

Fun, High Impact Learning Resources at the New Ulm Public Library

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Play is an important part of child's early development. A high percentage of brain development happens before age three, so learning must begin before children attend school. The library has many learning resources available for free with your library card that help build cognitive and development skills through play. Check out some of these learning resources to fuel learning in a 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 for learning about Minnesota birds and mammals. Although digging in the dirt is hard to do in the winter, the library has fun winter weather kits and equipment available, too. In addition to sleds and snowshoes, a snow fort kit—an excellent way to develop motor and building skills—is available for checkout.

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 or watch "Don't Forget to Read the Instructions," recordings of library staff demonstrating board games on New Ulm Community Access television!

Storytime at the library is a wonderful, well-loved community event. The library offers a variety of storytime 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 winter time story time kit is perfect for indoor, winter learning. This kit includes the board book "Winter" a bright baby touch and feel book, "Goodbye Autumn, Hello Winter" by Kenard Pak, "Over and Under the Snow" by Kate Messner, "My Bear" rhyme sheet, "Snowflakes, Snowflakes" song sheet, and an adorable bear puppet.

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.

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. A fabulous new addition to the library is a collection of Vox Books, books that talk! Vox books enable readers to listen to an audio recording directly from a printed book. An audio reader—attached to the front cover and controlled by a push button—allows the reader to listen and read along.

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. Understanding basic command language will definitely up their game.

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.