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Don't forget accessibility!

As you create online and virtual programs, please keep accessibility in the forefront of your planning and implementation. To get you started thinking about this, please watch this webinar and spend some time reviewing the attached resource list: [Creating Accessible Experiences For All](#). Before you plan any virtual programs (or if you're already doing them!) you should read [What If Accessibility Is A Right, Not A Request](#). Please reach out to your Youth Services Consultant if you want to discuss accessibility in programs, virtual or otherwise, and please make sure you discuss it with your supervisor(s) as well as your board. These new program formats and ideas can really broaden our service range and accessibility for patrons, but only if we remember to be deliberate and mindful about equal access.

SOME STORYTIME/EARLY LITERACY FAVORITES

- ★ From [Mid-Continent Public Library](#) in Missouri
[The Name Game](#)
What I Like About It: simple, short, engaging, a little goofy. No books required! the series of very short videos/games/rhymes.
- ★ From [Jackson Madison County Library](#) in Tennessee
[Alphabet Day with Ms. Jennifer and Abram](#)
What I Like About It: using what you have around you. No books required! Modeling good early literacy behavior and making it look natural
- ★ From [Arapahoe Library District](#) in Colorado
[Five Green Speckled Frogs](#)
What I Like About It: traditional rhyme, no book required! Using what you have around

you, including upcycled/recycled things, no extra supplies or printing required, gives options for different ways it can be done.

- ★ From [Madison Public Library](#) in Wisconsin

[*Little Fox*](#)

[*Zorrito*](#)

What I Like About It: on YouTube, so captioning is provided and you don't need FB to access. No books required! Brings part of the fun of storytime (games) without needing to recreate the entire program. In Spanish too!

- ★ From [Sacramento Public Library](#) in California

[*Virtual Storytime with Nate*](#)

What I Like About It: uses food/items he has on hand to talk about early literacy, talks about food, colors, body parts, basic storytime elements but no books required! Also includes a segment on destigmatizing mask usage.

- ★ From [Miss Julia](#)

[*Shaker Eggs*](#)

What I Like About It: Using what you have around the house. No books required! Familiar songs and rhymes that aren't too long.

- ★ From our own [Decorah Public Library](#)

[*Babytime Friday*](#)

What I Like About It: talking to caregivers in an engaging way about the benefits of babytime activities, uses a book but doesn't focus on it, replicable activity, focuses not just on the toddler age cohort.

- ★ From [Los Alamos County Library System](#) in New Mexico

[*Music & Movement with Miss Joy*](#)

What I Like About It: Taking a familiar, popular program into an online format, using what you have around the house and talking about why, singing familiar, traditional songs, no books required.

- ★ From [Emma S. Clark Memorial Library](#) in New York

[*Flannel Board Rhyme Time with Ms. Marcela*](#)

What I Like About It: A flannel board activity that can be done without elaborate +crafting, easy to build on and expand, lots of chances to talk about language building, no books required.

- ★ From [Hutchinson Public Library](#) in Kansas
[*Draw and Tell Story: Who's in My Garden?*](#)
From [Akron-Summit County Public Library](#) in Ohio
[*Draw and Tell Story with Miss Sarah*](#)
What I Like About It: Draw and tell stories are great for getting kids participating, can use with an older crowd, shows different ways of approaching narrative, can ask kids to send you their pictures, no books required.

- ★ From [Anythink Libraries](#) in Colorado
[*Imaginary Friends Are Real*](#)
What I Like About It: incorporates some of the games/imaginative play elements from storytime, has an interactive/draw element, could do it live or in zoom and take suggestions from the audience, has booktalks but not reading titles, no books required.

- ★ From [Matteson Area Public Library](#) in Illinois
[*Apron Puppet Storytime*](#) from [*Suzette's Puppets*](#)
What I Like About It: Suzette's Puppets is a great resource for learning how to use ALL kinds of puppets in storytimes. I like this one especially because of no books required, how she used Canva Pro to include the words beside her game, the use of the apron to engage, and the variation on the "little mouse" game that has lots of room for variety and expansion. If you're curious about learning more about using puppets, she's a great resource to start with.

- ★ From [Hoover Public Library](#) in Alabama
[*Mr. Rabbit*](#)
What I Like About It: no book involved, several staff members are involved but don't all feel like they have to have a guitar/ukulele, not overly involved use of props. Way to promote music collection too. Also note how the library showed that staff had been working/developing skills even when closed to the public and mentioned they'd be using these skills when they re-started programming. Good messaging! (And hey a closed group staff uke training sounds fun too!)

