	

Central Room C	Non-Profit \$15	Non-Profit \$17.50	Non-Profit \$15-23	Aligned with market rates
	Commercial \$30	Commercial \$32.50	Commercial \$24-38	
Central Conference Room	Non-Profit \$25	Non-Profit \$27.50	N/A	Aligned with market rates, size, equipment availability
	Commercial \$50	Commercial \$52.50		
Oak Ridges Room 1	Non-Profit \$15	Non-Profit \$17.50	Non-Profit \$15-23	Aligned with market rates
	Commercial \$30	Commercial \$32.50	Commercial \$24-38	
Oak Ridges Room 2	Non-Profit \$20	Non-Profit \$22.50	Non-Profit \$18-30	Aligned with market rates
	Commercial \$40	Commercial \$42.50	Commercial \$20-45	
Oak Ridges Room 1&2	Non-Profit \$25	Non-Profit \$30	Non-Profit ~\$30	Adjusted for size and equipment availability
	Commercial \$50	Commercial \$60	Commercial \$45-60	
Richvale	Non-Profit \$25	Non-Profit \$27.50	Non-Profit ~\$30	Aligned with market rates
	Commercial \$50	Commercial \$52.50	Commercial \$45-60	
Richmond Green	Non-Profit \$15	Non-Profit \$17.50	Non-Profit \$15-23	Aligned with market rates
	Commercial \$30	Commercial \$32.50	Commercial \$24-38	



Report Subject: Creating Vibrant Kids’ Corners Through Play-Based Learning
Report For: Approval
Meeting Date: February 19, 2026
Staff Report #: SRLIB 26.03
To: Richmond Hill Public Library Board
From: Joshua Dyer, Director, Content & Engagement

Summary

Richmond Hill Public Library’s Kids’ Corners serve as foundational spaces for early literacy, family engagement, and community connection. Following a pilot project at the Oak Ridges Branch, staff are prepared to expand a research-informed toy initiative across all branches.

The Oak Ridges pilot provided insight into how intentionally selected, developmentally appropriate toys can support hands-on exploration and caregiver–child interaction within library spaces. Based on this initial experience and supporting early literacy research, staff are recommending a system-wide expansion of the initiative.

To support this expansion, staff are requesting a capital expenditure of \$40,000 funded through Library’s Development Charges to fund the acquisition of standardized toy collections for each branch.

Recommendation

That the Board approve a \$40,000 capital expenditure from the Library’s Development Charges to fund the expansion of standardized, research-informed toy collections to all Kids’ Corners across Richmond Hill Public Library branches.

Background

RHPL’s Kids’ Corners are often a family’s first point of engagement with the library and play an important role in supporting school readiness, language development, and positive early learning experiences.

In 2025, a donor-funded initiative at the Oak Ridges Branch enabled staff to pilot the introduction of intentionally selected toys within the Kids’ Corner. The pilot was designed

not simply to add play materials, but to test a structured approach to toy selection, storage, signage, and use within a shared public environment.

While formal evaluation is still underway, early observations from the Oak Ridges experience suggest that the presence of thoughtfully selected toys can encourage families to spend time together in the space, support caregiver–child interaction, and create a more welcoming and dynamic environment. Staff feedback has also helped refine considerations around durability, maintenance, and space planning.

The pilot has therefore provided valuable operational insight and a practical foundation from which to scale the initiative more consistently across all branches.

Rationale

Play as a Foundation for Literacy and Learning

Play is widely recognized as a critical mechanism through which young children develop language, social, cognitive, and motor skills. In early childhood, play is not separate from learning, it is how learning happens.

By embedding intentional play opportunities within library spaces, RHPL supports the foundational skills that underpin literacy development long before children begin reading independently.

The initiative aligns with the principles of [Every Child Ready to Read](#) (ECRR), which identifies five core practices that support early literacy: talking, singing, reading, writing, and playing. Play supports vocabulary growth, storytelling, imagination, sequencing, and expressive language, particularly when caregivers participate alongside children.

Toy selection is also informed by developmental frameworks such as Mildred Parten’s Stages of Play, which recognize that children engage differently depending on age and stage, from solitary play to cooperative play. Ensuring a variety of toy types allow Kids’ Corners to support infants, toddlers, preschoolers, and elementary-aged children in age-appropriate ways.

