

Making the Shoe Fit: Contingency Planning for Programming Excellence – Real life scenarios

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Ground rules for discussion:

- ❖ Limit comments to two minutes.
- ❖ **Everyone** should join in the discussion.
- ❖ Keep personal anecdotes to a minimum (stay on topic – place more focus on the philosophy and less on what has happened in your particular library)
- ❖ Show respect to all viewpoints.
- ❖ There is no right or wrong answer, just different ways of handling situations.

Keep in mind the following:

- ❖ What is the purpose of library programming? Is it just because you have to?
- ❖ Policies relating to library programming can help in difficult situations.
- ❖ Strive for a balance between what's best for the librarian and what's best for the public.

The following case studies reflect real life library situations that have required staff response.

1. A program is underway and a man enters who obviously has mental problems. He is talking to himself and smells like urine. He takes a seat right in the middle of the crowded front row. What do you do?
2. A craft program with a limited number of spaces requires registration. Registration is full. However, on the day of the program, by the time the program is about to begin, only two people show up who have registered. There are many others in the library who want to participate. You let them in as the program is starting and fifteen minutes later, everyone else who registered shows up. You have limited craft supplies and not enough for the latecomers. What do you do?
3. You are a branch librarian running a program for a group of 48 with one helper. In the middle of the program, someone walks into the library, comes directly up to you, and asks you a reference question that requires pulling a book off the shelf. What do you do?
4. A fifth grade teacher calls you and tells you her class is studying a complex nonfiction topic and wishes you to create a program for them around this theme. You can think of a few book titles, but the elements of a whole program are not clear to you. What do you do?
5. If you have an outside presenter who doesn't show up, what do you do?
6. You are having a program for teens and 15 people show up, however, one student attending is babysitting her two younger siblings ages 2 and 5. What do you do?

7. You are having a program and are providing snacks. One person arrives and asks if the snacks are Kosher (they are not). What do you do?
8. The librarian has planned a program for “all ages.” Twelve children arrive who are between the ages of 8-14. Two mothers arrive with their three year olds. What do you do?
9. You have held a program on a regular basis at a specific time on a specific day of the week and this year, very few people are attending. What do you do?
10. You run a toddler program. A five-year-old sibling wants to join. He’s very enthusiastic but answers all the questions and tends to monopolize the interactions. What do you do?
11. During an program with a presenter from outside the library, one person keeps interrupting and asking off topic questions. What do you do?
12. A group of families arrives for a program on a wrong day. What do you do?
13. You have just finished a program that had many elements including props and refreshments. There are five minutes left in the program and a big group from a local daycare center arrives. What do you do?
14. An adult (with no children) shows up for a teen program. What do you do?
15. You have planned and advertised a craft program that requires registration. You have limited craft supplies and on the day of the program, children show up who have not registered. What do you do?
16. You run weekly preschool story times for the public. Almost every week, a local daycare with twelve children shows up in the middle of the program. What do you do?
17. A school sends classes to visit your library on a weekly basis. They are good at browsing and borrowing, but the teachers always ask you to read them a story or tell them a story. What do you do?
18. You’ve planned and prepared for a program and no one shows up. What do you do?
19. You’re in the middle of a program for preschoolers, but the children don’t seem engaged. They are not paying attention and some are being disruptive. What do you do?

20. You have planned and advertised a special program for the public that has several different stations that need adult assistance. One day before the event, a group of 40 calls and says they would like to attend. The number of assistants that you have lined-up is not sufficient to deal with the three times the number of attendees that were expected. What do you do?
21. A high interest program for teens with limited supplies has a few extra spaces. Two mothers with three year olds show up for the program. What do you do?
22. An adult shows up for a library program (for adults) with three small (rambunctious) children. What do you do?

Feel free to use these scenarios at your own library to engage colleagues in discussion and to solidify policy.

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