- ★ From [Ramsey County Library](#) in Minnesota
[*I'm A Little Monster Rhyme*](#)
[*Kitten is Missing Rhyme*](#)
What I Like About It: one of several rhymes from Ramsey County (all worth checking out) these make great use of the flannel board. Having it on Niche Academy means they can include the words on the same page. *Monster* is a simple felt board that hits a lot of basic concepts, no book required/game element. In *Kitten*, she *mentions* the book it is

from but doesn't read it, so no need to worry about permissions, also shows the dialogue we have in storytime outside just reading books.

- ★ From [Appalachian Regional Library System](#) in North Carolina
[Letter Z and Initial Sound Swap Activities](#) - *Alphabet Ready Online*
What I Like About It: this is part of their larger series of letter and phonetic awareness (check out their YouTube page) and it shows they take community education seriously and connect with behaviors we often model during in person sessions. This feels almost like a curriculum they can now share: Alphabet Ready Online can become a whole THING. Look how much she does here with no book, you could take a singular element out of this for short videos. This is also something that clearly preschool/kindy classes are using, good partnership and this could be a great resource to offer them ANYtime, especially if you can't always do in person outreach.

- ★ From [Valley Community Library](#) in Pennsylvania
[Dragon Hunt: Imaginative Movement Activity](#)
What I Like About It: no book, full of movement and activity. This is a series their children's librarian does leading kids through activities (jumping, sitting in a box, running, hopping, spreading out your arms like wings, crawling) as she tells a story. I like the focus on imagination and movement and creative thinking and storytelling, Make sure you check them all out. Also note in this one she is modeling wearing a mask! (and showing you can be active in it.)

- ★ From [Kingston Frontenac Public Library](#) in Ontario, Canada
[Play Break](#)
What I Like About It: Kingston does great stuff with their videos, but I especially love this series for young kids. It focuses on early literacy skills with things you might easily have at home (cheerios, dry spaghetti, egg cartons, salad tongs, jump rope, yarn, just your imagination!) or even things a library could easily put into a kit. Lots of talking to grown-ups about why this matters but still plenty of focus on the play for kids. Also like how they have it marketed: take a break and play!

- ★ From [Carroll County Public Library](#) in Maryland
[Down on the Farm](#)
What I Like About It: Love that it takes learning out of the library, these are the kind of videos kids would just love to watch no matter what! I also like how they created a thematic playlist and visit the farm again later for other videos (like one of their art videos). You could make this seasonal (visit the farm in every season!) or even just focus on one element and go all kinds of places (machines all around town, etc.)

Community Involvement/Partnerships

- From [Moreland City Libraries](#) in Australia !!
[Greek Storytime](#) (they also have an Italian storytime)
- From [Jackson Madison County Library](#) in Tennessee
[Storytime with Kenneth Cummings](#)
- From [Highland Community Library](#) in Pennsylvania
[Community Connections Storytime](#)
- From a [The New Orleans Public Library](#) in Louisiana and their partnership with Tulane University and the [The Pebbles Center](#)
[Bilingual Virtual Storytime](#)
- From Iowa's own Phyllis Peter at Newton and her daughter in Keokuk
[Mom & Daughter Musical Storytime](#)

What I Like About It: Building strong connections for the library AND for your community, keeping and developing partnerships are more important than ever, reminding people the library is part of “something bigger”, variety in style and content for your series to break up the routine and keep it fresh, using other’s expertise/language fluencies, modeling that ANYONE can read/share books.

“What Do I Have Permission to Read In Recorded Storytimes and Programs?”

- ★ **School Library Journal’s COVID-19 Publisher Information Directory:** [COVID-19 Publisher Information Directory](#)
- ★ **[Online Storytime Permission Database](#)**, compiled by Janis Comer at Indianola Public Library

Please remember that copyright still applies even during a pandemic. You might assume a publisher won’t sue you, but you don’t know that. You can’t just “declare” Fair Use. A publisher might not sue, but they will (and have already) send you take down notices or cease and desist

notices. How will reporting that look to your board or your director? Remember: as libraries, we are partners with publishers and they are also being impacted by this. We want to work *with* them as our relationships with them will continue when this is over. There is no one “right” answer and your best bet remains using this directory and/or contacting publishers directly with your specific request and then abiding by their terms. This might be time-consuming but many publishers reply quickly and you should think of this due diligence as part of the time needed for virtual storytime planning.

Also worth thinking about is what you might offer if you end up at home with no books or no access to the library. Meanwhile, if you create videos that DON'T need to be pulled because of copyright, you will be building up the digital offerings your library can provide *always*, not just during the pandemic or closures. This not only can increase social media traffic but can help you connect with more patrons, including some who might have trouble physically accessing the library.

Reach out to your Youth Services Consultant if you need more info or want to talk through anything.

SOME GRAB AND GO FAVORITES

The goal of this type of activity is to have NOTHING COME BACK TO THE LIBRARY. So unlike thinking of these as circulating activity kits with items that have to be returned and loaned to other patrons. or the ideas listed here involved taking kits/packs and **not** bringing them back.