Intentional Toy Selection

A central principle of this initiative is that toys are selected intentionally, not incidentally. In a public library setting, toys must meet standards that go beyond entertainment value. Selection criteria prioritize safety, durability, and ease of cleaning to ensure suitability for high-traffic shared environments. Consideration is also given to noise levels, maintenance

requirements, and the ability of materials to withstand sustained public use without requiring significant staff intervention.

Equally important is the educational and developmental value of each item. Toys are chosen to support imagination, fine and gross motor development, social-emotional learning, cooperative interaction, and early STEM exploration. Inclusive design principles are applied to ensure accessibility for children with a range of abilities and developmental stages.

This intentional approach ensures that the presence of toys strengthens RHPL's role as a learning-centered public space.

Outcomes and Benefits

Expanding the Kids' Corners toy initiative system-wide is expected to:

- Strengthen early literacy behaviours through embedded play-based learning
- Increase the quality of family visits
- Support positive caregiver–child interaction
- Encourage social development and cooperative play
- Reinforce RHPL's commitment to welcoming, inclusive spaces
- Create greater consistency across branches

The Oak Ridges pilot has provided sufficient operational confidence to proceed thoughtfully with expansion while continuing to monitor usage and outcomes.

Related Documents

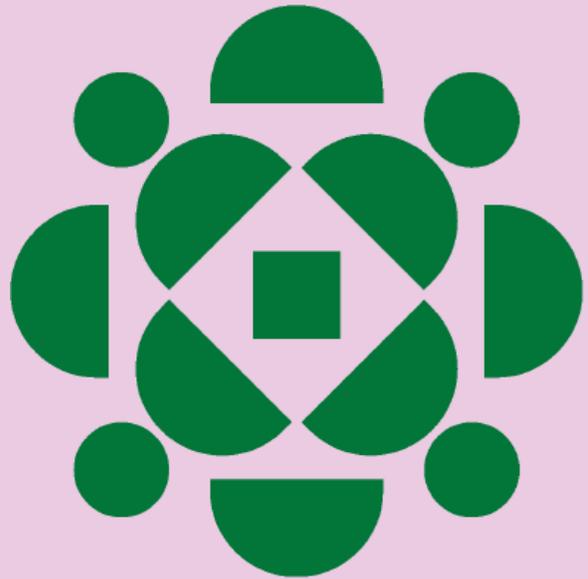
1. [Creating a Vibrant Kids Corner](#)

Toys with Impact: Creating Vibrant Kids Corners

Emma Kristensen, Content Librarian
Rebecca Robinson, Community Engagement Librarian

August 2025

Richmond Hill
Public Library



Presentation Overview

- Goal
- Toy Criteria
- Guiding Principles
- Inspiration
- Types of Toys
- Signage
- Storage
- Use of Toys for Programs



Goal

Transform RHPL's Kids Corners into vibrant, welcoming early literacy centres that encourage hands-on exploration and create inviting spaces where children and their caregivers can learn, play, and grow together.

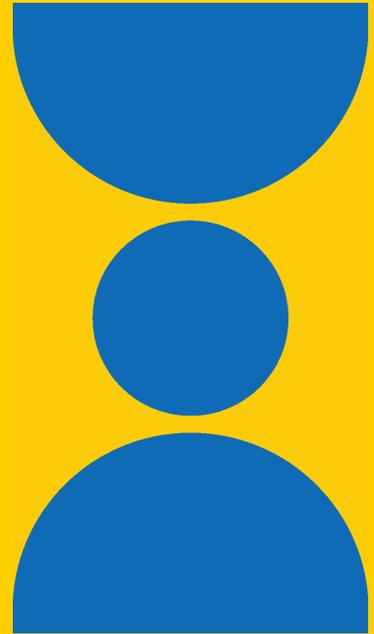


Toy Criteria

Safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No small parts that pose a choking hazard • Non-toxic materials • Durable construction
Ease of Cleaning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wipeable or washable surfaces • Few small crevices to trap dirt • Resistant to wear and tear • Avoid absorbent materials
Noise Level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quiet/volume adjustment • Avoid repeated music/phrases
Size & Storage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Easy to store pieces • Space in the library
Inclusive Play	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cooperative play • Accessible for children with different abilities • Collection has toys suitable for wide range of ages (0-12)
Maintenance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Replacement parts? • Holding up to wear and tear • No/minimal staff intervention needed
Educational Value	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open-ended play (cooperation) • Social Emotional Learning • STEM • Fine/Gross Motor skills • Imaginative play • Guided by Every Child Ready to Read Principles (ECRR)

