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B FOR BORROW

A PHENOMENOLOGY STUDY ABOUT YOUNG CHILDREN'S EXPERIENCE OF LENDING TOYS IN SWEDEN

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Abstract

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Aim: The aim of this study is to understand the experiences young children have regarding lending toys from a toy library. The study also aimed to understand the various parts that together constitute a loan such as visiting the toy library, choosing items, taking them to check-out and eventually returning them.

Theory: The theoretical framework that was used consist of two theories, phenomenology and sociocultural theory of play. Phenomenology as influenced by the philosophers Heideggers, Husserl and Merleau-Ponty is used to explore how a phenomenon is being experienced. Sociocultural theory of play by Vygotsky is used to highlight the importance of play and how it is used.

Method: A phenomenology approach was being used as a method when exploring the lived experiences of the children lending toys. Ten semi-structured interviews with children aged 3,5 to 8 years old were conducted at a toy library. To enable the research question to get answered a topic guide was used. The data analysis was carried out using a qualitative software.

Results: The research concluded that the experiences of the children were very similar to each other. The main findings in this thesis include the positive experience the children expressed about visiting and using the toy library. Another finding was that the children did not reflect much about the toys being shared with others. Lastly, their view on the returning of the toys, that was considered nothing more than a part of the lending process and a means to borrow more. As for further research I suggest interviews with parents to understand their experiences of the toy library and with those that have been using a toy library and decided not to, in order to understand what challenges toy libraries have to address.

Foreword

Firstly, I would like to really thank the young participants who made this thesis possible. Thank you, for being brave and share your thoughts, feelings and experiences with me and everyone else that will read this thesis.

And just as much of a thank you to my supervisor, Ilse Hakvoort. Thank you for guiding me, sharing your valuable insights and for keeping me on track through this whole process.

I will also take the opportunity to pat myself on the back. I am grateful to myself for keeping my own promise to still be a fun and present mum, and to manage my time so there was always room for tough days and extra episodes of Peppa pig.

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Background

This chapter will introduce the reader to my chosen topic, to why I find it interesting and what I want to contribute with my thesis.

Introduction

I am interested in studying young children's attitudes toward borrowing toys. The background for this interest is that I only last year found out about toy libraries, and it turned out there are only three larger toy libraries in Sweden. This made me curious about why there aren't more toy libraries in Sweden and why I had not heard about the phenomenon before. Do children perhaps dislike borrowing toys? Do they feel too old after preschool to play with the types of toys available? Are they even aware that borrowing toys is an option? Or could it be that parents either don't know about toy libraries or don't see themselves as people who would use such a community service?

Early last year, the Public Health Agency of Sweden (2024) released a report with recommendations on children's use of various media, such as tablets, smartphones, and computers. For children aged six, the agency recommends a maximum of one to two hours of screen time daily. They also advise that meals, physical activity, and other engagements should make up at least twice as much of a child's day as screen time (Public Health Agency of Sweden, 2024). One way to support families in following these recommendations could be through access to engaging and developmental toys. Buying new toys frequently can become expensive very quickly, as parents try to find toys that their child will appreciate. A toy library, however, allows families to enjoy "new" toys all year around, play at the library, a chance to interact with other families, and explore their child's evolving interests.

Swedish toy libraries

There are three larger toy libraries in Sweden when this thesis is being written, two located in Gothenburg and one in Stockholm. One of the toy libraries in Gothenburg was the first of its kind in Sweden (Leksaksbiblioteket, 2020), and the one in Stockholm is the latest addition to the Swedish toy libraries (Leksaksbiblioteket Stockholm, 2024). They all have the same thoughts about what a toy library should contribute to, the three pillars of sustainability (Högsbo Leksaksbibliotek, 2025). The economical pillar is represented by a low fee, low in comparison to the money that will be saved on not having to buy the items at a store. The low fee could be explained by the second pillar, the social, where the toy libraries want to enable

all families to enjoy toys that stimulate development and fantasy play, regardless of socio-economical background. They also promote eco-friendly toys, sharing and strive to educate children and families about ecological sustainability through play (Leksaksbiblioteket, 2020; Leksaksbiblioteket Stockholm, 2024; Högsbo Leksaksbibliotek, 2025).

Public libraries and leisure equipment libraries

The public libraries in Sweden are funded by the municipals and the libraries ambition is to promote democracy, language, and reading (Kungliga biblioteket, 2025). During the pandemic years of 2020-2022 the activities lowered at all libraries due to various restrictions, however numbers have started to rise even though they are not on the same levels as before the pandemic. According to a report assessing the activities during 2023, as many as 64 million loans were made at the public funded libraries, these loans include books, papers, games and other physical media (Kungliga biblioteket, 2023). This is an increase from the year before, which could indicate the willingness of sharing and lending amongst the Swedish population.

Fritidsbank or fritidsbibliotek are the Swedish words for leisure equipment library. It is a type of library where people can borrow sports- and outdoor gear free of charge, much like a public library but for physical activity. Loans vary from 10 days to a month, and the equipment could be both pre-owned and brand new. No membership or loan cards are required to use these libraries. These can be found throughout the country and some of these libraries are non-profit but run by employed staff, while others are managed by regional or municipal services. Their aim is to encourage physical activity for young children, teens and young adults, by providing them with the equipment needed. The equipment is commonly donated by organisations, members or private donations by families that want to support their cause (Fritidsbanken, 2025; Solna stad, 2025). Much like the toy libraries, who also offer items that are gifted by members, donated by organizations or bought with money that has been granted through various foundations (Leksaksbiblioteket, 2020; Leksaksbiblioteket Stockholm, 2024).

Sustainability in EU and Sweden

The European Union’s Waste Framework Directive (European Commission, 2023) provides a legal structure that prioritizes waste prevention, reuse, and recycling to support the transition toward a circular economy. Central to this directive is the requirement for member states to

recycle at least 55% of their municipal waste by 2025, a target that is central in much of the ongoing policy development across Europe (European Commission, 2023). Although Sweden performs well in waste-to-energy practices, challenges remain in increasing the rate of material recycled, which in 2020 stood at only 38.3%, compared with 46.6 % in 2019, due to changed EU reporting methods (European Environment Agency, 2020). Using the new reporting method, waste that is lost during the sorting process is excluded from recycling statistics. Previously, such waste could be included and with that resulted in higher reported waste. It's worth noting that the drop in Sweden's reported recycling rate doesn't automatically mean that the country is recycling less effectively. Rather, it reflects a change in how recycling is measured, with the new rules designed to give a clearer and more comparable picture across EU member states (European Commission, 2023; European Environment Agency, 2020).

National policies in Sweden, such as extended producer responsibility and strategies encouraging people to sort their waste, help create a supportive framework for sustainable practices (European Environment Agency, 2022). But it is often grassroots initiatives like toy libraries and local sharing schemes that bring these ideas to life in everyday settings. Efforts based in the community show how sustainability goals can be translated into practical action (Moser & Bader, 2023). This is done to make it easier for people to reduce consumption and reuse resources and at the same time inspire and inform future policymaking by showing what works on the ground.

Children's experiences of borrowing from toy libraries can be seen as a small but powerful reflection of bigger efforts in society to cut down on waste and use resources more wisely. Across Europe, the Waste Framework Directive (European Commission, 2023) pushes for a shift toward a circular economy, where preventing waste, reusing materials, and improving resource efficiency are key goals. Sweden's national strategies follow the same path, aiming to reduce waste at the source and encourage smarter, more sustainable ways of using things (European Commission, 2023; European Environment Agency, 2020).

Environmental benefits of a toy library

A study conducted by Røyne and Fernqvist (2020) evaluated the environmental benefits of a toy library in Gothenburg and highlighted both the direct and indirect impacts such an initiative can have. On a direct level, the researchers showed that shared use of toys can

significantly reduce greenhouse gas emissions. If all children in their target group halved their number of individually owned toys by borrowing instead, it could potentially avoid emissions equivalent to 82,000 tons of CO_2, comparable to the annual emissions of just over 9,000 average Swedish citizens. This demonstrates the real environmental impact that relatively small-scale local initiatives like toy libraries can have if used across the county (Røyne & Fernqvist, 2020).

Other than the immediate environmental gains, the study emphasizes the importance of indirect effects such as the toy library's influence on shifting societal norms regarding values and behaviours around consumption. These more subtle changes are particularly relevant in the context of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD). The goal within ESD is not only to teach about sustainability, but to form sustainable mindsets and practices through lived experience. When children borrow, return, and choose toys in a shared setting, they are engaging in actions of resource awareness, negotiation, and reflection. This aligns well with the concept of early childhood education as a space for valuable learning (Ärlemalm-Hagsér & Elliott, 2020), where sustainability becomes part of everyday routines and social interactions, rather than an abstract concept.

Education for sustainable development

Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) is a central concept in early childhood education that encourages children to develop knowledge, skills, and attitudes that support sustainable thinking and action. According to both Pramling Samuelsson and Park (2017) and Ärlemalm-Hagsér and Elliott (2020), ESD in early years should be rooted in children's lived experiences, making sustainability meaningful through everyday actions and choices. They emphasize that ESD is not about delivering facts, but about creating space for reflection, participation, and agency.

Ärlemalm-Hagsér and Elliott (2020) go on to explain that early childhood education can play an important role in sustainability work, particularly when children are viewed as active participants who learn through shared experiences with others and the environment. Their work highlights how social and cultural contexts shape how sustainability is understood and practiced in preschools. Additionally, Smolucha and Smolucha (2021), point out the importance of play as a zone for proximal development as part of Vygotsky's socio-cultural theory, where children can experiment with roles, perspectives, and reflections about sustainability. Through guided play and meaningful dialogue, children can begin to grasp

abstract concepts like sharing resources, caring for the environment, and thinking about the future.

Vare and Scott (2007) distinguish between two models of education for sustainable development, ESD 1 and ESD 2. The first focuses on raising awareness and transfer knowledge about sustainability challenges, gaining theoretical knowledge. ESD 2 emphasizes participatory learning, critical thinking, and the development of agency, more of a practical approach. The authors argue that while both are necessary, ESD 2 is fundamental for creating long-lasting and meaningful change. The thought of ESD 2 is active participation to encourage learners to question assumptions, engage with local and global issues and become empowered to act sustainably in their own lives. In early childhood, this means creating learning environments where children's voices, ideas, and experiences are taken seriously, and where they can actively explore sustainability through dialogue, decision-making, and everyday practices.

Research into Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) shows that real, hands-on experiences like visiting a toy library are crucial for helping children develop skills and mindsets for sustainability (Pramling Samuelsson & Park, 2017). The aim of ESD is to promote an interdisciplinary and holistic approach to education. This involves integrating the various perspectives of the three pillars, environmental-, economic-, and social sustainable development, and clarifying how these interact and influence each other over time and in different geographical contexts and at various levels, both locally and globally. When borrowing and returning become normal parts of play, ideas like responsibility and sharing become part of everyday life, not just something they hear about but something they live.

Together, these perspectives highlight that ESD in early childhood is not about teaching sustainability as a separate subject but weaving it into the everyday life of children. This could be done through relationships, routines, and shared activities like those found in a toy library context.

Aim and research question

The aim of this thesis is to capture the various elements included in the process of lending toys at a toy library. The primary aim is to study the process through the eyes of the children, the actual lender. This includes exploring children's lived experiences of the toy library at large, their experiences of picking out toys for themselves and their experiences regarding the

return of their borrowed items. The research question for this thesis and the knowledge I want to contribute with, is a summarization of all the parts above.

How do children experience lending toys at a toy library?

Literature review

This literature review examines articles and studies related to children learning through play, the use of various libraries, children in research, children's awareness of sustainability and if gender makes a difference. Some of the studies involve children both younger and older than those I will be focusing on in my thesis and even adults; however, I still consider the research and its findings relevant, and therefore these studies are included in my literature review as well.

Search process

I began my search using the online library at Gothenburg University. Natural Sciences, IT, and Environmental Development were selected as subject areas, which provided a list of relevant databases. As I had earlier encounters with Scopus from previous readings in this course, it felt natural to use that for further searchers. Using the keywords "Lending AND toys," I found several articles. I then refined my search with "Lending AND toys AND children," which yielded additional results.

Next, I conducted a second search in the Gothenburg University library, this time selecting Educational Sciences under the subject area. This led to a list of databases focused on education. After reading through a few descriptions, the choice fell on the Education Database. In this database, the keywords "awareness, sustainability, and children," were used, which produced further relevant articles.

During the work with this chapter and thesis, more relevant studies were found in the articles retrieved from the database.