- ★ Looking to bulk pre-made kits? Try [Oriental Trading](#) or [Fun Express](#). Need bulk supplies like paintbrushes, crayons, canvases, and others? Try [Dollar Tree](#), [Discount School Supply](#), [S&S Worldwide](#) or [Lakeshore Learning](#). (Lakeshore Learning also has including lesson plans, craft ideas, prompts, etc. that you could turn into grab and go activities. They even have a page with [free downloadable calendars and clip art](#).) You can buy bulk “classroom packs” of crayons, markers, or other supplies and use them in dozens and dozens of bags.
- ★ Clean out your craft closets!!!!!! All the things you have sitting in storage that you only have a few left over, all the random pom-poms, pipe cleaners, googly eyes, glass jars, toilet paper tubes, all the stuff you have piles and piles of ... now is the time to put them all in bags and get them out the doors and into the hands of families that can create with

them. Create a “Mystery Bag” and include some instructions about creativity and imagination.

- ★ Michael’s Craft Store created [Make 100 Projects with Just 10 Products](#) (acrylic craft paint, pipe cleaners, clothespins, construction paper, craft sticks, mixed media paper, pony beads, pom-poms, wiggle eyes, yarn.) that includes templates, you could raid your supply closet for several of these. *NOTE: please do not use the erroneously named “Aboriginal Dot Handprint” on pg. 5-6. This is cultural appropriation of Indigenous artwork and practice.*

- ★ Dyson engineers (yes, the vacuum people) created [free, downloadable Challenge Cards](#) for a wide range of science and engineering challenges for kids and teens. They range from balloon cars to simple metal etching. Dyson also created videos of their own staff trying a few challenges, which you could share on your social media while promoting the challenges.

- ★ From [Way Public Library](#) in Perrysburg, Ohio
[Apple/Pumpkin Puzzle Take and Make](#)
Got a lot of puzzle pieces you’re trying to get rid of? Why not give them a coat of spray paint and turn them into a take and make. There are lots of variations to this one you could make depending on what you have but it’s another good way to clean out some leftovers or appeal to lots of ages.

- ★ From [Albany County Public Libraries](#) in Wyoming
[At-Home Activities for Teens](#)
I like how each week is laid out on the site so you can access the instructions there at any time, the instructions are simple and have photos, and it’s all pretty low-key but still engaging. You could build a lot off this.

TWEEN/TEEN GRAB AND GO APPEAL

- ★ [A round-up of teen take and make kits](#) from the Geneva Public Library in Illinois

- ★ Make Your Own ‘Zine (you could give them material to make several and then encourage them to return a ‘zine to the library and then re-distribute them to other teens.)
[Instructions on how to make a ‘zine out of a single sheet of paper](#)

[Video on how to make a 'zine out of a single sheet of paper](#)
[Printable instruction sheet](#)

- ★ Origami (buy a bulk pack of origami paper and this is really good for all ages and can be scaled way UP in age or way down, depending on what instructions you might include.)
- ★ Fortune tellers/cootie catchers (there are a million templates online, you could make them themed around the theme or make one where every answer is a different activity to do outside/offline.)
- ★ Scratch art kits (an example of [some kits from Oriental Trading](#))
- ★ Paper airplanes (including a list of challenges and instructions for different types of airplanes)
- ★ [Straw weaving](#), friendship bracelets, things that can use up your piles of yarn! (and can be mailed to people.)
- ★ [Popsicle stick throwing stars](#) (video with 7 different ideas)
[Popsicle stick throwing stars](#) (blog post)
 These could go along with the exploding stick bomb activity sheet on the State Library website (see first entry above)
- ★ [Printable time capsule sheets for tweens/teens](#): Created for a Leap Year program. 5 sheets/4 color schemes. Includes a space to attach a current photo (Instax size, but whatever could work). Seal up in a padded envelope with duct tape and save to open in a decade! --Emily Linacre (Altoona Public Library), elinacre@altoona-iowa.com
- ★ Self-Care Packet: Include some teen friendly coloring sheets (like [this set from the nonprofit To Write Love On Her Arms](#), which is dedicated to addressing depression, suicide, and self-harm) some colored pencils, and some information about de-stressing, meditation, or help lines.
- ★ Blackout Poetry Kits: again, take a few of those old, donated books you really can't sell and slice out a few pages (I know, I know) and put them with some markers and instructions on how to make Blackout Poetry. ([Blackout Poetry Instructions 1](#), [Blackout Poetry Instructions 2](#)) You could invite teens to submit their best examples for a virtual poetry contest. You could also make this a POETRY POWER PACK with instructions for

how to write other types of poems/a few examples printed out from [Teen Ink](#), a national magazine made up entirely of teen writing (why not invite them to submit!)

