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NATIONAL TEEN SPACE GUIDELINES

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Young Adult Library
Services Association
www.ala.org/yalsa

APPROVED BY THE YALSA BOARD OF DIRECTORS, MAY 2012

FOREWORD

These guidelines were created in 2011 -2012 by a task force of the Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA) with feedback from the library community achieved through a public comment period in the fall of 2011. Members of the task force were Katherine Trouern-Trend (chair), Audrey Sumser, Kathy Mahoney, Caroline Aversano, Samantha Marker, and Kimberly Bolan Cullin. YALSA's Board of Directors adopted the guidelines on May 24, 2012.

REVIEW PROCESS

In order to finalize the guidelines, the taskforce presented a draft document to YALSA'S Board of Directors in June 2011. At this meeting, the taskforce solicited feedback on the draft

The feedback was carefully considered by the Taskforce; additions and revisions have been made accordingly. This draft document was approved for dissemination via a call for public comments period on Oct. 14, 2011. After the public comment period closed, the taskforce reviewed the feedback received and refined the draft guidelines as appropriate. The Teen Spaces Guidelines Taskforce wishes to thank the library community for their contributions to this document. It is intended that the National Teen Space Guidelines will be reviewed for revisions every five years.

INTRODUCTION

This is a tool for evaluating a public library's overall level of success in providing physical and virtual space dedicated to teens, aged 12-18. Potential users of these national guidelines include library administrators, library trustees, teen services librarians, community members and job-seekers hoping to assess a library's commitment to teen services. Not every element of the guidelines may apply to every public library situation, but the guidelines can serve as a place to begin the conversation about what constitutes excellent public library space for teens.

Teens experience rapid physical, emotional and social changes while developing their intellectual capabilities and personal values, understanding and accepting their sexuality, and identifying their educational and occupational options. Libraries are vital to today's teens in order for them to achieve a successful transition from childhood to adulthood. They offer the resources and the environment that foster positive intellectual, emotional and social development of tomorrow's adults. All of these factors contribute to the need for distinct teen spaces, both in-library and virtually. The national guidelines that follow are intended for all library personnel working with and for teens, so they can fully understand the mission of library service to this frequently underserved age group and the importance of dedicated physical and virtual teen spaces for their continued engagement, growth and achievement.

The mission of the Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA) is to expand and strengthen library services for teens. Through its member-driven advocacy, research, and professional development initiatives, YALSA builds the capacity of libraries and librarians to engage, serve, and empower teens and young adults. YALSA is a subspecialty of the American Library Association, the world's largest and oldest library organization, and a financially stable 501(c)3 not-for-profit.

To learn more about YALSA or to access other national guidelines relating to library services to teens, go to www.ala.org/yalsa.

GUIDELINES FOR PHYSICAL SPACE

1.0 Solicit teen feedback and input in the design and creation of the teen space.

A cornerstone of teen library services is the principle that teens must be actively involved in decisions regarding collections, services, and programs intended for them. Their active participation ensures that the evolving needs and interests of teens are being addressed, and they play a key role in attracting peers to the library. Teens become lifelong library users and supporters when they are enthusiastically engaged in planning and decision-making, and their sense of ownership will enhance the quality of their library experience.

- 1.1 Create a space that meets the needs of teens in the community by asking teens to play a role in the planning process.
- 1.2 Solicit teen feedback in the design of the space and regarding its use to allow teens to develop a sense of ownership.
- 1.3 Solicit teen feedback in the development of policies to ensure the space is representative of teen needs.