Guiding Principles

- Every Child Ready to Read
- The Six Stages of Play



Every Child Ready to Read

 **Talking** and telling stories are how children learn new information, new vocabulary and it is one of the most critical early literacy skills.

 **Singing** and rhyming allows for an increase in children's awareness of the sounds in words.

 **Reading** together is the most effective way to help children become proficient readers.

 **Writing** helps children understand that symbols and letters represent sounds and meaning, building the foundation for reading.

 **Playing** allows children to explore the world while developing imagination, self-confidence, and language skills, especially when parents join in.



We chose to include this framework in guiding our toy selections for the Kids' Corners because each principle aligns closely with how play and interaction foster literacy development.

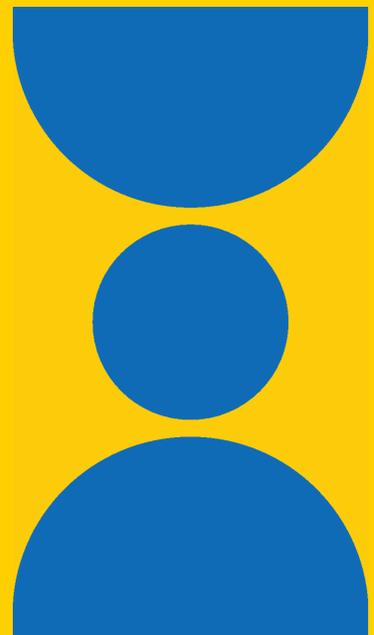
Mildred Parten's Stages of Play

0-3 Months	Unoccupied Play	Baby is making movement with their limbs. They are discovering how their body moves.
0-2 Years	Solitary Play	Child plays alone and is not interested in playing with others quite yet.
2 Years	Spectator/Onlooker Behaviour	Child observes other children playing but will not play with them.
2+ Years	Parallel Play	Child plays alongside or near others but does not play with them.
3-4 Years	Associate Play	Child starts to interact with others during play but not much cooperation is required.
4+ Years	Cooperative Play	Child plays with others and has interest in both the activity and other kids involved in playing.

We chose to include this framework in guiding our toy selections for the Kids' Corners because it ensures that our toys support children's growth by matching their developmental needs and encouraging age-appropriate play.

Inspiration

We're inspired by how these spaces support early literacy, school readiness, and create meaningful caregiver-child interactions.



Battlefords Family Resource Centre

Battleford, Saskatchewan

- Thoughtfully designed space (warm yet vibrant)
- Meaningful cultural integration (Cree and Metis influences, Treaty 6)
- Variety and quality of toys encourage exploration across multiple development domains
- “Stay and Play” program encouraging families to come and play with their toys
-  : **Facility Tour**



Toronto Public Library's KidsStop

Toronto, Ontario

- Each branch features a unique theme (e.g. pollinators, water, transportation)
- Tactile, hands-on elements support sensory and physical development
- Themes create distinctive, engaging environments that encourage repeat visits
- Themed spaces allow for intentional toy selection that aligns with learning goals
- Encourages exploration and discovery across multiple branches
-  : **Visit the Library : Ready for Reading**



