

Fun, High Impact Learning Resources at the New Ulm Public Library
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You may have heard of that parent that slips broccoli, sweet potatoes and power greens into the family's smoothies. This stealth move ensures even the pickiest toddlers, teens and adults get the nutrition they need. The library has learning resources that help in a similar way, building cognitive and development skills through play. Slip some of these learning activities into your next gathering or get away and fuel learning the fun way!

Did you know playing in the dirt reduces stress in youth? Not only does nature make people feel better, the natural environment promotes learning by restoring attention and facilitating experimentation and learning by doing. The library's nature kit contains binoculars and guides about Minnesota birds and mammals and can be checked out. The library also has a telescope you can borrow. Studying the night sky is a unique, exciting way to introduce anyone to science and exploration.

Board games are fun, exercise brains and bring people together. Help young ones practice school readiness skills like goal-setting, following rules and practicing patience by playing a game together. Some studies show playing board games reduces the chance of Alzheimer's. Need help picking out a game? Library staff have tested a lot of board games. Just ask for help.

Check out a story time kit. Story time at the library is a wonderful, well-loved community event. The library offers a variety of story time kits so you can replicate part of the experience at home. Children love to hear their caregivers tell stories. These librarian curated kits give you the tools you need to help kids build literacy skills and foster a love a reading. The summer time story time kit is perfect for summer escapes or gatherings. This kit includes "Mouse's First Summer" by Lauren Thompson, "Summer Days and Nights" by Wong Herbert Yee, "And Then Comes Summer" by Tom Brenner, "Five Green Peas" rhyme sheet, "Flutter, Flutter, Butterfly" song sheet, butterfly hand puppet and green backpack.

Blocks seem basic. But these simple, open-ended toys can be used in a variety of ways. Playing with blocks develops fine-motor and problem-solving skills as well as hand-eye coordination. Toppling blocks teach about gravity and building with others develops cooperation and other social skills. The library block kit contains includes: 30 colorful wooden bricks with two magnets, 18 wooden bricks with three magnets, six low risers, and six high risers.

Try audiobooks for the ride. Everyone loves hearing a great story and entertainment during a drive is always appreciated. Listening to books can help children learn how to read. One benefit is hearing the speech-patterns and rhythms not included in print. Additionally, because children are capable of listening at a higher level than they can read, they are exposed to different words, boosting their vocabulary.

Try coding! Programming skills are a highly sought after skill that will gain importance in the future. Exposing youngsters early sets them up for technological success. Try out the Fisher Price Think & Learn Code-a-pillar Twist. Kids use sequencing and problem-solving skills to program a path for the code-a-pillar. Need help convincing your youngster? Tell them coding skills can help them play Minecraft. They will start to understand basic command language.

Play Badminton! Get some exercise and help everyone sharpen their hand-eye coordination skills. The library kit includes an easy set up net, four steel rackets and two nylon shuttlecocks. Badminton practice will prep your group for Pickle ball, a wildly popular sport combining elements of badminton, tennis and ping-pong. The library's kit will be ready to check out very soon.

Need more suggestions? Please stop by the New Ulm Public Library and see all we have to offer. And let us know what else you'd like see or do at the library. We value your feedback and suggestions.

The library is located at 17 N. Broadway and is open to the public Monday to Thursdays 9:30 a.m.-8 p.m. and Friday and Saturdays 9:30 a.m.-5 p.m.