2.0 Provide a library environment that encourages emotional, social and intellectual development of teens.

Twenty-first century teens have an unprecedented power and enthusiasm in shaping their social and learning environments through the growth of digital communication. These tools have created new social norms and expectations for teens from diverse backgrounds. Public libraries must strive to recreate this online experience by hosting an inviting, high interest, multipurpose physical space for teens. In doing so, the library nurtures teens' values, identity, and the new skills necessary to grow and thrive. The environment should:

- 2.1 Convey that it is teen-owned and maintained.
- 2.2 Be comfortable, inviting, open and have a vibrant and teen-friendly look and feel.
- 2.3 Accommodate individual as well as group use for socializing and learning.
- 2.4 Include colorful and fun accessories selected by teens. Include up-to-date and teen friendly décor.
- 2.5 Allow for ample display of teen print, artistic and digital creations.
- 2.6 Allow food and drink in the space.
- 2.7 Contribute to a sense of teen belonging, community involvement, and library appreciation.
- 2.8 Be appealing to both users and non-users and provide resources for customers from diverse social groups, backgrounds and interests.
- 2.9 Be easy to navigate with clear signage and distinct areas for socializing, entertainment, teen print/digital collections and study and quiet areas.
- 2.10 Be easily navigable for teens with wheelchairs, walkers and other assistive devices

3.0. Provide a library space for teens that reflects the community in which they live.

Twenty-first century teens have the ability to select and engage in communities of their choice based on interest and identification with cultural, social and knowledge groups. A public library must provide a space for teens that builds upon the culture and size of the teen community and facilitates user-friendly engagement in the space. The space should:

- 3.1 Reflect the communities the library serves.
- 3.2 Be proportionate in size to the percentage of a community's teen population.
- 3.3 Incorporate creative design and signage to make it evident that the area is for teens.
- 3.4 Be designed and located to accommodate noise and activity away from quiet areas of the library and the children's area.
- 3.5 Provide easy access to research materials and staff assistance.
- 3.6 Provide separate rooms for programming and quiet study spaces.
- 3.7 Encourage visibility for unobtrusive staff supervision.
- 3.8 Accommodate a variety of uses including leisure reading, socializing, and individual and group activity.
- 3.9 Provide workspace for the teen librarian.
- 3.10 Have adequate and appropriate shelving for a diverse collection, displays and exhibit space.
- 3.11 Designed to be handicapped accessible and in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

4.0 Provide and promote materials that support the educational and leisure needs of teens.

According to Lee Rainie, director of the Pew Internet and American Life Project, the mobile revolution has changed people's sense of time, place and presence and has led to a new media ecology. This sets a new standard for the expected immediacy and availability of desired information in all formats. Libraries have an important role in providing appropriate materials to help teens navigate, consume and create information for entertainment and lifelong skill development.

- 4.1 Ensure a teen collection development policy is in place that is aligned with the mission and goals of the library and the library's overall collection development policy.
- 4.2 House materials within the space that address the unique emotional, intellectual, and social maturity of middle and high-school age adolescents.
- 4.3 Maintain a teen collection that supports and addresses the interests and needs of teens in the community.
- 4.4 Maintain materials that are evaluated and weeded on a timely basis for condition and relevance.
- 4.5 Maintain a teen collection that includes a wide variety of formats, including but not limited to:
 - 4.5.a Print fiction and non-fiction
 - 4.5.b. Music, including but not limited to CD, MP3, and other emergent technologies.
 - 4.5.c. Video resources, including but not limited to DVD, Blu-Ray and other emergent technologies.
 - 4.5.d. Downloadable books.
 - 4.5.e. Downloading stations for in-library use.
 - 4.5.f. Circulating hardware, including but not limited to laptops, eReaders, MP3 players and other emergent technologies
 - 4.5.g. Audiobooks and other emergent technologies.
 - 4.5.h. Graphic novels, manga, comic books, and anime.
 - 4.5.i. Video games and gaming systems.
 - 4.5.j. Magazines, both recreational and educational.
 - 4.5.k. Electronic databases and other digital research materials.
 - 4.5.l. Print research materials.

5.0 Ensure the teen space has appropriate acceptable use and age policies to make teens feel welcome and safe.

The teen space is intended for use by customers age 12-18 years old, and its purpose is to centralize the information and recreation resources of this age group while offering teens a safe, supportive, and positive space that is uniquely their own.

