



Child's Play

Newsletter of the USA Toy Library Association

Spring 2021





USATLA: Promoting Development Through Toys and Play

USA Toy Library Association Newsletter | Spring 2021

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World Play Day: May 28, 2021

(Adapted from the International Toy Library Association Website: <https://itla-toylibraries.org/home/world-play-day/>)

Play and toy libraries...keys to health promotion

Play promotes physical, mental and social health for infants, children, people with disabilities, adults and the elderly. Toy libraries not only support health promotion, but also our planet's health by reducing our impact on the Earth.

The Child's Right to Play

Play is so important to all of us, especially children. Article 31 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) recognizes the right of the child to rest and leisure and to engage in play and recreational activities appropriate to the age of the child.

Despite this, play tends to be one of the most neglected of all rights of a child. Increasing urbanization and the commercialization of play influences the way children engage in play. For many children in both rich and poor countries, child labour, domestic work or increasing educational demands reduce time available for play

World Play Day is celebrated in over 40 countries

World Play Day events are held in over 40 countries around the world and is recognized on the UNICEF South Africa Calendar of events.

The theme for World Play Day 2021 is 'Playing is Healthy'.

USA Toy Library Association

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Articles, suggestions and letters are welcome. *Child's Play* newsletter is designed by Anthony Iacuzzi Associates.

*Playing
Is
Healthy!*

USA Toy Libraries in the Pandemic

Toy libraries in the USA are still respecting the pandemic and gradually re-opening their programs to families in creative, socially-distancing ways. The University of New Mexico, which supports six beautiful toy libraries at various campuses, is using Facebook and Zoom to reach families with advice and education during the pandemic. https://www.facebook.com/unmecsc/groups/?ref=page_internal

The Los Angeles County Toy Loan is bringing toys to homeless children, some of whom are living in cars. <https://dpss.lacounty.gov/en/community/toy-loan.html>

Rutabaga Toy Library in Philadelphia is using social media to offer outdoor play opportunities and some socially-distanced indoor experiences.

The USA Toy Library Association has offered 100+ biweekly Facebook posts, tapping experts to offer creative play activities to help with parenting in the pandemic. These posts have reached more than 1,000 followers. www.facebook.com/USA-Toy-Library-Association-118012331559912/

Shown at right is a sampling of USATLA Facebook print posts. Video posts also feature experts in play – teachers, parents, designers and toy librarians.



One of six toy libraries offering multiple play experiences to families in the Albuquerque, N.M., area.

Examples of Activities for the *Surviving Parenting During the Pandemic* Campaign on Facebook
Sponsored by the USA Toy Library Association

Surviving Parenting During the Pandemic


The USA Toy Library Association (USATLA) and its experts want to help parents and kids play in order to survive this pandemic. We'll post ideas to help keep your home a happy, playful one.

LET'S MAKE A NAME TAG

From Rhoda Redleaf's book "Busy Fingers, Growing Minds"

You'll Need: contact paper – patterned or solid color – blank gummed labels; stickers; scissors; markers; hole punch; yarn.

Directions: Cut different shapes – balls, stars, triangles, squares, houses, cars, balloons – from the contact paper. Attach blank address labels onto the shapes and print the child's name on the label. Encourage your child to decorate their nametag with stickers or other designs. Punch holes in the top of the tags and string with yarn to make a necklace. Your child can wear the name tag for a few days, use it as a place card or ID tag for a cubby, cot or other things needing identification.



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OUTSIDE THE BOX

Think about making a 2-story-or-more playhouse...

- Tape several boxes together
- Cut doorways, windows
- Paint interiors or paste gift wrap on walls
- Make furnishings from thread spools (tables), smaller boxes (beds)
- Tell stories, "The Littles" or "The Borrowers"
- Or make a cracker box cot-tage using peanut butter as glue, pretzel sticks for trim, corn chips for textured roof!




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PUZZLEMANIA!



- Find small objects around the house – paper-clip, key, spoon, mitten, cookie cutter
- Trace each on construction paper about 12"x18" to make a playing board

- Cover construction paper with clear contact paper
- Place the objects in a container
- Take turns matching objects to the playing board
- Color code the tagboard and objects and make several puzzles of different colors

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STRING PAINTING - MIX IT UP!

From The Oppenheim Toy Portfolio's "Read It! Play It!"

You'll need:

- red, yellow and blue tempera paint
- big pieces of paper
- pieces of string 8-10 inches;
- try string and yarn of different thicknesses
- three paper plates
- newspapers



- (1) Pour tempera paints onto large paper plates. Have children dip the string into one paint at a time and then onto construction paper.
- (2) Try moving the string around or put it down in a squiggly design and then lift it up. By using another string they can introduce a second color that might blend into a third color.

