



Core Life and Public Libraries

Libraries nation-wide are adopting services and strategies to support 21st century learning in children and adults. Public libraries are building collaborative partnerships with educational institutions and other community organizations, "so that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills they need to thrive in a world where change is constant and learning never stops" (<http://www.p21.org/about-us/our-mission>). Libraries are no longer isolated book repositories with muted dark isles. They are now thriving, dynamic, bustling community centers offering opportunities for lifelong learning. We have entered an era of shared responsibility for the development of personal, social, and cultural improvement. Yesterday's fragmented responsibilities by service institution have given way to a more cooperative and shared responsibility.

Because libraries are becoming a universal resource and a supportive right arm to a variety of community programs and services, they must also provide a basis for all 21st century learning skills. The Partnership for 21st century learning states that 21st century learning environments and opportunities are essential to prepare all students for the challenges of work, life, and citizenship in the 21st century and beyond, as well as to ensure ongoing innovation in our economy and the health of our democracy.

The Core Life program aims to aid in building student's character, assist in the development of an informed citizenship, and enhance school spirit, culture, and climate. These goals align with many of the target skills of the 21st Century Learning framework. For example, the specified *Learning and Innovation* skills include communication, collaboration, and creativity. Learners must be able to work creatively with others, which entails working cooperatively with diverse cultures and individuals. In order to communicate and interact effectively, individuals must possess respect, tolerance, and empathy, three of the Core Life principles. Also, the 21st Century, *Life and Career* skills include the ability to manage goals. One of the 12 character traits addressed in the Core Life program is "Setting Goals"; learners are taught to set goals and take active steps to reach the goal.

IMPLEMENTATION

The following two Core Life programs/events are suggested for a public library venue:

Weekly Evening Program:

Target Audience: Parents and Children Grades 3-5

- The Core Life – Library program is designed specifically for families with children in grades 3-5.

Time Frame: 4-8 weeks

- 1.5 hours sessions: 30 minutes for conversation and a meal, one hour for focus on a Core Life principle, the representation in selected books, discussion, and activity
- One evening per week

Participation:

- Conversation occurs between leaders and parents/children through discussion around the character traits.
- Engaging activities provide enjoyable interaction between participants, discussion leaders, and staff.
- Open-ended questions help families discuss the material and the literature.
- Parents are encouraged to take an active role in the academic and social growth of their students.

Materials:

- Core Life Manual
- Core Life Materials: Posters and Teaching/Learning Resources
- Quality Children's Literature Representative of the Character Traits
- Resources lists

Core Life Fair

Target Audience: Parents and Children grades 3-5

- The Core Life – Library program is designed specifically for families with children in grades 3-5.

Time Frame: One Day, 2 Hours

- One stand-alone program

Participation:

- Stations of engaging activities involving each of the Core Life character traits, ie. Respect, Rules, Responsibility, Healthy Living, Volunteering
- Parents interacting with their children at each station through games, activities, or books

Materials

- Core Life Manual
- Books Representing Character Traits
- Resources from Area Organizations or Partners