Usage of toy libraries

Toy libraries were first founded in Los Angeles in year 1935. The reason for the establishing of a meeting place for children and their families came out of an economic crisis, the great depression in the US. The toy libraries were part of a solution to try and lower crime rate in the US and help families with lower socio-economic conditions (Ozanne & Ozanne, 2011). The authors further discuss the connections between poverty, education, and democracy,

arguing that providing communities with accessible resources, such as toy libraries, can empower children to learn, grow, and develop essential skills. They suggest that toy libraries could serve as a platform for work training, skill-building, and community engagement. By fostering these connections and offering opportunities for personal development, toy libraries can encourage individuals to feel more invested in their communities and, ultimately, in democratic participation. The concept of toy libraries has since spread worldwide but with slight variations. In the US, initially the toy libraries were funded by local governments or the state (Björck-Åkesson & Brodin, 1992) whereas in New Zeeland the majority of the libraries are community based and run by volunteers (Ozanne & Ozanne, 2011). Despite differences in funding models, the common theme between community-based and government-supported libraries is a focus on play and children's development (Ozanne & Ozanne, 2011; Björck-Åkesson & Brodin, 1992).

Both the articles by Björck-Åkesson and Brodin (1992) and Ozanne and Ozanne (2011) describe toys in toy libraries as tools for learning communication, interaction, cooperation and stimulating children's development. Additional reasons to encourage the use of toy libraries include reducing consumption of new products and providing children with a place to choose toys independently, regardless of family finances (Ozanne & Ballantine, 2010). Parents also appreciate toy libraries for offering toys that are not gender-stereotyped and typically exclude toys of a violent nature (Ozanne & Ballantine, 2010).

The most common type of toy libraries are the community-based ones as explained by Björck-Åkesson and Brodin (1992), where group activities, resources and support are offered to families, particularly in Canada and Australia. In those two countries a toy library functions as a centre to build informal networks to support families in everyday life.

Usage of other kind of libraries

Apart from borrowing books and toys from libraries, sports equipment is also available for loan in Sweden. The Leisure Equipment Library (LEL) recognizes that sports equipment can be expensive, which limits some families' ability to offer sports activities to their children. However, findings from recent studies reveal that children in higher socio-economic areas borrow sports equipment slightly more than those in lower socio-economic areas (Högman, et al., 2024). The authors suggest that families in lower socio-economic areas may not use the LEL as much, either because they do not identify as users of loaned sports equipment, are unaware of the option, or do not desire it. This tendency was also described by Ozanne and

Ozanne (2011) regarding toy library use. In their research, it was mostly families from lower- to upper-middle-class backgrounds who used toy libraries. For many, this choice was not necessarily financially driven but reflected a desire to be contributing members of their communities and set an example for their children.

There is another additional reason to why some parents seek out toy libraries and that is the toy stores persuasive marketing aimed at young children. Rather than trying to reach the adults with information on how their toys can support children's development, a combination of bright colours, sounds and brands are used to wake interest in the children. This approach and attempt to view children as consumers, take away from their childhood (Ozanne & Ozanne, 2011). Through an online survey Ozanne and Ballantine (2010) found that anti-consumption was one reason parents sought out a toy library, others responded that it was a struggle to go toy shopping with their kids. Parents also described how they found it hard to get the children to really explore the opportunities in the toy store as the children soon got targeted with advertisement from specific brands and types of toys (Ozanne & Ballantine, 2010).

Children and consumption

Research has shown that children's engagement with consumption begins at a very young age, and that they are not passive recipients but engaged participants even in early childhood. Valkenburg and Cantor (2001) argue that even children aged two to five years old develop clear preferences for certain products and brands. They are able to recognize logos and associate them with positive experiences, such as those from advertisements, television programs, or family situations. A couple of examples from my family would include Peppa Pig, Coop, Netflix and the logotype for the city they live in as the children see that at their pre-school and on books we borrow from the library. Although young children do not fully understand the intent of advertising, children still respond to its content both emotionally and with words. This includes express preferences of certain brands or characters and with this try to influence the consumption of the whole family and weave them into their everyday lives (Valkenburg & Cantor, 2001). This is further supported by Russell and Tyler (2005) as they highlight how children use brands and products as a way to express themselves. For example, a child might choose to wear a princess dress with sneakers and a superhero necklace. Not because these items traditionally go together, but because each one carries significance for the

child and expresses different aspects of who or how the child wants to be perceived (Russell & Tyler, 2005).

From the viewpoint of sustainability, it becomes essential to consider how such consumer experiences might be reshaped through alternative practices, like sharing or borrowing. Ozanne and Ballantine (2010) explore toy libraries as spaces of anti-consumption, where sharing replaces private ownership. Pramling Samuelsson and Asplund Carlsson (2008) do not talk about anti-consumption but suggest toy libraries as a setting for discussing and learn about consumption. This as toy libraries offer a space for exploring concepts like sharing, reusing, and taking responsibility. Although Ozanne and Ballantines (2010) study primarily addresses parental opinions, it provides important insights into how children encounter shared goods. This insight, along with the idea that consumption can be discussed from the perspective of sustainability awareness on a level that is suitable for children, a toy library could allow children to reflect on and engage with sustainability issues through individual experiences related to sharing, reusing, and responsibility (Pramling Samuelsson & Asplund Carlsson, 2008).

Sustainable and environmental awareness amongst children

To meet the needs of the current generation without limiting the ability of future generations is one way to explain sustainability (Hanss & Bohm, 2013). The definition of environmental awareness is “the attitude regarding environmental consequences of human behaviour” (Ham et al., 2016).

There are various factors that contribute to sustainable awareness, such as level of education, cultural group, societal norms and gender (Muldoon et al., 2019; Sharma & Rami, 2020; Yang et al., 2022; Weaver, 2002). The findings on gender as a factor when considering sustainable or environmental awareness vary slightly across studies. One researcher that suggests gender do play a role is Weaver (2002), but that it depends on various factors together with gender, while others find gender to be of little or no significant regarding sustainable and environmental awareness (Sharma & Rami, 2020; Muldoon et al., 2019; Yang et al., 2022).

Out of the four studies mentioned above, one of the studies have results based on adults, that is the study by Weaver (2002). The author describes how environmental awareness was more noticeable amongst women in Germany and the United States, but in the countries Japan, Russia and United Kingdom there was no significant difference between the gender when

asked about their environmental awareness. The location of the study seems to be of importance, this could be because it also includes various cultures and norms, further explained by Sharma and Rami (2020) as they found females to be slightly more concerned about sustainable and environmental awareness. This despite Indian culture sometimes being more prone to encourage boys rather than girls to educate themselves (Sharma & Rami, 2020). In the study Sharma and Rami (2020) conducted and the two remaining (Muldoon et al., 2019; Yang et al., 2022) the participants were children aged six to twelve. There were no significant differences in gender in these two studies by Muldoon et al. (2019) and Yang et al. (2022) regarding children's sustainable and environmental awareness, even though these studies were conducted in two different countries, Australia and China. For the study in Australia, a survey was carried out which aimed at measuring children's environmental awareness, and there were differences within that population, but not between genders, but the survey showed that the older children had more knowledge then the younger (Muldoon et al., 2019). In China the aim with the study was to examine what effects narrative-based environmental education had on the children, and the results were that it could improve children's environmental awareness, but did not affect their behaviours in a pro-environmental way. The latter result could be explained by the fact that behaviour change take time, in conclusion, the narrative-based environmental education could have positive affect, just later on in life (Yang et al., 2022). The author further explain that young children can understand sustainability concepts effectively when given hands-on experiences and opportunities to reflect on actions.

In conclusion, the studies conducted by Muldoon et al. (2019) and Yang et al. (2022) concluded that there was no significant difference between gender regarding environmental awareness, whilst the study by Sharma and Rami (2020) proved a moderate but still existing difference between genders when researching sustainable and environmental awareness. Gender could be of significance but as described by Weaver (2002), it seems to be dependent on more than gender on its own, and rather gender <u>and</u> culture, education and country.

Research *with* or *about* children?

Traditionally, children in research have often been viewed as passive objects rather than active participants. Adult researchers have interpreted children's experiences, which has meant that children's voices and perspectives have risked being lost or misinterpreted (Christensen et al., 2017). However, in recent decades, there has been a paradigm shift within

childhood research, where children are increasingly recognized as social actors and competent individuals with their own experiences and viewpoints that are valuable to research. This change has been reinforced by the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, particularly Article 12, which affirms that children have the right to express their views on all matters affecting them, and these views or opinions should be considered in relation to the child's age and maturity (UNICEF, 1989).

Einarsdottir (2007) emphasizes the importance of using research methods that allow children to express themselves on their own terms, such as through pictures, play-based methods, or participatory observation. This opens up the possibility for children's own stories and interpretations to come forward, rather than being interpreted solely through adult perspectives. Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) emphasize that qualitative research interviews aim to understand the individual's world from the individual's own point of view.

This child-centred perspective, however, involves methodological and ethical considerations. It is not enough to include children in research, but the research practice must also be adapted to their ways of communicating and interpreting the world. Christensen et al. (2017) argue that researchers must pay attention to the various forms of expression that children use and interpret these within the context of the children's own social and cultural environments. This requires flexibility in data collection, something that phenomenology supports. Van Manen (1997) emphasizes the importance of listening to lived experience and allowing the experience to speak, which is especially important in research with children, where it is essential to capture experiences that might otherwise be overlooked.

Research gap

There is existing research on sustainability, lending, and anti-consumption behaviours, but less focus has been given to toy libraries, especially in Sweden, where they are still a relatively new phenomenon. In the broader field, however, there is a significant gap in that the voices of children are often missing. Children, as the primary users of toy libraries, represent the future and are at the forefront of norm-challenging behaviours. Yet, their perspectives on sustainability, sharing, and consumption are seldom heard or explored in the context of toy libraries. Understanding children’s experiences and interpretations of these practices is essential, as they are the ones who will shape future consumption patterns and attitudes toward sustainability. Understanding children’s experiences and interpretations of these practices is essential, as they are the ones who will shape future consumption patterns and

attitudes toward sustainability. By exploring children's perspectives on these topics, this research will contribute to a more holistic understanding of how sustainability can be woven into early childhood learning environments and help inform policies and practices that encourage sustainable behaviours from a young age.

Theoretical framework

This thesis is guided by two theories, phenomenology and sociocultural theory of play. They are both adaptable in this case as the thesis aims to explore children's lived experiences, which will be analysed with the lens of phenomenology and the theory of play will be used to further support the analysis of children's behaviour around play.

Choice of theory

The choice to use both phenomenology and Vygotsky's sociocultural theory of play was guided by the aim to gain a deeper understanding of children's lived experiences with a toy library, as well as the social and cultural context in which those experiences take place. Phenomenology, particularly in the tradition of van Manen, offers a way to explore how children make meaning of their encounters, how they experience borrowing, returning, and playing with toys that have been used by others. This approach allows the study to stay close to the children's experiences and perspectives, valuing their unique ways of expressing themselves and engaging with the world.

At the same time, Vygotsky's sociocultural theory of play provides a complementary framework to understand the role of social interaction, cultural tools, and adult-child dialogue in children's meaning-making processes. Play is not only an individual experience, but also shaped by the environment, the people present, and the shared cultural norms. This perspective highlights how children's play at the toy library becomes a site for learning, negotiation, and development of skills and values, such as sharing, making choices, and participating in sustainable practices.

By combining these two perspectives, the study aims to balance the richness of individual lived experience with the broader social context in which those experiences are situated.

Phenomenology

This study is grounded in phenomenology not only as a methodology but also as a theoretical lens. Phenomenology, as developed by thinkers such as Husserl, Heidegger, and Merleau-Ponty, is concerned with the study of lived experiences, how individuals perceive and make sense of the world through their subjective, embodied, and emotional experiences (Merleau-Ponty, 1962; Husserl, 1982; van Manen, 2016). Rather than focusing on objective truths, phenomenology seeks to understand how phenomena are experienced in the moment, from the first-person perspective.

In the context of this study, phenomenology provides a useful framework for exploring how children experience borrowing toys from a toy library, not merely as a functional act, but as a meaningful and emotional event in their lives. The aim is to understand how the act of lending, playing with, and returning toys is perceived by the children, what emotions are involved, and how these experiences are situated within the social and physical environment of the toy library (van Manen, 1997; van Manen, 2016).

