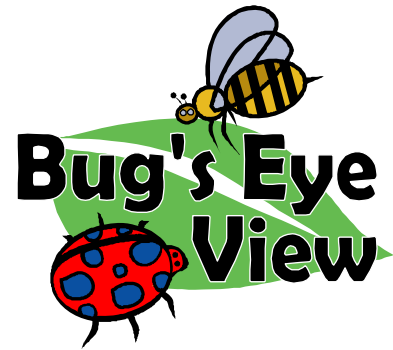




How to start a Backpack program

What is a Science, Art & Literature Backpack?

This is a backpack filled with books, toys, games, experiences and activity pages that can be checked out by children. Each backpack has a separate theme. The literature sets the stage for a few simple science and art activities that relate to the theme.



Why add a Backpack program to our library's collection?

The backpack program is an excellent way for your library to achieve the following goals:

1. Use a variety of literature and media to expose children to science and art concepts.
2. Model to parents and caregivers simple ways to extend a child's reading experiences.
3. Increase circulation of library materials.

Assembling the Backpacks.

1. Select a topic. Consider the following:
 - a. *Traditionally popular topics* such as dinosaurs, bugs, space.
 - b. *Hot topics*. Popular characters, movies, TV shows.
 - c. *Local topics*. Lewis & Clark, caves, school mascot (tigers, Vikings, Governors).
 - d. *Education Standards*: What topics do teachers in your schools need some support on? What is to be taught in science and art to the age level you are targeting with your backpack?
 - e. *Library Resources*: Do you have some great books that have not been checked out much? Can you link some popular fiction with some less circulated nonfiction? Do you have a puzzle, video and and/or puppet all on the same topic?
 - f. *Events*: Be a part of your community centennial by announcing the creation of new backpacks about important parts of your local culture. Help the volunteer firefighter with Fire Prevention Week by adding a backpack about fire safety.

2. Select the literature. Consider the following:
 - a. Two to four items are usually sufficient.
 - b. Use this as an opportunity to introduce children to new types of literature. Consider picture books, guidebooks, coffee table-type books, how-to books, biographies, poetry books. Don't forget videos, music CD's and computer games.
 - c. Add an item or two that will allow the students to become more involved or to retell the story. Examples: related games, puzzles, puppets, felt-board sets, etc. Provide suggestions for using these items.
3. Select science activities related to the literature. Consider the following:
 - a. Two or three science activities are usually sufficient.
 - b. Read the books. Are there any good science activities right in the story? Did the kids in the story make shadow puppets? Did they plant a seed? Did they make a card house? Put exactly what the kids need to do these activities right in your backpack.
 - c. Consider activities that are just somewhat related to the story. For example: "*Where's Waldo?*" books - activities could include looking at their own home with a magnifying glass. They could also do size comparisons/measurement activities. Or, for "*Good Night, Moon*" -supply a laminated chart recording the moon phases each night.
 - d. Check science websites or science activity books for ideas.
 - e. Ask a local expert or teacher to help you select activities.
 - f. Select activities that use only objects that are in the backpack or are easily found in most homes.
 - g. E-mail the SD Discovery Center for ideas: info@sd-discovery.com.
4. Select art activities.
 - a. Consider the style of illustrations in the book: photography, torn papers, black & white.
 - b. Consider the topic of the book. Examples: shadows - make positive/negative pictures; teach how to add shadow to a drawing. "*Where's Waldo*" – drawing close-ups (Georgia O'Keefe flowers), or camouflage pictures ala Bev Doolittle.
 - c. Consider artists who have chosen the same topic. Degas – ballet
 - d. Use art books, art teachers, and local artists as resources for including activities that expose children to art concepts, techniques or art appreciation experiences.
 - e. Try to feature local or South Dakota artists whenever you can. This will help the students understand that art is something that South Dakotans can do.

