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Family Place Libraries

From its organizational Fact Sheet: “The Family Place Libraries™ initiative promotes a national model for transforming public libraries into welcoming, developmentally appropriate early learning environments for children ages 0-5, their parents and caregivers. Based on research about the importance of early brain development, the Family Place Library supports the essential role of parents as first teachers and addresses the physical, social, emotional and cognitive aspects of child development to help build a foundation for learning during the critical first years of life. By partnering and working with other social, health and educational service providers, the Family Place model aims to ensure that all children enter school ready and able to learn and positions libraries as key early childhood and family support organizations within the local community.”

From <https://www.familyplacelibraries.org>: “A nationwide network of children's librarians who embrace the fact that literacy begins at birth, and libraries can help build healthy communities by nourishing healthy families. The Family Place Libraries network currently includes more than 500 sites in 32 states and continues to grow.”

Greensburg Hempfield Area Library (GHAL), one of the most progressive Libraries in the WLN, has joined the Family Place Libraries network and is the beneficiary of a generous grant award, made possible by the Office of Commonwealth Libraries, PA Department of Education, to support programs to come. As required, two key staff members have participated in off-site training. This summer, GHAL is offering the inaugural a “Play Learn Connect” series of programs under the heading of “Parent Child Workshops.” GHAL’s announcement says that: “They will be on Monday mornings at 10 AM from 6/26 through 7/24. We will continue to offer at least two Play Learn Connect program series each year.” Registration is required, and GHAL’s interactive play-based program is for children aged 1-3, but siblings up to age 5 may also attend.

“We will be adding a new Parenting Collection in the Children’s Library area. Most books and materials relating to parenting children will be in this new collection. There will be a new spine label and shelf location.

“In the fall, we will be completely redesigning the layout of the Children’s library to enlarge our playspace. We will be adding new toys to the playspace and making it more welcoming for families.”

If you have been following along on the various stories about creative Library activities in this column, you already know that GHAL and Delmont Public Library have together been building a model for Public Resource Centers, including for Digital Literacy & Workforce Development and Special Needs (Autism Spectrum). You know that this has been made possible with numerous generous grants, including from foundations,

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government, and the American Library Association. Now the Family Place Libraries initiative is added to the broad array of opportunities for you the patron. Please take advantage of these new programs and know them as being part of how some public Libraries are redefining themselves.

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