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Los Angeles County Toy Loan Program Thrives

Los Angeles County Department of Public Social Services (DPSS), Toy Loan and Volunteer Services Section (LA Toy Loan) was first introduced in 1935 to provide children with toys during the Great Depression. Today LA Toy Loan supports more than 50 centers that serve thousands of children in L.A. County.

Many toys – both used and new -- are donated by the public. Donors, many of whom find us online, will contact our office and we make arrangements to pick up the toys or have them delivered to us. Our staff actively participates in community outreach events to make the public aware of LA Toy Loan and donation opportunities.

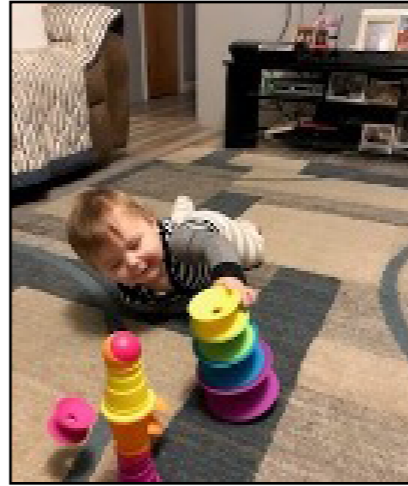
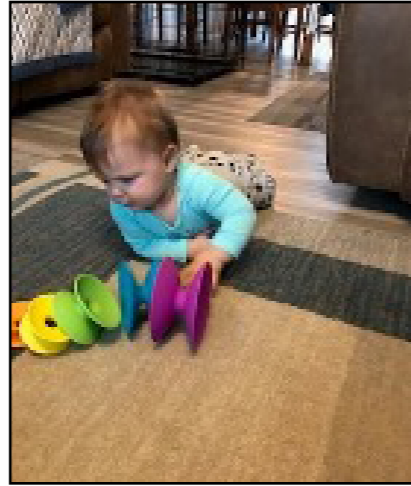
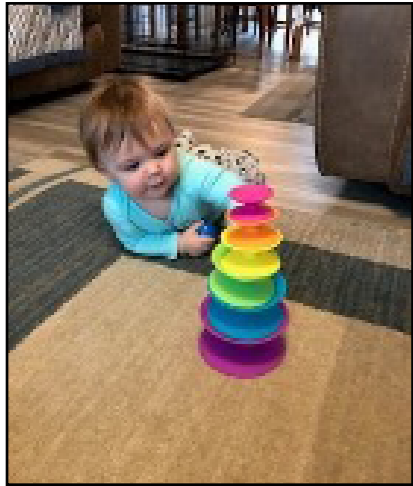
New and used toys are organized and inventoried at our Toy Loan Headquarters office located in downtown Los Angeles. Staff determine whether a toy is appropriate for distribution or not.

Toy Loan Centers may be found in schools, agencies, parks and community centers. North Valley Caring Services (NVCS), serving primarily elementary children, developed creative activities to stay open in the pandemic by loaning their 150 toys to a broader age group and to children with special needs. Nearly 90 children took advantage of the expanded program. Also children may test out the toys before borrowing. NVCS continues to be open one day a week and every Saturday. Of course due to the pandemic, in-person visits has been stopped for the time being.

LA Toy Loan is also piloting a project designed to keep children engaged at toy loan centers. Children who demonstrate excellent “virtual” attendance in schools and community programs are rewarded with toys. NVCS has shared that the program is a hit!



Ohio's Cuyahoga County Public Library brings toy boxes to children

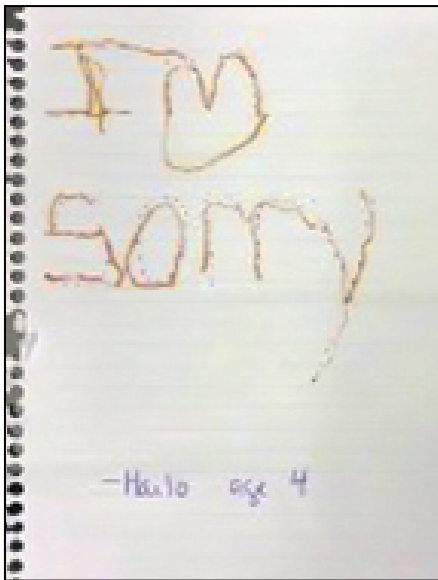


Thanks to COVID-19, we have seen our carefully constructed world topple but (also thanks, in part, to COVID) we have learned to come back another day, with resilience, to build anew.

As Devin demonstrates, little ones continue to enjoy the offerings of the Toy Library from Cuyahoga County Public Library, despite COVID-19 and here are a few of the messages we've found tucked into the toy boxes upon return:

"Dear Literary Superhero! We LOVE the Library. Thank you for working during the pandemic. We know it hasn't been the easiest. We want you to know, your services have been essential to us. Books and toys from the Library has been a bright spot for us.