★ [Read it and Eat It: Summer Spice Exploration](#)

A combination of reviving a book club AND adding a grab and go element - this library bought bulk spices and added them to kits with a little bit of history and suggested ways you could cook with the spices. This was for adults but could be very teen friendly or even for the whole family.

★ From [Sewickley Public Library](#) in Pennsylvania

[Teen Take & Make Monday: Fantasy Week](#)

What I Like About It: Since it follows along with a take and make kit they were handing out, it lets them do something a little more detailed (sewing project) It's topical, tied to Animal Crossing, and has a big tween/teen appeal. They could ask everyone to send them pictures of the finished project and post on social media. They could even try to arrange a time where they all get together on Zoom to craft together and talk about Animal Crossing. It also matches the theme for other videos/programs that week.

Make Use of the Library's Luxury Item: A Printer!

Remember that many households would love to do the amazing, fun, simple printable activities we see all over the Internet but they lack access to a printer! Now you can turn these into grab and go activities just by taking advantage of the library's printer and throwing in a few crayons, colored pencils, or markers. This can include activities for adults and seniors as well: crossword puzzles, zentangle coloring, sudoku puzzles, etc. can all be printed out and turned into "fun at home" kits.

- ★ [Picklebums](#) - a UK site run by a former teacher has so many great printables - from [playdough mats](#) (you can print these out, laminate them and put them in a grab and go bag with a small container of dough) to [draw your own postcards](#) (print some out and include a few stamps and encourage kids to write mail to someone they can't see now and that's another grab and go.) A definite favorite is her [drawing prompts](#), which can be turned into all kinds of fun activities in grab and go bags/contests.
- ★ [Debbie Ridpath Ohi](#) - is a Canadian illustrator who has TONS of print ready things at her site that could be great for take-homes. There are lots of pages for kids who want to illustrate, write, and draw comics. There are also bookmarks and book review forms.
- ★ [Jarrett Lerner](#) - is an American writer and illustrator who has been putting out wonderful printables all through the pandemic. There are some that are specific to now,

like thanking truck drivers and designing masks, but I REALLY love all the finish the comic panels (slip some of these in with all those comics the kids are checking out) and the drawing/writing prompts. Caitlin Driscoll, a technology teacher in Ohio, took some of Lerner's images and [turned them into printable 4x6 postcards](#). For those of you doing mailings, this would be a great way to get a fun activity directly to people and not require in person contact.

- ★ [Poppy Tshaya Kay](#) - is an Australian illustrator who has several fun freebies up on her website, including really great [drawing faces guides](#) (kids and tweens love "how to" drawing guides) but what I got really excited about was her PAPER DOLLS. There's fairies, mermaids, and just regular kids with different outfits. These could be another cheap and fun take and make kit.
- ★ [Itsy-Bitsy Fun](#) - A great printable site. They have packs of coloring pages and masks, which you could easily turn into grab and go packs or include with some books (print out the dinosaur mask and include it with a bundle of dinosaur books.) They also have a whole section of [folder games](#), which you could turn into grab and go activities for littles.

Coloring!

Many of you know I am a huge coloring fan and the coloring table was one of the favorite spots for kids and families (and teens) at the last library I worked at. But, again, many families might not have access to coloring sheets or printers at this time, even as more and more artists are making stuff available. You could easily create grab & go activity bags for all ages with all levels of coloring sheets. Throw in some colored pencils, crayons, or gel pens to really make it next level or just have individual packets at the desk patrons can take. Here's just a few places to find coloring sheets, most of these are more appropriate for a tween-adult level audience.

- ★ [Flourish](#) from Johanna Basford (one of the very famous people in the "adult coloring" movement has made this 12 page book free)
 - ★ [Create](#) from Adobe (they've been posting weekly themed sheets which are all done by artists. You can download them as printable sheets OR as a PSD to color using Adobe or a JPEG to color in other apps, so there's virtual options!)
 - ★ [Coloring with Climo](#) from Liz Climo (children's illustrator who has made a free coloring book with a variety of his characters.)
 - ★ Coloring Pages from [Lauren Faulkenberry](#) (hand-drawn images of birds, cats, and other wildlife.)
 - ★ Coloring Pages from Iowa artist [Lauren Bonney](#) (themed around recent events like baking and zoom.)
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Maybe I'll do a StoryWalk. Wait, what's a StoryWalk?

StoryWalks are an "old" concept, well, they've been around for several years. They have traditionally been focused on books about nature and then set up in parks and around trails. But what they are and how they look has and continues to change. It's basically a way to put a story out in the public and let people experience/visit it on their own. Obviously seems like a pretty great fit for these times. Some people are even thinking up ways to incorporate leaving activities or movement prompts along with their stories.