ROM's WonderWorks

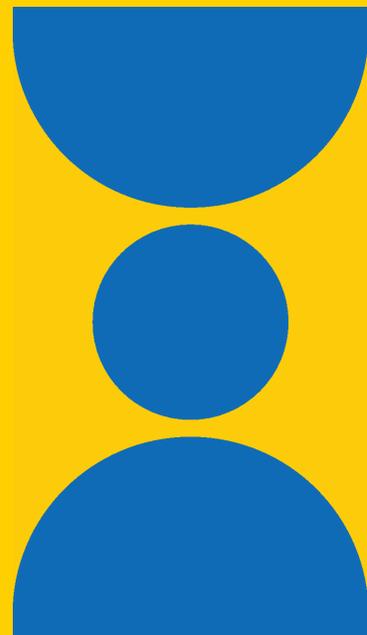
Toronto, Ontario

- Self-directed exploration (free choice)
- Variety of props, prompts and play spaces
- 📍: [WonderWorks | Royal Ontario Museum](#)



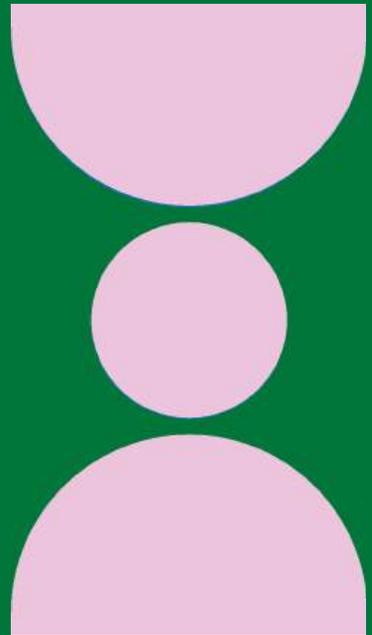
Toy Selection by Type

We've selected toys that support different types of play to encourage a range of developmental skills.



Larger Toys

Larger-scale toys that are deemed as a staple of the Kids' Corner experience.



ROM - WonderWorks, Toronto



TheMuseum, Kitchener



EarlyON Oak Creek, Kitchener



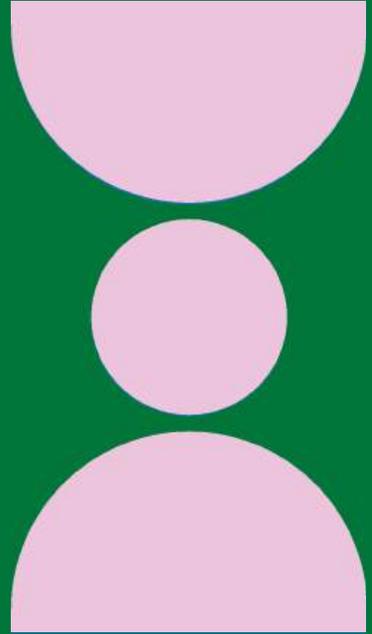
Cambridge Public Library



Cambridge Public Library

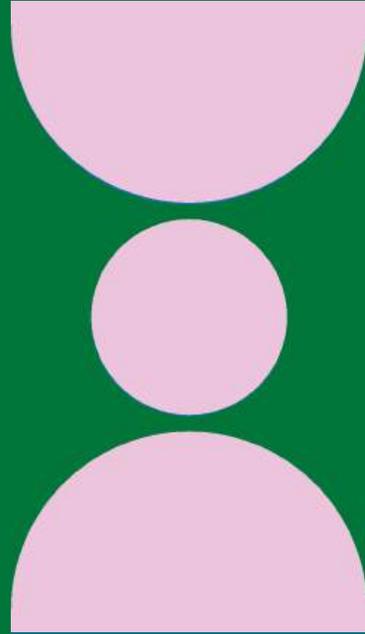
Babies

Baby-friendly toys allow the library to be a place where even our tiniest visitors can play, discover and connect with their caregiver(s).



Mats

Play mats support a variety of developmental needs by encouraging sensory, gross motor, and imaginative play, whether through alphabet recognition, pretend road play with toy cars, sensory grass with farm toys, or more active movement with hopscotch.