A phenomenology approach aligns closely with the aims of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD), which emphasizes values, attitudes, and behaviours that support a more sustainable future (UNESCO, 2017). Toy libraries promote sustainability by encouraging circular consumption and shared use of resources, and children's experiences within these spaces can provide valuable insight into how sustainable habits and understandings begin to take shape. Through the lens of phenomenology, this study explores how children describe their experience of borrowing toys at a toy library. While the aim is not to explicitly investigate concepts such as sharing, ownership, or responsibility, these themes that are central to ESD may emerge throughout the research process and provide valuable insight in addressing the research question.

Moreover, phenomenology helps raise the voices of children themselves, recognizing them as competent and knowing individuals and agents in line with the principles of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (United Nations, 1989). By understanding children's lived experiences, this study contributes to a broader understanding of how sustainable practises can be integrated meaningfully into early childhood contexts, not through instructions, but through embodied, emotional, and socially embedded experiences.

Sociocultural theory of play

While the primary theoretical lens for this study is phenomenology, particularly drawing on Van Manen's (2016) lifeworld approach to understanding the lived experiences of children, it is also valuable to look at these experiences within a sociocultural context. In this regard, Vygotsky's theory of play, as interpreted by Smolucha and Smolucha (2021), offers a complement to the phenomenological understanding of children's experiences and descriptions.

Vygotsky emphasized the role of imaginative play in the development of higher mental functions, arguing that play is not merely a reflection of reality but a creative process through which children learn to navigate social rules, negotiate meaning, and develop self-regulation. According to Smolucha and Smolucha (2021), play allows children to operate within the *Zone of Proximal Development* (ZPD).

The Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) is a core concept in Vygotsky's sociocultural theory of learning. It refers to the space between what a child can do independently and what they can achieve with guidance or support from someone more knowledgeable, such as an adult or a peer. Vygotsky argued that meaningful learning happens in this zone, when children are challenged just beyond their current level but still within reach with appropriate help.

In the context of this study, borrowing in itself function as a zone of proximal Development as can be seen when children engage with the various range of toys. These activities at the toy library stretch their abilities, such as learning new ways to play, negotiating with others, or understanding the borrowing process. With the support of adults or through social interaction with peers, children expand their understanding and gain new skills. The toy library then becomes a space of proximal development where learning and development are supported through play and shared experiences.

This sociocultural view aligns well with the phenomenological findings in this study, where children's experiences at the toy library are rich with imaginative engagement, decision-making, and playful exploration. Their expressions of independence, choice, and interaction with both objects and sometimes people are not only personal and embodied, as highlighted in phenomenology, but also embedded in social practices and cultural norms around sustainability, sharing, and consumption.

Moreover, Vygotsky's perspective helps to deepen the understanding of how children make sense of borrowing, returning, and sharing toys, not only as isolated events but as parts of broader learning processes. Through repeated experiences at the toy library, children engage in meaningful activities that intertwine lived moment with the internalization of socially constructed values such as responsibility, empathy, and care for the environment. These are all essential components of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD).

While the phenomenological approach allows for an in-depth exploration of the children's own voices and lived experiences, Vygotsky's sociocultural theory of play provides a complementary perspective that situates these experiences within a developmental and cultural framework. Together, they offer a richer, more nuanced interpretation of the role of play, learning, and social interaction in shaping sustainable behaviours and values in early childhood.

How the theory was used

Phenomenology, as described by van Manen (2016) guided the entire analytical process by framing the study around the lived experiences of the children. This meant paying close attention to the way children spoke about their experiences at the toy library, what they emphasized, how they expressed emotions, and which moments stood out in their narratives. The analysis aimed to capture the essence of these experiences through thematic reflection, rather than reducing them to measurable categories. Phenomenology made it possible to stay grounded in the children's own descriptions and helped ensure that their voices remained central throughout the results chapter.

Vygotsky's sociocultural theory of play supported the interpretation of the data by bringing attention to the social, relational, and cultural dimensions of the children's experiences. For example, when children spoke about borrowing and returning toys together with adults, or when they described learning how to use certain items through interaction, Vygotsky's ideas

helped to highlight how meaning and understanding are co-constructed in social contexts. The theory was especially useful in understanding play not just as an activity, but as a space for development, learning, and the transmission of values, such as sustainability, sharing, and responsibility.

Together, these two theoretical perspectives allowed for a rich and layered interpretation of the material. Both the depth of individual experience and the broader social processes that shaped them was considered. The presentation of the results reflects this combination, with attention given both to the personal and emotional dimensions of children's voices.

Methodological design

This chapter presents the methodological framework of the study. It begins by introducing phenomenology as the chosen research approach and explains how it forms the overall design. The chapter then details how the interviews were carried out and the process of analysing the data. Finally, it addresses considerations related to validity and reliability, outlines the study's limitations, and discusses ethical aspects of the research.

Phenomenology as a method

Phenomenology is both a method and a theory, commonly used within the pedagogy and human field, but also within psychology and philosophy. It is most useful for exploring how a phenomenon is experienced and perceived and is used within qualitive research (Thorsten, 2024). Phenomenology as a method involves using semi-structured interviews and observations as tools, but in contrast to a strictly regulated interview this method allows the participants and the interviewer to conduct a conversation based on a topic guide rather than a detailed interview guide. This approach allows the researcher to answer the research question while keeping the conversation flexible, in this case allowing me to follow the child's interest and thread of thoughts, and to keep the questions open enough for the interviewee to feel free to express themselves in an open and in-depth manner (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009).

Smith (2003) describes phenomenology as experiences ranging from experiences within our mind, senses and emotions, but also those experienced physically with our body. This differs from phenomenon that we may observe rather than perform and live through (Smith, 2003; Merleau-Ponty, 1962). This is in line with what Husserl contributed with to the phenomenology method, to focus on the here and now, what is being experienced in the moment rather than what has been experienced before (van Manen & van Manen, 2021).

Husserl considers experience as knowledge and believes in explaining things as they appear, a way to understand and explore insights into human existence (Dowling, 2007; van Manen & van Manen, 2021). In this study, it is the experience, feelings and actions related to borrowing toys that is being examined, not the process of borrowing itself (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). In other words, the focus is on sharing the experiences of a lived experience, and this is in line with Heidegger's main focus, but also how that experience is affected by the relation an individual has to what is being experienced (van Manen & van Manen, 2021). In this thesis there are several relations to be considered, the child's relation to lending, the toy library, toys in general, available toys, games and the adults and children they interact with at the time of their visit to the toy library.

The method of Phenomenology is a way of looking into ordinary human activities and explain these everyday happenings from the perspective of the one experiencing them (van Manen & van Manen, 2021). When writing and working with Phenomenology it is the direct experience, also known as the first order experience, that is being examined. This includes exploring the essence of experiences, what feelings are connected to that experience and using phenomenology as a way of seeing (van Manen & van Manen, 2021).

Dowling (2007) presents something that is characteristic and a key concept in phenomenological research, Husserl's idea of bracketing, which is commonly used when analysing the empirical material. Bracketing, also known as epoché, could be explained as when the researcher deliberately sets aside their own biases, assumptions, and preconceptions about a phenomenon to focus purely on the participant’s lived experience (Dowling, 2007). This is however very difficult to do, so as a complement to Husserls idea about bracketing Heideggers introduced reflexivity. Heidegger did not deny bracketing but rather saw the need to acknowledge the researcher's previous knowledge, therefor reflexivity includes critically reflecting on how the researchers background shapes the research process (Dowling, 2007).

Selection of participants and the role of the adults

Ten children accompanied by one adult were interviewed. The criteria for being considered to be part in the study were that the children visit the toy library with an adult, that they had made at least a couple (2) of loans and returns, and that the child could talk. The criteria for having made a couple of loans is simply so that the child would know what it is to have an item at home, return it, and then get something new. For the first criteria, some of the toy libraries adults visit the library on their own, so they chose the items to lend, and they are also

the ones returning them. Asking their children about the lending process would be less useful for me with this particular research question. And my last criteria resulted in the children ranging in age from three years old to eight years old. Various approaches were used when contacting potential participants, five were asked in person by me when visiting the toy library, three were asked in person by a board member of the toy library. An additional ten adults were e-mailed after being thought of as suitable by the already mentioned board member. The participants of the pilot interview were also asked in person by me, as they checked all of the above-mentioned criteria. Out of the eight that were asked in person seven went on to accept the letter of consent and conducted interviews. And out of the ten that only were approached via e-mail, four went on to accept the letter of consent and conducted interviews.

The role of the adult that accompanied the child was multi-sided, it was on one hand to make the child and caretakers feel secure and comfortable around me, who to most of them was a stranger, it was also a way to connect with the children through their caretakers and make them relax as I and the caretakers had a casual conversation before the interview got started. The accompanied adults were also of help with supporting the younger children in remembering past experiences, finding the words for toys or games they wanted to describe from previous loans. Sometimes the adults also helped me understand the child's answers as not all words could be understood at first by some of the younger participants.

Letter of consent

A total of 18 potential participants received a formal invitation via e-mail to take part in this thesis with their child. Eleven of them responded and answered yes to participating, another three responded that they wanted to take part but for various reason did not end up doing so. The remaining five did not respond at all. Out of the eleven, ten received the letter of consent in Swedish (appendix 1) and one in English (appendix 2). This was done to enable the participant to read the information in their preferred language to avoid misunderstandings and make sure they knew what they agreed to participate to. The e-mail contained information about the process of their personal data, the research question and a brief background to the subject, information of how the data would get collected and a document to sign regarding their consent to participate (appendix 1 & 2). When they had confirmed that they were still interested in participating, they received yet another e-mail with suggestions regarding day and time to conduct the interview. At the time for the interview any questions concerning the

form of this thesis, collection of personal data and consent was answered and consent given by the adult signing the document (appendix 1).

My experience of walk-alongs

Initially the chosen data collection was that of walk-along, were the child would be able to walk me along their experience at the toy library, from the hallway, to the main room and the lending disc all the while being asked question unless they willingly started talking about what they saw, did and experienced. However, after the one pilot interview was held it became clear that keeping focus on both talking to their adult, playing and choosing toys, showing how to move and play in the toy library whilst also paying attention to the interview, was a bit much for this particular age group. It is possible that this would have been effective with older children, but I rather think it was a combination of limited time, space and too much excitement at once. The time limitation entails two factors, the first being that the children were only interviewed once, had there been interviews that took place over time it might have worked as the children than could have been allowed more playtime and less interview-time. The second part of the limited time issue is that of the children's energy, they were most aften seeing me after a long day at either pre-school or school, it was before dinner time so I do not see how we could ask the children to focus on play, the space, their experiences and communicating their lived experience all at once. I think the space in itself might have been a limiting factor as well, because this toy library is mainly on larger room where the children are being exposed to items wherever they look. In a larger space, or when conducting walk-alongs outside, the children get a little bit of distance or pause where they are giving a chance to talk and reflect together with the interviewer. For the excitement, that is not only connected to the items in front of them, but most children were also excited about this new experience of being interviewed! And to add to that excitement, they were also allowed to visit the toy library after hours and play with items that are usually for home loan only.

In conclusion, the pilot interview made it apparent that semi-structed interviews as used within phenomenology was the best suited data collection method for this study.

Playful conversations

As phenomenology aims to reveal and explore the individual experience and feelings of a phenomena (Smith, 2003) it is a useful method within ESD. This is done by conducting semi-structured interviews supported by a topic guide. Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) emphasize that

the purpose of the qualitative research interview is to gain insight into how individuals perceive and experience their world, prior to applying scientific interpretations. A phenomenological approach in qualitative research highlights the importance of understanding social situations from the participants' own perspectives. A phenomenology approach also aims to describe reality as it is experienced by the participants, based on the idea that reality is shaped by how individuals perceive it (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). The setting at the toy library, with puzzles and toys of the children's choice, turned the interview in to a semi-casual conversation. The questions were directed to the children, but the accompanied adults had all been instructed before the interviews were conducted, that they could support their child in re-asking my questions in a way that might be more suitable for their child, help the child to remembering past experiences or just help get the conversation started. Before the interview begun me and the child tried out the recorder together, this was both an attempt to break the ice, show the child how the recorder would be used during the interview, but also a natural way to explain what would happen after the interviews. After the transcription and storage of the audio files had been explained to the child, they got to sit down either by a table or on the floor and they were then informed when the recording was started.

One thing I chose not to include in my data collection was the gender of the children. This after reading previous research conducted with children and no significant difference had been stated between gender Muldoon et al. (2019) and Yang et al. (2022). One of the included studies on children did show a slight difference, but it was so small of a difference that the author even discussed whether or not it should be considered a difference at all (Sharma & Rami, (2020). The one article that supported their hypothesis that significant differences between gender occurred where studies conducted on adults (Weaver, 2002). To this background, I decided not to include the gender of the children as it might not be of relevance, and it gave me the possibility to further anonymize them.

