

**SAMPLE DISCUSSION GUIDE**  
**FOCUS GROUP STUDY**  
**PARENTS OF YOUNG CHILDREN**

Good morning. My name is \_\_\_\_\_.

We are very pleased you have agreed to join us today.

We are here to talk about how the (Name of Library) can best serve families with young children.

The discussion we are going to have is called a focus group. For those of you who have never participated in one of these sessions I would like to explain a little bit about this type of research.

Focus groups are used to gather information informally from a small group of individuals who have a common interest in a particular subject—in this instance, you all bring your young children to programs and services at the public library.

This discussion will provide invaluable information to our Library about how it can offer better services in the future. The focus group is part of our overall strategic planning process.

In focus groups, there are no right or wrong answers. We want to hear from everyone in the room. We are pleased you can be part of this group because we think you have important ideas regarding the children's services available at your public library. Don't hesitate to speak up when you have a point you would like to make.

I will be moderating the session and moving us along so that we touch on all of the key subjects on our agenda. I would like to avoid getting bogged down on issues that don't pertain to everyone in the group. If I think that we are spending too much time on one subject, I will step in to keep the discussion moving.

We will be keeping a record of this discussion so that I don't have to take notes. I like to follow what is being said and then go back later to review what you said again so I can accurately convey your ideas and opinions.

My role today is to see that we have a productive discussion and to summarize the group's feelings. I will not refer to any participant by name in the reports I prepare. The information will be kept confidential and used only by our Library to develop new services and programs that will better address your needs and those of other families in the future.

**QUESTION ONE:** I would like to begin by going around the table and asking each of you to tell us a little about yourself and your family and about the programs and services you are using. **PROBE FOR AWARENESS/USE CHILDREN'S PROGRAMS AND SERVICES.**

(Insert list of programs and services for young children so that you can ask about them if they are not mentioned.)

**QUESTION TWO:** Why do you think it is important to have good libraries in our community?

**FOLLOW-UP:** What are some of roles the Library plays in the community?

**QUESTION THREE:** What changes are taking place in our town that have a direct affect on families with young children?

**FOLLOW-UP:** How can your public library respond to these changes?

**QUESTION FOUR:** In general, how satisfied are you with the free programs and services that the Library provides for young children and their families?

**QUESTION FOUR (A):** How satisfied are you with the space provided in our library for young children?

**QUESTION FOUR (B):** How satisfied have you been with the collections of materials for young children?

**QUESTION FOUR (C):** How satisfied have you been with the variety and quality of programs for young children?

**QUESTION FIVE:** How satisfied have you been with the staff who assisted you and your children? Do you feel comfortable asking them for assistance?

**FOLLOW-UP:** In general, when you leave the library, are you satisfied that you accomplished what you wanted to accomplish?

**QUESTION SIX:** How do you think the public library can help parents who want their children to get ready to read and succeed in school? **PROBE FOR READING LISTS, TIPS ON READING WITH CHILDREN, PARENTING MATERIALS, etc.**

**QUESTION SEVEN:** Let's pretend that the Library could be changed in some way. Imagine yourself walking into this renovated facility. What is it you see in your imagination?

**QUESTION EIGHT:** When you come to the library do you feel like you are coming to a place that is safe, clean and welcoming?

**QUESTION NINE:** When considering collections, programs, and services for families with young children, what do you think the Library should do more of in the future? We have discussed many programs and services that the Library provides for young children. If you had to pick three that you personally think are most important, which three would they be?

**QUESTION TEN:** Do you have any additional suggestions about how the library can improve its programs and services for preschool children and their families in the future?

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