Littlest Life Skills

Lafayette Public Library

Children

Littlest Life Skills

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Free

Byline

Becca Faul, Children's Librarian, Lafayette (La.) Public Library

This program was developed for children, ages 18 months to 4 years old. Littles can play and explore while developing practical life skills. Children rotate through several stations, each allowing them to learn/practice a life skill while sharpening their fine and gross motor skills. Activities include: sweeping up pom-poms, vacuuming confetti with a small hand vacuum, pouring water into cups, dressing a teddy bear, washing plates, wiping up spills, and so much more!

Advanced Planning

The goals for this program were to introduce basic life skills to children. Each skill practiced was one we typically use in our daily lives (e.g., dressing ourselves,

washing our hands, cleaning up messes). I wanted each activity to also utilize fine/gross motor activity. The goal of the program was not for the learners to master each skill, but rather to introduce them to a new skill and build their confidence. The smiles on their faces whenever they successfully swept up pom-poms or dressed the Teddy bear were indicators that they were building confidence. We wanted this program to be a space to foster the growth of independence in our littlest of learners.

I planned this program about 2-3 months in advance. Because I wanted this to be a low-no cost program, I heavily relied on supplies I had at home, items around the library, or supplies that my colleagues let me borrow (hand vacuums, toddler's clothing, recycle bins, etc.). The program was solely planned and run by myself, but I found it would be beneficial to have an extra set of hands present, as there were so many stations. This was the only issue I faced, and if I do the program again, I will definitely have a second person facilitating with me. That would allow for more one-on-one engagement with the littles and their caregivers.

Marketing

We promoted the program in our quarterly Book Talk program guide, as well as on social media and MediaZone screens throughout our library. I found that the methods of promoting the program were very successful.

Budgeting

There was no cost for this program, however you could tailor the program to your liking if you wanted to purchase any items. I was fortunate enough to have everything we needed, either at home, at the library, or donated by colleagues. For any program that I am determined to keep cost-free, I usually get permission to send a system-wide/building-wide email to employees, asking for donations or items to borrow. This almost always works out!

Day-of-event Activity

Setting up for this event takes a bit more time. I gave myself at least an hour and a half. Because the program had 10 stations, I asked one of our Library Associates to assist me in setting up. I used our Craft Room to set up the messier activities (brushing teeth, wiping up spills, washing hands, washing dishes, cutting "food (Play-Doh) with plastic, kid-safe knives, cutting and pasting paper). I set up all the other activities in our large Storytime room (vacuuming confetti, sorting recyclables and trash, sweeping pom-poms, dressing the Teddy bear, sorting laundry (lights and darks), folding towels, etc.). At each station, I also made signage stating what the activity was and what skills it targeted.

I had only one person assist in setup, but I'd recommend having at least two people set up and help with cleanup after the program. I know that this may not be possible for smaller systems, but you can always limit the number of activity stations and possibly rotate them if you offer the program again.

Program Execution

The program was more successful than I could have imagined. We had over 50 people in attendance. Luckily, our space was large enough to accommodate that many people. We received lots of great feedback, mostly from parents who were excited to take some of the activity ideas home and practice them with their kids more. So much of the feedback I receive as a children's librarian is that caregivers can't believe they never thought to do a certain activity at home. If I can provide a toolkit for parents/caregivers to leave the library with and use at home with their littles, I feel like I have achieved my goal.

Advice

For anyone interested in offering this program or a similar one, I'd say just have fun with it! Don't worry about whether or not every child will be able to do *every* activity. Offer a variety of activities for various skill levels. Know that all of the kids will be really excited to use the vacuum! And, I would suggest you not overthink it. Often, I find myself struggling with whether or not something is *too hard* or *too easy*. Part of the undertone of a program like this is that it's a bonding experience for caregivers

and their littles. Just plan the program and let the patrons explore freely!

Since Programming Librarian published this article, our readers have tried the program at their own libraries! Here’s what they have to say:

Feedback
I am a Children's Librarian at the Oceanside Public Library mainly focusing on ages 0-5 and their parents and caregivers. I think this program would be super beneficial at our library!
— Heidi Garcia, Librarian II Youth Services, Oceanside (Calif.) Public Library

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

Supporting Materials

Download this Program as a PDF

- Programming Librarian Facebook Group

Slideshow Images



Image









Image









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Manipulation Stations

Audiences:

Children (9 and under)