The total number of interviews for this thesis was eleven, ten of them conducted in Swedish, the first language for both the children and me, and one in English, one of the participants first languages. The reason not all interviews were held in the same language was to enable the children to express themselves as freely as possible, in a language they felt the most comfortable with. The interviews were guided by a topic guide (appendix 3) that includes

both general themes as well as specific questions to make sure the research question would get answered eventually.

In qualitative research the sample size for interviews is frequently discussed and if there is a number of interviews that are sufficient in all research (Francis et al., 2010; Guest et al., 2006). Although generalisability is not the goal in qualitative research, researchers often aim for theoretical saturation, the point at which no new insights or themes emerge from the data (Glaser & Strauss, 2006; Bryman, 2011). The number of interviews a researcher can conduct is often constrained by various factors, in this thesis such as time and logistical limitations.

All interviews were transcribed into the language they were conducted in, this ended up being one interview and transcript in English and nine in Swedish. This due to one of the interviews done in Swedish got discarded as it resulted in no data. The interviews ranged from 6 to 20 minutes, with most of the being around ten minutes long. All the interviews were conducted over a period of one months.

Data analysis

The analysis of the data collection was guided by the two theories for this thesis, phenomenography and sociocultural theory of play. The transcripts from the data collection constitute the empirical material for the qualitative analysis. The primary data consists of the answers from the children and sometimes the adults' inputs in the conversations have been included in the empirical material if it was part of the child's answer.

The software program NVivo in addition to Colaizzi's data analysis method were used as an analysing tool (Vignato et al., 2022). The University of Gothenburg provided a software license for NVivo, this contributed to the specific software being used. NVivo enabled me to code the responses from the children based on answers connected to questions but also based on specific words connected to either experiences or that relate to the research question. To identify themes, thematization as described by van Manen and van Manen (2021) and the first four steps of Colaizzi's analysing method were incorporated when using NVivo. The transcripts were read through several times in NVivo to locate keywords and phrases to code, this would be step one and two, *familiarization with the transcripts* and *identifying significant statements related to the research questions*. Step three of Colaizzi's data analysing method is *creating meaning for these statements* which has been done by relate the responses from the children to each other but also to the used theories and concepts that have been discussed

previously in this thesis. Lastly NVivo was used to *organise the findings into themes,* this is also the fourth step of Colonazzi (Vignato et al., 2022). The themes have emerged from the codes and some codes are found under more than one theme as some of them might be intertwined or over-lap each other. The themes have been named by me rather than NVivo, this due to personal preference regarding names of the theme and limited time to learn how to fully use NVivo.

After finishing the coding and finding of themes, the fifth step was to *describe in detail the participants experiences*, whilst keeping true to the collected data. This was done by referring back to the theories and tying them to the words of the respondents. Step six is trying to *capture the essence of the phenomenon*, what have been found out and what does that mean. This is all presented under findings and the themes explained there. Last it is recommended to *return with the findings to the participants* for validation. The participants that took part in this thesis are very young, some of them might not even remember what they said at the time, so I have not returned with the findings to them. I did however ask follow-up question at the time of the interviews so that the children could elaborate their response or just confirmed that my understanding of what they described was correct. The adult did sometimes circle back to their child too, to make sure that us adults had understood the child correctly, this could be considered somewhat of a return of the findings to the participants.

Validity and reliability

Validity and reliability are essential criteria for evaluating the quality of qualitative research, although they take different forms compared to quantitative studies (Bryman, 2011). In this chapter a short discussion regarding generalisability is included, as it is a strengthening factor to the thesis.

Reliability refers to the consistency and dependability of the research process. To increase reliability in this thesis the analytical process was carefully documented, this included transcribing all the interviews and make notes of initial impressions. Thematization described by van Manen and van Manen (2021), as an approach aiming to identify recurring and descriptive themes based on the children's responses, has been used. To identify these themes an analytic tool such as a software program, NVivo was used to code the responses (Bryman, 2011), this too could increase validity. Notes and memos were written throughout the process to capture reflections, questions, and decisions. Furthermore, Colaizzi's analytic method as described in Vignato et al. (2022), provided a structured framework, including returning to

participants to confirm or clarify their statements during the interview. This step-by-step documentation supports both the reliability and credibility of the findings.

Validity, in a qualitative sense, refers to the credibility and trustworthiness of the findings and whether the results accurately reflect the participants lived experiences. Here too Colaizzi's final step plays a vital part to strengthen validity, as participants were asked to reflect on their answers during the interview and were encouraged to add or revise anything they had said. They were also reminded that they were welcome to contact me afterwards if they thought of something they wanted to change or add. These extra steps increase the likelihood that the interpretations stay true to the children's own perspectives.

The phenomenological approach used in this study also contributes to both validity and richness of data. By allowing follow-up questions and by conducting the interviews at the toy library, I could observe and interpret how the participant interacts with what is offered at the toy library at the time of the interview (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). In addition to traditional quantitative concepts such as reliability and validity, phenomenological research emphasizes trustfulness to the participants lived experiences and my ability to reflect over their descriptions of their experiences (van Manen & van Manen, 2021). By engaging in epoché, or as it is also called, bracketing, I attempted to bracket my own preconceptions and approach the material with an open mind. Furthermore, I prioritized the words of the children before my own interpretations, meaning that the analysis main focus was to stay close to the children's own expressions, avoiding premature theoretical framing.

In qualitative research, generalisability is not primarily about producing results that can be applied to all populations and groups, but rather about providing a rich understanding of a particular population, like that of children using toy libraries (Bryman, 2011). However, Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) highlight the concept of analytical generalisation, which refers to the potential for findings to be applied to similar contexts or cases. In this study, the findings are closely tied to a specific toy library and a particular group of children. Nevertheless, because the context, a Swedish toy library, shares similarities with other toy libraries in terms of structure, purpose, and target group, one could reason that similar results might be found in comparable settings. In other words, the results of this thesis could be of relevance for understanding children's experiences at most toy libraries in Sweden, and maybe even in other countries.

Finally, a potential limitation affecting both validity and reliability relates to language. All participants spoke Swedish; except one family whose first language was English. That interview was conducted in English. Although I speak both Swedish and English, Swedish is my first language, and this might have influenced my ability to fully capture subtle nuances in the English interview. Similarly, when analysing and writing in English, small misinterpretations may have occurred. These are important to acknowledge when considering the trustworthiness of the findings.

Ethical considerations

Audio recordings were used when collecting the data, they contained gender, names and pronouns. The recordings were carried out in accordance with key ethical principles, including informed consent. Any details that could potentially identify the participants or reveal personal information were carefully removed in the transcripts (Kvale & Brinkman, 2009). Prior to the interviews the adults were asked to read and sign a paper of consent. The paper included description of how the recordings and later the transcripts of them would be stored, the research question and explaining that the university of Gothenburg is ultimately responsible. In order to include the children and make them aware of what was going to happen, I asked them if they would like to talk to me about what they do at the toy library, and we made a short recording with our names and age. They got to listen back to the recording, and I explained that I would record and then listen to our whole conversation later and write down every word that we said, then that test-audio file was deleted before the interview begun.

The audio files from the interviews will be deleted after the final draft of this thesis had been submitted. In the transcriptions of the audio files no names, pronouns or gender were revealed, the only personal data revealed in those are the age of the child. The transcripts were stored so that only I could access them, and the supervisor on request (Bryman, 2011). This is in agreement with the recommendations from the Swedish Research Council (2024). Involving humans in research is ethically justifiable as long as the use of the research are in reasonable proportions to the risk of the participants (The Swedish research council, 2024). To this background the level of personal data collected in this thesis stands in reasonable proportions to the benefit of the research question. Bryman (2011) also points out numerous ethical principles that needs to be considered when conducting interviews, to protect the participants integrity and anonymity. This includes informing the participants about whom

will read the thesis, where it will be published, and how it could be used. The children and adults participating in this thesis were all informed about whom is likely to read it, that toy libraries in Sweden might read and use it, and that it will be published at Gothenburg University Publications Electronic Archive (GUPEA). For further maintained anonymity throughout the whole process, the location of the toy library will be kept unknown, which child that has been quoted in the thesis and where they live in relation to the toy library (Bryman, 2011).

Research limitations

One limitation is the choice of participants, or rather the combination of the interviewer having limited experience conducting interviews, and no experience interviewing young children. Considering that the interviews mostly took part during the afternoons due to preschool, school and their caretakers working, sometimes the children had a hard time to express themselves due to tiredness, hunger or just being overwhelmed after a long day with a lot of impressions.

This brings us to the next thought of limitation, the location of the interviews. There was a thought of conducting the interviews at the toy library, to get the children to consider the interviews a fun and special event, that it would be easier to talk about something they could relate to in that moment. This turned out to be a bit of a struggle, for some the focus was only on the item in front of them, and keeping a conversation going at them same time was sometimes challenging

Something else that needs to be highlighted is the limited number of interviews, or rather the length of the interviews. On average the interviews were about ten to fifteen minutes long, but some were as short as six minutes and others went on to twenty-plus minutes. I decided that when the child felt bored, restless or simply left the conversation, the interview was then done. I had already anticipated shorter interviews as children as previous studies show that young children can find it difficult to stay focused for extended periods of time (Christensen et al., 2017; Einarsdottir, 2007).

The findings in this thesis are still quite extensive, and the reason to that I would argue is that children are very eager to share their experiences if the subject is something that interest them. The answers did not always come as a respond to a direct question, but rather as a thought after some play and during a conversation about something else. A grown-up might

have felt an urge to deliver an answer that felt thought through and that they had reflected upon. Most of the children in this study had not been prepared in advance about the subject and their responses were genuine and what they felt or experienced in the moment.

Findings

This chapter aims at presenting the findings derived from the analysis of the empirical interview data using a phenomenology approach. Ten children were questioned about their experiences, with the support of a parent. As this is a qualitive study, the responses from the participants will not tell the reader much as far as results go. To make sense of the empirical data, this chapter will guide the reader with the support of my analysis through my findings. All quotes have been translated by me from Swedish to English, except those quotes derived from the one interview held in English. The analysis aimed at studying the experiences of children when visiting and lending toys at a toy library. Five main themes were identified using phenomenology both as a lens, the theory, and as a method to go through the empirical data. A second theory, Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory of Play, was also used when analysing the collected data. The chapter starts with a brief introduction of the participants and information on how often they visit the toy library. This is followed by the findings, the five themes.

The children and their parent

The children ranged in age between 3,5 to 8 years old. They are all frequent users of the toy library. The older children have a more developed language and with that the possibility for them to express themselves more in detail then the children that have recently started to express themselves with words. One adult per child was asked to accompany the child as to make the child comfortable enough to talk to an adult they did not know, in other words, the interviewer. In these interviews the adult turned out to be a parent in all of the ten cases. Their role was, other than to bring comfort, also to support the younger children in remembering and helping them understand my questions. The parents could use examples they knew their child could relate to, in order to understand what was asked. For example, in Swedish library is translated to *bibliotek*, sometimes in Swedish it is shortened to *bibblan*. This might be the word the child is more used to use and is the word the child itself would connect with the library, that sort of “translation” the parents contributed with.

Three (3) of the children visit the toy library every week, five (5) of them every other to three-week, one (1) child visits about once a month, sometimes less frequently and one (1) family responded with that they visit the toy library in periods.

A literary appetizer

It is a busy world and sometimes we just want a short and simple answer. This is my findings in a very concentrated and un-analysed table, an appetizer, of what to expect when reading about the various themes and further findings.

Themes and further findings	**Quote**
Play at the toy library	"I like the Lego and the crafts when they're available"
Reasons to visit	"We usually borrow, or if there's a birthday party or something special happening."
Independent children at the toy library	"Well, I get to choose some of the things myself, and then there are some that I didn't choose."
How does it feel to lend toys?	"You get to try new things,"
No returns, just re-loans	"Yes, if you don't think it's fun, or if it's too hard. Or if it's too easy, you can return it too."
Attitudes of the families	"We usually borrow books too, so… I thought you'd be more upset when we return things, but then you can always borrow them again another time."

Themes

Five themes were identified, and they all reflect the feelings and experiences that together exemplifies and describes how children experience the process of lending toys at the toy library. These themes enable the reader to get a better understanding of how the children perceive this activity, that for some is part of their weekly activity. It is not always possible to separate one theme from another, or to categorise an answer from the interviews under just one theme, sometimes they might intertwine.