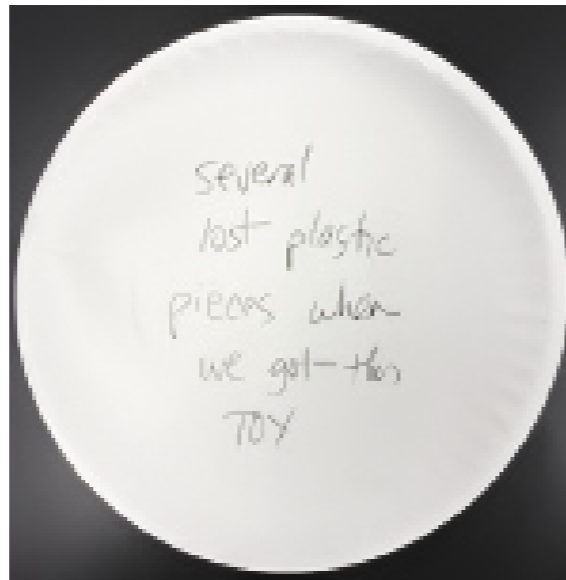
- Many Thanks! Claire & Ryan"



On a piece of paper...

"My daughter thought it would be funny to hide these around the house. I have been looking for days and we are one short. I am so sorry. We will find it and return it. Her consequence is no new library toys for awhile."

- Emily



And on this creative stationery...

(It was discovered that the pieces had been there along and were re-united with the toy!)

But isn't this the best part of play? Creatively using whatever is at hand to tell a story, making it your story.

Wouldn't it have been terrific had this been found in one of our Food & Dishes Sets, combining the real and the pretend.

As difficult as COVID has been, it can't take away what is truly essential to survive and that is our natural sense of curiosity.

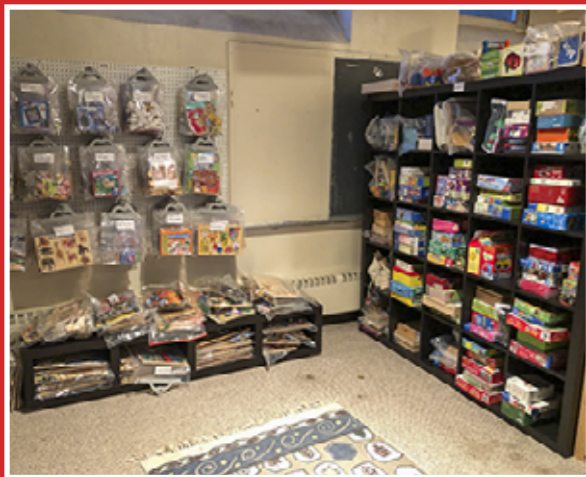
Who would have imagined a pandemic? In the middle, who could imagine it being over? And now, what can we imagine about tomorrow?

Play enables us to safely act out our fears and work out what we dare to dream. At Cuyahoga County Public Library we are honored to play a role in providing the tools for the important work of play.



"This orchestra learning material is a wonderful resource for fostering sensory growth in children! I took it for a visit to my 3½ yr old grandson. He played with it for hours, ascribing personalities to the various instruments in his pretend play- allowing them to 'talk' to each other. Thank you!"

- H. Wallach



Minneapolis Toy Library Takes Off

by Rebecca Nutter, Executive Director

We updated our puzzle storage area with a storage unit created by my dad with a pegboard and storage for hanging bags. We created trip kits for families with money from a grant we received from our county in MN. The idea behind the trip kits is that we all want things to entertain kids in the car/plane/train without spending more money. These shoe box sized containers have plenty of fun things for kids to do! Families love them!

We recycle broken toys with Terracycle. It feels good to toss a broken toy in there and know it won't end up in the landfill. The box is open to our members too.

We were connected with someone in our county that came in several times to test our toys for lead content. We found that many really old Fisher Price toys contained trace amounts of lead. We now don't accept those old toys.

Kari and I (below) interview at a local news station. We are the volunteers that run the library (along with our wonderful board members).

Continued on Page 7





Minneapolis Toy Library *(continued from page 6)*

We hosted many different swaps for kid related items. Families could bring in things they didn't need (clothes, shoes, books, art supplies, hats, boots, etc.) and possibly swap it for something they do need. Families really liked them and we hope to do them again soon.

