

Friendly Advice for Newer Directors

Directors, make sure to ask your Regional Library Consultant about matching you with a mentor.

Even if you have been in the area for a long time, there is more to know. Speak to staff, tag along for a day on the bookmobile etc.

Increase your knowledge on non-traditional library patrons and their usage/needs of the library (homeless patrons, patrons with language barriers, mental health concerns)

Be prepared to advocate/talk about library issues any time you are out in public.

The library always needs to be promoting itself, through official channels and daily conversations.

Keep thank yous, messages, and media write ups accessible so they will be there when you need a pick-me-up.

The library's collection should not reflect the views of any one individual. Just because a book is in the collection, it does not indicate an endorsement of its message.

Weeding is a good thing! It has been proven that circulation increases with shelves that are not overflowing.

Learn your collection. Best way to do that is to shelve the books.

Keep a well-stocked toolbox easily accessible.

Remember the library is not the ER. You and your staff should provide the best service possible, but library service is not life or death.

Your library patrons trust you to be a protector of their privacy. Make sure your policies and systems are keeping that trust.

Due to the nature of your position, you represent the library at all times. Be sure to take the extra time to make sure that you are doing that in a positive light in your PR materials and written and oral communication.

The director is a 24/7 job, but try not to take work home.

Hire good people, train them well, and then leave them alone.

It is lonely at the top. You are the boss, not a friend.

The decisions of you and the board should be as transparent as possible.

The library's most important resource is its people & the relationships they form with the community.

When possible, take the time to let people know that the library is thinking of and thankful for them through your medium of choice (thank you/sympathy cards, phone calls, social media messages)

Be nice, be kind, and be patient. Some patrons just need a few minutes of human interaction, but you also need to know when to cut the conversation short.

Always keep spare "get dirty" clothes & shoes at work for emergencies.

You and your staff should treat every patron equally. Do not do for one something you would not do for all.

When possible, allocate resources and time for you and your staff to attend conferences.

Every director has multiple levels of support. Do not be afraid to reach out to your mentor, your Regional Library Consultant, or the Directors' List. There are no dumb questions you could ask.

The library's future is guided by its strategic plan, mission statement, & values. Try to keep those in mind when conducting day-to-day work.

Do not be afraid to ask help from friends & family if they have a skill/knowledge that you need.