

Northfield Public Library
Youth Services Framework
2025

The mission of Northfield Public Library is “inviting exploration, empowering people, engaging community.” Youth-focused activities that work to fulfill the mission of the library include: planning, collections, spaces, staff and training, technology and access, programs and services, and communication.

Northfield Public Library values:

- Hospitality
 - Create an inviting environment, inside and out
 - Nurture a welcoming staff culture
 - Uplift and celebrate diversity
- Trust
 - Listen and respond to feedback from the community
 - Be a reliable community partner
 - Be a responsible custodian of resources
- Access
 - Guarantee equitable access to resources
 - Develop staff leadership and expertise at all levels
 - Provide free access to all expressions of ideas without restrictions
- Innovation
 - Encourage creative problem solving
 - Embrace playful learning and inquiry
 - Anticipate and respond to community needs
- Connection
 - Engage with the community where they are
 - Reach out to the underserved
 - Foster conversation across differences

Five strategic priorities have been identified in the 2021-2026 Strategic Plan:

1. An invited community is a community that feels at home in their library.
2. An included community is a community in which every person is seen, heard, and engaged.
3. A connected community is a community with access to needed resources for all.
4. An empowered community is a community that is equipped for a changing world.
5. An informed community is a community that understands what their library offers and shapes their library with feedback.

The goal of creating a framework that describes and encompasses the range of services provided to the community by the Northfield Public Library is to encourage the development of holistic plans for youth-focused services, resources, and communication plans that reflect the library’s values, as well as evaluating their effectiveness in fulfilling the library’s strategic priorities.

Planning

Youth-focused services are based on input from the community, research, best practice, broad trends, and community needs that support the library as third space. Specific objectives include:

- Use current research about child and teen developmental needs and the role of libraries in supporting them.
- Scan developments in technology and the online environment to ensure library services remain relevant.
- Incorporate best practices as identified by expert professionals and professional organizations, in and outside the library world.
- Link into local community needs.
- Lobby for appropriate resourcing to support youth services in the library.

Action plan for 2025:

- Engaging in planning that establishes an annual view of programs/services.

Collections

Collections for young people should be responsive, relevant, and accessible.

- Promote the collection through youth-focused displays, reading lists, online access to the catalog, and peer-to-peer recommendations.
- Provide a range of formats that are informed by new developments in youth literature.
- Consider input from children, teens, caring adults, and adults who work with youth when making selections in addition to traditional sources such as library jobbers, review journals, and social media.
- Review collection use regularly to evaluate the public's engagement with youth collections, including circulation statistics, in-library use, appeal, appropriateness, and relevance.

Action plan for 2025:

- Establish standing order programs for popular youth materials to ensure consistency in ordering.
- Participate (as invited) in the transition from Horizon to Evergreen.
- Continue to refresh book lists with an eye to supporting readers to know why a book might appeal to them beyond the main theme of the list.
- Develop collection development plan for Oasis and Bookmobile collections.

Spaces

Spaces for children, teens, and families at Northfield Public Library should:

- Extend a spirit of welcome and belonging.
- Embrace playful learning and inquiry.
- Have furniture and fittings appropriate for the needs, preferences, and use of the spaces by the intended age group.
- Highlight and showcase the collection and resources available.

Action plan for 2025:

- Identify what NPL spaces are, develop an assessment tool, and evaluate spaces.

- Use results of evaluation to being a long-range plan for youth space enhancement/changes.
- Work with Outreach to improve Bookmobile service and management of Bookmobile collection for youth (especially during the summer season).

Staff

Youth Services staff work collaboratively with other library staff and throughout the community to provide positive, proactive engagement of children and teens in libraries. Staff seek to:

- Provide opportunities for staff development and mentoring of all staff
- Provide opportunities for teens to volunteer and/or work in the library
- Advocate for the needs of children and teens in the library
- Participate in professional development and contribute to the body of knowledge about children and teen service provision
- Collaborate on children and teen projects with other colleagues and community organizations

Action plan for 2025:

- Prepare and deliver training for interested staff regarding basic child and adolescent development, reasonable expectations, and suggestion for redirecting energies.
- Incorporate Reader's Advisory recommendations, tips, recent trends, etc. at monthly All-Staff meetings.

Technology

The library aims to provide equitable access to online resources, and emerging technologies. Specific objectives include:

- As new resources or technology is introduced at the library, work to develop policies for use that minimize barriers for children and teens.
- Maximize access to library collections via interactive online tools.
- Provide opportunities to develop information literacy skills.

Action plan for 2025:

- Assess Youth/Teen webpages; update, delete, and create content where necessary.
- Assess youth STEAM kits; identify opportunities for continuation of service.

Programs and Services

Programs and services to children, teens, and caregivers endeavor to:

- Empower, connect, and showcase the creativity of young people.
- Foster an invited and included community by encouraging social interactions and a sense of belonging.
- Support the recreation, reading, and information literacy needs of families and young people in nontraditional settings.
- Work in partnership with other agencies providing services for children and young people.

Action plan for 2025:

- Expanding Youth Services programming at the Oasis

- Research options for sensory-friendly programs and services, gather community feedback, and implement
- Connect with homeschooling caregivers and youth to inform programs and services
- Promote a sense of belonging and ownership of the library space by providing consistency in teen programming
- Enhance commitment to teen leadership at the library in general and at TAB

Communication

- Develop communication and promotional strategies targeted toward children, teens, and interested adults.
- Utilize networks for communicating with other agencies serving young people as clients to cross-promote activities.

Action plan for 2025:

- Provide opportunities for young people to be involved in the creation of library marketing.