Usage of the toy library at large

When talking to the children about the toy library, it became clear that it meant more to them than just a place to borrow and return toys. They described it as a place to play, to spend time with family, and just to be. This broader understanding of the toy library connects well with how Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) encourages learning that's rooted in

everyday experiences, where children are active participants in shaping what sustainability can look and feel like (Ärlemalm-Hagsér & Elliott, 2020).

Theme one - Play at the toy library

All of the children expressed that they always engaged in some kind of play when visiting the toy library. It could be play with toys of the shelves, through pretend play using costumes, by drawing outside on the patio, or playing games and puzzles. A central part of the space is the "community table," where four to six people can sit together, usually to build with Lego or take part in crafts. This enables children to interact with their adults or with other visitors. The fact that it was missing at the time of the interviews was brought up by child 10, ever so gently and subtly "I like the Lego and the crafts when they're available". Three more children specifically mentioned Lego as something they enjoyed. For two of them, the toy library was the only place they could play with small Lego, because they had younger siblings at home and safety was a concern. This points to how the toy library can offer opportunities and resources that might not be possible at home, not just in terms of variety, but also access and safety.

Despite all children explaining that they engage in some kind of play at the toy library, all of them describes mostly playing on their own. The children who had siblings did not describe playing with them at the toy library, but rather that they just visited together. None of the children recalled playing with other visitors at the toy library, even though they described visiting the toy library when other children were there too. Three of the children shared that they had visit the toy library with a friend or cousin, but this seemed to be the exception rather than the norm. Child 7 described their visits like this, "I sometimes come here with my mom and friends."

This focus on play lines up with what we know about how young children learn, through doing, exploring, and making sense of their world. From a phenomenological point of view, play becomes more than just an activity; it's an experience that carries meaning and reflects how the child sees and interacts with their surroundings (van Manen, 2016). It's also a space where children can feel free and in charge, which is something that ESD values highly, children making choices, testing ideas, and being trusted as capable learners.

From an ESD perspective, this focus on independent play still tells us something valuable. ESD often highlights participation and agency, giving children room to choose, decide, and

act (UNESCO, 2020). The toy library seems to offer that, a space where children can lead their own learning and play. At the same time, it raises questions about whether there's room to develop more social or peer-based experiences at the toy library, which are also important when thinking about sustainability as something we build together.

Theme two - Reasons to visit

Other than play, child 4 mentioned that they also had other reasons to visit the toy library, "We usually borrow, or if there's a birthday party or something special happening." These kinds of special events usually offer extra activities, while borrowing and returning still happens as usual. The children didn't seem to separate these events from normal visits; they were just another part of what the toy library could be.

Most of the children said they visited the toy library after preschool or school, just like they might visit the book library. One child visited every week, not to borrow anything, but just to play. The rest of the children also played while they were there but typically returned or borrowed something too. Four of the children, and their adults, compared their experience to going to the book library: looking through things, testing them out, choosing a few to take home, and returning them later.

This comparison shows that the children are already familiar with borrowing as a normal way of doing things. From an ESD standpoint, this is important. It suggests that concepts like sharing, taking turns, and thinking beyond personal ownership are already woven into their everyday experiences. Rather than just being taught about sustainability, they are practising it which aligns with the idea that young children can engage with sustainability through concrete, meaningful activities (Pramling Samuelsson & Park, 2017; Ärlemalm-Hagsér & Elliott, 2020). And just like in the book library, not everything has to come home. The toy library gives children a chance to try things out, explore, and make choices, all part of developing a sense of responsibility and understanding how we use resources wisely (Pramling Samuelsson & Park, 2017).

How does it feel to share?

The next set of themes reflects how the children experience visiting the toy library, focusing on feelings and thoughts around choosing items and playing with toys that have previously been used by others. Not all of the children reflected on the fact that the items they borrowed

were second-hand, pre-loved, or not brand new, and for many, this aspect was of no matter to their enjoyment.

Theme three - Independent children at the toy library

Across all interviews, the children expressed different levels of independence in their experience of borrowing and choosing toys. Child 9 described it with these words: “Well, I get to choose some of the things myself, and then there are some that I didn’t choose.” Regardless of how decisions were actually made, they described themselves as being in charge, of what to play with, what to bring home, and when it was time to go.

In one case, a child came over with a box of toy road signs, proudly stating it was their choice, only for the adult to clarify that the item had been turned down on earlier visits because of concerns about losing the pieces. Even with these boundaries, the child framed the experience as one of independence and control. This echoes van Manen’s (2016) idea that what matters is not simply what happens, but how it is experienced. The child’s sense of freedom was not diminished by adult intervention, because their lived experience was still one of participation and choice.

Figure 1

Comment: Box of toy road signs

In families with multiple members sharing a loan card, children often got to choose one of the four items borrowed. Even when this meant they didn’t get everything they wanted, they didn’t seem to problematize the sharing. Instead, they expressed ownership over “their” choice: “Yes, we can borrow four things, and we’re four in the family, so everyone gets one thing each. Look, I borrowed that one [points at a dress-up costume].” These were the words

of child 5, child 2 even described a flexible agreement in their household: “Sometimes, if we can’t find something that my sibling will really like, then I get to borrow two things.”

Some children described their thought process when choosing what kind of toy they wanted, how it would fit with what they already had at home, or whether they’d have enough time to play with everything. “Mm, sometimes I want a bit too many things,” child 3 said when asked about the process of deciding what to choose. These reflections, however brief, suggest that even young children make decisions grounded in their own internal logic, another point that aligns with a phenomenological view of children as actively involved in their everyday lives (van Manen, 2016). This indicate that the children are very much in control of their lending process, and that they reflect upon the decision. Even the part of returning is in their minds as they decide on what to bring home.

Ultimately, the children described borrowing not just as a task or errand, but as something fun and rewarding in itself. Child 8 summed it up simply: “You get to play with toys *and* borrow things.” This reinforces the idea that the toy library is not just a place for lending, but a space where meaning is made through experience.

Theme four – How does it feel to lend toys?

All ten children described borrowing as a positive experience. Some focused on the excitement of getting to try something new: “You get to try new things,” child 4 stated with a smile. For others, it was more about testing different versions of a familiar item, like trying a new puzzle or finding something just the right level of challenging as child 7 put it: “Yes, if you don’t think it’s fun, or if it’s too hard. Or if it’s too easy, you can return it too.” This shows that for many children, borrowing was not a one-time decision, but a process, a cycle of choosing, testing, returning, and trying again.

A few children expressed worries that exemplified their preferences rather than concerns about borrowing itself. “Maybe that something you borrow and bring home can be a little boring,” child 6 reflected. Since the children can never anticipate what items will be available during their visit, this is a valid concern. Others focused more on what they might miss out on when it comes to certain figures or characters. Another child, number 3, shared a small complaint: “Yes, it’s all those things without dinosaurs and pirates… and all the dangerous animals.” These remarks don’t reflect a negative view of the toy library as a concept, but rather personal expectations or hopes for specific items.

One older child, child 4, offered a surprisingly reflective answer when asked what it felt like if something they wanted wasn't available: "Well, then someone else gets to play with it and have fun." This kind of perspective-taking, though not expressed by all, points to an early awareness of others and a willingness to share resources, something that can be implied to the values of Education for Sustainable Development, where empathy and community-mindedness are core ideas (UNESCO, 2020).

Figure 2

Comment: Example of dinosaurs found at a toy library

Nine out of ten children had neutral or positive views of returning toys, often seeing it as just part of the experience. For them, the joy was not in owning but in the process, returning, choosing, and starting over. This supports the idea that children, when given time and space, start to form their own understanding of what it means to share and reuse resources, something that fits well within the bigger picture of sustainability. These everyday experiences can help children develop what's often referred to as action competence in ESD, where learning happens through doing and relates closely to their own lives (Ärlemalm-Hagsér & Elliott, 2020). Play plays a big part in this too, as Smolucha and Smolucha (2021) point out how imaginative play gives children the space to explore new ideas and make sense of the world in ways that feel meaningful and fun at the same time.

More play!

The toy library is not so much about borrowing and returning in the opinion of the children. It's about play, deciding what to play with at home and finally bringing back items and

finding something new to explore. The returning part of the process seems to be just another aspect of borrowing, not something that receives more attention than choosing, borrowing, or using an item.

Theme five – No returns, just re-loans

Most of the children described taking part in gathering the borrowed items at home when it was time to return them. The older children explained how they count the parts and clean them so they're ready for another child. These are simple, everyday actions, but they reflect deeper values of care for shared resources, responsibility, and an understanding that things can be used by many over time. Although few children named these ideas explicitly, this kind of embodied experience, doing rather than being told, aligns strongly with how young children begin to grasp sustainability in a meaningful way (Pramling Samuelsson & Park, 2017).

When asked about their feelings regarding playing with toys that other children had played with before them, most of the children had not reflect about this at all, and it seemed to have little to no impact on their attitude towards playing and lending toys. One of the children, child 10, simply stated that "It feels good" when asked about sharing toys.

As mentioned earlier, the younger children did not reply to this question at all, nor did they reason around the question at the time. It was just not something they had thought about or seemed to be very concerned about. One of the older children, child 4, on the other hand had more to say about circular consumption when asked about sharing toys with others. "I'm not really sure. [Plays for a bit] I don't really think about it that much. But can I tell you something? Almost all the things I have, someone else has had them before me". This quote suggests that while the child hasn't reflected deeply, there is an emerging awareness that second-hand items still carry value, and perhaps even a story. This kind of casual familiarity with reusing items demonstrates a natural relationship to resource circularity, which is a cornerstone of sustainable thinking.

This indicates that the fact that others have used still has value for the individual, it is something that interest them. The next citation is one that was presented under theme four as well, but this also displays how the returning process could be perceived as a beginning to play rather than the end of it. There is less focus on losing anything, "Yeah, if you don't think it's fun, or if it's too hard. Or if it's easy, you can return it too." child 2 reasoned. Rather than

focusing on the end of a play experience, the children often frame the return as a step toward something new, a way of completing the cycle. This resonates with the ESD idea that sustainability is not about doing less, but doing differently, with more intention and care for shared resources.

One of the children did express feelings that differed from the others, when asked about the returning process child 8 simply stated that it was “Boring.” and nothing else. When trying to get the child to explain what it was in the returning process that felt boring, the answer simply led “It’s just not that fun. “. Even though the child later in the interview expressed positives feelings towards lending new items, the returning process was not directly connected to that in this case. This is also a valid feeling to the process of returning, that it is just not that fun. This response came from one of the children that visit every other to every third week and have done so since they started using the toy library, so even though the returning part of the process is boring to the child, it still comes back and express over-all positive feelings towards spending time at the toy library.

Finally, some children displayed that they do not know the difference between buying and borrowing, this could indicate that the child simply does not know the difference, and why would they, either way the get to go home with something new. Or that this is their way of “shopping”, they get gifted a loan card and then it is theirs to use. And child 1 displayed a very neutral attitude towards what happens after the loan has expired and the item is returned, “then we do something else”. Simple as that.

Further findings - Attitudes of the families

The adults were not the ones being interviewed, but their opinions were sometimes presented through the thoughts of their child or when they wanted to give context to the children’s responses. When children described trying new items as something positive, a couple of adults reflected on what they saw as beneficial with the toy library. This often included the temporary nature of larger or more space-consuming items, such as play tents, play tunnels, or bobby cars for indoor use. Child 4s adult commented: “Yes, exactly, we live in a small space too, so it felt like, yeah... Even if you buy second-hand, it still has to be stored and eventually sold, and that takes a lot of time.”

Figure 3

Comment: Example of play tunnel

This shows how families appreciate the toy library not only as a place for play, but also as a practical solution to reduce household clutter and avoid over-consumption, key values connected to sustainable living. In this way, the toy library becomes an example of everyday informal learning about resource use and circularity, both for adults and children. These practices align with principles within ESD, particularly around mindful consumption and resource efficiency (UNESCO, 2017).

In response to their children describing the returning of items as easy and struggle-free, the adult of child 1 reflected, “We usually borrow books too, so… I thought you’d be more upset when we return things, but then you can always borrow them again another time.” This kind of thinking mirrors the cyclical nature of use that’s central to Education for Sustainable Development (ESD). Borrowing, trying, and returning is not framed as a loss but as an opportunity for renewed discovery, a small but meaningful reflection of sustainable consumption practices (UNESCO, 2017; Ärlemalm-Hagsér & Elliott, 2020). It highlights how everyday experiences, like using a toy library, can help children and families engage with sustainability values in an accessible and tangible way.