- 5.1** Actively seek teen input in the creation of the teen space guidelines, empowering the teens to serve as valuable resources.
- 5.2** Clearly state and display guidelines once they have been discussed and determined.
- 5.3** Ensure that both staff and the public are aware of the rules and expectations for using the space.
- 5.3** Address common points and behaviors within the guidelines, including but not limited to:
 - 5.3.a** Age requirement
 - 5.3.b.** Use of appropriate language and behavior, including no fighting, no public displays of affection, and cleaning up one's mess.
- 5.4** Expect teens to respect themselves and the space and convey this clearly in the guidelines.
- 5.5** Consider adopting a "teen-only" policy for use of the space to create a space that is uniquely their own. A teen-only space can:
 - 5.5.a.** Indicate to teens that the library cares about their unique developmental, recreational, educational, and social needs.
 - 5.5.b.** Enable teens to be themselves in a teen-friendly environment.
 - 5.5.c.** Help teens feel more at ease in the library.
 - 5.5.d.** Help contain noise levels that may be distracting to other patrons.
 - 5.5.e.** Contribute to the safety and well-being of teens while in the library.
- 5.6** Limit adult use of the teen-only space to browsing materials for a period of time not to exceed 15 minutes, adult tutors who are currently working with teen students, adults accompanied by a teen, and library staff. This space can:
 - 5.6.a.** Allow teens to feel comfortable in an area where other teens are the primary occupants.
 - 5.6.b.** Enable teens to feel safe from risky, adult-initiated interactions.

6.0 Provide furniture and technology that is practical yet adaptive.

The space is designed to accommodate a variety of activities and is flexibly arranged so these activities can take place easily. Furniture, fixtures and technology should be multifunctional and flexible so that as needs and activities change the area can be adapted accordingly. The selected furniture and fixtures should be conducive to marketing library material through displays and arrangements that stimulate discovery and use. Browsing areas for materials should encourage teens to engage in the library at their own pace and comfort level.

- 6.1** Have shelving for materials in various formats.
- 6.2** Provide comfortable and durable seating and tables for teens of all sizes and abilities. Include furniture that is wheelchair accessible.
- 6.3** Include furniture that is easy to move around the space in order to allow for a multitude of group, individual, and programmatic activities.
- 6.4** Include display equipment such as bulletin boards and display cases.
- 6.5** Ensure ample trash receptacles are available.
- 6.6** Provide a reference or information services desk or kiosk, clock, and telephone as well as ample storage for teen librarian's supplies.
- 6.7** Offer listening, viewing, and downloading equipment for a full range of user abilities/needs. Ensure assistive hardware and software technology is available for vision and hearing disabled teens.
- 6.8** Be technology rich and include both stationary and portable technology that is easily accessible and exposes teens to a diversity of hardware and software for both entertainment and learning.
- 6.9** Offer access to current and emerging platforms and tools, including but not limited to social networking and photo-sharing sites, user-driven communication tools for tagging and review sharing, audio and visual production technologies, and interactive Web services.
- 6.10** Provide adequate lighting, ventilation, temperature controls, and acoustics.
- 6.11** Include ample outlets to allow for technology owned by the library as well as technology owned and brought into the space by teens.
- 6.12** Provide adequate network infrastructure.
- 6.13** Ensure wireless capability.

GUIDELINES FOR VIRTUAL SPACES

7.0 Ensure content, access and use is flexible and adaptive

Online communication and engagement is central to the rhythms of teenagers' lives. Many teens have self-structured identities and social environments online and exist in a rapidly converging virtual and physical world. According to Pew researchers, three-fourths of teenagers contribute content online and are key players in the digital information revolution. Traditionally libraries have sought to push information out to library users through librarian-created content, but it is vital in today's world to recognize and adapt to the changing information needs and expectations of our teen patrons. Teens should be active participants in the creation and maintenance of the library's online presence. An attractive and functional virtual space should be designed with teen input, evaluated regularly by teens, have interactive features, and be usable on a mobile device. The virtual space should:

