Youth Services Competency Set
Portfolio Development Suggestions
October, 2012

These competencies are for support staff working in a public library in service to youth, from birth through age seventeen. Services to youth include collection development, programming, providing readers’ advisory and reference services, and teaching information literacy skills and related activities.

1. **Library Support Staff (LSS) understand the library’s role in meeting the needs of all youth, including those with special needs and from diverse backgrounds.**

   **Portfolio Development Suggestions**

   1.1 Prepare an annotated bibliography of five articles in the area of the library’s role in serving youth. Compare and contrast the articles. From one of these articles, describe one library service to youth which explicitly targets youth with special needs or those from a diverse background. Give your opinion about this service.

   1.2 Create one list of needs of youth that a library service or program could meet. Create a second list of five services or programs that a library offers for youth. How does each service or program meet the needs that you identified? Are there some needs on the first list that are not met by a library program or service? If so, describe programs or services that could meet these needs.

2. **LSS have a general understanding of the stages of childhood and adolescent development, and strategies to support the literacy skills of all youth.**

   **Portfolio Development Suggestions**

   2.1 Design a new library service that supports the development of age-appropriate literacy skills for at least two of the following age groups: early childhood, elementary, middle school, or high school. Explain what age-appropriate skills the new service addresses and what other factors in the child’s life may influence the development of those skills.

   2.2 Prepare a bibliography of five articles in the area of child development and development of reading skills. Compare and contrast the articles. Describe a library service that encourages language development and literacy for young children. Describe how the service addresses the developmental needs of early childhood.

3. **LSS are familiar with print and digital library resources for youth, including award winners and classics, and assist with selecting resources for a youth collection.**

   **Portfolio Development Suggestions**
3.1 Give examples of at least 20 resources for children and teens (including award-winners, classic titles, multimedia, or DVDs) that you might choose for two particular age groups (ten resources for each group). Provide comments on what makes these resources appropriate for the age groups that you chose.

3.2 Investigate three awards for children’s and teen resources and discuss the criteria for these awards. Identify one item that you would nominate for each award and explain why. If you were designing an award for youth resources, what age group would you target and what criteria would you use?

4. LSS select appropriate materials for a particular youth, based on factors such as reading level, interest, and level of maturity.

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4.1 Describe one child and one teen who you know. Describe the materials you would choose for that child and teen based on factors such as their reading level, interests, cultural and ethnic heritage, community context, geographical area, personality, language skills, and literacy.

4.2 Describe how you would seek a child’s or teen’s opinion about library resources that you had selected just for them. Include a questionnaire or interview guide that you would use to find out their opinions. How would you use these opinions to improve future recommendations?

5. LSS are familiar with the best Internet sites for youth, rules for safe navigation, and technological applications for youth.

Portfolio Development Suggestions

5.1 Compile rules for use with children and teens about safely navigating the Internet and explain why you included each rule. Are there differences between rules for children and rules for teens? If so, what are they? Create guidelines to teach children and teens how to use an online search tool. Ask a librarian that serves children or teenagers to comment on these guidelines. Provide a summary of this discussion including any changes you made based on your discussion with the librarian.

5.2 Identify at least three problems or issues that can occur in using technology in children’s and teen services and how you would resolve each. Ask a librarian that serves children or teenagers to comment on these problems or issues. Provide a summary of this discussion and identify what you consider the best way to solve each problem or manage each issue.

5.3 Discuss what criteria you would use to identify the best websites for children and for teens considering safety, content, and other important factors. Provide
examples of five “best” websites for children and for teens and describe how these sites meet your criteria.

6. **LSS understand and can explain the legal and policy issues, including the rights of minors, regarding youth services in libraries.**

**Portfolio Development Suggestions**

6.1 Identify at least three types of legal issues that can occur in serving children or teenagers and how you would manage each. Ask a librarian serving children or teenagers to comment on these issues and your intended approach. Provide a summary of this discussion, including the librarian’s response to your approach and any changes you made as a result.

6.2 Identify three laws where youth and adults are treated differently in the way library service is delivered. Describe the similarities and differences in the way youth and adults receive library service under these laws.