StoryWalks is a trademark, so that's one thing to be aware of. You also can't modify the images/text in the book(s). We've gotten lots of questions about it, so Mandy wrote a FAQ entry for it. It's a good place to start with the "rules"

[What Are The Legalities Involved?](#)

As you can see, it's not THAT onerous/restrictive, but there are some rules. The issue I have heard about the most from libraries is durability, i.e. investing in sign posts/holders that last a long time and allow them to put pages in that also last. This can be pricey and, of course, since the material is outside it faces and wear and tear. There is no one easy answer for this, especially if you don't want to spend a lot of money. But it's not the only consideration, especially if you are thinking about making this temporary only.

[Here's an article about a temporary one that was set up in Council Bluffs:](#)

And here's [a great article about a permanent one put up in Newton](#). I am sure if you reached out to Phyllis Peter at Newton she would be happy to talk to you about it, she knows a lot about StoryWalks!

If you want to get a good overview, the [Programming Librarian/Let's Move In Libraries campaign did a webinar about it you can watch](#).

This would also be a great thing to reach out to your parks or other city departments about. Many libraries who do this do so in partnership with their parks department. And in our new age, you'll need to make sure however you arrange this leaves plenty of room for social distance and that you include wording about that. Librarian Abby Johnson [wrote about how her library is even adapting theirs to not only talk about social distancing but other library resources](#).

The concept has evolved and I think that's great. Librarian Sujei Lugo Vázquez works in a urban neighborhood in Boston and didn't have trails or parks so she, instead, came up with something I

think would be REALLY great in these times. A literary stroll around the neighborhood, using the windows of stores for the kids and families AND local businesses. [You can read her post about it](#) (she also had a library program to go along with it, you might even be able to turn that into a make and take craft!)

As you can see, she didn't modify the pages (that's a big sticking point with publishers) and numbered them, so those are important points. You do usually need at least two copies of the books, but you can figure that out before you order.

Are you an Iowa library who has hosted a StoryWalk or have one permanently installed? Feel free to leave links to articles or posts about your StoryWalk. You can also talk about cost and durability and leave links to where you bought supplies, this is always a big question for people as they begin to plan outdoor installations. Remember to include your name and contact info so if anyone has any questions they can get in touch with you directly! You can also reach out to your Youth Services Consultant for more info or to discuss any element of this and to Mandy if there are still legal/copyright questions you have in mind.

[The ALSC Blog has a great step-by-step guide](#) from a librarian about how she assembled and put up a StoryWalk. This is a great intro if you're just wondering about dipping your toes in or getting started with a basic StoryWalk.

Watch Phyllis's [Kernels recording about Storywalks](#).

Socially Distant But Still Connected Programming

These are ideas for programs that can still build community and connection but don't require groups or even being together in the same space. You can modify them for different ages or spaces to fit what you have.

- ★ From Germantown Public Library in Tennessee

[Dear Friend: Quarantine Pen Pal Campaign](#)

Some of you expressed interest in setting up a pen pal program. This is the outline for how a library in Tennessee is trying to set up a program between seniors and youth but there are many ways you might try to facilitate it. If you're an Iowa library looking for pen pals, leave your contact info here and maybe another Iowa library can connect with you to be pen pal buddies.

- ★ *[Virtual Escape Rooms](#)* Created through Google forms, virtual escape rooms have become quite popular lately, with many libraries designing and sharing them. Sun Prairie Library

in Wisconsin has kindly [put together a big document of many of the rooms](#) (though it would be impossible to round them all up and there are constantly new ones being made) if you want to get a sample of what they are like. You can make them for any age and if you don't want to make one, you can share one from one of these libraries (make sure you credit and link back to their page if you do, that's just good librarian sharing behavior and they need the stats!)

★ ***Trivia Nights***

This could be a great all ages/family program or one designed just for tweens or teens. You can make ones that are specifically about the summer theme or specific fandoms or basically anything you can find trivia questions about. You can try to host it live through Zoom or another platform or just make a recorded version for fun at any time. Maybe you could partner with a local restaurant or pub for gift certificates as prizes.

- ★ Miki Wolfe from the Sharon Public Library in Massachusetts put together [a quick webinar](#) for the Massachusetts Library System about hosting a trivia night, it also has a great handout with lots of info and links.
- ★ From the [Delaware County District Library](#) in Ohio there is [Saturday Night Library \(SNL\) trivia](#) for patrons to do whenever it works for them.
- ★ [From West Gippsland Libraries](#) in Australia there is another [Family Trivia Night](#) for patrons to play whenever, this one advertised as something they can all do together and hosted on Vimeo.
- ★ Watch the Kernels about [Adult Online Trivia](#) with Alexis Kurth from the Solon Public Library.

★ ***Either/Or***

You could also use Google forms to create a fun voting/versus for tween/teens (or families). You could do anything from “Best Marvel Movies” to any goofy set of “would you rather” questions. You could announce results weekly (or more often.) If you don't want to do this online, you can turn these into a handout and encourage adults to use them as conversation starters and promote it as a fun family activity they could take offline.

