

# PROGRAM IDEAS from PAST YEARS

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*This is a compilation of programming ideas discussed during CSLP trainings held in Indiana between 2016 (Build a Better World) and 2020 (Imagine Your Story). They are in no particular order other than being arranged by age group. To search this document for a particular topic, use Ctrl-F.*

*The current program year, CSLP 2021 (Tails and Tales) can be found linked on [this page](#).*

## Additional Resources for CSLP planning:

- CSLP website: <http://www.csipreads.org/>
- ISL's Resources for Librarians Serving Youth: <http://www.in.gov/library/4642.htm>
- Indiana State Library's Pinterest page with program ideas/boards from past years: <https://www.pinterest.com/INStateLibrary/>
- CSLP's Pinterest page: <https://za.pinterest.com/csipreads/>
- Star.NET STEM Activity Clearinghouse (many vetted STEM program ideas): <http://clearinghouse.starnetlibraries.org/>
- Performers recommended by Indiana library staff: <https://continuinged.isl.in.gov/performers-list/>
- USDA's Summer Food Service Program Toolkit: <https://www.fns.usda.gov/sfsp/summer-meals-toolkit>

# Program Ideas

## All Ages program ideas

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- Prince and Princess Tea/Party or “Royal Party” / could have a focus on table manners, trying new foods, etc. Other tea party ideas – Alice in Wonderland, Tea with Queen, Mad Hatter Tea Party; Fancy Nancy tea party.
- “Tell Your Elders’ Stories” - have older community members/family tell kids their story. For added impact, have the kids then retell it in their own words. Build a family tree.
- Fairy Tale Night – family members dress in costumes, have books, activities, games centered on fairy tales. Or, “Imagine Yourself As...” Day. Make Rapunzel braid bookmarks.
- Bring in Disney princesses/princes (can be hired locally, or get costumes). One idea shared—bring in Jasmine and Aladdin, hold prince and princess training, include songs, a short skit, and a photo op. Could also be done as a Saturday breakfast, like the Princess Breakfasts done at Disney World.
- Hold a comic con at your library. Feature mythological characters.
- Family Show & Tell: Families select an item (heirloom, memorable thing) and share its story with the audience.
- Kick-off party idea: Fantasy theme activities and snacks for all ages – castle bounce house, VR game with a fantasy theme, crafts consisting of crowns, wands (magic or fairy wands), décor... etc.
- Three Little Pigs building challenge – Read 2-3 versions of the fairy tale, build a house out of craft materials to house their own ‘little pig’ (could be paper or other). One library uses straws, popsicle sticks, and LEGOs. Bonus—make it STEM by challenging them to build a house strong enough to stand up to the wolf’s breath, aka a hair dryer! Teacherspayteachers.com offers a number of these fairytale based STEM programs for a small fee. <https://inventionlandinstitute.com/steam-lesson-plan-three-little-pigs-design-challenge/>
- Bring in a storyteller through Arts for Learning Indiana; hire a local puppet or other traveling theater to present a fairy-tale based play.
- Hold a Storytelling Extravaganza/Weekend or “Be the Storyteller” event – make it a storytelling contest, offer other activities such as group storytelling (one person starts and you add to it as you go around the circle).

- Connect with a regional Indiana Enchanted Fairy Trail group <https://www.centralinfairy.org/> for a fairy program. Make wands and fairy wings, flower crowns.
- Hold a Fairytale Film Festival or just show a series of fairytale based movies through summer. Interactive movies are also popular and fun (sing with the characters, yell lines out loud, eat what the characters are eating, etc.) – [www.teenthinktank.net](http://www.teenthinktank.net) contains lots of scripts that tell you what props you'll need and when to interact with the movies. Shrek is a good one for this summer.
- Peter Pan program – Newport Aquarium has a crocodile show they will bring to libraries in a radius from them (near Cincinnati).
- Sidewalk Art/Picasso – block off squares on your sidewalk using chalk or watered down tempera paint, then invite people to create masterpieces on the sidewalk; this program could be for any age or all ages! Ask for fairytale themed art.
- Library in northern Indiana is hiring a harpist who recites fairy tales while she plays, and does all the character voices. Anna Hagen – <https://www.annahagenharpist.com/wp/>
- Fantasy “Glamour Shots” – use green screen and photo editing software, props, etc. to take photos of people with dragons, unicorns, etc.
- Family Disney musical Name that Tune.
- Family Fandom – 4-6 activities around specific fandom (Harry Potter, Marvel, Frozen, Pokemon) for families to participate in together. Have someone dress up in a related costume for photo opp!
- Harry Potter program for any age – weave a “house” scarf (Griffendor, Hufflepuff, etc.) using a cardboard loom. <http://www.craftstylish.com/item/2546/how-to-weave-on-a-cardboard-loom/page/all>  
Can also include a potions class—basic science experiments
- Bowling Night – rent a local bowling alley and invite families to attend! One library did this with great success in their community. May be able to strike a good deal with the alley.
- Invite a local musician to come in and do a “Behind the Music” style concert—play songs and tell the stories of how they were written/inspired, etc.
- Journaling – decorate a journal (purchased or made), give them some writing prompts/talk about what people write in journals. Use Indiana Young Reader’s Center program guide, linked in Resources section, above. Bullet Journal – hold a how-to class for teens or adults

- Get started with 5 questions: Five things I like about myself that make me unique; Five people I'd like to meet; Five things I'd pack in my suitcase that I could not travel without; Five places I'd like to travel.
- Constellation stories! Rent a planetarium or just show pictures of the constellations, talk about how to find them and the stories behind them. <http://clearinghouse.starnetlibraries.org/> may help with this.
- Hold a Book Tasting for any age group. Set up tables with several book options (by genre works well) then have people spend a set amount of time at each table until they've been to all of them. Give them a "menu" with space to keep track of what they are most interested in. Lots of resources online!
- Three Billy Goats Gruff puppet show with a craft (or any other simple fairy tale)—let the kids make their own simple puppets from craft materials and give them a simplified script to take home and recreate the show! Gingerbread Man puppet show could be followed by decorating gingerbread men cookies.
- Contact someone who does Renaissance Fair cosplay, invite them to show off their costumes and depending on their skills/interests, they could talk history or demonstrate costume making, etc. For instance, one librarian knows a fencing instructor. Encourage medieval LARPing (live action role playing). Hold your own library Renaissance Fair. Bobbing for apples and other activities.
- End summer with a Back to School Bash – provide notebooks or binders for kids to decorate with duct tape and makers, play games, have ice cream, etc.
- Board game night- there are lots of games that would work with the theme! Two ideas: Fairy Tile and The Enchanted Tower.
- Hold a drawing contest for any or all ages! One library did superheros but could do mythological or fairy tale characters instead.
- Mascot Design Contest – design a mascot for the library or the children's department. The winning design can be made into a real stuffed plushie via a website like Budsies.com. Could make one for library and one for winner.
- Minute-to-Win-it family program with various game stations.
- Cupcake decorating program – get ideas online – can bake cupcakes yourself or negotiate discount from local grocery/bakery; for extra fun, do it in the style of "Nailed It" (Netflix cake decorating show).
- Beach party – bring towels, wear flip flops, hats, sunglasses, eat ice pops, play surfer music, play games like limbo and "hot beach ball" (hot potato but with a beach ball). Or "Splash" day with water games incorporated. Make ice cream in a bag (recipes on internet).

- Invite your local “Community Helpers” (fire dept, police, etc.) to do programs at your library; they often have an outreach division and are very willing to do this. Sometimes they are willing to incorporate a “Touch a Truck” sort of event, where the kids can explore the firetruck, police car, etc.
- For Northeast Indiana libraries – Fort Wayne Youth Theatre has a traveling troupe of teens who will do performances with audience participation. <https://www.fortwayneyouththeatre.org/> Also for NE Indiana, Scheumann Farm & Petting Zoo will bring a miniature pony dressed as a unicorn to your library for photo ops – [www.scheumannfarm.com](http://www.scheumannfarm.com)
- For Southeast Indiana libraries – Jeff Nicholas, Cincinnati artist/cartoonist draws character as he tells a story and can be hired to come to your library. <http://www.jnicholasart.com/>
- 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of moon landing celebration! July 20, 1969-2019.
- Celebrate Indiana’s own astronaut, Gus Grissom
- Nighttime stargazing program for the whole family! Family campout? Partner with local park? Use the Night Sky Network or Solar System Ambassadors (links above in resources) to run a program.
  - Wabash Valley Astronomical Society does a Beginner Telescope Workshop for those in the Lafayette area. <http://www.stargazing.net/wvas/>
  - Matrix Entertainment out of Michigan has a “Curiosity Dome” you can hire them to bring in: <http://matrixentertainment.com/events/curiosity-dome>
  - Cincinnati Observatory (for those in SE Indiana) offers outreach programs: <https://www.cincinnatiobservatory.org/educationalprograms/>
  - Link Observatory in Morgan County does programs across the state: <https://www.linkobservatory.org/>
- Huge “sticker by number” poster that can be worked on gradually over time (stickers as incentive for coming in the library? Other?). Example: [https://www.demco.com/products/Upstart-Promotions/Posters-D%C3%A9cor/General/StickTogether-reg-Masterpiece-Starry-Night-Mosaic-Sticker-Puzzle-Poster/\\_/A-B00401398&ALL0000&es=20180830115801461673](https://www.demco.com/products/Upstart-Promotions/Posters-D%C3%A9cor/General/StickTogether-reg-Masterpiece-Starry-Night-Mosaic-Sticker-Puzzle-Poster/_/A-B00401398&ALL0000&es=20180830115801461673)
- Space movie night—watch space themed movies, serve moon pies as a snack. If possible, show the movie outside on a big screen under the stars!
- Space themed music night or dance party, consider having a local DJ spin for you.
- Where’s the Martian? (or other character—alien, astronaut, etc.) – get an inflatable or large cutout of whatever character you want to use; move it around to local businesses every few days, ask patrons to locate it and go into library to say where they found it for a prize or entered into drawing.