Cambridge Public Library



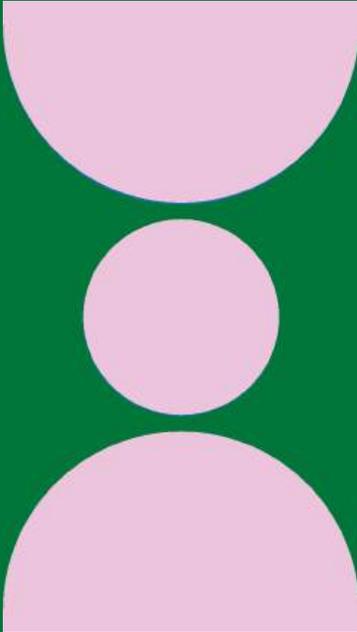
Cambridge Public Library



Cambridge Public Library

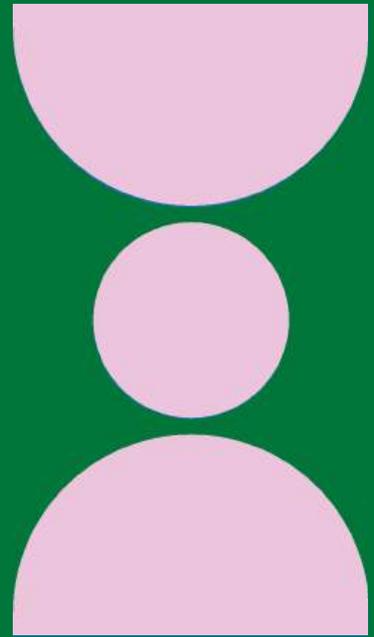
Imaginative Play

It inspires creativity, storytelling, and social skills, having these kinds of toys available at the library turns the space into a vibrant hub for learning through play.



Sensory Play

Helps to spark curiosity and wonder, inviting children to explore textures, colours, and sounds while learning through joyful discovery.



Sensory Bin Ideas



Cambridge Public Library

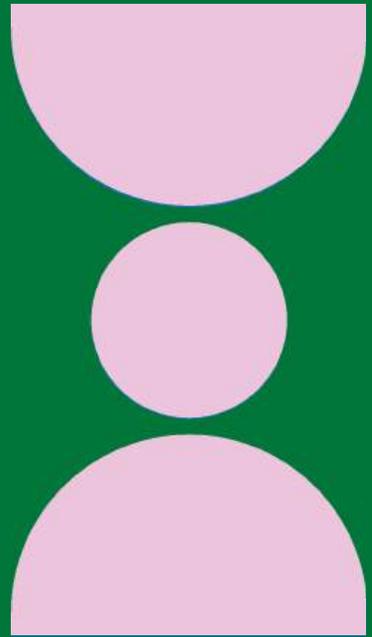


EarlyON Oak Creek



Fine Motor Toys

Help children strengthen hand-eye coordination, finger dexterity, and grasp control while having fun.



Fine Motor Toys



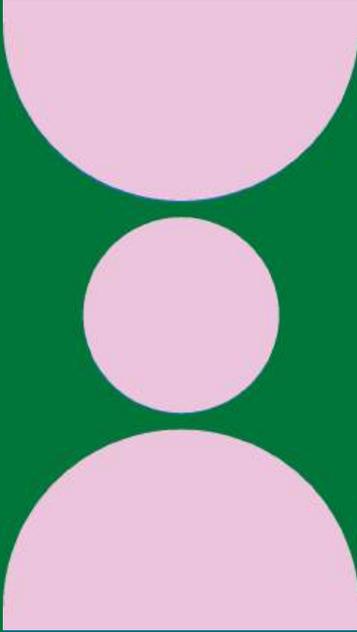
 : **Wooden Peg Board | The Montessori Room**



 : **Guidecraft Weight Cylinders | GD-5085**

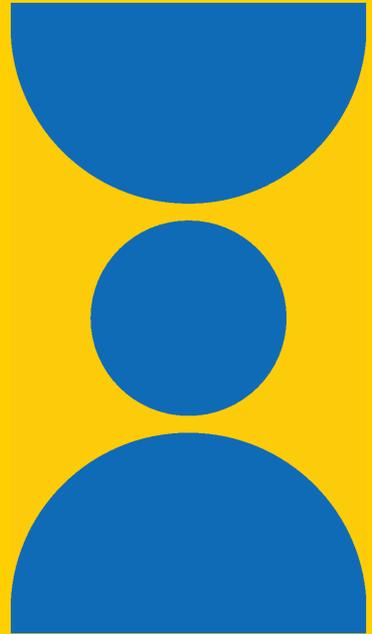
Physical Play/Gross Motor Skills

When kids at the library start using the tables and chairs as jungle gyms, it's a pretty good indication that they're craving some safe, movement-friendly activities.



