Toy Lending Library

Hubbard Public Library

Children

|

Tweens (10-12)

Toy Lending Library

Mar 5, 2021

$5,000+

$$$
Byline
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The Toy Lending Library opened in July 2020 and is an ongoing, permanent addition to the services and programs offered by the HPL Children's Room and HPL more generally. To date, it is already a tremendous success, providing at-home, hands-on learning educational resources for children and their families.

The toys are a much-needed and welcome source for patrons and others who wish to supplement available learning opportunities for their children and families. Our Toy Lending Library was made possible by a generous gift from Barb and Loren Kindler in honor of their grandchildren.

Advanced Planning

Plans for the Toy Lending Library have developed and evolved over many years. HPL and its Children's Room staff continuously assess, evaluate, innovate and evolve to meet changing community needs to serve patrons and community members and expand resources and services offered.

Such a program is a beautiful resource at any time (e.g., to provide accessibility to educational and hands-on items beyond books). However, given current and ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and associated restrictions and challenges, this new program is particularly timely as families strive to find additional at-home learning activities and resources.

The numbers of circulation of items from the Toy Lending Library, including Grab, Go & Read bags (bags with six board books) and Sprout Early Learning Backpacks, demonstrate the huge success of this program. Attracting patrons into the library to view and check out these resources presented an unexpected challenge since the library reopened following closure due to the COVID-19 situation and safety concerns.

Marketing

The opening of this new resource was announced and promoted widely, utilizing print, digital, video and other media formats. A video of the opening was posted to HPL's Facebook page and HPL website; news releases appeared in local and community newspapers; and fliers were distributed at HPL's Friends Book Sale events throughout summer and fall 2020.

In addition, the Children's Room hosted a number of special outdoor programs for children and families. Although the building was closed, items from the Toy Lending Library were made available for check-out at these events. Promotion of this new resource has been and will continue to be accomplished via usual library publicity and announcement outlets.

Budgeting

Space for this new and permanent Toy Lending Library was reallocated and repurposed from its previous usage and required minor renovations, refurbishing and new shelving units. This space is ideal for this purpose as it has an entry directly from the Children’s Room space (as well as other access), and the space modification costs associated with converting it to this new use were incidental.

The primary costs are the actual materials (educational toys, hands-on activities, family-oriented resources). An additional essential cost is for the plastic storage containers used for circulating the items. Investing in quality items and the appropriate circulation containers will save on future replacement expenses.

Program Execution

Toys and backpacks in the Toy Lending Library are available for check-out, just as books can be checked out, and thus are ideal for in-home learning and family activities. The items available for circulation are already in high demand and clearly the need for this program will continue to grow. The program will expand through additions to the collection of materials available for circulation to patrons.

Since opening, items from the Toy Lending Library, including the Sprout Early Learning Backpacks, circulation data show that every item available has been checked out at least once; and some of the items have been checked out as many as 18 times! This is particularly impressive given that materials check out for one week, followed by a seven-day quarantine required by safety mandates related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Advice

Our most important advice would be now is the right and perfect time! The time, efforts and resources involved in developing and implementing this Toy Lending Library are completely merited and worthy. Do not wait; begin now. You can start

small. It is not necessary to have hundreds of items for circulation. Plan for and have the numbers and types of items that you can offer, based upon your library's resources (financial, space, personnel, and other).

It is also important to consider the time-consuming nature of a Toy Lending Library. For example, non-book items have very different storage, handling and other considerations than books. These include: inventory, check-out and return of items for which there may be multiple pieces, storage of these diverse materials, and cleaning and sanitizing matters, to name a few.

Also, as with any new program or resource, it is important to collaborate with all departments within your library to ensure success. Support of all library departments and associated staff is essential to the success of any new venture. As libraries and programs, services and resources continue to evolve to meet growing and changing community needs and challenges, 'non-book' collections, resources and services will certainly only expand!

Did you try this program at your library? Share your experience using this form.

Supporting Materials

Document
toy_lending_library_story.pdf
Document
toy_lending_library-childrens_room.pdf
Document
grab_go_read.pdf
Document
toy_lending_library_2021.pdf
Document
childrens_room.pdf
Download this Program as a PDF

- Programming Librarian Facebook Group

More Programs

May 11, 2020
Children (9 and under)+ | □□
Image



Curbside Kids' Activity Kits

Audiences:

Children (9 and under)
May 12, 2020
Children (9 and under)+ | □□
Image



Virtual Literary Legos

Audiences:

Children (9 and under)
Tweens (10-12)
Aug 5, 2020
Children (9 and under)+ | □□
Image



STEAM-y Wonderful Wednesday

Audiences:

Children (9 and under)
Tweens (10-12)
Oct 28, 2020
Children (9 and under)+ | $
Image



Outdoor No-Touch Escape Room

Audiences:

Children (9 and under)
Teens (13-16)
Young Adult (17 - 20)