- Family Egg Drop Challenge – build a “lunar lander” for your egg that will stay together/protect it when dropped from height. This is an engineering challenge, give them random materials and let them problem solve. Tip: use the balls that light up on impact rather than actual eggs for a less messy program!
- Use Virtual Reality system to “explore” the universe in a space program
- “Escape Mars” Breakout Box Challenge – created by Allison McLean, Elkhart Public Library (IN): <https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1rOUBFRQFD16WQ03eLV6GrFTPDOyqxpPE?usp=sharing>
- The Paradox Machine: A Doctor Who Escape Room – created by Matthew Stephenson @ Pendleton Community Public Library – he is willing to share his program plan: mstephenson @ Pendleton.lib.in.us
- Make your own escape room based on the Apollo 13 mission/movie.
- Make mini planetariums out of cardboard boxes – use flashlights for light source, punch holes in cardboard in shape of constellations
- Create your own large planetarium! <https://www.jpl.nasa.gov/edu/teach/activity/inflatable-planetarium/>
- Learn how to navigate by the stars
- Light Painting – set a camera to a long exposure then allow the patron to “paint” in the air with a flashlight. It can be a game, “Guess what they are painting.” First the teams guess based only on watching them paint with the flashlight; if no one gets it, show the picture and see if they can guess.
- Hide glow in the dark stars or painted rocks in the library, award prizes for people who find them.
- Paper Airplane Studio and Testing Grounds: kids/teens/adults make paper airplanes (provide instructions for different designs) and test their creations by flying them through different obstacles/rings hung around the room. Discuss aeronautical engineering. [www.foldnfly.com](http://www.foldnfly.com)
- [www.LaserShows101.com](http://www.LaserShows101.com) out of West Lafayette does laser shows; they also have a new telescope that can be used during the day (solar telescope). Contact there is John Rubacha.
- Invite a local pilot in to speak. UPS pilot, commercial pilot, someone with a private pilot’s license... if you or other staff don’t know anyone, don’t forget to check with any small local airports.

- Set up an astronaut selfie station. The Upstart catalog has a stand-up of a rocket ship you can put your face through, as well as some paper that could be a backdrop, a child-sized cloth space helmet, and photo stick props.
- Do a program centered around constellation mythology—various constellations have different stories depending on the culture (Ancient Greece, Native American, etc.) What do they have in common, what's different?
- Look back at Mars explorers, at the current rovers, and the future of space travel. Talk about travel to/colonization of Mars with examples of science fiction books (*The Martian Chronicles*; *The Martian*; etc.)
- Do a VR space exploration program using Google Cardboard. Various apps available, such as VR Space for Google, Virtual Reality Moon for Google.
- “Gods and Rock Stars” powerpoint presentation with rock stars like the Rolling Stones with images of Greek/Roman gods – done by Diana Martin @ Knox County PL – she is happy to share this powerpoint with anyone interested – dmartinKCPL @ gmail.com
- Around the World in 88 Minutes – explore new cultures, food, and traditions, discuss world travelers and where they visited. Could adapt this to space – Around the galaxy in 88 minutes, discuss all elements of space (planets, comets, stars, etc.)
- A “Universe of Stories” program centered around the stories of various cultural groups in your community. Consider inviting patrons to come in and ‘tell *their* stories’ or perhaps folktales that are important to their cultural heritage. This is especially effective in communities with a large, diverse population but could also be done in smaller communities.
- A Universe of Flavors – food items to try from different parts of the world – could be name for any cooking program!
- Star Wars Jedi Academy (or general celebration) – invite local 501<sup>st</sup> legion to visit in costume, set up stations for various tasks the kids must accomplish to become a jedi. <https://www.501st.com/>
  - Stations with balloon animal lightsabers, star wars themed food
- Make Your Own Golden Record: The Voyager Golden Records are 2 phonographs that were included aboard the Voyager spacecraft launched in 1977. They contain sounds and images meant to portray life on earth and are intended for intelligent life of future humans to find. How would families update these records or create them about their own lives? Burn a CD or use Spotify to create a share-able playlist. <https://voyager.jpl.nasa.gov/golden-record>
- Family trivia! Space, cartoons, books, etc.



- Run a book club for families or any age group. Traditional book club (everyone read same title), or allow each to read on a certain topic and then share, or even just have them bring in a favorite book to show and tell. Could also do a book exchange.
- Community block party in the library parking lot. One library is going to let teens paint parking spaces!
- 3D party – create old-school 3D glasses using a template (internet) and blue and red cellophane which can be purchased at Dollar Tree. Can create a book of 3D images printed from the internet, create your own 3D art, or watch 3D videos. To tie into theme, look for 3D images and videos of space. <https://www.thesprucecrafts.com/diy-3d-glasses-1250758>; <https://ourfamilycode.com/3d-writing-steam-activity/> Google for images by searching for “red/blue 3d images and anaglyphs.”
- Set up a “local author” Author Fair. Invite anyone who has published (self-published included) to set up a booth.
- Chalk on the Walk/Chalk Walk program – draw off squares on your sidewalk, allow families to fill in one square each.
- Dungeons and Dragons / General Board Games programs – lots of websites to refer to: [www.fantasyflightgames.com](http://www.fantasyflightgames.com) / <http://Dnd.wizards.com> / <https://roll20.net> / <https://donjon.bin.sh/d20/dungeon>
- Painting program – families can try different painting techniques – string painting (drag string through paint then onto canvas); bubble painting; bubble wrap or plastic wrap painting; etc.
- Splash Day – small pool, pool noodles, floats – make baggie ice cream – hold a relay race with sponges, buckets – let kids/families spray each other with hoses – eat popsicles.
- Storybook Walk – traveling version! – laminate book pages and tape them up in community businesses (around a town square is perfect); can also take them to school and prop on music stands. Could also tape up around inside of library. Families walk from page to page and read. Great community outreach opportunity. Can combine with physical exercise by putting cards with directions (hop three times, etc.) at each stop with the book.
- Family mad libs – space themed
- Ice cream social – makes a great kick-off program!
- Rock painting / rock garden / rock scavenger hunt (hide painted rocks around town) – traditional paint or you can dip rocks into water that has nail polish floating on top to create a marbled effect – or paint like galaxies or stars/planets.



- Yoga, Zumba, etc. Little ones can also do these when simplified!
- Moana party or Beach party with ukulele music and basic ukulele lessons; try some basic hula dance moves; do limbo; read Moana books and/or screen movie. Bring towels, sunglasses, wear flip flops.
- Name that song as a passive program—clips of songs from Disney movies on a CD, answer sheet with pictures to match the song with the movie (pictures helped the youngest children play along).
- Garbage Can Drumline or Bucket Drumming – use garbage can lids, cans turned upside down, or buckets to improvise drums. Experiment with sticks made from different materials to see what sounds they make. YouTube has videos about this style of drumming for reference. [Bucketdrumming.net](http://Bucketdrumming.net); [bucketdrumming101.com](http://bucketdrumming101.com)
- Invite local geologist or rock enthusiast in to do a talk about their rock collection, or ask them to create a display (in a locked case, ideally) for your library!
- Hire a professional jump roper to do a program at your library, especially if he jumps to music... or create your own jump-rope-a-thon or jump rope party—again, set to music!
- A Universe of Poetry – for any age – could do book spine poetry (<https://www.scholastic.com/teachers/blog-posts/alycia-zimmerman/super-simple-book-spine-poetry/>) or cut words from magazines and glue them together.
- Keepsake crafts – stations around room for creating different keepsakes to give as gifts—hand prints in salt dough, etc.
- Genealogy program for families—create family trees, talk about researching, etc. Local historical society could help present; Indiana State Library Genealogy Division could offer tips to librarians to share with patrons.
- Paint your own walking stick, perhaps talk about trails at local state or city parks.
- Show and tell with older audio/visual formats: cassette tapes, 8 tracks, vinyl records, VHS tapes, beta, laser discs...