Rules & Signage

As our spaces evolve, so should our signage, helping families understand how to use toys responsibly and respectfully. Updated early literacy messaging can guide caregivers in recognizing the learning that happens through play and how to extend it at home.

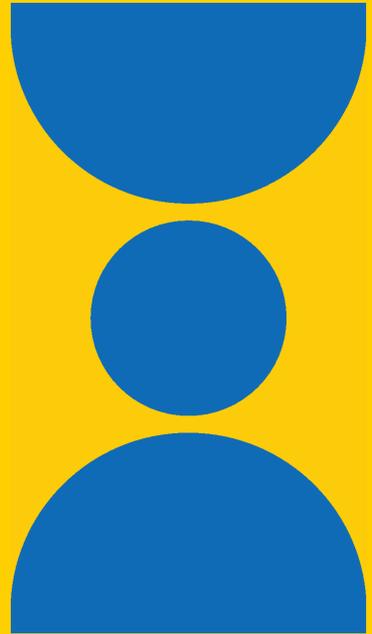


Cambridge Public Library



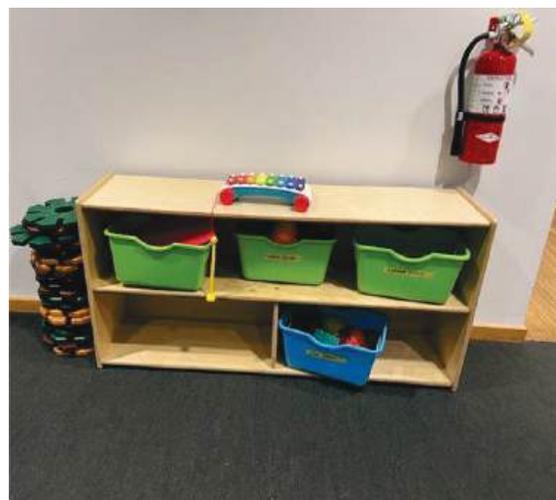
Storage

Thoughtful storage and accessible shelving keep the space tidy and inviting, while encouraging kids to explore, play, and take responsibility for clean-up.



Montessori Shelves with Bins

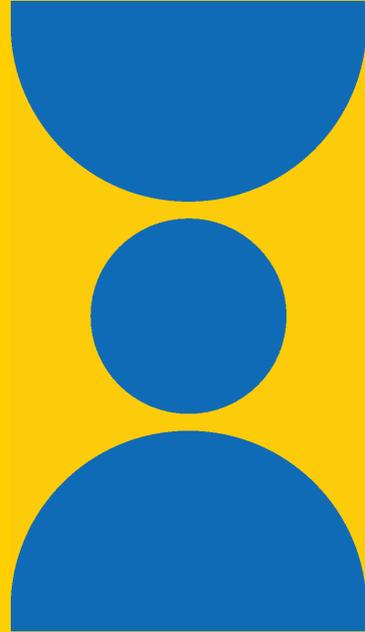
- Displayed at children's eye level for easy access
- Promotes responsibility through easy clean-up
- Helps children make choices and explore more freely



Cambridge Public Library

Use of Toys for Programs

The use of toys can also extend to library programming, making the library a fun and accessible destination for families to learn, play, and discover together.



Stay & Play Programming

- The use of the toys for a drop-in style programming
 - PD Days
 - March Break
 - Winter Break
- Unstructured play-time with the toys for socialization of kids, time for parents to meet up while kids play
- Library becomes a destination for fun hangouts for kids (and their parents)

IDEAIEXCHANGE

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Saturday Stay and Play

All Ages

Saturday, August 03
10:00am - 4:00pm
Add to Calendar

Come and stay and play!

See children and other caregivers with their creative imaginations throughout the children's journey.
Keep it fun! This program does not require a registration.

Availability

If you require an accessibility accommodation for this program, please let us know by email: access@ideaiexchange.ca or by phone: 905-882-2222. If you require a registration, please let us know by email: registration@ideaiexchange.ca or by phone: 905-882-2222.