- 7.1 Support and use social media as a vital means of communication.
- 7.2 Allow teens to share their work, receive feedback and build community.
- 7.3 Model safe and appropriate use of social media tools for teens.
- 7.4 Support collaboration with adults and peers.
- 7.5 Allow administrative rights and content contribution to both library staff and teens.
- 7.6 Be interactive.
- 7.7 Support and feature mechanisms for teens to connect in real time virtually with library staff who can assist them with research needs such as chat, text message, and Skype, among others.
- 7.8 Support and feature mechanisms for teens to connect with one another through the library website to talk about books, homework, and research.
- 7.9 Support and provide capabilities for taking part in programs virtually.
- 7.10 Offer classes, drop-in sessions, and/or virtual instruction to educate and teach use of Web 2.0 tools and other emerging technologies.
- 7.11 Provide positive online interactions modeled by library staff.
- 7.12 Include content, photos and videos produced by teens in accordance with the library's photo release policy.
- 7.13 Designed to be accessible for those with visual, auditory, and motor disabilities. See The Internet and Web-based Content Accessibility Checklist (www.ala.org/ascla/asclaprotocols/thinkaccessible/internetwebguidelines) provided by the Association for Specialized and Cooperative Library Agencies.

8.0 Ensure the virtual space reflects 21st century learning standards.

Through interaction and participation in digital media, teens are developing important social and technical skills helping to build a skill set necessary to learn and thrive in today's networked world. As virtual and physical worlds continue to converge, teens need tools, support and resources to harness information in a way that is meaningful to their particular needs and as participants in multiple and diverse social and learning environments.

- 8.1** Help teens thrive in a complex information environment.
- 8.2** Expose teens to diverse perspectives, gather and use information ethically and use social tools responsibly and safely.
- 8.3** Support the development of multiple literacies including digital, visual, textual and technological information navigation and use.
- 8.4** Enhance teen information literacy skills through opportunities to share and learn with others, both physically and virtually.
- 8.5** Teach respect for copyright and the intellectual property rights of creators and producers.
- 8.6** Connect understanding to the real world.
- 8.7** Help teens consider diverse and global perspectives.
- 8.8** Engage teens in social and intellectual networks of learning to gather and share information.
- 8.9** Use technology and other information tools to organize and display knowledge and understanding in ways that others can view, use, and assess.
- 8.10** Help teens connect learning to community issues.
- 8.11** Contribute to the exchange of ideas within and beyond the learning community.
- 8.12** Respect the principles of intellectual freedom.
- 8.13** Use creative and artistic formats to express personal learning.

9.0 Provide digital resources for teens that meet their unique and specific needs.

21st century teens interact with a range of materials in multiple formats in their school and leisure environments. According to the MacArthur Foundation, we are in the midst of a knowledge revolution that is changing how we approach learning and leisure resources for youth. Libraries need to adapt to this new paradigm and provide resources and support for teen's natural gravitation to digital media platforms.

- 9.1** Provide general contact information for the library and specific contact information for the teen librarian and teen content creators.
- 9.2** Feature information about library programs and activities for teens.
- 9.3** Feature a collection development policy for website content and links that includes a procedure for addressing challenges to controversial websites and a procedure for users to suggest additional electronic resources.
- 9.4** Feature annotated booklists and book reviews, and/or links to teen literature sites that provide reader's advisory services.
- 9.5** Promote teen collections and resources.
- 9.6** Feature informational and recreational links, including the library catalog, databases, and recreational links suggested by teens.
- 9.7** Feature interactive information of interest and need to teens including, but not limited to, homework help; health and sexuality; financial advice; relationship advice; time management tips; pop culture; college prep.
- 9.8** Provide opportunities for teens to post reviews of materials.
- 9.9** Provide links to the library's Teen Advisory Board blog, wiki, Twitter feed, or other means of online communication.
- 9.10** Feature interactive content that helps teens learn how to use library resources.
- 9.11** Feature content that is changed and updated frequently.

RESOURCES

While every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of URLs in this document, please bear in mind that websites change frequently.