- Create a community art project you work on through the summer...perhaps using rocks to create a collage/mural!
- Dungeons & Dragons or roleplaying clubs for upper elementary age and up.
- Hold an American Sign Language program. One library is offering it 1x week for 6 weeks. Invite a local teacher or someone else qualified to present.
- “Dad Rocks!” Father’s Day program
- Invite local musicians in for “First Friday” concerts the first Fridays of May, June, July, and August.
- The Indiana State Museum has several themed education trunks that can be borrowed for a small fee, see their website for info and availability. <https://www.indianamuseum.org/educational-outreach>

## **Preschool/Early Literacy program ideas**

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**\*DON’T FORGET**—your CSLP Early Literacy manual contains a wealth of book, song, fingerplay, craft, and other storytime-related ideas!\*

- Check these sites for songs, rhymes, and other storytime ideas:
  - Jbrary: <https://jbrary.com/>
  - Storytime Katie: <https://storytimekatie.com/>
- Preschool science & math – light and shadow programs using clear bins filled with water to explore the way prisms work, do “light painting” (google this/see Pinterest for more info), talk about transparent v. opaque.
- Parent/Child or Guardian/Child Fairy Tale Ball
- Chicken Story Time – read with a live chicken – read the book Chicken Storytime – do a craft of a solo cup chicken noise maker. <https://sciencebob.com/chicken-sounds-from-a-cup/> Chicken Little is a good tie-in.
- Introduce young children to the Chronicles of Narnia series through felt board, puppet shows, and interactive stories. (google for ideas)

- Sensory bins – make “fairy dust” from salt and food coloring, they can write in it or you can hide fairy tale related items in it (see Pinterest). Can also use moon sand, water, beans, etc.
- Gingerbread house class – make a castle instead of house, or tie it into Hansel and Gretel. Can use graham crackers in a pinch!
- Dress up storytime with fairy tale characters or prince/princess/royalty theme. Have a parade around the library for everyone, whether or not they dressed up! Ask for costume/dress donations to have on hand for kids who don’t come in costume.
- Do a storytime with different versions of the same tale (Cinderella stories from different countries, etc.)
- Fairy Tale Dance Party! Dance to Disney princess movie songs.
- Use fairy tales to create puppet shows that the librarians do, or the kids can use for imaginative play. Paper bag puppets, stick puppets, sock puppets...Can make puppets out of kitchen utensils, also! Shadow puppets are another option.
- Jack’s Bean Sprouts – a gardening club one library plans to do for littles! – another name suggested – Messy Little Gardners – build a castle in the sky using shaving cream in a tub as the clouds and DUPLOs for the castle. Try planting beans, they are relatively easy to grow. Can do this in cups, in library garden, etc. Seed Savers Exchange will send free seeds to your library!  
<https://www.seedsavers.org/>
- Do a Once Upon a Story Time Yoga program – some poses can be related to fairy tale characters. Kidding Around Yoga and Yogibrarian are good resource websites. Mindfulness and movement program with breathing exercises and short periods of meditation.
- Jewelry crafts – can be done on different scales for each age (pony beads for kids, real jewelry for adults); make royal jewels.
- Noah’s Ark animal building workshop – like Build-a-Bear, can order the animals and materials and put them together at your library during program. Several animals could work for fairy tales.  
[www.noahsarkworkshop.com](http://www.noahsarkworkshop.com)
- Gardening/STEAM – plant beans (magic beans?!), pumpkins (Cinderella)
- Teddy Bears’ Picnic – set up picnic blanket with teddy bears on it and a picnic basket; say the basket has a hole in it and you’ve lost everything from inside! Go on a hunt through the library to find the missing food following paper cut outs of bear paw prints. Finish up with the rhyme “Teddy Bear, Teddy Bear, Turn Around!”

- Do a Pete the Cat storytime; using his Old MacDonald book, sing the song; create paper/cardstock animals and put them on craft sticks so the kids can waive them in the air during the song.
- Read *Where the Wild Things Are*, make crowns, have a wild rumpus parade.
- Picture Book Putt Putt – use painter’s tape to outline each hole; every hole has a different book theme. Print off or find props to correspond to the book at each hole. Can find cheap child-sized plastic golf-clubs at dollar store.
- Don’t forget—you can take storytimes on the go to a local park, police station, restaurant, store, etc.
- Decorate pet “meteors” or “asteroids” (aka pet rocks)
- Use pool noodles and other materials to make aliens; alien spaceships from paper plates.
- Make light boxes using Christmas tree lights, etc.
- Make glow in the dark constellations using glow in the dark stars; make constellations in a tube using paper towel tubes (see Pinterest).
- Paint planets using shaving cream swirled with paint or food coloring on a paper plate: <https://iheartcraftythings.com/preschool-space-craft-marbled-planets.html>
- Summer Snow Storm program – make Indoor Play Snow – 3 cups baking soda + ½ cup hair conditioner (should be white colored conditioner). Feels cold and packs like real snow; sweeps up easily. Could also dye it and call it moon sand, or Mars dust...
- Picture Book Putt Putt – create a ‘course’ on the floor using colored painter’s/masking tape. Each hole can have a picture book theme (How Do Dinosaurs Say Goodnight hole – decorate with stuffed dinos and images of dinosaurs propped up with book stands; etc.) Putting sets can be purchased at Dollar Tree, or use cups for holes. Incorporate actual books, too.
- Dance party! Block Party! Art Party! - Use/play fun music during all of these. (Check out Jim Gill and Laurie Berkner.) Music Makers / Movement and Music / Shake Your Sillies – etc. -- all toddler music and movement programs
- Make your own shakers/drums/other instruments with recycled materials
- Toddler air guitar contest

- Use the book *Music Class Today!* by David Weinstone to inspire a program
- Do something inspired by *Beat Bugs* (show on Netflix): <https://www.beatbugs.com/>
- Bring in Arts for Learning to do a program that teaches kids how to break words down into syllables with drumming. (Could do this yourself, too! Phonological awareness!)
- Instrument petting zoo—ask high school band/orchestra teacher, or local professional band or symphony, to bring in instruments.
- Tiny Tot Idol – American Idol for little ones! Singing “competition” (could just be a way for them to have fun—teach songs and sing them together).
- Toddler Prom – have them come in their finest, play music and dance!
- Seek out picture books that use song lyrics for their text; Iza Trapani has done several of these (“How Much is that Doggie in the Window” and “I’m a Little Teapot,” for instance); read with the group then sing the song. Act out any motions.
- *Not a Box* program – use book by Antoinette Portis, then use cardboard boxes to play pretend or to craft cars, houses, etc.
- Building Friendships program – could make many different programs work for this, from general ‘play’ programs to craft programs; maybe an official ‘hang out after storytime’ program? Happens anyway, but this might encourage shy parents to stay and interact more with other parents and kids.
- Petting Zoo with vehicles – Contact your local police/sheriff’s dept, fire dept, etc for a “community helpers” vehicle petting zoo or a local contractor for a “construction vehicle/big trucks” petting zoo.
- Build robots – cardboard & scrap materials or possibly real robots (basic ones!)
- Play with Robots – use Cubelets, Spheros, Dash, etc. with toddlers! It can be done! Indy PL InfoZone does this regularly. Code-a-Pillar is a preschool coding toy one library has used.
- Make and/or decorate “Drive-in Movie cars” made from cardboard boxes. (See Pinterest) Adapt these for Universe of Stories by making “spaceships” to sit in.
- See if your county’s Purdue Extension office can supply blocks/DUPLOs for block play.

- Put up a Story Walk in a local park (or in/around your building!).  
<http://www.kellogghubbard.org/storywalk>
- Parachutes Rock! -- parachute play program for preschoolers. Will need adults to help with this. Teach basic movements then use those movements with songs.
- Pete the Cat dance party.
- You Rock! Based on the book Only One You by Linda Krauz which features colorful fish; read the book then paint rocks to look like fish! Great message about how everyone is unique.
- Rock-a-bye Baby – baby program that includes lots of music, lullabies, playing, and singing.
- Library Town – dramatic/imaginative play stations for various community locations set up in a room together – laundromat, ice cream shop, restaurant, store, mini-library, etc.—and let the kids play freely!
- Toddler 4<sup>th</sup> of July parade to marching band music.
- Process Art program – painting idea – Put sheet of white construction paper inside a pringles can, add a ping pong ball that has been dipped in paint, shake the can and remove the ball. See what you created! Can take the painting home in the same can.

## **Children's/School Age program ideas**

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- **Mousetraps/Rube Goldberg Devices** - build a device
- **Building Things** – Build Bridges: Experiment with craft sticks, straws, blocks, legos...marshmallows and uncooked spaghetti; Build Buildings: Who can build the tallest tower with provided materials? Could be family challenge...
- **Robots** – Build functioning robots--brush and art bots, Pop Can Kits, etc. OR not functioning—build with craft materials, design on paper, etc.
- **Cooking** Could easily be series, different dishes each time. Can do no-cook/microwave if your library doesn't have oven.
- **The Future** – Brainstorm and dream big about the future, design cars, build buildings, etc.
- **Stories** – Writing contest or workshop; MadLibs program
- **Bookmarks** – Bookmark contest (run through summer) or design bookmarks craft program
- **Histories** – Make a time capsule, learn about historical events in your community.
- **T-shirts** – tie dye, cut into new patterns (remove sleeves, etc.)

