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Library Manager's Report September 2026

Children's Area Refresh Project. As the Library Foundation wraps up its fundraising, plans for implementing the project are underway. The children's area will be closed for the month of November while work is done to rewire, paint, install new carpet, move shelving, and set up new furnishings and equipment. Celebrations and a grand reopening will take place as soon as the project wraps up, which likely will be in early December.

Every Child Ready Duluth. The independent evaluator working with the ECRD initiative has released a report following community conversations with parents and caregivers in the Duluth area last spring. ECRD staff led three online sessions with a total of 17 participants. Participants highlighted that welcoming, kid-friendly spaces are important to them, as well as accessible restrooms, safe layouts and parking. Some concerns were expressed around safety at the downtown location. The single most cited reason why families keep coming back was library staff. Participants also expressed appreciation for story times, scavenger hunts, play areas, toy checkouts, special events and community passes. They mentioned wanting Saturday hours at all three locations, as well as outdoor year-around spaces, movement and music programs.

New ADA Parking Stall. At the request of library staff, an additional ADA parking space was installed on Superior St. in front of the Main Library. This was suggested by the library's Accessibility Team as well as staff who work in Circulation. City Parking Manager Mark Bauer took the issue to the Parking Commission, which promptly approved the request. The new parking stall does not have a curb cut. Even without a curb cut, however, it is likely to make the Main Library more accessible for people with mobility impairments, especially with the Michigan St. entrance closed.

Port Cards. As a new school year begins, staff have compiled usage statistics for Port Cards. A Port Card is a virtual library card that is issued to every student enrolled in the Duluth School District or attending Harbor City International School. A Port Card allows a student to have access to all of DPL's databases and digital collections, as well as to check out up to five physical items at a time using their student ID number. The use of Port Cards grew significantly over the 2025-26 school year. The number of items checked out on Port Cards between September 2025 and July 2026 nearly tripled this year, with over 6100 items borrowed. Last year about 2700 items were checked out on Port Cards. August Port Card statistics will be compiled at the end of the month.