- ★ From [Palatine Public Library](#) in Illinois is [this fun “either/or” between Harry Potter and Star Wars.](#)
- ★ Use this [comprehensive, cool bracket ranking](#) to set up virtual voting on the best Marvel movie.
- ★ A big list of [either/or questions](#) or [would you rather questions](#) for kids (but remember you can also make it as simple as “Dogs or cats? Cookies or ice cream? Flying or being invisible? Pizza or tacos? Unicorns or dragons?”)

- ★ From our own Cherokee Public Library
[Flat Tyler](#), created by a community artist, this is a way for Tyler, the children's librarian, to travel all over just like *Flat Stanley*. This is a great way to engage kids without Internet access, stay present in their life and let them be creative, and take advantage of the mail. (Let us mail Flat Tyler to your grandma and she can color him and mail him back to you!)

- ★ From [Public Library of Anniston-Calhoun County](#) in Alabama
[Chalk Obstacle Course](#)
This could be a great thing to put up in your parking lot, on your sidewalk, or even in a local park. There are tons of chalk obstacle courses online, so you can easily find other versions on Pinterest or by Googling. This could also be a fun way to promote a grab and go bags that have sidewalk chalk inside them. Make sure you post about maintaining social distance while they play.

- ★ From [Enoch Pratt Free Library](#) in Maryland
[Chalk the Walk 2020](#)
[Chalk the Walks](#) is a worldwide movement to encourage people to use chalk to create art on sidewalks. Many of you in Iowa probably know about the huge event held in Mt. Vernon-Lisbon (which [went online this year](#)). This year the Pratt in Baltimore turned it into a library program and encouraged people to participate with messages of hope and support. It turned into a whole city-wide effort and they were able to create this video, which encourages even MORE chalking and builds up a community spirit around it. West Des Moines is hosting one [in/around the library in July](#). If you're giving out sidewalk chalk as one of your grab and gos, you could tie it into one of these!

- ★ From [Valley Community Library](#) in Pennsylvania
[Word Scramble](#)
Easy, hand-written, low-tech! Encourages participation in comments and can be themed, as this one is around graduation.

- ★ From Old Adobe Elementary in California
[Cow Challenge](#)
This is an elementary school that issued a weekly challenge for students to create a cow however they wanted and send in pictures. Note how many different responses they got: from legos to paper plates to drawings. Basically anything that encourages them to be creative and work with what they have.

- ★ From [Poudre River Public Library](#) in Colorado
[*Zoom Silent Disco*](#)
 A virtual version of the “silent disco” where everyone listens to their own music while they dance together, this takes it to zoom and invites tweens to mute their mics and dance to their own music. Basically, building that community. Could be a family event too.

- ★ From Portage Public Library in Wisconsin
[*Name That Book*](#)
 Posting the first and last line from a book every week and having patrons guess. Simple and fast to make the graphic, easy for people to interact with, could do it for any kind of book from classics to newer picture books. Could also use for reader’s advisory.

- ★ From our own [Kendall Young Library](#) in Webster City
[*An Amazing Chalk Obstacle Course*](#)
 You have to check out this video of the Kendall Young Library’s obstacle course they painted in front of their library. A little more permanent and a great program for all ages. If you have questions about it, you can email Kendall Young director [Ketta Lubberstedt-Arjes](#) for more info.

- ★ From Kendallville Public Library in Indiana
[*2020 Mascot Contest*](#)
 Kendallville opened up a contest for local children and tweens to draw a mascot for the library. Then they narrowed it down to a few and had the public vote on a favorite through Facebook. Lots of community connections possible here, from the first entries to the voting. You could have different age categories, do it every year, get permission to use the art on all kinds of posts/promo.
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- ★ From [LaCrosse Public Library](#) in Wisconsin
[*Library Pen Pal*](#)
 From Los Alamos County Library in New Mexico
[*Send a Postcard to the Library \(vol II, vol III\)*](#)
 Two programs involving libraries and connecting through mail. In the one from LaCrosse, you can write the library and they’ll write you back. In the one from Los Alamos they provide blank postcards and stamps and ask people to write them, then collect the postcards and share with the community - you can see they got all kinds of responses, including from adult artists.

- ★ [*Snapshots: An Online Teen Photography Contest*](#) from [Homewood Public Library](#) in Alabama

A great way to have some cool teen art to show off and encourage them to share some of their art. They gave a gift card as a prize but you could also make up fancy certificates, send them off to get printed from an online service and hang them up in the library or around town, all kinds of fun ways to show off their work and honor it.

- ★ From our own Hardin County Libraries

[Countywide Fall Bingo Challenge](#)

Here's a great program out of Hardin County where all the libraries are challenging their patrons to compete against each other for a trophy and bragging rights. I also love how they have involved the schools. Love this kind of cooperation across libraries in a county.