While most families seemed to have a fairly relaxed approach to the borrowing cycle, there were different ways of handling the process at home. Some described it as a joint effort, this is the words of the adult to child 9 “Sometimes we sneak things out, sometimes we help each other.”. Others emphasized independence and trust, child 8s adult described the returning process like this “I usually return the toys, but the child is good at borrowing on their own.” This shared responsibility between adult and child could be an example of values being passed down through generations, as the adults show the child that borrowing could

sometimes be a process that demands us to deal with difficulties, such as parting from fun toys. But as a family we will still procced with lending as it is important to us, and this is how experiences and practices are being passed down (Ärlemalm-Hagsér & Elliott, 2020).

Discussion

This study aimed to explore how children experience borrowing toys from a toy library. Through a phenomenological approach combined with Vygotsky's sociocultural theory of play and the lens of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD), the research aimed to understand children's lived experiences and discuss these within wider fields of childhood consumption, sustainability, and children in research. This chapter discusses the findings in light of the theoretical framework and previous research, critically reflecting on how children's narratives provide insight into both personal experiences and broader socio-cultural norms. This study set out to explore how children experience borrowing toys from a toy library. Through a phenomenological approach, the children's voices were placed at the centre, allowing their own words and expressions to guide the understanding of the experience. ach shaped by the children's lived realities, developmental stages, and social contexts.

What can I do?

Migration due to climate change, wildfires and floodings, famine due to draught, the list can be made long for all of the things we do not want to pass on to our children. But change is something we need to do together both globally, locally and within our own families. It can feel overwhelming, useless and difficult to know where to start. But if I begin by looking around me, there are plenty of small actions to be taken every day. It could be related to lowering food waste, use the car less, buy seasonal fruit and vegetables, engage in local clothes swapping, consume less. And when consumption is necessary, let it be second-hand or give the local Facebook group a shout out, someone else might be willing to donate what you look for. This, and the fact that I last year stumbled across a toy library in Sweden made me formulate this research question, *How do children experience lending toys at a toy library?*

Play, play and play

From the first theme, play at the toy library, a couple of responds stood out. The first being the importance of play and how the children all mentioned the toy library as a place to explore play that was not always possible in the home environment (Ozanne & Ozanne, 2011). Play is

something that should be a central part of a child's day according to the Public Health Agency of Sweden (2024). Additionally, they also recommend limited to no screentime for young children, here toy libraries could be a part of the solution as they provide both space and toys to be played with. Children love to play, and they do it in various ways, throughout the interviews children described how they engage in play, it could be fantasy play, puzzle, games, Lego or building objects out of blocks or magna tiles.

Play is so much more than what meets the eye, it is a way to gain and develop language, to learn and develop motorial skills, to learn and develop how to interact with others and it is also a way of learning one's culture and learn skills from those more knowledge. This aligns with Vygotsky's socio-cultural theory as described by Smolucha and Smolucha (2021) and even though most children described playing on their own when visiting the toy library, this does not mean they cannot learn from each other. As part of this theory toys could be considered tools as a way for children to learn about social interactions and cultural behaviours. Toys can be understood as mediating tools, bridge between two individuals, that support children's learning and interaction with others. When used at the toy library, tools become part of how children explore ideas like sharing and taking turns, while also holding emotional and personal meaning shaped by everyday experiences (Smolucha & Smolucha, 2021; van Manen, 1997). At a toy library emotional and personal meaning could be the recognition of a toy they have borrowed before, or an item that represent a favourite character or animal, or an item connected to a personal experience, like a ball from the park, a carrier used when being comforted.

Behaviours and independent play are also central to ESD where the aim is to encourage empowerment, independence and decision-making (UNESCO, 2020). Another focus within ESD is the ability to practise through lived experience (Ärlemalm-Hagsér & Elliott, 2020), this is a part where the toy library can function as a safe and familiar place to practise. In this way, the toy library becomes more than just a place of borrowing, it serves as a pedagogical environment where children learn about responsibility, care for shared goods, and the possibilities of circular consumption (Ärlemalm-Hagsér & Elliott, 2020; Pramling Samuelsson & Park, 2017; UNESCO, 2017). These experiences can plant the seeds for encouraging children to see value in use, care, and community sharing.

Borrowing vs consumption

During the interviews children described their reasons to visit, generally they were about play, lending and returning. This was something that was a practised habit and part of their weekly activity in another library, namely the book library. Swedes as a population are prone to borrow as visiting public libraries could be viewed as a societal norm considering the large amount of loans that was reported for the year 2023, 64 million (Kungliga biblioteket, 2023). The fact that swedes borrow books to a large extent and with the knowledge provided by Ozanne and Ballantine (2010) where they describe parents wanting to avoid store bought items due to conflicts and the children not being able to explore all that is available for them, an argument could be put forward that borrowing is actually something that could be spoken for more in Sweden, as it seems that the general population would consider it a positive development that would make their daily life smoother.

This brings us to the topic of consumption and independence. All ten of the participating children expressed levels of independence. They experienced being in control of the process of choosing and borrowing, making choices that suited them in that moment. Some children even reflected over the consequences and actions needed to be made if the wrong choice was made. Then that item was simply brought back, and a new item could be picked and hopefully that one suited the child better. This understanding of children as active participants aligns with Vygotsky's sociocultural perspectives, where consumption is seen not simply as an economic act but as a cultural practice embedded in everyday life. And it has been argued that children's consumer behaviour is shaped from the early developmental stages through interactions with media, family, and commercial messages (Valkenburg & Cantor, 2001). This should indicate that children's consumer behaviours also could be influenced by alternatives to shopping, that if the child is introduced to sharing, mend, borrow and trade from an early age this is what consumption looks like for that individual. At least that is what Ärlemalm-Hagsér and Elliott (2020) argues as ESD is very much about behaviours and practical implements in individuals' day to day lives.

To further elaborate on the theme of independence, it is of importance as it allows for the use of toy libraries as a place for children to explore concepts of education and sustainability. As explained by Røyne and Fernqvist (2020) toy libraries can provide subtle education as well, in forms of nudging societal norms closer to sharing rather than owning. Pramling Samuelsson and Park (2017) and Ärlemalm-Hagsér and Elliott (2020) also emphasises that change and an understanding of ESD is something children need to learn by doing, seeing and feeling, rather than being instructed about.

What is more is the importance of viewing the experience from the view of the child, otherwise small but important interpretations might me overseen. As in the case with the child that expressed being fully independent when choosing items to borrow, and the adult explaining that there were limitations and terms that came with making a loan. But the important fact here was the experienced independent and the fact that independence can be identified in as many different ways as there are responses (van Manen, 2016; Christensen et al., 2017).

Sharing is caring and shopping is popping?

Children did express concern, what if something was not going to be fun to play with, or what if there was a lack of a certain motive or what is the child's favourite character was unavailable at the time of the visit? This is another side to usage of a toy library, the items offered might differ to what is being offered at a store. As children are being targeted by marketing, tv-commercials, characters, logotypes they are exposed to in their everyday, the logotype of the toy library, children will have preferences (Valkenburg & Cantor, 2001).

To prolong childhood and engage in less consumption is discussed by Ozanne and Ozanne (2011) and what they mean with this is that instead of turning children into consumers being targeted by commercials and being exposed to brands and toys that the parents might want to censure for various reasons. Children will try to persuade their family members to get them what they want (Valkenburg & Cantor, 2001), and at a store this could be something that turns into a conflict. Unlike traditional toy stores a toy library focus less on getting the child's attention to a certain item but rather have them explore items based on their own interest and need. At a store the impressions might be so intense that the child only explores a fraction of the available items (Ozanne & Ballantine, 2010).

As a toy library enables children to explore toys at a paste that suites them, this is also done without having to consider the economy of the family (Ozanne & Ballantine, 2010). As the items at a toy library all have the same price value, the only restriction is the number of toys the child can choose, there is no need for the families to restrict the child's wishes due to finances. This study did not explore the economic part of being lenders, and according to previous research by Högman et al. (2024) and Ozanne and Ozanne (2011) it does not seem like it is families that have restrained finances that seek out lending establishments.

When asked about their experiences of sharing the responses were sparse, not because the children did not have opinions, but rather because this was something they had not thought about. But in accordance with Muldoon et al. (2019) the older children seemed to be more aware of the fact that they did share the items with other families, and this was described as no concern to these children. The willingness and openness to sharing is central to ESD as this matches with the values of Education for Sustainable Development, where empathy and community are highlighted (UNESCO, 2020). As part of sharing goods is also the returning of borrowed items, a part of the lending cycle that was given no more weight than other parts in the process by the children. This could be explained by the fact that visiting the toy library and making returns a regular activity has been taught to be something positive as in enables more play (Ärlemalm-Hagsér & Elliott, 2020).

Love pre-loved

Toy libraries, often run by non-profit organizations turn national policies into everyday actions. Instead of buying new toys, families get to borrow, use, and return them, helping to extend the life of each item and cut down on unnecessary consumption. It's a simple idea, but one that fits neatly with the broader engagement for sustainable living (Moser & Bader, 2023). This was echoed by one of the adults expressing that the toy library also functioned as a way for their family to spend less and avoiding the hustle of having to store and eventually sell items that the children no longer wanted to use. For the children, borrowing and returning toys wasn't something negative or boring, it was just part of the fun. Getting to try something new each time made the experience exciting rather than about losing something. This shows how everyday routines at the toy library can support sustainable habits in a natural way, where ideas like sharing and reuse become part of what children do, not just something they are told about (UNESCO, 2017; Ärlemalm-Hagsér & Elliott, 2020).

The use of a toy library, as discussed by Ozanne and Ozanne (2011), may serve as a practical example of this type of learning, sharing and reuse. Their research shows that children who borrow from toy libraries learn to care for shared goods, practice resource-sharing and donate items they no longer use. This is something most of the children described doing in various ways, collecting the items for return, some counted and cleaned the parts, others focused more on finding the next fun thing to bring home, but that is part of sharing too. Over time early experiences may contribute to general pro-environmental habits, such as carpooling, thrift shopping, or organizing community lending initiatives as clothes-swapping. All this put

together could contribute to children grow into sustainable citizens. And this is something that Sweden, and Europe, could benefit from in an attempt to reach their goals of recycling municipal waste (European Commission, 2023; European Environment Agency, 2020). To further engage children to become aware of environmental issues Yang et al. (2022) suggests narrative-based education as a way to introduce young children to the field. Here the toy library is already a space to do so, as children share experiences with each other, but this could be further elaborated as in holding workshops where storytelling and activities connected to sustainable development are the focus. This is all in line with ESD (Vare & Scott, 2007) and Vygotsky's socio-cultural theory of play (Smolucha & Smolucha, 2021) as ESD promotes active participation and the empowerment of children through knowledge, and Vygotsky describes learning through tools and more knowledgeable peers. Tools, in this case toys, can be used to both talk about origin of the toy, how it is made and by who, how it ended up at the toy library and how much less CO2 emissions are being let out due to the children sharing rather than owning (Røyne & Fernqvist, 2020).

My time to shine

As there are only three main toy libraries in Sweden for now, they are not accessible to all. I would further argue that they are not even accessible to all in the cities they are located in, maybe not even in the areas where they have their facilities. That children from the north or south of Sweden cannot visit makes sense, you simply do not take a trip to Gothenburg or Stockholm for a quick visit at a toy library after pre-school or school. For the children in the two cities where toy libraries can be found, one limitation is the knowledge about the library's existence. Not all families will have friends or neighbours that visit either, thus they will not talk about the libraries amongst themselves. Others might not engage in social media accounts that would highlight or advertise about the toy libraries. Another contributing factor that might be limiting to some families, apart from distance to the libraries, are the opening hours of the libraries. As they are mostly dependent on volunteers to keep open, the days and times to visit might not suit families that work extra shifts, late evenings and weekends. This strain of thought is also confirmed by Högman et al. (2024) as they identified that some families simply do not identify as borrowers, or as I argue, do not know about the option to borrow rather than own. As for not knowing about the possibilities to use toy libraries, there could be another angle to this as well. For one, adults might have heard about toy libraries but are unsure about what to expect, thinking that the toys will be old and unattractive, that the

libraries are only for the local residents and some might simply prefer the buy new items for various reasons.

Further, the aspect of inclusion needs to be highlighted, if the toy libraries are located in areas where the population is predominantly made up of one majority group, and that is not the group you identify with, a visit might not feel so intriguing. This also applies for families that in other ways might feel norm breaking in that area, due to religion, family constellation, level of education, financial possibilities and language barriers.

