

February 26, 2001

Carolyn Colvin, President  
Faculty Senate  
N242 LC  
University of Iowa

Dear President Colvin:

As University faculty members and parents of small children, we are concerned about the University's withdrawal of support for the 4Cs toy library. The University has generously provided space for the library, rent-free, for the past fifteen years. Because of the change in the University's rental arrangement with the owner of the Old Public Library (where the toy library is housed,) the toy library is facing eviction. We hope that the Faculty Senate will join us in encouraging Vice President Doug True, Associate Vice President Robert Foldesi, and Family Issues Coordinator Jane Holland to find a way to keep the toy library in its current location or in some nearby downtown space.

To fully appreciate the role the toy library plays in the Iowa City Community, you need to visit with a small child so that you see how the librarian, Ruth Rhoades, welcomes children and makes sure (despite the constraints of a limited budget) that they have an inviting selection of clean appealing toys available to borrow. Ms. Rhoades gets to know children's toy preferences personally and calls their parents when something she knows they will especially like has been returned to the shelves. People from all sectors of the Iowa City community come together at the toy library --University faculty members, graduate students, day care providers, and low-income families who could not otherwise provide their children with the variety of play opportunities the toy library makes possible.

The toy library's current location is ideal because it allows parents to visit the Iowa City public library and the 4Cs toy library in one fell swoop, thereby increasing the chances that children will benefit from both of the places. For faculty members with small children as well as graduate and undergraduate student parents, the toy library serves as an important gathering place, as well as a source of educational toys for children. Support for the toy library is consistent with the University's expressed interest in encouraging alternatives to alcohol consumption downtown.

The 4Cs Coordinator, Teresa Guither, is beginning to consider a plan to move the library to the 4Cs office on Sycamore Street, a move that would necessitate the raising of money to cover necessary construction, and the confinement of the toy library to a smaller space. This is a default plan, but one that we hope can be avoided. Because the toy library is such a worthwhile institution, because its current location is so ideal for its purpose, and because the University's longstanding support has resulted in a happy commingling of town and gown, we fervently hope that the University will find a way to help the toy library stay in its current location or in a site close by.

Thank you very much for considering this matter. Please do not hesitate to contact Judith Pascoe ([judith-pascoe@uiowa.edu](mailto:judith-pascoe@uiowa.edu)) should the Faculty Senate need further information in order to address the toy library's plight.

Yours sincerely

Judith Pascoe

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Cc: Teresa Guither, 4Cs Coordinator  
Doug True, Vice President, Finances and University Services  
Robert Foldesi, Associate Vice President, Human Resources  
Jane Holland, Human Resources and Family Services  
Philip Jones, Vice President for Student Services and Dean of Students  
Jan Warren, Chair, Council on the Status of Women