

“Make and Take” or Drop In Library Activities
(from pubyac online discussion group)

From: Diana Cook [\[mailto:dcook@rpl.regina.sk.ca\]](mailto:dcook@rpl.regina.sk.ca)

Thanks to everyone who answered my make and take query. I'm finding these ideas very useful and plan to implement some of them ASAP! You people out there in library land are so great to share your knowledge with others—I know that is what we are all about, but I also know how busy we all are.

Thanks a bunch,

Diana Cook
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At my library, we always have coloring and simple activity sheets available with a small container of markers and crayons. The kids love to do them and look for them when they come into the library. We usually provide new ones about every two weeks. We have done make it/take it crafts also. Some we have done in the past are wooden gliders, snowflakes (We hung these up in the library. A little messy, but most were good about throwing scraps in the trash.), stick puppets (Leftovers from storytimes that were already glued together.), etc. We have never had a major problem with messes. The biggest pain was going through the markers occasionally to discard bad ones and replace tops. I say go for it. Just keep it simple. You can buy crafts from S & S Crafts and Oriental Trading Co. Hope this helps.

Margie Wegrzyn  
Head of Youth Services  
Flossmoor Public Library  
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Several summers ago we collected assorted craft items and placed them in a clear plastic shoebox. We cataloged the box under realia and patrons were able to take the box out along with 2 or 3 pages of construction paper. The box was for “in library” use only. The box contained magic markers, paste, assorted stickers, colored pencils, sharpener, crayons, etc. Patrons were encouraged to work at tables in the juvenile room. Along with the box was a list of activities/suggestions relating to the summer theme.

Bonnie Mazzaferro
Youth Services
Cutchogue-New Suffolk Library

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Diana,  
At my former library we did this all the time. We did have some specialized drop-in crafts, but we always had a craft/art table. We would put leftover crafts from storytime out there, crayons, glue and just plain old craft stuff we had lying around. I don't think it was originally intended to be a permanent thing, but the

kids loved it and came to expect it, so we just started doing it all the time. We would also put coloring pages out and connect the dot type of things as well. As far as mess goes, we had a sign on the table asking the children to clean up after themselves. For the most part that worked, but we would have to make sure that the table and a staff member cleaned the box of craft stuff on a regular basis. We would usually do this once a week or so. Cleaning it was never a huge issue. I was also amazed by how the little of the stuff we put out would be wasted. The kids were very creative and loved to combine the crafts, use scraps and generally be creative. I hope this helps!

Michele Farley  
Children's Librarian  
Johnson County Public Library

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I leave leftover preschool coloring projects, coloring sheets, and construction paper on one corner of my desk along with a bucket of markers. I try to go through the markers and replace them every few months but the kids are happy with whatever colors are there. It's pretty easy for me and keeps them busy.

Cheers,
Pam Carlson, Children's Librarian
Los Altos Neighborhood Library
Long Beach Public Library

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The first Saturday of every month I have a Make-and-Take program from 10-4. I set out two or three crafts that take materials like glue, scissors, paper, and foam shapes, streamers, etc. I have the instructions taped to the table and an in the vicinity if extra help is needed. It really works out well. Some of the crafts we have done include a Valentine Mosaic, a Rainbow Dancer with a paper plate and streamers, and paper flowers. For Summer Reading in July we are going to color elephants from India and glue on sequins and add a yarn tail and Make Chinese lanterns. If you need any more help just let me know. I love to do crafts.

Suzanne Kirk

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I work at West Park Branch of the Cleveland Public Library. I do a "drop-in" craft every Thursday, 4 - 7. I put out supplies (crayons, markers, glue, scissors, tape, etc) and a sample of a finished project. Some weeks we just put out coloring sheets and word puzzles. The community really likes being able to participate at a time of their own choosing. Many have multiple children involved in many activities. We also have a YMCA group that comes specifically to do the craft every Thursday. I have learned to keep it simple and NEVER use glitter in public areas. Since it is drop-in, all younger children bring their grown-ups (who help with more detailed activities).