In this thesis I came to the conclusion that the children enjoyed the whole concept of the toy library, spending time there, occasionally interact with others, take part in festivities and borrow fun things. How ever I recognise that this might not be the experience for all children, that might depend on their previous experiences of borrowing, their parents level of interference, for example if a child were not to experience independency at a toy library but rather restrictions and warnings the overall feelings regarding lending toys might be negative. The lending process could also be considered somewhat time consuming and annoying in the view of the adults, it is ultimately their responsibility that the items are being returned on time, in the same state as they were prior to their loan and to make sure that they have been cleaned. The knowledge that another adult might correct you for being late or have incorrectly cleaned something might be off putting for some.

Do we now know how children experience lending toys?

The reason for there not being a toy library in every corner of Sweden could be due to lack of demand, and this could be because the awareness of them needs to be increased. It is less money out of one's pocket and it gives you more toys than your kid could play with. Children seem to really appreciate the concept of borrowing, trying and playing with items regardless of them being pre-owned, new, old or trendy. So, did my chosen method of phenomenology give me the responses I needed to answer the research question? I believe so, what I required the most when talking to the children was the ability to adapt the interview approach to their needs, mood and personalities. Using a phenomenology approach gave me just that as it is a combination of semi-structured interviews and observations (van Manen, 2016). This resulted in the children getting asked about the same topics, but not necessary the exact same questions. Some children needed to get into their play and answer questions as a character from their play, others needed me to participate in their game in order to answer questions.

All of this was made possible with a phenomenology approach. The older children were not so concerned with play but was instead more comfortable doing a puzzle and answer the questions one after the other, this was also a way made possible within phenomenology. Against this background, it is crucial to design the research in this study in a way that facilitates children's active participation. Through a phenomenological approach, with semi-structured conversations in a safe and playful environment, children are given the opportunity to express their experiences and perceptions of the Toy Library both in their daily lives and in relation to broader themes such as responsibility, sharing, and community (Christensen et al., 2017; Van Manen, 1997; Einarsdottir, 2007). And these various ways of conducting the interviews also mirrors the results. It is all about the individual experience, they might be having similar experiences at the same location, but they still differ depending on the child's personality, preferences and family backgrounds? The result clearly shows that the method worked as it was able to adapt to the child and made them comfortable enough to share their experiences and opinions (UNICEF, 1989). A toy library could also function as a platform where children can express their opinions and receive information and ideas shared by others. In accordance with article 31 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, children have the right to engage in play but should also be allowed leisure and recovery (UNICEF, 1989).

A brief reflection about my participants

The sampling was limited to children visiting the toy library somewhat regularly, this in itself excludes a vast majority of the population. It is mainly people living in close proximity of the toy library that visits, this as it can be stressful to both get children from pre-school and school, travel for a bit and then make it before closing time. The fee for both the travel, lending cards and the cost if something breaks or get lost could be of putting for some families due to low income. Another potential reason for not visiting could be the feeling of not belonging. If the toy library is located in an area mainly made up of families that have a different ethnicity, language, culture or religion as oneself it might feel like a bit of a hurdle to make that first visit. For this thesis no information regarding the participating family's level of education, income, ethnicity or religious belonging was collected, so I cannot say much about that, other than that nine out of the ten participants spoke Swedish and the tenth English. Looking at the toy library's introductions of their volunteers, board members and staff most of them come across as white, or white passing, Europeans, this mirrors the participants of this thesis too (Leksaksbiblioteket, 2020; Leksaksbiblioteket Stockholm, 2024; Högsbo Leksaksbibliotek, 2025). This could indicate that the areas where the toy libraries are located

are predominantly made up of white families with enough income and free time to be able to engage in volunteer work during weekdays and sometimes also weekends. All of this together describes a little bit of my sampling and why representation is limited.

Future Research

There are many different aspects that could be further researched regarding toy libraries, especially in Sweden. As described in the discussion, there are some challenges for the toy libraries in regard to reaching out to all parts of the Swedish society. Children do seem to find toy libraries great, but it is ultimately the parents' decision whether to visit or not.

One of my suggestions is therefore to research how toy libraries are experienced from the adults' point of view. This could include investigating how adults think the libraries could evolve to better suit their needs and should involve families that do not currently use toy libraries. Even more important is to research why some families have stopped using toy libraries, what were their reasons, and what could be done to attract them again, if anything? Or perhaps come to the conclusion that borrowing is not for everyone.

Future research could also aim to understand how toy libraries could be more clearly framed as educational spaces for young children. Rather than viewing sustainability education as separate from the ordinary curriculum, educators, politicians, influencers and adults should pass on desired behaviours such as borrowing, sharing, and returning. This might be developed in collaboration with staff and volunteers at toy libraries, what are their views on the practice that is the toy library?

A study where young children discuss sharing and lending as concepts and then visit a toy library as part of an educational field trip could also be valuable. A follow-up could explore whether their thoughts have changed or developed after the visit. Interviews, walk-alongs, and observations could be used in a study carried out over a prolonged period of time.

In conclusion, future research could build on this thesis by including the perspectives of parents, various types of educators, and toy library staff to offer a more complete view of how toy libraries can contribute to different populations in Sweden, and maybe even other similar societies. Longitudinal studies might also examine if early experiences of sharing items influence children’s attitudes toward sustainability later in life.

Conclusion

This thesis has examined children's experiences with toy libraries with theoretical insights from phenomenology, Vygotsky's sociocultural theory of play, and Education for Sustainable Development. The study reveals that borrowing toys is a way to build independent and confident children. It also reveals that ESD is something that children can engage in from a young age. Lastly, the process of lending toys turned out to be appreciated and largely a positive experience for all of the participants.

The two findings that stood out the most is the throughout experience of independence expressed by all participants. The second finding being that the returning of items did not seem to be of bother to the children, and this is something that I myself as a parent have had thoughts about. This could be a further argument to why more libraries of various sorts should be invested in, as the children seem to mostly experience positive feelings and sensations connected to borrowing, as several of the participants also visited the book library and shared similar thoughts about lending and returning books as they did toys.

Considering that toy libraries could functions as a space were children and their families encounter sustainability, language, culture and build social relationships we as a society should engage more in these local safe places. Not just for our children, but for a sustainable future as well, as we together learn to care for things but also each other and encourage empathy and a sense of belonging.

Taken together, I would argue that a toy library can act as both a place of leisure, an extra activity to engage in, a place for families to socialise and connect with their local community and their children, a place for knowledge exchange and non-formal education and a place for children to exercise their right to express their opinions and to receive information and ideas.

As for the research question, *How do children experience lending toys at a toy library?* I would argue that their experience is positive, filled with fun and contributes to them growing into knowledgeable and independent individuals.

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DEPARTMENT OF PEDAGOGICAL CURRICULAR AND PROFESSIONAL STUDIES

Appendices

Appendix 1 – letter of consent in Swedish

1.Information om behandling av personuppgifter i utbildningssyfte vid Göteborgs universitet och samtycke till deltagande i arbetet

Dataskyddsförordningen (GDPR) ställer krav på att du ska få information om hur dina personuppgifter behandlas. I detta dokument beskrivs hur behandlingen går till och vilka rättigheter du har som registrerad. På sista sidan i detta dokument finns även en samtyckesblankett rörande deltagande i nedan beskrivna arbete.

Vem är ansvarig för behandlingen av dina personuppgifter?

Göteborgs universitet är personuppgiftsansvarig för den behandling studenter utför inom ramen för sina studier.

Om du har frågor om behandlingen kan du vända dig till studenten som utför behandlingen.

Kurskod	ESD700
Titel/benämning på studentens arbete	Hur upplever barn att låna leksaker på ett leksaksbibliotek?

Studentens namn	Emma-Liz Larsson
Studentens e-post	larssonemmaliz@gmail.com

Rättslig grund och ändamål med behandlingen

Universitetet har enligt 1 kap. 2 § högskolelag (1992:1434) i uppdrag att anordna utbildning. Detta innebär att universitetet har rätt att behandla personuppgifter enligt den rättsliga grunden allmänt intresse när det är nödvändigt för att utföra sitt utbildningsuppdrag, enligt artikel 6.1 e GDPR.

Detta innebär även att enskilda studenter behandlar personuppgifter i utbildningssyfte. Studenter behandlar personuppgifter i sin utbildning, t.ex. vid genomförande av självständiga arbeten (examensarbeten), uppsatser eller fältstudier. Studenten ska då formulera ett tydligt och avgränsat syfte med arbetet. Studenten har nedan fyllt i syftet med arbetet.

Studentens syfte

Jag skriver just nu mitt examensarbete som handlar om hur barn upplever att låna leksaker i ett leksaksbibliotek. Syftet med studien är att undersöka hur barn beskriver sin upplevelse av att låna leksaker, samt vilka tankar och känslor som uppstår under denna upplevelse. Under intervjutillfället, kommer barnet, dess medföljande vuxen och mina egna ord och tankar att spelas in på en ljudfil. Det är endast upplevelser och känslor som kommer att finnas med i mitt arbete, citat och exempel för att tydliggöra mina resultat och analyser. Det kommer finnas ålder på barnen som grupp angivet i arbetet, men inte ålder på specifika barn. Exempelvis “12 barn deltog och deras åldrar varierade mellan 3 - 6 år fyllda”.

Studenten kommer behandla följande uppgifter om dig

Studenten har kryssat i de uppgifter som studenten kommer att behandla om dig:

☐ namn, kontaktuppgifter och/eller adressinformation

☐ enbart indirekta personuppgifter såsom exempelvis svar på enkätfrågor m.m.

☐ etniskt ursprung

☐ politiska åsikter

☐ religiös eller filosofisk övertygelse

☐ medlemskap i en fackförening

☐ hälsa

☐ uppgifter om sexualliv eller sexuell läggning

☐ genetiska uppgifter

☐ biometriska uppgifter som används för att entydigt identifiera en person

☐ uppgifter om lagöverträdelser

☐ andra typer av personuppgifter, ange i fritext:

Metod för insamling

Nedan har studenten kryssat i vilken eller vilka metoder som kommer att användas för insamlingen i studentens arbete.

☐ Bild- eller videoupptagning

☐ Ljudupptagning

☐ Enkät

☐ Intervju

☐ Observation

☐ Annan, ange i fritext:

Vem kommer att kunna ta del av personuppgifterna?

Enbart de personer som är involverade i det arbete som studenten utför i utbildningssyfte vid Göteborgs universitet ska kunna ta del av dina personuppgifter. Det innebär exempelvis att studenten själv och eventuell handledare till studenten kommer att ta del av dina personuppgifter.

Uppgifter kan begäras ut med stöd av offentlighetsprincipen

Dina personuppgifter eller handlingar som dina personuppgifter förekommer i kan, om de lämnas in till universitet av studenten, komma att bli föremål för en begäran om allmän handling i enlighet med offentlighetsprincipen. Det innebär att enskilda kan ta del av allmänna handlingar och därmed få tillgång till uppgifter där dina personuppgifter förekommer, om dessa inte omfattas av sekretess. Sådana utlämnanden hanteras därför i enlighet med bestämmelserna i tryckfrihetsförordning (1949:105) och offentlighets- och sekretesslag (2009:400).

Studenter uppmanas att inte lämna in direkt identifierande uppgifter (namn, kontaktuppgifter m.m.) om dig när studenten lämnar in sitt färdigställda arbete. På så vis kommer det i det flesta fall enbart vara möjligt att begära ut indirekta personuppgifter om dig från universitetet.

Hur länge kommer personuppgifterna att behandlas?

Dina personuppgifter kommer enbart att behandlas under den tid som studentens arbete i utbildningssyfte pågår. Efter att arbetet har avslutats kommer studenten att

radera personuppgifterna. Detta gäller dock inte sådana uppgifter som har lämnats in till universitetet och som därmed blir en allmän handling (se ovan).

Kommer dina personuppgifter behandlas utanför EU/EES?

Universitet kan i verksamheten komma att föra över personuppgifter till tredje land, det vill säga till länder utanför EU/EES. Under sådana förhållanden gäller särskild lagstiftning. Universitet kommer under sådana förhållanden att vidta alla rimliga juridiska, organisatoriska och tekniska åtgärder som krävs för att uppnå en lämplig skyddsnivå för dessa personuppgifter. En överföring till USA kan komma att ske vid behandling i universitets verktyg för textredigering och fillagring som studenten använder. Universitetet använder Microsofts tjänster för detta.