- **Get Moving** – Yoga for kids, martial arts, healthy snacks, etc.
- **Universe of Science** – SO MANY experiments you could choose from! Check Pinterest.
- **Children’s Dept Mascot Contest** – hold a contest to design the new library/dept mascot. Winner’s design gets made into a stuffed version via a company such as Budsies.com. Winner gets 1 copy and library gets 1 copy to keep in department.
- **Fairy Tales** – Read/discuss fairy tales from other countries, discuss how they are alike or different, then kids can write their own fairy tales.
- **Sports** – Invite local HS athletes and coaches in dressed in their uniforms, talk about how the game is played, run basic drills to the extent space allows, talk about teamwork, sportsmanship, and self-discipline. Let kids try on uniforms (pads for football, shin guards for soccer, etc.).
- **Universe of Pets** – Invite local Humane Society or other shelter in with some of their adoptable pets; talk about pet care; hold adoption hours; create simple tied blankets for the shelter.
- **Space/Moon Rocks!** – Paint rocks dark blue with stars or planets; use microscope to view lunar rock samples.
- **Monster Socks** – Make sock puppet monsters (check last year’s CSLP manual for details)
- **Coding** – Coding with Google CS – [csfirst.withgoogle.com](http://csfirst.withgoogle.com) – website has everything you need to create a club for free. They have a music and sound lesson.
- LEGO Club – Castle edition! Or, make castles from recycled materials – make it a challenge – have groups build as tall as they can, or make them so they can hold a certain amount of weight, etc.
- Make castles from recycled materials; make magic reading wands with popsicle sticks (decorate and use to point to words as they read).
- Make marshmallow catapults: <https://www.wikihow.com/Make-a-Marshmallow-Catapult> Great if paired with castle building challenge—use the marshmallow catapults to knock down the castles!
- Hold a Wizard Camp!
- Make glow in the dark fairies from soda bottles – adapted from lightning bug craft – <https://onelittleproject.com/pop-bottle-firefly/> Another option is to create a “fairy bottle”-- <https://bitzniggles.com/glowing-fairy-bottle/> Or, a cut-paper lantern similar to this: <https://liagriffith.com/fall-paper-cut-lantern/> (but with fairies instead of leaves)
- Moana Mythology Party – hire a presenter to dress as Moana, read tales/folklore from Hawaii and other Polynesian islands. Could do similar things with other Disney or book characters.
- Knights/Knight Training program – Decorate a cardboard shield, make up a story about being a knight. What are your strengths? What adventures do you go on? Set up challenges such as ‘slay the dragon,’



‘capture the dragon egg,’ or ‘rescue the village person’—essentially, an obstacle course. Jousting with pool noodles.

- Order blank books (or staple paper together to make a “book”) and let kids draw and write to create their own ‘book.’ Note- Amazon has blank *board* books. East Chicago Public Library did this with elementary aged kids and called it “Our Story” – the kids wrote their own stories.
- Alice in Wonderland mini-golf. Could use lawn flamingos instead of clubs!
- Hold a National Novel Writing Month (NaNoWriMo) Summer Camp - <https://ywp.nanowrimo.org/pages/summer>
- Make fire breathing dragon puppets
- Percy Jackson – “Battle of Cabins” program – Give groups or “cabins” of children challenges where they earn points – Build the Parthenon, STEM challenges, etc.
- Cardboard castle building—collect boxes and let them build. Ask local furniture/appliance/grocery stores to donate extra large boxes. Provide other materials to decorate creations.
- Fairy Tale Character Scavenger Hunt – print characters and hang around library; each character has number. Kids have ‘bingo’ style cards with character pictures/names on them; they write the number they see next to the hanging character on the bingo card to verify they saw it. Or, just play Fairytale dress up BINGO! They come dressed up as their favorite character and you can give away fairytale-related prizes or books.
- Enchanted Forest Dioramas – kids bring a shoebox, library supplies art materials; create an enchanted forest in the box. <https://theimaginationtree.com/little-red-riding-hood-story-box/>
- STEM fairy tale program; use book Fairy Tale Fixers (or get creative on your own) and offer activities like building the three little pigs houses and testing them for strength; get Rapunzel out of her tower, etc.
- Use the book The Library Gingerbread Man to talk about Dewey Decimal System.
- Dragon and Unicorn Party, or Mermaid party – make dragon or mermaid eggs using air dry clay and press jewels and other shiny items into the clay. Hold a dragon egg hunt by hiding pre-made eggs around the library. Suggestion for making dragon (aka dinosaur) eggs:

<https://www.instructables.com/id/DIY-Dinosaur-Eggs/> One library had a local stable bring 2 ponies dressed as unicorns for a unicorn party.

- Rick Riordan “Camp Half-Blood” Program – kids complete series of challenges. Poseidon Water Day in partnership with local pool, can include stories and crafts in addition to water games.
- Make Fairy gardens/terrariums – collect jars or plant pots, provide potting soil and small plants (may be able to source these from avid gardeners in your community) and plant along with small items like fairy doors and little toy fairies, etc.
- Recreate Ancient Greek myths; do a mythology program—make Greek masks, Greek god/goddess coloring sheets, watch videos about Greek mythology.
- Fairytale Escape Room/breakout box – search online or Breakout EDU for ideas
- Fairytale Olympics! Celebrate summer Olympics and fairytales – series of challenges: <https://www.coolest-kid-birthday-parties.com/party-game/>
- Fairy Tale Con for elementary kids – dress up as your favorite fairy tale; tell about your character; have fairy tale themed crafts; have a photo booth set up for pictures
- Harry Potter Triwizard Tournament! Quidditch Tournament in a local park!
- Make a diorama of a fairy tale or myth
- Science of Stories – plant “magic” beans, etc. Fizzing Fairy Potions – using baking soda, vinegar, dish soap, glitter, food coloring, glass jar, etc. <https://theimaginationtree.com/science-activity-fizzing-fairy-potions/>
- Fractured fairytale readers’ theater, or even act out a traditional fairy tale. Get kids involved in costuming and sets, and even writing the script. Could be multi-week program. Or, could do this as an improve activity – select a well known tale and change up the details, then tell the new story.
- Make storytelling rocks—you paint or mod podge characters from fairy tales to smooth rocks and as you tell the story, you set the characters out one at a time. Many examples on Pinterest, see ISL’s Pinterest page (linked in Resources above).

- Roll Your Roles – divide kids into groups and give them each a 6 sided die along with three lists of 6 each of fairy tale heroes, villains, and items. They roll to get their combination (one hero/one villain/one item) and then create a short story or skit to act out.
- “Imagine What I Can Be When I Grow Up” – bring in people from all types of professions to talk to the kids. Could be a series. Community helpers are especially appealing and often come with interesting uniforms/vehicles/etc., but any job could work!
- Build a fairy house, create fairies from craft materials (search pinterest for ideas). Or, create a lighted silhouette fairy in a jar (pinterest).
- “Favorite Book Character Day” – make masks, hats, and props; use photo background of castle.
- Read “Choose Your Own Adventure” books aloud to a group, making the decisions together by voting.
- Run a kid-centric role playing game session. “Hero Kids” has 10 characters, is inclusive, involves simple dice mechanics and playtime runs approx.. 30-60 minutes. Find info on DriveThruRPG.com; order dice branded with your library logo on [www.chessex.com](http://www.chessex.com).
- Make-a-Monster: Read “She Made a Monster” by Lynn Fulton then construct own monster out of construction paper; could possibly lead to writing or telling story about their monster.
- Silly Storytime for older kids (K-2<sup>nd</sup>) centered around *Mother Bruce* books by Higgins; read the stories, do a bear hotel craft based on *Hotel Bruce* book; do “Going on a Bear Hunt,” have a snack.
- Messy Art Day – use leftover craft supplies from other programs (clear out the craft closet!), let them make whatever they want.
- Slime is always good! Numerous resources, just google.
- Hold a robot obstacle course using spheros and any other robots your library may own; set up the course in advance, or let the kids design it.
- Food/Cooking – make/build/decorate gingerbread houses from Hansel & Gretel (could use graham crackers, too!); Make gingerbread men cookies for the Gingerbread Man tale.
- Create your own graphic novel/comic strip. Tell YOUR story! Hold a comic book club.
- Build a rubber band powered car or other vehicle using LEGOs and rubber bands; see whose goes farthest.

- Life-sized board games! Candy Land – could change character names to fairy tale names...
- TEI Landmark Audio sells MakerSpace and summer reading themed programming kits:  
<http://teilandmarkaudio.com/pages/makerspace.aspx>
- Minute to Win It challenge programs are always popular and can be done inexpensively. YouTube has lots of ideas.
- Trickster Day (originally done as April Fools program) – various stations with projects like making fake poop, brown “E’s” (brown die-cut E’s inside a container instead of brownies), donut seed packets (printables4mom.com), fake colored glue “spill,” etc.
- Certified therapy dogs reading program (kids read to dogs) – if you have one of these already, see if your regular dogs might be willing to wear dragon (or other fantastical) costumes this summer while the kids read to them!
- American Girl Doll Club – tell ‘their stories’ then pending age of audience, kids could tell their own story.
- Do a program about Indiana’s own astronaut, Gus Grissom!
- Explorer’s Club – “visit” several planets, do planet crafts, study the differences between each planet, talk about the order of the planets. (This program is adapted from an “around the world” Explorer’s Club – rotating topics covering regions/countries/etc. with activities and crafts to help teach the topic.)  
“Where in the Universe Are You” – stations for big bang, wormholes, black holes, dark matter. Find activities on the STEM Activity Clearing House—one example:  
[http://clearinghouse.starnetlibraries.org/astronomy-and-space/220-solar-system-in-my-neighborhood.html?search\\_query=solar+system&results=25](http://clearinghouse.starnetlibraries.org/astronomy-and-space/220-solar-system-in-my-neighborhood.html?search_query=solar+system&results=25)
- “Constellation Explorer,” “Constellation Exploration,” or “You Are a Star” -- Make constellations in a tube using paper towel tubes (see Pinterest); make constellations with marshmallows and toothpicks; make constellations on putting star stickers on black paper and connecting them using white or yellow crayon. “Design their own” constellations—if they could create a constellation, what would it look like? What is its story/mythology? Discuss constellation myths. Learn to spot them in the sky.
- Galaxies in a jar (Pinterest)
- Moon program – study phases of moon, how moon formed/got its craters (<https://lco.global/education/activity/craters-classroom/>), moon landing/astronauts, look for the man and woman in the moon...