The summer between the Minneapolis Toy Library being mobile and finding a permanent location, the library was housed inside my garage in Minneapolis. We had about 5 shelves full of toys. Members would come in and browse just like they do now, except now there's no motorcycle parked next to the check out table. The members who signed up during this phase of our library understood our goals and our mission, so they didn't mind the funny location for a couple months. It was fun to be outside and watch the kids use some of the large toys or small pull toys right in my driveway. (Our garage space)

We started the toy library as a mobile endeavour because we didn't have the money for a permanent space and we weren't sure the idea was going to be successful. We rented out rooms at local libraries for free, hauled 4 or 5 bins of toys, set them up and 3 hours later packed them up again. We took members' information down with paper and pencil. We had 2 people signed up after our first event at a library. The word spread and we would have more and more at each event. Now we have over 250 members and have a permanent space!



Member Give & Take

Question:

Should toys reflect current trends, be “neutral” or pose an ideal (as in classic toys)?

Here’s an example: the Fisher-Price *Work from Home* set is for infants 3 months and up and consists of soft versions of a coffee mug, a cellphone and a laptop. Realistic? Maybe. Ideal? Maybe not.

Log into the *Community Forum* at usatla.org to join in a conversation about this issue.



USATLA Publications & Resources

The following publications are available for purchase [HERE](#)

Child’s Play Newsletter

A periodical full of news and information about toy libraries and related topics.

USA Toy Library Association Operator’s Manual

Everything you need to know about setting up and operating a toy library.

Read It! Play It! by Joanne and Stephanie Oppenheim

An illustrated, 112-page book of fun activities that build literacy through reading and playing.

Read It! Play It! With Babies and Toddlers by Joanne and Stephanie Oppenheim

An illustrated, 103-page book that builds literacy with babies and toddlers.

Now in English and Spanish. Please specify

Hey Kids! Out the Door, Let’s Explore by Rhoda Redleaf

This 245-page masterwork includes twenty-seven nature, community and concept walks.

Learn and Play the Green Way by Rhoda Redleaf

This 220-page book is grouped into six age-related sections that range from infants to schoolagers.

When Play Isn’t Easy: Helping Children enter and Sustain Play

by Sandra Heidemann and Deborah Hewitt

This 87-page book helps children enter and sustain play.

The Power of Play

A discussion about early childhood education with Dr. Michael K. Meyerhoff, The Epicenter Inc.

Guidance from the CDC on cleaning and disinfecting toys

In light of the coronavirus pandemic, here are recommendations from the Center for Disease Control about cleaning and disinfecting toys. The CDC is a trusted source!

How to Clean and Disinfect Toys

- Clean off visible dirt with soap and water.
- Spray the toys with disinfectant and allow the disinfectant to remain in contact with the toy for one minute and then wipe off.
- Toys that are likely to be mouthed by infants and toddlers should be rinsed with clean tap water after they are disinfected.

In addition, the CDC recommends the following:

- Children and parents should wash their hands with soap and water or clean their hands with antiseptic hand gel before entering and when

leaving the common play area.

- Toys used in play areas should be made of smooth solid surfaces that can be easily cleaned and disinfected. Avoid toys with small pieces and crevices and those made of fabric or fur.
- Donations of stuffed animals or other toys that cannot be cleaned and disinfected should be accepted only if they are new and then should be distributed to individual children to keep and not kept in common play areas to be shared.
- Toys should be cleaned and disinfected at least three times a day. In addition, they should be cleaned immediately if they are soiled with vomit, stool or other body fluids.

The cleaning of toys (disinfecting) three times a day may put a strain on toy librarians; but may be more important than ever now.

The World Health Organization recommends the following cleaning procedures:

Chlorine Bleach considerations and recommendations:

Household bleach is an effective agent against most bacteria and viruses. It is important to follow recommended dilution guidelines for specific surfaces. Certain precautions should always be adhered to when using bleach, including:

- Dilute and perform disinfection procedures and in a well-ventilated area. Adverse effects of inappropriate mixtures of household cleaners usually are caused by prolonged exposure to an irritant gas in a poorly ventilated area
- Avoid combining bleach with acids (like vinegar) or ammonia (Windex). Potential irritants released from such mixtures are chlorine gas, chloramines and ammonia gas
- Wear appropriate personal protective equipment as chlorine bleach is corrosive and irritating to mucosal tissue, skin, eyes and upper and lower respiratory tract

- It is recommended using a “pump” or “pour” bottle instead of a spray bottle to avoid aerosolizing the bleach solution
- Prepare bleach solutions daily.
- Open bottles of chlorine bleach should be discarded after 30 days
- If a splash occurs to mucosal tissues, immediately flush with water”

A number of toy libraries choose not to use a bleach based agent. If you are a facility that does not use a bleach based agent, be sure that it is an EPA-registered BACTERICIDAL agent, not a BACTERIAL STATIC agent. You will also need to be aware of what specific bacteria and viruses the agent kills. This will be listed on the package or package insert.

We hope this information helps and calms nerves as well. We will continue to monitor the situation.