Dina rättigheter enligt GDPR

Dataskyddsförordningen anger att den enskilde har ett antal rättigheter. Nedan anges de mest relevanta rättigheterna. Om du vill läsa en mer utvecklad beskrivning av dina rättigheter enligt GDPR kan du gå in på www.gu.se/om-webbplatsen/behandling-av-personuppgifter.

Rätten till tillgång (registerutdrag)

Som enskild har du rätt att kostnadsfritt en gång per år begära information om vilka personuppgifter som universitetet behandlar om dig. Kontakta oss via dataskydd@gu.se för att begära ett utdrag av dina personuppgifter hos oss.

Rätten till radering

Som enskild har du rätt att få dina personuppgifter raderade i de fall som personuppgifterna inte längre behövs för att uppfylla det ändamål som de samlades in för (rätten att bli bortglömd).

Det kan finnas bestämmelser som anger att personuppgifterna inte får raderas, vilket gör att det då är dessa bestämmelser som gäller och att uppgifterna därför inte kan raderas.

I de fall det finns rättsliga hinder mot radering av personuppgifterna kommer universitetet att begränsa behandlingen av dessa personuppgifter till att endast omfatta behandling i den utsträckning som det finns rättsligt stöd för.

Rätten att invända mot behandling

Som enskild har du i vissa fall rätt att invända mot att universitet behandlar dina personuppgifter. Om det inte finns tvingande skäl för universitetet att fortsätta behandla personuppgifterna, som till exempel för att uppfylla rättsliga krav, kommer universitet att upphöra med behandlingen.

Kontaktuppgifter till dataskyddsombudet

Har du frågor om den specifika behandlingen kan du vända dig till studenten som har samlat in uppgifterna. Studenten har fyllt i sitt namn och kontaktuppgifter under rubriken ”Vem är ansvarig för behandlingen av dina personuppgifter?” i detta dokument.

Om du har frågor om behandlingen eller har klagomål kan du även vända dig till universitets dataskyddsombud på e-post dataskyddsombud@gu.se.

Om du vill läsa mer om hur Göteborgs universitet behandlar personuppgifter generellt och en utvecklad beskrivning av dina rättigheter enligt GDPR kan du gå in på www.gu.se/om-webbplatsen/behandling-av-personuppgifter.

Du har rätt att klaga till Integritetsskyddsmyndigheten (IMY)

Om du anser att universitetet behandlar dina personuppgifter i strid med dataskyddsförordningen har du rätt att lämna in ett klagomål till Integritetsskyddsmyndigheten. Närmare information om hur du går till väga för att lämna ett klagomål finns på Integritetsskyddsmyndigheten webbplats, www.imy.se.

2.Samtycke till deltagande

Det är frivilligt för dig delta i studentens arbete och du kan närsomhelst återkalla ditt samtycke fram till dess att arbetet har lämnats in. Vänligen läs igenom informationen ovan innan du samtycker till deltagande. Om du har frågor om informationen ovan eller studentens arbete kan du kontakta studenten. Studentens kontaktuppgifter finns på första sidan i informationen samt nedan.

Kurskod	ESD700
Titel/benämning på studentens arbete	Hur upplever barn att låna leksaker på ett leksaksbibliotek?
Studentens namn	Emma-Liz Larsson
Studentens e-post	Larssonemmaliz@gmail.com

Samtycke

Jag samtycker till deltagande i ovanstående arbete som utförs av studenten.

Jag samtycker till att de personuppgifter som nämns ovan behandlas om mig i arbetet.

Jag har tagit del av informationen som presenterades tillsammans med denna samtyckesblankett.

Underskrift

Datum

Namnförtydligande

Kontaktuppgifter (E-post och/eller telefonnummer)

Appendix 2 – letter of consent in English

Information about the processing of personal data for educational purposes at the University of Gothenburg and consent to participate in the work

The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) requires that you are informed about how your personal data is processed. This document describes how the processing is carried out and what rights you have as a data subject. The last page of this document also contains a consent form for participation in the work described below.

Who is responsible for the processing of your personal data?

The University of Gothenburg is the data controller for the processing carried out by students in the context of their studies.

If you have questions about the processing, you can contact the student who carries out the processing

Course code	ESD700
Title of the student's project	How does children experience lending toys at a toy library?
Name of the student	Emma-Liz Larsson
Email address of the student	Larssonemmaliz@gmail.com

Legal basis and purpose of the processing

According to chapter 1 §2 of the Higher Education Act (1992:1434), the university has a mission to organize education. This means that the university has the right to process personal data on the legal basis of public interest when it is necessary to fulfil its educational mission according to article 6.1 e GDPR.

This also means that individual students process personal data for educational purposes. Students process personal data in their education, e.g. when carrying out individual projects, essays or field studies. In these cases, the student must formulate an explicit and limited purpose for the project. The student has filled in the purpose of the project below.

Purpose for the student

I am currently writing my thesis, which explores how children experience borrowing toys from a toy library. The purpose of the study is to investigate how children describe their experience of borrowing toys, as well as the thoughts and feelings that arise during this experience. During the interview sessions, the child, their accompanying adult, and my own words and reflections will be recorded as an audio file. Only experiences and emotions will be included in my thesis, using quotes and examples to clarify my results and analysis. The children's ages will be presented as a group, but not individually. For example: "Twelve children participated, and their ages ranged from 3 to 6 years old."

The student will process the following data about you

Below, the student has ticked the data the student will process about you:

- ☐ name, contact information and/or address information
- ☐ only indirect personal data such as answers to survey questions, etc.
- ☐ ethnic origin
- ☐ political views
- ☐ religious or philosophical beliefs
- ☐ membership of a trade union
- ☐ health
- ☐ information about sexual life or sexual orientation
- ☐ genetic data
- ☐ biometric data used to uniquely identify a person
- ☐ data on offences against the law
- ☐ other types of personal data, please specify in free text:

Method of collection (to be filled in by the student)

Below, the student has ticked the method(s) that will be used for data collection in the project.

- ☐ Image or video recording
- ☐ Sound recording
- ☐ Survey
- ☐ Interview
- ☐ Observation
- ☐ Other method, describe it here:

Who will be able to access the personal data?

Only the persons involved in the project that the student is conducting for educational purposes at the University of Gothenburg will be able to access your personal data. This means, for example, that the student and a possible supervisor of the student will have access to your personal data.

Data can be requested under the principle of public access to official records

Your personal data or documents containing your personal data may, if submitted to the university by the student, be subject to a request in accordance with the principle of public access to official records. This means that individuals can request access to official documents and thus gain access to information in which your personal data appears, if these are not covered by confidentiality. These requests are handled in accordance with the principles of the Freedom of the Press Act (1949:105) and the Public Information and Privacy Act (2009:400).

Students are encouraged not to submit information about you that can identify you directly (name, contact details, etcetera) when submitting their finalised work. This way, it will in most cases only be possible to request indirect personal data about you from the university.

For how long will the personal data be processed?

Your personal data will only be processed for the duration of the student's work for educational purposes. After the project has been completed, the student will delete the personal data. However, this does not apply to data that has been submitted to the university and which thus becomes a official document (see above).

Will your personal data be processed outside the EU/EEA?

As the result of the university's activities, the university may transfer personal data to third countries; i.e. to countries outside the EU/EEA. In such circumstances, special legislation applies. In these cases, the university will take all reasonable legal, organizational and technical measures required to achieve an appropriate level of protection for the personal data. A transfer to the US may occur when the student is using the text editing and file storage tools provided by the university. The university uses Microsoft for these services.

Your rights according to GDPR

GDPR states that individuals have a number of rights. The most relevant rights are listed below. If you want to read a more detailed description of your rights according to GDPR, please visit https://www.gu.se/en/about-the-website/processing-personal-data.

Right of access (register extract)

As an individual, you have the right to once a year, free of charge, request information about what personal data the university processes about you. Contact us via dataskydd@gu.se to request an extract of your personal data from us.

The right to be forgotten

As an individual, you have the right to have your personal data erased in cases where the personal data is no longer needed to fulfil the purpose for which it was collected (the right to be forgotten).

There may be other legislation stating that personal data cannot be erased, in which case this legislation applies and the data cannot be erased.

In cases where there are legal obstacles to the deletion of personal data, the university will limit the processing of these personal data to only include processing to the extent that there is a legal basis for.

The right to object to processing

As an individual, you have in certain cases the right to object to the university processing your personal data. If there are no compelling reasons for the university to continue processing the personal data, such as to fulfil legal requirements, the university will cease processing.

Contact details for the Data Protection Officer

If you have questions about the specific processing, you can contact the student who collected the data. The student has filled in his/her/their name and contact details under the heading "Who is responsible for the processing of your personal data?" in this document.

If you have questions about the processing or have complaints, you can also contact the university's Data Protection Officer, by email dataskyddsombud@gu.se.

If you want to read more about how the University of Gothenburg processes personal data in general and a detailed description of your rights according to GDPR, please visit https://www.gu.se/en/about-the-website/processing-personal-data.

You have the right to complain to the Swedish Authority for Privacy Protection (IMY)

If you believe that the university processes your personal data in violation of GDPR, you have the right to file a complaint with the Swedish Authority for Privacy Protection, IMY. Further information on how to make a complaint can be found on the website of IMY, www.imy.se/en.

Consent to participating

Your participation in the student's work is voluntary and you can withdraw your consent at any time until the work has been submitted. Please read the information above before agreeing to participate. If you have any questions about the above information or the student's work, please contact the student. The student's contact details can be found on the first page of the information and below.

Course code	ESD700
Title of the student's project	How does children experience lending toys at a toy library?
Name of the student	Emma-Liz Larsson
Email address of the student	Larssonemmaliz.larsson@gmail.com

Consent

I consent to participation in the project carried out by the student as described above.
I consent to the processing of my personal data in the project mentioned above.
I have read the information presented together with this consent form.

_____ _____
Signature Date

_____ _____
Name clarification Contact information (Email and/or phone number)

Appendix 3 – Topic guide

Övergripande tema - KÄNSLAN av att besöka Leksaksbiblioteket

-Vad känner du när ni ska gå hit?

-Vad känner du när ni är framme?

-Vad känner du när du är inne i Leksaksbiblioteket?

-Kan det kännas olika vid olika besök?

-Varför känns det som det gör?

Övergripande tema – UPPLEVELSER kopplade till lånprocessen

-Vad är det första du vill göra när du kommer in i stora rummet?

- Vad är det första du brukar göra när du kommer in i stora rummet?

- Hur vet du hur många saker du får låna med dig hem?

-Hur bestämmer du vad som ska få följa med hem?

-Får du bestämma helt själv?

- Med vad och vem leker du på Leksaksbiblioteket?

Övergripande tema - LÅN och ÅTERLÄMNING

-Hur känns det att lämna tillbaka saker du har haft hemma?

- Hur känns det att låna hem nya saker?

-Hur känns det att låna saker som delas med andra?

-Hur känns det att lämna tillbaka något som varit superkul/inte det roligaste?

-Brukar ni hjälpas åt med att förbereda hemma inför återlämning? (samla ihop, räkna, rengöra?)

Övergripande tema - UPPFÖLJNING

-Uppstår konflikter?

-Är besöket här alltid i syfte att låna/återlämna?

- Hur/brukar ni prata om Leksaksbiblioteket hemma?

-Varför valde ni som familj att börja nyttja Leksaksbiblioteket?

Topic guide

This topic guide has been translated into English from Swedish by me. Original guide above.

Overall theme – The EXPERIANCE of visiting a toy library

-How do you feel when you're about to go here?

-How do you feel when you've arrived?

-How do you feel when you're inside the Toy Library?

-Can it feel different on different visits?

-Why do you think it feels that way?

Overall theme -EXPERIENCES related to the borrowing process

-What's the first thing you want to do when you come into the big room?

-What's the first thing you usually do when you come into the big room?

-How do you know how many things you're allowed to borrow and take home?

-How do you decide what to take home with you?

-Do you get to decide completely on your own?

-With what and whom do you play with at the toy library?

Overall theme - LOAN and RETURNS

-How does it feel to return things you've had at home?

-How does it feel to borrow new things to take home?

-How does it feel to borrow things that are shared with other people?

-How does it feel to return something that was really fun/not so fun?

-Do you usually help each other get ready at home before returning the toys? (Collecting, counting and cleaning the parts)

Overall theme – FOLLOW-UP

-Do conflicts arise?

-Is the visit always for borrowing/returning toys?

-How/Do you talk about the Toy Library at home?

-Why did you as a family choose to start using the Toy Library