Videos for School Age Kids/Tweens & Teens/Families

Don't forget you can make videos for more than just virtual storytime. Here are some great examples of virtual programs that reach out to school age kids, feature goofy or fun challenges and engagement opportunities for teens, and encourage family play and engagement, and promote library programs as well. Some of these even have stand-alone adult appeal. You can modify these in a huge variety of ways, showcasing different resources, using what you have on hand, or borrowing formats to play different types of games or create different engagement opportunities.

- ★ From [York County Library](#) in South Carolina

[Word Game](#)

What I Like About It: York County has a ton of great stuff, including a sound scavenger hunt and daily drawing challenges. This, especially, is a fun reminder of games you can play offline (with some literacy lessons slipped in) and you could do any number of games, especially if you had a partner, like hangman or pictionary, etc. Or you could do one live in a hangout or zoom session and have the audience take turns guessing/being your partner.

- ★ From [McAllen Public Library](#) in Texas

[Fight Boredom Challenge \(Draw Blindfold\)](#)

What I Like About It: This is geared at teens but could have appeal to a wide range. I like that it uses the language "challenge" which is engaging and currently on trend (show us how YOU do it) and shows really simple and goofy stuff that can be replicated.

- ★ From [Suffolk Public Library](#) in Virginia

[Food Challenge with Jennifer: Where Jennifer Tries That Bacon Carrot Thing From Tik Tok](#)

What I Like About It: Everything! Suffolk Public Library has [a lot of great programming videos](#), so check them all out. This includes the series that is staff trying out tongue-twisters, how easy and great is that, but this series, with staff member Jennifer trying out “trendy” food like mug cakes or avocado toast is really fun. Promotes the library’s cookbook collection, is fun to watch and share, and with this one taps into something very current and in the zeitgeist so it grabs a lot of attention and clicks.



- ★ From [Ramsey County Libraries](#) in Minnesota
- [Maker Kids](#)

What I Like About It: Lots of great and simple activities for a slightly older crowd but not TOO involved or requiring TOO much materials - like in the fingerprint art she acknowledges you might not have an inkpad but you can color your fingers with washable markers or the tangrams and cardboard building. Also the focus on the making of the craft, not the person doing it makes it easier for kids to follow along.

And here’s a behind-the-scenes look at the HIGH TECH set-up [librarian Tasha](#) shared with me of her set-up! See how easy it can be? :) When I asked Tasha how she filmed these she said: *“balance my phone on top of a paint stirrer taped to a box and hope a train doesn’t go by!”*

- ★ From the [Floyd County Library](#) in Indiana

[Children’s STEM: Salt Water Experiment](#)

What I Like About It: A simple activity that could be done at home without a lot of supplies, but you could also make this up as a take and make (a few salt, sugar, and baking soda packets) and the connection with an activity sheet they provide (we’re doing it together OR do it on your own.) This is a good multi-age activity too or something you

could suggest they do with the whole family or multiple siblings. You can scale up/scale down your conversation/instructions depending on that or just call it a family activity.

- ★ From our own Rachel Pollari at [Marion Public Library](#)
[STEM Thursday: Rube Goldberg Machines](#)
What I Like About It: Marion has a great series of videos, check them all out! This is a series that teen librarian Rachel does once a week that's perfect for tweens/teens. I *especially* loved this one, where she tries to set up a Rube Goldberg machine to feed her cat. It's fun and a little goofy and works with what they might have at their house. There are also videos for making a cloud in a jar, an egg launch and more. They even have a [whole playlist that's an interactive Choose Your Own Adventure story!](#)
- ★ From [Nappanee Public Library](#) in Indiana
[Making Musical Instruments with Miss Maggie](#)
What I Like About It: Just uses things you have around the house, so no supplies needed (but remember if you're cleaning out all your craft and junk closets, you could maybe even make this into a take and make kit!) and it's customizable and scalable for a large age range.
- ★ From [Fort St. John Public Library](#) in British Columbia
[Maker Box](#) video series
What I Like About It: There are three of these videos so far and they show teen volunteers/others making things out of their take and make boxes. The second and third videos also feature video from patrons with what they have made. I like how they make the "grab and go" seem more like a program and how they sell it as a "maker box" - something you'd PAY to experience. Also allows them to put in more complicated projects. Make sure you watch all three of them!
- ★ From [Galion Public Library](#) in Ohio
[Play-Doh Challenge \(#1, #2\)](#)
This involves Take & Make and a video element: they give them a thing of Play-Doh, some random craft supplies, and even the cookie sheet (but that could be an additional) and then add the video on to go with the challenge of "what can you make" lots of access points for this and across several age ranges, which is always welcome.
- ★ From [Athol Public Library](#) in Massachusetts
[Make Your Own Origami Crown](#) and [How To Make A Paper Pumpkin](#)
I like the stop-motion animation style for these, it works really well with origami/paper craft but it's also a fun/different way to shoot a video and can allow for those following

along to go at their own pace and you can easily insert the simple instructions (via paper notes) in this format which also helps with pacing/what's needed to just follow along.