- NASA astronaut training program—create a “space obstacle course” with tests the astronauts must pass. OR, call it “Space Camp” and expand to offer other activities. Let kids walk across an air mattress to simulate a moon walk; dig for moon rocks; decorate rocks to create “moon rock” magnets; use a green screen to offer an “on the moon” photo opp for kids.
- Make moon sand or galaxy slime (Pinterest)
- Make bouncy balls that look like planets or galaxies (add glitter for stardust!)  
<http://www.pbs.org/parents/crafts-for-kids/super-bouncy-balls/>
- Make stress balls from expanding water beads, rice, flour, or slime inside of balloons.  
<https://bitzngiggles.com/water-bead-stress-ball/>
- Make spaceships/rockets using plastic bottles, rockets from Pringles cans, jet packs from 2 liter bottles, or paper towel tubes and clothespins—all on Pinterest
- Make a paper mache astronaut helmet. (Then have the kids run an obstacle course while wearing them!)
- Make glow in the dark comets - <https://astronomerswithoutborders.org/319-awb-blog/dark/astroarts-blog/astrocrafts/2102-flying-glow-in-the-dark-comet.html>
- Use baby food jars to make snowglobe rockets (Pinterest)
- Invite a local rocket club to visit the library and do a program for you – check the National Association of Rocketry for clubs in your area (<http://www.nar.org/find-a-local-club/nar-club-locator/>) or the local high school.
- Space Games: Solar System Scavenger Race (teams race to be the first to put planets in order); Saturn ring challenge with beach ball and hula hoop; Don’t Drop the Asteroid (keep balloon in the air); Astronaut Hands (try simple tasks while wearing gardening gloves).
- Mars Mission: Design a space mission to survive on a planet. Talk about the challenges a real mission might face. Could be individual or collaborative. Check StarNet STEM Activity Clearinghouse for program information.

- Design an alien—use prompts to create an alien culture, including appearance, language, habitats – draw pictures/write descriptions.
- Galaxy sun catchers – use glue and food color (and glitter), create design in a round container such as the lid of a butter container, peel it up when dry and you have a suncatcher!
- Make bubble planet paintings – bubble painting with colorful bubbles to look like planets! (Pinterest)
- Bedtime Math’s Crazy 8’s math club – they provide all the materials you need for activities, games, and fun. Glow in the dark geometry, toilet paper Olympics. <https://crazy8s.bedtimemath.org/home/what>
- Mario Kart Scavenger Hunt & Race in the library. Divide kids into teams, ask teen volunteers to help. The kids solve clues to win cups (Flower Cup, Star Cup, etc.—as in game). One person from each team races in the video game to determine who goes first. Teams are given items along the way that might help or hinder—again, as in the game (turtle shells to go faster, banana peels, etc.) Worst items sent races to Bowser’s Castle—in a separate room with MK themed mini-games. Some ideas here: <https://www.joyintheworks.com/super-mario-party-games-activities/>
- Koko the Gorilla program – watch portions of the video “Koko’s Kitten,” discuss it (book also!), learn some words in sign language from Koko.org (The Gorilla Foundation), giveaway Koko related items.
- Young Writer’s Club – “A Universe of Stories” or “A Sky Full of Stories” Write stories or even try writing a screenplay! Examine structure of common stories (how does the plot of sci fi movies usually play out? Common plot points, etc.) Google “making screenplay for kids” or Ontarian Librarian blog will help plan a series.
  - Leah Singer teaches a creative writing class for children – leahsthoughts @ gmail.com; costs vary
- Draw to music! Listen to a few types and see if artwork changes. Soundtrack of 2001 A Space Odyssey and other outer space music? Could also create multimedia art.
- Make doll clothes – basic sewing – could do alien PJs or other space-related material. One library will run a series 2 Saturdays a month; will learn the basics of hand sewing and how to use a machine. Will design and make their own monster dolls or make space themed items.
- DIY Discovery program/series – introduce kids to an activity that they may want to pursue as a hobby, such as pottery, photography, gardening, or cooking.
- Karaoke party! Or Name that Tune – either using Disney music or Kids Bop.

- Make a music and/or dance video—let the kids shoot it and edit it
- Put on a talent show
- Use a Makey Makey to make music via their bongo and piano apps: <http://makeymakey.com/apps/>  
Make it fun by making piano keys they can walk on out of foil, or bananas in place of the bongos!
- Shrinky-Dinks to create guitar picks (could make necklaces out of them); colored pencils are recommended for coloring them.
- Make your own fossils (see Pinterest), kids get to dig them out. Consider using a 3D printer to print really cool dino shapes, dino teeth and claws, etc. and use those. Can freeze in ice, place in plaster, etc.
- Rock, Paper, Scissors contest! Use the book *The Legend of Rock, Paper, Scissors* by Drew Daywalt
- Learn another language. Ask language speakers in your community to offer a mini or beginning class to kids.
- Angry Birds program – build and knock down cardboard boxes (can do as individuals and in groups); stuffed sock balls with angry bird faces; green balloons with piggy faces.
- International Night – representatives/booths from different countries, ask local restaurants to provide food of different countries, provide information. Great all-ages/family idea!
- Coder Dojo program – partner with Eleven Fifty Academy to offer classes (an Indiana-based non-profit that offers coding classes, contact them to learn more: <https://elevenfifty.org/about/outreach/>)
  - Websites to help teach coding:  
Scratch - <https://scratch.mit.edu/>  
Hour of Code - <https://code.org/learn>  
CodeCademy - <https://www.codecademy.com/>  
Additionally, many robots (Dash, Lego WeDo, Spheros) provide their own coding software such as Blockly, which can be used on iPads and other devices.
- Cardboard Challenge—Global Cardboard Challenge is in Sept/Oct, but could do your own version of it—idea is open-ended, to build “something awesome out of cardboard, recycled materials, and imagination.” (<http://cardboardchallenge.com/>) Can often pick up resources for free or inexpensively at your local Solid Waste Management District center or recycling center.



- Paper bag STEM Challenges – self contained STEM challenges – various craft materials in bag, staple a challenge to the front. Examples: <https://buggyandbuddy.com/mystery-bag-stem-challenge/>
- Make “galaxy” shirts with fabric paint; example of how: <http://www.instructables.com/id/DIY-Galaxy-Sweatshirts-Or-anything-you-want-to-/>
- Life-size games (life-size Jenga, Candyland, etc.). Added bonus—have the kids help you build it/put it together! One library did life-size Oregon Trail! Included a history lesson about that time period.
- Create map art—make your own or color/decorate black and white maps—could even frame them!
- Reader’s Theater—can use short stories or adapt books yourself (examples of Mr. Popper’s Penguins, Peter Pan were given). Invite teens to act as mentors and assist.
- “What’s Fowl in the Library?” – brought in chicks, talked about care/handling of animals, could do many different animals if you have a good contact (any contacts with local 4H groups if not farmers?). Could call series, “Animals Rock!” or similar.
- Group building challenge—build a structure from LEGOs or blocks, put it under a box. One person on a team is allowed to look and must try to communicate to the group what should be built (they don’t get to see it). Team building/communication practice exercise.
- Invite local woodworkers in to show and tell different tools with the kids; work with them or a naturalist to build bird houses for outside the library, then note/track the birds that visit (an ongoing project or posted in dept).
- Work with a local arts group to create a piece of public art to display in the community.
- Create cupcakes that look like book characters or represent elements of books; could be child’s choice of character. Make it a cupcake wars program by challenging them to decorate to the theme and giving them one unusual ingredient to incorporate.
- Create a community garden, or a library garden, with kids as a program or ongoing program.
- Children’s craft fair—children sell their own craft projects.
- Minute to Win It program.