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MODEL PHYSICAL & VIRTUAL TEEN SPACES

Library: Frankfort Community Public Library
Location: Frankfort, IN
Teen Space Name: The Edge
Virtual Space: <http://fcpl.accs.net/teen.htm>
Contact: Tom Smith, Assistant Director and Kirsten Weaver, Teen and Outreach Librarian

Library: Waupaca Area Public Library
Location: Waupaca, WI
Teen Space Name: Best Cellar
Virtual Space: www.waupacalibrary.org/teens
Contact: Peg Burington, Director

Library: Newark Public Library
Location: Newark, NY
Teen Space Name: The Teen Spot
Virtual Space: <http://newarklibraryteenspot.blogspot.com/>
Contact: Elly Dawson, Director

Library: Plymouth District Library
Location: Plymouth, MI
Teen Space Name: Teen Zone
Virtual Space: <http://plymouthlibrary.org/index.php/teen>
Contact: Cathy Lichtman, Teen Service Librarian

Library: Farmington Public Library
Location: Farmington, New Mexico
Teen Space Name: Teen Zone
Virtual Space: www.infoway.org/TeenZone/index.asp
Contact: Barbara Savage Huff, Youth Services Librarian

Library: Chicago Public Library, Harold Washington Library Center
Location: Chicago, IL
Teen Space Name: YouMedia
Virtual Space: <http://youmediachicago.org/2-about-us/pages/2-about-us>
Contact: Mike Hawkins, YouMedia Coordinator/Lead Mentor

Library: Tacoma Public Library
Location: Tacoma, WA
Teen Space Name: Story Lab
Virtual Space: www.storylbtacoma.org/
Contact: Sara Sunshine Holloway, Librarian

Library: Queens Library
Location #1: Queens Library for Teens, Far Rockaway, NY
Virtual Space: www.facebook.com/queenslibraryforteens
Location #2: Flushing Branch, Flushing, NY
Virtual Space #2: http://queenslibrary.org/index.aspx?page_id=44&branch_id=F
Contact: Vikki Terrile, Coordinator of Young Adult Services

Library: Detroit Public Library
Location: Detroit, MI
Teen Space Name: H.Y.P.E. (Helping Young People Excel)
Virtual Space: <http://dplhype.org/>
Contact: Lurine Carter, Children's and Youth Services Coordinator

Library: Orange County Library System
Location: Orlando, FL
Teen Space Name: Club Central
Virtual Space: www.ocls.info/Children/Teen/doi/club_central_do_it.asp
Contact: Vera Gubnitskaia, Youth Services Manager

Library: Gail Borden Public Library District
Location: Elgin, IL
Teen Space Name: Studio 270
Virtual Space: www.gailborden.info/m/content/view/1302/905/
Contact: Billie Jo Moffett and Melissa Lane, Studio 270 Co-Managers

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FOR FURTHER INFORMATION ON TEEN LIBRARY SERVICES:

- Visit YALSA's Guidelines, including reference guidelines, competencies for serving teens, an evaluation tool for public libraries, and more at www.ala.org/guidelines
- Download YALSA's National Research Agenda at www.ala.org/yalsa/researchagenda
- Read about the latest issues in YA librarianship in *Young Adult Library Services* (<http://yalsa.ala.org/yals>) or the *Journal of Research on Libraries and Young Adults* (<http://yalsa.ala.org/jrlya>)
- Keep abreast of new developments in YA lit and youth services through the YALSABlog (<http://yalsa.ala.org/blog>) or The Hub, YALSA's YA literature blog (<http://yalsa.ala.org/thehub>)
- Find professional development opportunities, including webinars and classes, through YALSA's Online Learning portal (www.ala.org/yalsa/onlinelearning)
- Train staff in your library, consortium or agency with Young Adults Deserve the Best (www.ala.org/yalsa/young-adults-deserve-best). These self-paced kits provide customizable training on understanding teen behavior and strengthening teen services through technology.
- Stay connected on social media through the YALSA Twitter (www.twitter.com/yalsa) or YALSA's Facebook pages, www.facebook.com/yalsa or www.facebook.com/booksforteens

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