

CHEAP IDEAS THAT NEED LITTLE PREPARATION OR SUPERVISION

- Contact the art teacher at your local school to solicit artwork from students. Teachers are usually very willing to set up the display in your library and kids love to come in and see their creations. (Childcare centers and homeschoolers are often interested in displaying their work, too.)
- For Children's Book Week in May, contact schools in advance and request "books" written by children to create a display of children's creations.
- Set up a microscope so kids can bring in anything they want to look at: a leaf, a bug, even blood.
- Have children submit their favorite riddle, joke, or silly saying. Post them on the bulletin board.
- Have a fall harvest display with flowers and vegetables that the kids have grown themselves.
- Have a name the _____ contest. Use any animal the library might have such as a goldfish or gerbil. This can also be done with a library mascot such as a puppet or favorite stuffed animal.
- Put out puzzles on a table and let patrons work on them.
- Make and display "Feelie boxes" - decorated shoe boxes with a hole cut in one end and a particular texture inside for the child to feel.
- Name that object - ask a local museum or historical society to set up a display of unusual artifacts. Kids can guess what the object is. Put correct entries into a box for a drawing.
- Host a bookmark contest and print up the winning entries. This is an easy way to highlight children's art while providing a practical handout.
- If you have a display case, encourage kids to sign up to show off their collections: dolls, dinosaurs, legos, Star Wars items, etc.
- Have board games available for children to play.

- Post a weekly riddle. Have children guess the answer by writing it down and putting it in a box. Draw a winner at random from the correct answers.
- Have weekly drawings for a prize such as an ice cream cone or “treasures” from the dollar store. Any child who enters the library or checks out a book is eligible to enter.
- Put out a bucket of dominoes, legos, or blocks so kids can build and stack with them.
- Display a jar full of little objects (e.g. jelly beans, pebbles, dog bones, beads) and have the children guess the number. Closest guess gets a prize.

The following ideas are from Linda Donigan and Chris Poggi of the Bennington Free Library:

- Display pictures of parents and/or grandparents when they were little. Make sure name and phone number are written on the back or photocopy the original if the child does not want to leave it. Family history books are the perfect complement to the display.
- Create a different graph every month on a wall. Use post-it notes with children’s names as the response piece.
 For example: Post the question: “How do you travel to school?”
 Possible choices: Bike, Walk, Bus, Car, Truck, Other...
 “Who is your favorite picture book character?”
 Possible choices: Madeline, Curious George, Clifford, Strega Nona, Max & Ruby
- Post a Lego Challenge. Go to this website for challenge ideas:
<http://adventurekids.blogspot.com/2011/01lego-buildingchallenges>
- Set up a large magnetic board with rotating sets of pictures, words, and letters. Take a board book apart and apply magnetic tape to the pages. Use to sequence the story.
- Set up a book making center. It’s amazing what kids can create with paper, markers and a stapler. Offer different book bindings if the center really takes off.
- Set up a science center with seasonal objects to sort, classify or just explore. Pose a question and offer books to complement the display.
- “Where in the World is the Librarian?” Have someone take your picture in different spots around town. Post a different picture each week. Have kids guess your location & award them a small prize for a correct guess.
- Set up an art center with recycled paper, markers, crayons, colored pencils, rubber stamps and stamp pads.
- Dollhouses are important! Be on the lookout at tag sales for different ones. Turn your dollhouse into a hospital, general store, castle, etc. Rotate the different dollhouses in the

Children's Room.

- Display book character and/or puppet with corresponding book.

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