5. Kits Examples: Use the backpack you received from HOP as an example. Here are some other ideas.
 - a. Sample 1: Marvelous Music
 - i. One or more tuning forks
 - ii. Percussion instruments (tambourine, drum, rhythm sticks, maracas, etc.)
 - iii. Scarves (to inspire twirling & dancing)
 - iv. Picture books with a music theme (i.e." *Carnival of the Animals*" by John Lithgow or Sergei Prokofiev's *Peter and the Wolf*, which is available with a fully-orchestrated & narrated CD)
 - v. Classical music CD or cassette
 - vi. Instructions for doing some experiments with various depths of water in glasses
 - b. Sample 2: Magnetism
 - i. Plastic container full of assorted objects that may or may not be magnetic (Le. paper clips, plastic beads, wood blocks, canning jar lids, etc.)
 - ii. At least one good, strong magnet
 - iii. Several magnets of various size & strength
 - iv. Suggested books:
 1. at least one non-fiction book about magnetism (i.e. *Magnets* (All Aboard Science Reader), by Anne Schreiber)
 2. *Twinks Magic Carpet Ride*, by Jean Lewis & David Gantz
 3. *Mr. Fixit's Magnet Machine* (Richard Scarry Ready to Read Book), by Richard Scarry
 4. *Amazing Magnetism* (Magic School Bus Chapter Book), by Rebecca Carmi
 - v. Magnetic sculpture toy available from science and novelty stores.
6. Putting It All Together.
 - a. Containers:
 - i. Plastic boxes
 - ii. Rawlins Municipal Library in Pierre uses thrift store backpacks with decor that fits their theme.
 - iii. HOP orders Take-Home Backpacks from www.lakeshorelearning.com. You can order a set of 10 for \$47.50 or individually for \$4.95 each.

- b. Activity Cards: The purpose of the activities cards is to guide the parent's and children's use of the backpack contents. Some of the activity cards have directions for activities. Some of them may have new activities related to the books.
 - i. Keep them simple. Include just one set of instructions or activity per card.
 - ii. One of the cards should be an inventory that lists all of the backpack contents. A note to the parents about the purpose of the backpack is nice, too.
 - iii. Print them on cardstock then laminate them.
 - iv. If you have included activities on the cards that require writing, supply a small pack of wipe-off crayons and a wipe-off eraser.
 - v. Punch a hole in a top corner of each of the cards. Hold them together with a binder ring.
 - c. Filling the backpack or labeling the contents
 - i. Put the name, initials or logo of your library on every item of the backpack. This means everything ... each piece of a puzzle, each crayon, each activity card, etc. *This will payoff. When Mom cleans under the couch and finds a puzzle piece with your logo on it. She will return it to you. If no name is on it, it goes in the garbage and you have to spend \$10 on a new puzzle.*
 - ii. If something has multiple pieces (such as a puzzle or felt board story), put the contents in small plastic containers or zip-seal bags. Label the outside of each bag with a list of the items that belong inside it.
 - iii. If you are including reproducible items such as coloring pages, place those items in a folder so they do not get crumpled.
 - iv. You might consider including a very brief questionnaire in the backpack that asks the user about the condition of the pack and their experiences using it. *Only do this if you want to gather this information. Otherwise it's just extra paper and work.*
7. Maintaining Your Backpacks
- a. You must thoroughly inventory your backpacks each time they are checked in. Examples: count puzzle pieces, crayons, survey the condition of each item.
 - b. If something is missing or damaged beyond normal wear and tear, contact the most recent borrower to arrange for return, repair or reimbursement.
 - c. Clean all items as needed or according to a schedule you devise.
 - d. Replace any consumable items such as coloring sheets, crosswords, etc.
 - e. When items start to get to dingy or worn, replace them. Remember, it is a treat for your patrons to take these backpacks home. It will be a disappointment if the items are missing, dirty or in disrepair.
 - f. Record your evaluation data, if you are keeping it.