6.3 Describe a situation in which a library received a challenge to an item intended for children or teens. Compare and contrast two policies on challenged materials from two libraries. How does the American Library Association Office for Intellectual Freedom suggest that libraries handle these situations?

7. **LSS understand and apply customer service strategies to encourage library use, establish a welcoming atmosphere, and maintain a safe and comfortable environment for all youth, their parents, and other caregivers.**

**Portfolio Development Suggestions**

7.1 Identify strategies to create an inviting library atmosphere for children and teens. How would you ask for their opinions about these strategies? Include a questionnaire or interview guide that you would use to find out their opinions.

7.2 Visit the children’s and teen areas in at least three libraries other than the one in which you work. Discuss at least three design features that you feel are the most functional and attractive and three features that are problematic, dysfunctional, or unappealing.

7.3 Compare and contrast a library’s children or teen area with the area especially designed for children or teens in a commercial space (for example, a fast food restaurant or a bookstore). What design elements in the commercial space would work in a library’s area for children or teens? What design elements in a library would work in the commercial space?

7.4 Find and review a policy and procedure regarding children’s or teen’s behavior and a policy about emergencies. Recommend changes to these policies and procedures.
8. LSS communicate effectively with youth, their parents and other caregivers; other library staff; and the personnel of organizations serving youth.

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8.1 Describe the most effective and least effective communication methods you have used or seen used with children and teens. Ask a librarian serving children or teenagers to comment on these methods. Provide a summary of this discussion and identify what you consider the three most important communication skills for working with children and three for working with teens.

8.2 Describe the most effective and least effective communication methods you have used or seen used with parents and other caregivers. Ask a librarian serving children or teenagers to comment on these communication skills. Provide a summary of this discussion and identify what you consider the three most important communication skills for working with parents or caregivers.

9. LSS assist with creating, promoting, implementing, and evaluating library programs and services.

Portfolio Development Suggestions

9.1 Give three examples of library programs designed to attract children and teens. Discuss how library staff planned, promoted, implemented, and evaluated these programs. What were the strengths of these programs? How could they be improved?

9.2 Deliver a story hour or another program and promote the program. Videotape the program and evaluate your performance. What are your strengths and what can you improve? List those agencies, groups, or organizations that could help to promote the program or support this service. How would you approach them to ask for their help? What worked and how could you improve the program’s promotion?

9.3 Describe one service or one program that you would create to reach children and teens that do not use the library. Include how you would promote, implement, and evaluate this program or service. Ask a librarian serving children or teenagers librarian to comment on your plan. Provide a summary of this discussion and identify the ways you consider the best to reach children and teens.

10. LSS understand the value of cooperating with schools and other organizations and work with them to serve the community’s youth.

Portfolio Development Suggestions
10.1 List organizations in your community you believe would be likely partners in children’s and teen services. What would be the goals of such partnerships? What activities could these organizations and the library plan together?

10.2 Give examples of collaborative relationships that you have developed in children’s or teen services. How did you establish these relationships and what were their outcomes? How would you change these relationships to improve children’s or teen services?

10.3 Visit a school library and a public library and talk to the staff about their services. Discuss the differences and similarities between school and public library services. Describe five ways that school and public libraries can cooperate and what would be the role of each library.

11. **LSS understand and apply the best practices for providing reference services for youth and refer to a librarian when appropriate.**

Portfolio Development Suggestions

11.1 Describe how you would conduct a reference or readers’ advisory interview with children and teens. How do these interviews differ depending on the age of the person? What information do you want to know when you conduct an interview with a child or teen? When is it appropriate to involve a parent in these interviews?

11.2 Give three examples of how you helped children and teens select reading materials. What factors did you consider when you made your recommendations and what types of resources did you use? Indicate three specific resources and why you chose them.

12. **LSS instruct youth how to use library materials, resources, and equipment.**

Portfolio Development Suggestions

12.1 What teaching strategies work to teach children and teens how to effectively use library resources? How do you know when children and teens need instruction or assistance? How do they communicate that need verbally and nonverbally? Select one teaching strategy to use with children and one to use with teens. Compare and contrast these strategies.

12.2 Create a guide to teach children and teens about the use of a library reference resource. Explain your reasoning for creating this tool.