

Roma Toy Library Network

A Community for Roma Mothers Focusing on Young Children

The Roma Toy Library Network aims to spread the message about the importance of early childhood education for Roma children. It plans to offer ongoing learning and professional support to its members and provide a platform of common advocacy at national and international levels.

The Roma Education Fund (REF) supports approximately 40 Toy Libraries in Central and Eastern Europe reaching around 1,450 families and 4,600 children. The idea to set up a professional network of Roma Toy Libraries emerged after the first REF Toy Library event held in Belgrade in 2016, attended by representatives from eight countries.



What is the Toy Library?

Toy Library is a community venue where children, their families and care-givers can meet to borrow toys, puzzles and books that are designed to support children's early development and learning. The items from the library may be borrowed and taken home, but can be used in the venue also.

The Toy Libraries supported by the Roma Education Fund have crucial role in reaching out to Roma parents and children from vulnerable communities and providing better early childhood development services. It also provides an opportunity for parents to strengthen their parenting skills and to understand the role of play in the different stages of their children's development.

Although each Toy Library is different and adjusted to the local specificities, there are some core activities offered by them.

ECD intervention / model description of REF

REF has developed an ECEC model intervention based on its project and field experiences, objective of which is to improve the ECD outcomes and the school readiness of disadvantaged Roma children under age six by facilitating and expanding the access to quality ECEC services and improving the parenting skills of the Roma parents. ECEC projects are focusing on three main objectives:

- to eliminate the existing barriers to access to and participation in preschool and ECEC services of Roma children under age six by provision of need-based material / financial support.
- to achieve improvements in the parenting skills and practices of parents through informal learning activities, such as reading sessions, Toy Libraries, building awareness and skills to implement good parenting practices and enhancing the interaction of parents with preschool institutions.
- to improve the quality of teaching and learning of Roma children in preschools by strengthening the capacity of teachers and caregivers to provide child-centered education, facilitating learning through Roma teacher assistants and stimulating the links between preschools, academia and pedagogy students.



Toy Library
in numbers

3,013

Roma families
as Toy Library members

40

Toy Libraries
in 8 countries

3,500

high quality
educational toys
and

2,500

story books

Main activities
of
Toy Libraries

**YOUR
STORY**

reading sessions,
literacy courses and
parents' clubs

**BORROWING/
LENDING**

toys

**“STAY AND
PLAY”**

community activities,
Mobile Toy library



Benefits of Toy Library

Play is the most efficient way that children learn. Access to quality educational toys support the early stimulation of children and develop important skills for healthy physical and cognitive development as well as learning social lessons about sharing and responsibility. Furthermore, Toy Libraries improve the home learning environment of children and interaction between parents and children.

“She found herself sitting at home playing with her children. She hadn't really played with her children because there was always something to do at home. But she learned to use the games from the Toy Library and she was so engrossed that she almost felt like a child when playing together her children. The father became involved in the games and he also visited the Toy Library later.”
(Toy librarian, Serbia)

For more information about the
Roma Toy Library Network, please visit:

Webpage: <http://www.romaeducationfund.hu>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/romatoylibrarynetwork/>



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