Jeanna Sauls

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We only do Make 'N Takes for our younger patrons ( pres-gr4 or so), so the crafts are probably a little younger than you would like, but maybe you would be interested in our procedure. Once a month, we make up a certain number of craft kits (each kit in a plastic baggie) to be available to our children. Usually our crafts are simple, consisting of construction paper cut-outs to glue together and a couple of fun items like wiggly eyes, feathers, sequins, beads, etc. When our children's room was open (it's closed right now due to flooding), we would put out the kits, along with crayons, markers, glue, etc. and directions on how to make the craft in the library. That worked out well...the older kids could do it on their own, and the younger ones had mom to help. Plus, we didn't have to worry about having materials out all the time...just during the one week a month. Right now, since we don't have space in the library for a craft table, we are providing take-home craft kits once a month.

Hope that helps you out.

Stephanie Deeter  
Cutler Memorial Library  
Litchfield, NH

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We have a coloring table in the children's department and our families love it. We just cover a regular square table with butcher paper to protect it and leave a big bucket of crayons on the table. We have preprinted coloring sheets on the table that kids can grab and color. The coloring sheet designs are usually very simple so young children can participate and we sometimes leave word searches or connect-the-letter pages for older kids. The table is near the reference desk so we can keep an eye on the kids and clean the table up regularly. Cleanup is fairly minimal. Parents and children regularly leave their pictures on the table, so we do have to pick them up a few times a day and recycle them. They also leave crayons on the table but we have a sign on the coloring bucket that asks people to clean up after themselves and it seems to help. We usually change the butcher paper once a week. We used to go through at most 100 coloring sheets per week. However, we recently rearranged the department and the coloring table is getting much more use now, so we probably go through 200-300.

We've started getting wise about the coloring sheets and we now use them to promote our programs. For instance, when we did a piñata-making workshop, we had piñata coloring sheets on the table and listed all the details of our program at the bottom of the sheets. We did the same when we had a Clifford party and we try to find a tie-in for any library event we can. It's a terrific way to advertise the library. <http://www.coloring.ws/coloring.html> is a great place to find coloring sheets and IPL has links to dozens of coloring sites too (<http://www.ipl.org/div/kidspace/browse/fun1600>). I highly recommend the coloring table - it gets lots of use, parents feel comfortable letting their kids color while the parents browse for picture books, and coloring appeals to all ages (we have toddlers and preteens use it).

Good luck!

Drop In Ideas
MHLS YS Dept.
6/2004

Debbie Levy

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We give paper, pens and pencils when asked for drawing materials, that's all. However, recently we tried letting some of our 12-year-old volunteers, who are very talented artistically, design and create a bulletin board for our children's dept. It is a huge board, about 6 X 15 feet. I covered it with a solid cover paper, and they were going to create a spring scene of baby animals, flowers, etc. We settled on a one-month deadline. The deadline came and went. Two and a half months later we had some flowers and one small bunny to put on the board. They had no sense of deadline, even as they were encouraged to finish-they had decided to put in one hour a week, no more no less. And of course it became a social thing, and then just an obligation as they realized how much time it would take at the rate they were going. So, we won't be trying that again, and unfortunately I am once again responsible for creating the BB displays!

This is just FYI, it's hard to get expectations to match with kids at this age. Good luck!

Debra

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I have set up a table with a box of color sheets and another with several craft projects and materials to do them in the summer. It worked great. I think the key issue is do you have a space in your library where you are not in the traffic path and this type of activity would not disturb others. I also set up a chess/checkers board on one of the study tables. You would be amazed how much it was used. Now the local children's chess club meets periodically and has tournaments in the meeting room. I have a jigsaw puzzle on the table at all times for the people to put together. I hope it works out for you.

Kathy Sparkman

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