

Conferences to Expand Your Horizons

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Children's librarians and other staff who work in children's and school library services have much professional development experience to both offer and receive at conferences.

For example, hands-on workshop-style conference sessions offer new ideas for immediate implementation into your programs. Research reports give attendees new information that can be integrated into your grant applications and rationales for children's services as well as into the developmental tips we give to parents and caregivers. Seeing your colleagues present their work may inspire new partnerships, programs, and directions for your own library.

Finally, attending conferences always offers a wonderful opportunity to meet new colleagues with whom we can exchange ideas and support and build potential collaborations. Consider attending or proposing a program to any of these conferences.

American Association of School Librarians (AASL)

www.ala.org/aasl

This group purports to be the *only* national professional membership organization focused on school librarians and the school library community. Their national conference/exhibition, held every two years, is devoted solely to the needs of school librarians. The AASL 17th National Conference and Exhibition will be held in Columbus, Ohio, November 5–8, 2015. For information about the conference, see <http://national.aasl.org>.

Association of Children's Museums (ACM)

www.childrensmuseums.org

The ACM offers an annual conference called Interactivity that is held in various host cities' children's museums. Session topics have included how to create engaging learning spaces for children, supporting learning through play, supporting transgender children and families, using research and evaluation to inform professional practice, and much more. There is a great deal of crossover between libraries and children's museums and our approaches to supporting informal learning, so we encourage you to consider membership and participation in a future ACM conference.

Association for Library Service to Children (ALSC)

www.ala.org/alsc/institute

Held every other year, the ALSC National Institute is sharply focused on children's library services, collections, and programs. It includes exceptional programming covering a range of topics, keynote addresses from well-known authors and illustrators, networking with like-minded colleagues, and other social and cultural experiences. The event is designed for front-line youth library staff, children's literature experts, education and library school faculty members, and other interested adults. The next institute will be held September 15–17, 2016, in Charlotte, North Carolina.

Book Expo America (BEA)

www.bookexpoamerica.com

This annual event is held in late May. Next year's expo is slated for Chicago. BEA is one of the world's biggest book industry events, and librarians and other educators receive discounted registration fees. The exhibits hall is legendary, with numerous author/illustrator events and signings. Program topics include marketing and engagement; analytics, tech, and mobile; library insight; the business of publishing; and readers and authors. Browse through books; gather ARCs for review; meet authors, illustrators, and publishers; and, in the process, learn more about the publishing industry.

Children's Literature Association (ChLA)

www.childlitassn.org/annual-conference

Held in June of each year, the 2016 event will be in Columbus, Ohio, with the theme of animation; guest speaker will be YA author Gene Luen Yang. Other topics may include picture books and illustration; graphic novels for young readers; comics and cartoons for young people; children's media: film, cartoons, television, video games, and more.

International Literacy Association (ILA)

www.reading.org

Previously known as the International Reading Association, this group hosts one of the best literacy conferences in the world, providing an excellent opportunity to learn about emerging evidence on a range of literacy-focused topics from leading literacy scholars. New knowledge about literacy learning can help to inform our approaches and practices for supporting literacy development in the children we work with.

National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)

www.naeyc.org

This organization promotes high-quality learning for all children, birth through age eight, by connecting practice, policy,

and research. This year's annual conference will be held in November in Orlando, Florida. Sessions include practical programming ideas, performances by well-known figures, presentations of research papers, and many networking opportunities. CEU credits are given for attending this exceptional conference focused on best practices in the early years. NAEYC also has state and local branches.

National Black Child Development Institute (NBCDI)

www.nbcdi.org/events/2015Conference

The NBCDI engages leaders, policymakers, professionals, and parents around critical and timely issues that directly impact Black children and their families. This organization promotes the development and delivery of culturally relevant resources, focusing on education, health, child welfare, literacy, and family engagement. The NBCDI's annual conference will be held October 17–20, 2015, in Washington, DC.

Society for Research in Child Development (SRCD)

www.srkd.org

This group's biannual conferences offer professional development to research-thirsty librarians. The 2015 meeting in Philadelphia had a program called How Vocabulary Gaps Become Knowledge Gaps: From Research to Intervention to Implications for Education and Policy. This kind of research is the driving force behind a great deal of work in early literacy resources, supports, and services.

Zero to Three

www.zerotothree.org

This national nonprofit organization provides parents, professionals, and policymakers with the knowledge and know-how to nurture early development. Their mission is to ensure that all babies and toddlers have a strong start in life. Their 30th National Training Institute will be held December 2–4, 2015, in Seattle. Topics include early care and education, child care and home visiting, mental health and infant mental health, early intervention, and child welfare. ↻

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