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Automatic library membership for newborn babies in Moray

Public libraries in Moray are demonstrating that when it comes to enjoying books, you are never too young.

The council's libraries and registrar's services have teamed up to issue a library card to every child when their birth is registered.

The card means that a child automatically becomes a library member from their very earliest days.

It entitles them to borrow books, talking books, CDs and DVDs virtually from the moment they enter the world – admittedly with a little help from mum or dad at first.

Moray Council’s principal librarian, Sheila Campbell, said the initiative would help encourage children to read from an early age and grow up enjoying all that books have to offer.

“As far as I am aware we are the first local authority to automatically issue library membership to ones so young and it is a good example of collaborative working within the council.

“I am sure the initiative will be popular with parents who I hope will see it as part of giving their new baby the best possible start in life.”

Councillor Anne Skene, who chairs the council’s children and young people’s services committee, presented the first membership to 19-day-old Lochlan Sam Mitchell as his birth was registered at the Elgin registrar’s office today by mum Kathryn Adam and dad Paul Mitchell, of Dunbar Street, Lossiemouth.

“We are delighted to have received funding from the Scottish Government’s public library improvement fund to automatically enrol every child as a library member from the registration of their birth,” said Councillor Skene.

“The libraries service will be working in partnership with the registrars who will hand out the specially designed library card and information flyer to parents. This will allow us to promote the benefits of reading and the library service to those who have traditionally been hardest to reach.”

The initiative is also being supported by Scholastic Books from whose title, *The Loon On The Moon* by Chae Strathie and Emily Golden, the illustrations for the new library cards are taken.

Moray Council area stretches from Tomintoul in the south to the shores of the Moray Firth, from Keith in the east to Forres in the west. The council and its 4,500 employees respond to the needs of 92,500 residents in this beautiful part of Scotland, which nestles between Aberdeenshire and the Highlands.

Headquartered in Elgin, the administrative capital of Moray.

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