- Create a house out of empty plastic water bottles. Kids can paint bottles first. Will be a several week program.
- Summer-long LEGO building challenge/program—can add on to structure all summer.
- “Create and Destroy” program—build contraptions that will knock other things down! Example is marshmallow guns. Catapults from craft sticks.
- Stuffed animal or teddy bear sleepover. Stuffed animals sleep over at library, take pictures of them doing things around the department. Have the animals go to space overnight!
- Cookies & Canvas—let the kids paint whatever they want OR guide them through drawing music-themed paintings—can trace out lines before or put tape down in the shape of a music note, etc.
- Pokemon scavenger hunt- hide pics of different Pokemon around the library, give them a checklist to check off as they locate, prize for finding them. Could be part of a larger Pokemon-themed party.
- Use drum sticks as basis for a craft. Check Pinterest for ideas.
- Make rain sticks! Talk about what they are and then make one. <http://happyhooligans.ca/rain-sticks>
- Paint rocks to look like cactus, glue together and put in planters—googly eyes for added cuteness.
- Book buddies – pair teens with young K-3 students to practice reading together. Do a craft, have a snack, pick out books together.
- American Girl tea party, bring their dolls, dolls can be ‘introduced’ to one another, do crafts and have snacks.
- Readers’ Theater Rocks – turn a picture book into a production using music, instruments, songs, sets, props, etc.
- Backyard Bird Song primer – listen to bird songs of local/common birds like cardinals, chickadees; talk about how birds learn and imitate songs and why they sing; step outside and listen for robins; bird song impression contest. [www.Allaboutbirds.org](http://www.Allaboutbirds.org)

- Kids choir program for grades K-5, teach them 1-3 popular songs for kids and simple choreography, the let them perform.
- Sing Silly Songs – teach the kids several silly songs that have motions that go with them (Once an Austrian Went Yodeling, The Princess Pat, Little Bunny Foo Foo). Provide the lyrics on paper and let the kids make their own songbooks by adding construction paper covers and decorating them. At the end, ask them to teach songs to you!
- Stomp program with various found materials to make drums.
- Make Solar S'Mores: <https://climatekids.nasa.gov/smares/>
- Invite a local bakery/baker to come in and teach cake decorating or do a baking program. Could do this on your own—ask local grocery to donate the cupcakes or sell them to you at a reduced price, lots of books/pinterest ideas for decorating cupcakes.
- Invite local music store, music teacher, or other musician to come in and give instrument lessons. Ukuleles are a very easy instrument to learn.

## **Teen program ideas**

(Search with Ctrl-F)

Teen Video Challenge – this contest has moved to the summer and the manual now includes a section all about it (pages 33-35)! Learn about it here:

<https://www.in.gov/library/files/CSLP%20Teen%20Video%20Challenge%20Information.pdf>

- **Zombies**– Make “zombie” bears or other stuffed animals by taking apart and putting back together with mismatched parts. Watch zombie movies.
- **T-shirt Art**– Tie dye, bleach, cutting different ways to create new pattern, use old t-shirts to create new clothing item.
- **Book Crafts**– Use old books to create book art
- **Writing** – Hold a writing contest or workshop; make book spine poetry and hold a poetry slam at the end so kids can read their best ones aloud, etc.
- **Cooking Universe** – Food and cooking. Teen “Chopped” or “Iron Chef.” Could also build a solar oven.
- **Gaming Universe** – Have an expert gamer in to speak, or invite teens in to teach each other informally.
- **Coding Universe** – Teach basic coding using CodeCademy or use robots and Scratch or similar.

- **Robots** – Can make more complicated robots than School Age, or use set such as LEGO WeDo
- **Your Future**– College or career fair or talk; college prep; what to expect
- **Make Your Business Blast Off**– Invite babysitters and lawnmowers, etc, in for tips from a local entrepreneur.
- Create your own Fractured Fairytale. Read examples like Stinky Cheese Man by Scieszka.
- Creative writing class teens. Have them tell their stories (Imagine Your Story) or focus on modes of storytelling, of which writing is one. “Write the story of your future” or their autobiography.
- Rick Riordan book club for teens.
- Green Screen – movie making – movies are a mode of storytelling
- LARPing (Live Action Roleplay) – based on fairytales, mythology, or a well-known story. The teens do the actual role playing and adults are brought in as volunteers to be the “non-player characters” and interact with the teen’s characters—adults can be monsters the teens need to defeat, etc. Lessons on how to LARP, how to make costumes, etc. can take place in the weeks beforehand or even the morning of the event.
- Horcrux Scavenger Hunt (Harry Potter) – Teams compete to destroy/find all the Horcruxes and defeat Voldemort, they are hidden through the library.
- Order blank books so teens can write their own graphic novel. Could also staple paper together to accomplish this if needed.
- Hold a National Novel Writing Month (NaNoWriMo) summer camp for ages 13 and up - <https://campnanowrimo.org/>
- “Interrupting Anime” – have manga blocks of a few stories at their climax point and leave the rest blank for teen anime fans to finish.
- Play art game Exquisite Corpse – could call it Exquisite Mythological Monster, etc. Fold paper in three, a person begins drawing the head of a monster; fold that part over and pass to next person, who draws torso of monster without knowing what the head looks like; next person draws bottom of monster. At end, unfold it to see your creation!
- Use Google CS “storytelling” function for preteens/teens to create own story. Just google “Google CS!”

- Hide-n-Seek in the library- after hours – serve pizza and let teens have free reign in the library (with supervision!)
- Medieval weaponry/armor cosplay and/or crafting (using foam!)
- Bad Art Night – create the baddest art with random art supplies.
- Nailed It (show on Netflix) cookie/cake decorating program for Adults – show them picture of a beautifully decorated cookie, cupcake, etc. and they have to recreate it – library provides the base cookie or cupcake and decorations – they decorate.
- Food program focused on food from fantasy movies/books – butter beer from Harry Potter, Turkish delight from Chronicles of Narnia, tea from Alice in Wonderland, etc.
- Interactive story walk – teens write, stage, rehearse, plan, & perform an interactive storywalk for kids in the community. Could be outside or inside library. More info: <https://www.kellogghubbard.org/storywalk>
- Escape Room – “Escape from Medusa’s Lair.”
- Let’s go on a Quest – obstacles and games that kids can compete in
- Fairytale Nails manicure party/program
- Awkward/Fairy Tale Story – play a game where the group builds a story together.
- Make Fairy gardens – collect jars or plant pots, provide potting soil and small plants (may be able to source these from avid gardeners in your community) and plant along with small items like fairy doors and little toy fairies, etc.
- Percy Jackson movie marathon and/or trivia
- Set up a Dungeons and Dragons club or other tabletop roleplaying game. If you don’t know how to lead these yourself, talk to local game stores, D&D website <https://dnd.wizards.com/>, watch YouTube series Critical Role for an idea of how D&D works (heads-up, this is a very high-level D&D game that has been

going on for years and is played by professional voice actors—but it shows you what the game can be):  
<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCpXBGqwsBkpvYjsJBQ7LEQ>

- World Building 101: Creative writing/art opportunity to develop a world setting for stories, games, etc. Develop your own creation myth, religion, countries, politics, and more. Donjon.bin.sh is a world building generator.
- Create a dragon egg from papier-mache; decorate. Make paper dragon puppets:  
<https://rufflesandrainboots.com/paper-dragon-puppets/>
- Egg Drop challenge – Dragon Egg Drop Challenge? - Give them a raw egg and materials for them to create a protective structure around the egg. Drop them from a height and see which ones don't break. Participants should test and adjust their creations as they go!
- Dragon egg bath bombs
- Harry Potter Wizard's Ball
- Summer-ween – Halloween myths in the summer – taken from Gravity Falls TV show
- Lit Café – themed to mythology/folktales/fairytales
- Special effects make-up program – one library invited a local theatre make-up artist to give lessons; you can find some ideas online, also. Zombie make-up is an extension of this.
- STEM-related program – one idea is to have kids roll a marble through a pool noodle to try to knock down fat sidewalk chalk that is standing upright. Discuss probability, make guesses about how many attempts it might take to knock over the chalk, discuss what worked and what didn't.
- College/Career Prep program – invite local scholarship coach or school counselors to talk about applying for scholarships and how to find them, FAFSA, etc.
- Sewing program for teens – learn basic hand sewing with simple projects, or use sewing machine if library (or staff member) has one. Pillows, tote bags, pillow cases, notebook covers, stuffed animals.
- Invite a local author such as Sandra Mitchell to speak. Sandra can lead workshops, talks, etc.  
[www.saundramitchell.com](http://www.saundramitchell.com)

- Star Wars Capture the Flag game – light and dark sides – cardboard obstacles – star badges, if badge is captured you're out – goal is to 'destroy the base' of the opposing team.
- Hold a "Space Camp" movie (80's movie) lock-in—watch the movie, do a craft or rocket experiment, offer Rock Band and Karaoke. For Rock Band, divide into 'bands' and give them space-related names.
- Hold a mini Star Wars or Star Trek convention at your library, dress up
- E-textile constellations. Create an existing constellation or make one up using lily pad twinkle boards, led lights, and conductive thread from SparkFun. Sewn into fabric and framed with an embroidery hoop. Hand-sewing will be new to most kids so plan on a long program!  
<https://learn.sparkfun.com/tutorials/twinkle-zodiac-constellation>
- Play the cooperative card game "Space Team" (<https://www.playspaceteam.com/>) available as cards and as phone download. It can be loud so consider offering a quieter options, such as a craft, for those who don't like the noise. Videos of the play-through available on YouTube.
- Illuminated Death Star wall art: <http://www.320sycamoreblog.com/2013/10/pottery-barn-star-wars-art-knockoff.html>
- "Discover Who You Are" program with zodiac and star charts
- Role Playing Game program with assorted RPGs; for this summer, Fantasy Flight's Star Wars RPG. Can purchase the game rules from Amazon or the Fantasy Flight website, [fantasyflightgames.com](http://fantasyflightgames.com).
- Cosplay dance party – dress up as your favorite character! Make it space themed with Star Wars and Star Trek costumes/activities.
- Diverse in the Universe – teach teens about different cultures and their beliefs. Bring in members of the community who are from those cultures to present.
- Hide pictures of different items throughout the library; the items would be things that teens could use to assemble a survival kit to help them survive an alien invasion. Each item worth a different number of points; at the end, the group that created a "pack" with items worth the most points, wins! Tie in *The 5<sup>th</sup> Wave*.