If you are attending a registered program with a support worker, please let your support worker be a guest when you sign up.

Cost: Free

Age Group: All Ages

Event Type: Programs & Activities

Area: Home / Home / School April / Programs / Events

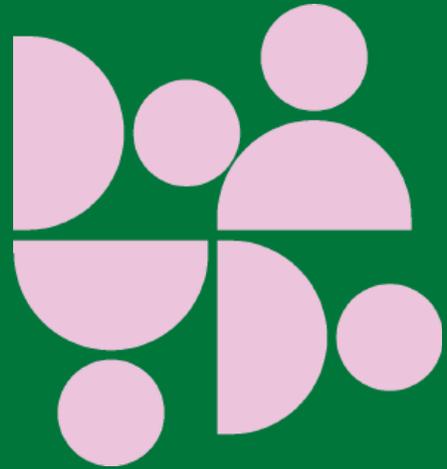
Stay & Play

- Offered multiple times a week at different times including seasonal drop-in events
- Unstructured on-site play together, meet new friends, gain new skills, and share ideas
- Families have opportunities to connect and build relationships with professionals (librarians, public health nurses, RFP, RFP, etc.) in an informal setting to their shared programs when available
- Click here to see photos of the staff of each program to support with children's transition home and to provide family learning opportunities for parents

Battlefords Family Resource Centre

Feedback

Any comments, questions, or concerns?



Thank you!



RHPL UPDATES

Indie Author Day, Saturday, November 15, 2025 (150 attendees)

- A celebration of local authors with opportunities to meet authors, buy books, and hear read-alouds for kids. This annual event since 2016 continues to gather more attention, seeing a 50% increase in attendees from 2024.
- Published in the Richmond Hill Liberal:
Indie Author Day article: [Sick of Amazon? Richmond Hill Public Library to host more than 30 independent authors you can meet at annual book fair](#)



Toronto Legends Podcast presents: An Evening with Terry O'Reilly, Thursday, November 20, 2025 (106 attendees)

- An evening with advertising guru, podcaster, and author Terry O'Reilly, hosted by Andrew Applebaum of the Toronto Legends podcast
- Some feedback survey responses from attendees:
 - “It was fantastic to have this event right in our community. One little annoyance was the background noise which was distracting. I am very impressed with our library system for all that it is offering. I understand that a new space is being created at the library for such events and I look forward to attending more events there.”
 - “I felt a sense of community”
- 70% of attendees who completed our feedback survey had not attended an RHPL event in the last 6 months - great way of reaching new audiences
- With creative advertising solutions, this event has highlighted with [Our first-ever Spotify ad](#)

- Our next event with Toronto Legends Podcast will be an evening with author, journalist, and podcaster, Steve Paikin, on April 23rd



68 ❤️ 3 💬 2 📌
 Liked by southcentralrichmondhill.cat and others
 davidwestrh We had a great evening at the Richmond Hill Public Library last night hearing Terry O'Reilly talking about his new book 'Against the Grain'.
 I've been a big fan of Terry's for years and still love his Under the Influence radio show and podcast. Thanks RHPL and Toronto Legends Podcast, Andrew Applbaum, for bringing Terry to our great city!
 November 21, 2025

RHPL first Tea Festival, Saturday, January 10, 2026 (310 attendees)

- A record-breaking number of attendees for our very first Tea Festival, which included 16 vendor booths and sold out programs with a certified tea sommelier, or the chance to try tasseomancy, tea leaf reading
- News article link: [‘Sanctuary in a cup’: Richmond Hill’s first Tea Marketplace lets you hobnob with tea sellers and experts at public library café](#)
- Attendees reported a satisfaction rating of 4.44/5 and 45% who completed our feedback survey had not attended an RHPL event in the last 6 months - another great way of reaching new audiences



Mayor's community coffee and chat – Sunday, Jan 31, 2026 (200-250 attendees)

- The feedback was overwhelmingly positive and many people told the Mayor "you should do this every month!".
- A last minute space request where we were able to provide a friendly, community space where the Mayor can connect with our community.