Scavenger Hunts/Out and About Activities

Lots of people are gonna want to get outside this summer! You can share these on your social media or, again, make use of that luxury item and print these out and encourage patrons to take them. They can be supplemental activities if you run out of take and make kits for a week. You can encourage community wide participation, share one post and have everyone report back their results. You can also take activities from any of these and make your own hunt, including by adding local activities/locations, using a site like [My Free Bingo Cards](#).

★ [Summer Art Challenge](#)

Love this one is all based around art and things to create!

★ **Primary Playground Scavenger Hunts**

She is a teacher who has made about a million of these. For \$4 you can get her [whole printable pack](#) of them, but you can also just see them [on her Facebook as images](#). She has hunts for letters of the alphabet, seasons, sounds, feelings, you name it.

★ From [High Plains Library District](#) in Colorado

[Outdoor Scavenger Hunt](#) - like the inclusion of the five senses as categories.

★ From [Mountain View Public Library](#) in California

[Discovery Walk - Textures](#) and [Discovery Walk - Sounds](#)

Love the idea to observe textures and sounds AND encouraging kids to draw what they saw/experienced. Retelling is an important early literacy skill.

★ From Chilliwack School District in British Columbia

[Outdoor Learning Pack](#)

This is a huge pack of printable nature activities that you could tie into all kinds of things from programs to books. There's an outdoor alphabet scavenger hunt, outdoor guessing games to play with someone, pages for reflection, an environmental art challenge, and even some stuff about equations! Some of it is school oriented (because of the source) but there's plenty to share.

★ From Birchard Public Library in Ohio

[Fall Bucket List](#)

This is a new way to approach the “scavenger hunt” idea and might have more appeal for teens and tweens - calling it a bucket list instead. This one is more geared towards adults and has all fall things, some that might be hard to do socially distant, like a hayride or a corn maze or feeding a squirrel (ew lol) but the concept of renaming it and listing different seasonal activities (along with including cute graphics as she has done here) could be a fun way to switch it up.

I'm No Director, How Do I Film/Edit This Stuff?

I am certainly also no Thelma Schoonmaker (pioneering three time Oscar winning editor of some of the greatest movies ever made) and, as always, the best advice to you is to just practice and not be afraid of messing up. You can learn by doing (and doing and doing, that’s the practice part!) and your patrons don’t expect perfection. Here are some suggestions on some software that might help and some other advice. Some are free, some have free versions, and others do have some cost. If you have advice or a favorite app or program, please share!

★ From [Jester Jim](#)

[The Basics of Video Making](#)

Jester Jim is a performer who has transitioned to offering online shows but also did this one hour webinar on how to make videos. While he’s talking about working with an iPhone (or an iPad) he also has lots of great general tips about lighting and framing and just getting more comfortable filming and being on camera.

★ From [Colorado Virtual Library](#)

[Virtual Storytimes webinar](#)

This is a webinar from “the early days” - which already feels like a million years ago! So some of it might feel dated or like you “already know it.” But there’s a 10 minute portion all about technical aspects with tips and tricks. Start at about the 50 minute mark and go from there. (or watch it all!) All the material is here, including the slide deck.

Software Possibilities

- ★ [ActivePresenter](#) screen recorder & screencast video editor (has a free and paid version)
- ★ [WeVideo](#) online video editor (has a free version but also has plans starting as low as \$5 a month)
- ★ [OpenShot Editor](#) open source video editor
- ★ [Filmora9](#) (has a free version and a more expensive paid version)

What if I want to use music during online programs?

★ Colorado Libraries for Early Literacy [Music Help for Streaming Storytimes](#)

Unfortunately just like copyright and reading titles online, there's no ONE cut and dried answer to this. One thing that is different, however, is that many online platforms, like Facebook or YouTube, have copyright bots set up to recognize music being used and disable those videos. So, even if you have permissions, a bot doesn't know that and can bounce or shut down your video. You should prepare for that just in case!

You might consider something like a "silent disco" or "do it your own way" dance party. Invite everyone to mute their mics, turn on their cameras, and turn on their own music in whatever format they have to dance however they would like! You can lead the group by suggesting dance moves or leading them in certain actions. You might make one of your "take and make" kits themed around the upcoming event, if they can join you to dance live, YAY and if not they have a kit about having their own dance party. You could include crepe paper to use as "dancing scarves" or some bells/make your own instrument as an accessory. (see link in this document to a video about making your own musical instruments.)