- Chocolate Olympics – Minute to Win It style games that involve chocolate, like m&m color sorting, rolling a Whopper with their nose, etc.
- Make a watermelon explode using rubber bands, talk about the forces at play.
- Make “galaxy” shirts with fabric paint; example of how: <http://www.instructables.com/id/DIY-Galaxy-Sweatshirts-Or-anything-you-want-to/>
- Nerf night in the library – capture the flag- make a glow in the dark version
- Rent the Game Truck which can hold laser tag programs
- Have a glow in the dark party after hours for the teens—put tonic water in punch so it glows under black light, dance with glow sticks, etc.
- Do a super hero backstories program
- Make a tiny galaxy inside of a small “potion bottle” necklace (can buy the small bottles).
- “Intergalactic Pancakes” cooking program—make pancakes that look like galaxies using food coloring, etc.
- Wii Sports Summer Games
- Duct tape crafts – use duct tape with a star or galaxy design.
- Teen “Take Apart” or “Tinkering” Day – bring in old music-playing devices (cassette players, record players, 8-track players—also old VCRs/VHS tapes and old TVs are possibility) – take them apart and learn how they work.
- Lip Sync battle! Or a Rap Battle
- Bring out your old library Wiis and play Rock Band, American Idol, Just Dance, Dance Dance Revolution, etc.
- Make art inspired by music – listen to music while drawing/creating

- Air Band competition
- Make Your Own band-inspired t-shirt (favorite band, or make up a band name...) OR, make your own concert poster – talk about design, make one for self and one to decorate the library.
- Do a Hamilton (or other Broadway-themed show) inspired program
- Make parody videos
- “Adulting 101” series – geared toward older teens who need to learn skills before leaving home. Job Skills – Tips on getting a job; what employers expect from you; resumes; taxes; changing a tire or car oil; etc.
- Obstacle Course or Life-Size Game – Could ask teens to create these themselves!
- Great opportunity to try forming a Teen Advisory Group if you don’t already have one.
- Greeting Cards – Use conductive copper tape, coin batteries, and tiny LED lights inside to create homemade light-up greeting cards; could create other light-up art using these materials. “Paper circuits” ideas: <http://tinkering.exploratorium.edu/paper-circuits> and here: <https://chibitronics.com/>
- Filmmakers Club, Classes on basic shooting and editing, teen video contest.
- Teen Bookshelf – Ask your teens to tell you what they’d like to see on a special shelf just for them— give them ownership of it.
- Revamp Your Bedroom or Locker – Suggestions for organization, create things to put in room/locker.
- Make a New Ending (for book or movie) – Could be a writing program, movie program, or just a book discussion where you talk about how the ending could be improved. Re-do it themselves.
- Start a Teen Art & Poetry magazine—show off what teens in your area can do! Self-publish it. Bring in professors or authors/professional writers who can tell the kids “this is what you can do with your writing skills!”
- Start a teen volunteer program.
- Book club for teens—icebreaker games at the beginning (they find it easiest to talk about themselves!), make it regular/weekly. One library picks one book per month and gathers weekly to discuss it.

- Make terrariums! Put small characters and objects in them. Could also do this as a “fairy garden.” Could use fake plants so they require less care/maintenance.
- Magic the Gathering (or Pokemon, etc.) program—gives teens an excuse to get together, practice social skills, easier when you have something to do with your hands like a game.
- Spa party—make own bath bombs, sugar scrubs, etc.
- Crayon art—melt crayons onto white canvases, let them drip down and create cool designs.
- Do a Zentangle program—may need a certified teacher (check local art store to see if they know one!) <https://www.zentangle.com/>
- Steampunk art – take apart old equipment/computers, etc. (i.e., “e-trash”). and make art that is steampunk inspired; could also create elements of costumes this way; make sure THEY are the ones taking a part the equipment, saves you time and they learn a little. Be sure to use safety glasses and gloves.
- Work with a local arts group to create a piece of public art to display in the community.
- Shaving cream & water fight outside the library.
- Amazing Race for teens – race around library/outside library for clues.
- Bad Art Night – kids can do whatever they want with supplies provided, no pressure to be “good.”
- Breakout Room/Box program—Breakout EDU has one-stop supplies in a box as well as themed program ideas.
- Zombies in the Stacks – Keep library open until dark/late for teens. Teach them zombie makeup then turn down lights and play zombie tag—have to drag one foot if “it,” no cell phones allowed.
- Murder Mystery Night – Teens stay after closing, provide dinner (pizza) and enact a murder mystery using a script. <http://mymysteryparty.com/> [www.janetdickey.com](http://www.janetdickey.com)  
<http://www.queen-of-theme-party-games.com/murder-mystery.html>

- Teen jam session – invite teens who play instruments to come together to play, sing, or just hang out and listen. Serve coffee/soda.
- Teen Band night – invite local teen bands from your community in to perform concerts. If there are enough—perhaps a Battle of the Bands?
- Play name that tune but use Rockabye Baby CD versions of popular songs, they have to identify them. Make it a team-based game.
- Sound wave art – teen creates a soundwave by saying a phrase and recording it with sound recording software. Then you print out pictures of the waves, trace and paint them onto canvas or object or manipulate it using photoshop.
- Teen Book Playlist Contest – teens choose a book and create a song playlist for the title, 5-7 songs they think match the mood or themes of the book. Make display with lists later.
- What rocks? Create a playlist of many different types of songs. Kids spin a wheel to determine what genre you will listen to, then you play a few examples of that genre of music. The kids evaluate it: First, they rate it (Yes! Kinda. Meh. Ew! No way!), decide whether the song is a 'classic,' determine whether you can dance to it, does it stir any type of emotion, do they know anyone who knows that song, then they can talk about the songs after they evaluate them.
- Top 5 Listening Parties – inspired by the book *High Fidelity* by Hornsby – teens can bring their top 5 lists of songs based on various categories, or create the lists at the library—then get together and share that music (they can bring their own music on their phones, etc.) Then at the end they will compile it all into one big group list.
- Beat Shazam – using the phone app Shazam, which identifies music, play name that tune...but you are playing against Shazam to see if you can guess it before Shazam does!
- Have a “book” discussion about video games! Play a video game at the library—everyone playing the same game OR everyone checking out different games if your library loans them—and discuss the game’s literary merits—talk about plot and pacing, character, etc.
- Harry Potter Horcrux Scavenger Hunt on Harry’s Birthday – July 31. Hide “horcruxes” around the library with clues to find them. If enough teens, divide into the 4 Houses (Gryffindor, Hufflepuff, etc.) and give them 4 different tracks so they aren’t just following one another around.

- Rory Gilmore Book Club – what would Rory from the show Gilmore Girls read? Discuss those books.
- Ask a local DJ (wedding/party DJ or radio station) to talk about their job, how they got into it, the equipment, best and worst part of job, etc. Show equipment.
- Fired Alcohol Ink Art – use alcohol inks (can make these yourself—see Pinterest—or buy them) on glass or tile, light them on fire (CAREFULLY! Take all precautions, of course!) to create really beautiful art. Lots of info online. <https://www.itsalwaysautumn.com/fired-ink-art-easy-craft-for-kids-adults.html>; <https://alittlecraftinyourday.com/2017/06/29/diy-fired-ink-art/>; <http://www.reinstonz.com/peek-pinterest/fired-alcohol-ink-art/> Great for Adults, also!
- BINGO with a Twist – Play Bingo; when someone hits BINGO, sing the “B-I-N-G-O” song (“There was a farmer had a dog...”). Randomly during game, do other silly things like asking “Would you Rather” questions, show fun YouTube videos, make them sing or dance, etc.
- Make mosaics from old CDs/DVDs; create jewelry, bowls, or other art from vinyl records
- Invasion of the 80’s – Rock of Ages program. Retro event for teens incorporating 80’s music trivia, ‘costume’ contest, know your meme trivia, lip sync contest, 80’s movie clips, etc.
- Build a PC – have computer repair person or builder/hobbyist teach the basics of building a PC.
- Glow in the Dark Party – turn teen room into a glow zone party with black lights, glowsticks, etc. One library had a local DJ play music, held a Nerf war, created a glowing dance floor with florescent duct tape.

## Adult program ideas

(Search with Ctrl-F)

- **Home World**– Home improvement, organization – ask someone from hardware store to come in and lead a workshop on some aspect of home improvement.
- **Meal Plans**– Speaker from Purdue Extension or other—nutrition, meal planning, freezer meals.
- **Wardrobe Renovation** – Makeover your closet, invite local clothing store or thrift shop
- **Computers**– Adult computer skills classes
- **Cooking** – Iron Chef or Chopped for adults! Or just a cooking class.
- **Our Community/Library** – Grow your Friends group (or start one!). Invite members of community in to discuss their aspirations for the community; find out how the library could become involved. Or, invite local elected officials to come speak in forum, give chance for community to get to know them.

