

The Library as a Public Space for Children

Jacqueline Kociubuk^a

^aUniversity of Wisconsin-Madison, Madison, WI, USA

kociubuk@wisc.edu

ABSTRACT

Many US-based public libraries experience an influx of semi or unsupervised children and teens in their spaces afterschool. Though some public libraries have adopted after school homework centers and invested in other library-staff led programming, little is known about how school-aged children are collaborating together to shape shared public spaces under looser adult supervision and direction, using their various social and cultural identities to define the space they are in. This proposed study utilizes Placemaking theory and will be bounded by one recurring, unstructured, drop-in afterschool public library program for children. Insights from this study could potentially point to how, if at all, children are creating community, learning from each other, and engaging with the world in loosely supervised public spaces away from family and school, potentially informing better design of the library as a public space for children. Findings could also illuminate ways for informal learning practitioners to create more meaningful connections with children in afterschool spaces, support positive peer culture formation, and facilitate opportunities in a way that supports children's autonomy free of the more neoliberal constraints of a formal school setting. This works-in-progress poster is specifically soliciting feedback regarding issues of consent and assent for research with latchkey children in public library spaces.

ALISE RESEARCH TAXONOMY TOPICS

Children's services; Public libraries; Community Engagement

AUTHOR KEYWORDS

Placemaking theory; Latchkey children; Afterschool Programming