Recently, 2-year-olds have been seen coming in and out of the Wolfsohn Memorial Library in King of Prussia, Pennsylvania. They arrive clutching dolls and teddy bears, and their mothers' hands. Less than an hour later they are seen leaving, with borrowed books tucked safely under their arms, humming tunes, and reciting bits and pieces of nursery rhymes, blissfully unaware that they are helping to make history. These children are the youngest group ever to attend organized storyhour sessions in a Montgomery County, Pennsylvania library.

In the past, many people have assumed that youngsters of this age could not benefit from group activities because of their limited vocabularies and short attention span. But Barbara Shertz, children's librarian at Wolfsohn, felt differently. "They understand more than they can express," says the librarian, who had read of a similar program that was successful in Upstate New York.

The idea of the program came to Shertz after area mothers expressed an interest in finding outside stimulation for their sons and daughters. According to a recent report in *Library Journal*, these parents reflect a growing trend among more sophisticated parents and children who want and need new and imaginative library programs.

"Storyhours For Toddlers," which began in the fall of '77, meets this need. The program is specifically geared to the capabilities of boys and girls 2 to 3½ years old. It is shorter than storyhours for older groups — 30 minutes rather than 45; it is filled with constant activity — singing, reciting nursery rhymes, and short games are sandwiched in between stories. And, mothers are included in the fun to provide encouragement, security, and gentle discipline, if necessary.

Reaction to the announcement of the initial six-week session was immediate. Never before had a storyhour produced such response. It was filled to overflowing on the first morning of registration. But the groups were kept small so that each child would be able to see and to participate — 22 children on Monday mornings; 14 on Thursdays.

At the appointed hour, the youngsters and their moms take their places in the community room of the library, encircling storyteller Bridget Flynn, and join her in singing a "wake-up" song. Encouraged by their parents, the children soon catch on to the festive spirit and don imaginary socks and shoes and "polish their noses."

Mothers play an important role in these sessions, explained Shertz. They help the little ones, who can barely put two or three words together, to understand what is going on, and they also provide security so necessary at this age.

"Mother is there holding the child on her lap. There is a nice participation between parent and child. She plays an active role by joining in and sharing an experience with her toddler, unlike watching TV, where both are playing the passive roles."

At the beginning, the children had to get used to listening and participating, but as the weeks went by they became accustomed to the routine and were able to join in more. Occasionally one or two wander away from the group to explore, but they return to their places beside their mothers as soon as their curiosity is satisfied. Very rarely are they disruptive. And only once, remembers Shertz, did a child have to be taken outside because of his behavior.

One day, when the song was over and the group was seated upon floor mats, Flynn introduced large flannel