- **Launch Your Business** -- Invite local business people in to give talks on entrepreneurship, perhaps your Chamber of Commerce?
- **Art/Painting/Crafting** –Art class! Painting, etc. ANY crafts. Could be a series. Coffee & Canvas.
- Ask local Classics professors to do a talk
- Fairy Tale or Mythology Trivia
- Folktale or fairytale themed book club. One library hopes to offer one for an adult with special needs group that regularly visit the library.
- Cosplay – invite local who cosplay in to talk about the process of creating a character/costume.
- Ballroom dancing class/series – end with a fairy tale ball for adults!
- Invite patrons who have visited Europe to share their pictures/travelogues, especially if they visited castles.
- This year is 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of ratification of the 19<sup>th</sup> amendment, so celebrate the women’s suffrage movement – Liz Ellis – Exec Director of Indianapolis Propylaeum – [www.thepropylaeum.org](http://www.thepropylaeum.org) has a toolkit, combined program list. <https://www.thepropylaeum.org/suffrage-centennial>
- Sept. 2, 2020 is 75<sup>th</sup> Commemoration of the end of WWII – do a program about Ernie Pyle, the Hoosier journalist and war correspondent.
- Alice in Wonderland tea party for Adults, or hold a tea tasting – try different flavors/styles or teas from different countries. Learn about the traditional Japanese tea ceremony, try matcha green tea.
- Create book art
- Escape Room/breakout box – search online or Breakout EDU for ideas. One suggested idea was “This is Sparta” based on Ancient Greece – use Greek hieroglyphics, Greek gods and goddesses, etc.
- Decorate Sgraffito pottery: <http://www.lakesidepottery.com/Pages/Pottery-tips/How-to-create-sgraffito-pottery-tutorial.htm>

- Try eco dyeing - <https://sunnastudios.co/blogs/news/eco-dyeing-an-introduction>
- Use polymer clay to create “fairy food” – on a tiny scale (small donuts, pizza, etc.) – could use these in a fairy garden, make jewelry, etc.
- Fairytale Foods cooking class
- Make resin jewelry: <https://www.resinobsession.com/resin-frequently-asked-questions/resin-jewelry-making-what-every-beginner-needs-to-know/>
- Cryptids & Speculative Zoology program - Chupacabra, Loch Ness Monster, Big Foot, etc. Local college anthropology department or local paranormal groups may be resources for presenting.
- Nailed It (show on Netflix) cookie/cake decorating program for Adults – show them picture of a beautifully decorated cookie, cupcake, etc. and they have to recreate it – library provides the base cookie or cupcake and decorations – they decorate.
- Adult painting class- mythical creatures such as unicorns, etc.
- Lord of the Rings: A History of Middle Earth – find someone in your area (enthusiastic patron? Professor?) to talk about Lord of the Rings and the rich (fantasy) history in the books.
- Ladies Night Out – women only event with food demo (chocolate fondue), invite a local performer in to entertain, offer fun games
- “Caring for our Elders” series – planning ahead for elder care. Bring in experts from community, such as lawyers, banks, funeral homes, nursing homes, etc.
- Cooking class for adults – they can help or just watch. Could select food that is found in fairy tales!
- Bob Ross painting class. Must be a certified Bob Ross instructor – bobross.com – prices will vary based on what you want and individual instructor. Usually include all materials in the cost. Library would need to decide whether to charge, request donations to cover cost, or just provide free to patrons—libraries say people are usually willing to pay, though, if cost is otherwise prohibitive for library.

- Cemetery Walk – partner with another library with genealogy and local history dept, or your local historical society to plan a cemetery walk; research people buried there who might have local significance, or relatives of participants. During walk, someone is stationed by the headstone to tell the story of that person. This was a program that was planned over several months and included the research portion, which was done by the participants/volunteers.
- Invite local crafts people in to demonstrate what they do; for instance, a woodcarver. (Could also incorporate fairy tales—Pinochio to go with the woodcarver, etc.)
- Hold your own “Antiques Roadshow” – have patrons bring in items they have questions about and have an expert explain – invite someone from a local museum to help identify items.
- Partner with a local observatory if there is one; invite someone from a regional or university observatory to speak.
- Put out space themed puzzles
- Role Playing Game of Star Wars or other space themed universe; or Dungeons and Dragons in the Star Wars world
- Make luminaries
- Hold an al fresco Night Under the Stars with mocktails and hors d’oeuvres.
- Make spray glitter star paintings – or “galaxy” paintings using black canvas – make it a coffee and canvas program!
- Bingo Universe or Cosmos Bingo using the show Cosomos - (<https://astronomyontap.org/2014/03/cosmos-bingo/>)
- Hold a book discussion about a space-themed book—for instance, *Rocket Boys* by Homer Hickam. Many materials available for this at [www.homerhickam.com](http://www.homerhickam.com).
- Starry Night (or other artwork) themed art exhibit—invite artists in community to do their interpretation of the piece of art, hang them in the library as an exhibition. Consider holding a reception to debut them with refreshments, music, etc.



- Bob Ross painting program – warning, you will need a certified Bob Ross instructor to do this program or you run the risk of being sued by his estate! Find one here: <https://www.bobross.com/Articles.asp?ID=325>
- Book tasting with Sci Fi/space books. <http://programminglibrarian.org/blog/you-can%E2%80%99t-taste-book-its-cover-book-tastings-library>
- Spa party – make own bath bombs, sugar scrubs, etc. (Make bath bombs that are swirled like planets) Could call it a “Space Princess for a Night” party (think: Princess Leia).
- Offer a continuing workshops for Adults who might be the caregiver or guardian to an elderly relative. Topics can cover assisted living, banking, social security, legal and funeral arrangements.
- Volunteers– get your volunteer program started
- Bring in bands to do concerts at your library
- Brain/Memory – Bring in a speaker on this or offer brain teasing exercises
- Body – Zumba, yoga, martial arts – instructors from community
- Coloring Sheet – Design their own
- Adult Prom, dancing lessons—ballroom or line dancing
- Band – invite musicians in to jam together, and/or to teach lessons
- Wreath – can glue all types of things to a wreath frame and make wreaths for any season! Could use willow branches to create wreaths or stars for hanging.
- Make terrariums, real or fake plants.
- Master Gardener (or other gardening) program
- Do a Zentangle program—may need a certified teacher (check local art store to see if they know one!) <https://www.zentangle.com/>

- Atlas Art – Weeding atlases? Take them apart and create art! Decoupage and collages on a variety of surfaces.
- Escape room – create your own in the library! Great possible family/all-ages program.
- Retro-gaming – Gather old tube TVs and connect them to old consoles like Ataris or original Nintendos... or there is now an Atari Flashback game console. Audience is 30's-40's and families, nostalgia factor.
  - Could include Tetris craft—glue small wood block beads together to look like Tetris pieces, string on jewelery or glue to picture frames, etc.
- Space or literary trivia in a pub! Work with a local bar to hold a trivia night. Librarians write the literary-themed questions and orchestrate? Could do this in the library, minus beer to keep it “dry.”
- Hold a food drive; build a structure using the boxes and cans donated; work with Habitat for Humanity in your town.
- Work with a local arts group to create a piece of public art to display in the community.
- For those in smaller towns, take area rugs to your town square, set them out on sidewalks, bring a transportable number of library books and comfy chairs, and encourage people to sit and read... community building. (Make sure you get permission from the proper authorities/businesses first!)
- Invite local roller derby team (if you have one!) to come speak, perhaps demo as much as is possible in the library! This has all-ages appeal.
- Knitting or quilting program, knit hats for those going through chemo, fleece blankets and dog beds for animal shelters, etc. Arm knitting is also an option.
- On site or off site at a local brewery or distillery or bar; how to make beer at home; learn about the different types of beer or spirits.
- Family STEAM Night! Example activity: The 3 Little Pigs story and families will have stations to build houses and after our Big Bad Wolf (blow dryer) will try to knock them down.
- Homeschool Fair – Organize fair for your community
- Glass etching – can find instructions on internet, simple to do with etching cream.

- Vinyl record scavenger hunt – use old records hidden with different titles, then they can search the stacks for the albums. Play music as clues or just in background.
- Make crafts with guitar picks. Cover a picture frame, make jewelry, etc.
- Create a Human Library. The “books” are humans with interesting and diverse stories. They are “checked out” during the program by other patrons and a discussion and learning follows. Several libraries in IN have done something like this. <http://humanlibrary.org/>  
<https://www.indystar.com/story/life/2017/11/03/indianapolis-human-library/821440001/>
- Cook the Book cookbook discussion – reserve copies of cookbooks with a theme (a particular country’s cuisine, low-fat cooking, etc.) – patrons check out, try a few recipes, then return for the actual program. The group cooks a couple of recipes together then sits down to eat and discuss what they did and didn’t like in the cookbooks they checked out.
- Pebble art – creating whimsical artwork on canvas with pebbles, sticks, string, etc. Use super glue, hot glue to adhere to canvas. Pinterest or google image search of “pebble art” will result in great samples to share.
- Button art—use old buttons to create collage art on canvas board. Could be in shape of your monogram/initials, or could be in shape of guitars, music notes, etc.
- Build a PC – have computer repair person or builder/hobbyist teach the basics of building a PC.