

“Why Do We Need to Expand the Jones Library? The Library is perfect as is!”

In a perfect world, we wouldn't need any more square footage. We truly wish that re-designing our interior to flow more safely and efficiently would solve our problems. As some people have noted, we have several inefficiently used spaces such as in the atrium and on the top floor. Unfortunately, there isn't enough of that inefficiently-used space to give us what we need.

To fully understand the need, it's best to look at each Library department separately, which is what we did when writing the *Building Program*, which you can find on our website. For example:

The Children's Room

1. This is one of the most beloved spaces in our building. It's comfy and cozy and it invites you to play on the carpet and read stories in the alcoves. Without fully analyzing the space, one could say there is no need to change that space.

However, we really do have to fully analyze the space and the services that we provide there. On a daily basis, the Children's Room staff serve hundreds of children of all ages, from birth through age 17. That's a very wide range of learning styles and abilities and needs. Ideally, the Children's Room would be separated by different age ranges. For example, babies need their own space; preschoolers need their own space; middle schoolers and high schoolers need their own spaces. They don't want to be intermingled, nor should they be. But right now, all ages are on top of one another, sharing the same space.

2. Our children's computers are located in a room not visible from the children's circulation desk. When a five-year-old is playing “Little Einsteins,” he is doing so right next to a ten-year-old playing “Minecraft.” Both children are using the Library's resources appropriately, but the ten-year-old doesn't want to see “Little Einsteins” and the five-year-old probably shouldn't be watching “Minecraft.”
3. Our Children's Room only has room for two love seats. This is unfortunate because caregivers and children LOVE to sit next to one another and read. Nothing is more precious or valuable in a child's life than reading with a loved one. Children who read with adults, grow to equate reading with love. We need more space for additional love seats.

4. In any library, all ages of children should be served on the same floor. Right now, our Children's Crafts Room is in the basement, the majority of the youth collection is on the main floor, and a portion of the youth non-fiction collection is on the second floor. This is neither ideal for parents watching over multiple children, nor is it ideal for staff having to oversee the services. It is not safe.
5. Our youth non-fiction shelving is much too high. There are some staff members who cannot reach the top shelves! Ideally, the shelves would be no higher than five shelves high, and only three shelves high for preschoolers, but we do not have the proper square footage to do that.
6. Consider the amount of space it takes for a Children's Librarian to prepare for and hold a story/craft time. If you have ever held a children's birthday party, you will understand. Our Saturday events consistently draw upwards of 100 children. That's a lot of craft supplies to have to make available and cut out in advance. The Librarians need space to prepare for the dozens of programs that happen at the Library on a monthly basis. Right now, the Children's Room staff do not have a place to work. Or a place to be messy. Or a place to plan. Right now, they do this work while assisting patrons at the circulation desk.
7. In preparation for these youth events, tables and chairs need to be set-up in advance and taken down afterward. It takes 30 minutes for the makerspace programs to be set-up (with 3D printers and laptops) and even longer than that for our lego events. Then clean-up has to occur. (Imagine having to pick up all those legos!) Time isn't the biggest problem, though. The problem is lack of meeting room and activity space. Library programs have to compete with public programs for space. But if the Children's Room had their own program space, staff wouldn't have to set-up and take down on a daily basis. The other benefit to having a Children's Activities Room is everything is cleanable. There would be no carpet. The glue, glitter, and perler beads could fly! It would be a space for kids to be kids. Right now, kids are playing with modeling clay in the beautifully carpeted Woodbury Room. This is not ideal.
8. The last point about this Department has to do with the Children's Librarian. This topic is not as important as the others, but it does affect services. Currently, the Children's Librarian's "office" is located in "prime real estate" – in what could be a truly gorgeous reading nook. But because there is nowhere else for her to be located, her desk is in this nook. We think the public would be overjoyed to see that "office" moved, and for the nook to be released.