



Think Make Create

LABS

The Makerspace Playbook

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TMC ON THE MOVE: PREPPING FOR WINTER

Each of us may have different degrees of winter, but this still is an excellent opportunity to schedule time for a thorough walk-through of your mobile makerspace. Summers are busy and we may not have done a great job of inventorying and cleaning as we should. When prepping for winter, make sure to pull out any items that might not store well. For us, we pull out vinegar as an exploding gallon in a trailer made for some interesting cleanup. I would recheck items that sometimes react to varying temperatures: crayons, playdough, plastics, etc. The integrity of these items may change after they have been stored in hot/cold temperatures, and this would be a good time to replace them. Batteries can winter over but check to make sure they are still stored separately and safely. Remember to consider the outside of the trailer as well. Check wheel bearings, brakes, door hinges, and all the trailer connections as these are used often and should be in top repair.

~ Claire Sponseller, Area Extension Educator,
University of Idaho Extension 4-H



Spotlight on You: City Build 2040

Students at Oakland-Craig Public School had the privilege to take part in City Build 2040 during their summer program. The activity was led by 2 Oakland Craig high school students over the course of 4 days. The first 3 days focused on designing and building. Students were put into groups of 3-4 to build a section of their city. On the fourth day, students rushed to complete their section of the city so they would be ready to present to parents and community members about how they envision Oakland, NE to look like in year 2040. They also rehearsed our speeches and collaborated with their classmates to see how each of their sections interconnected.

Parents and community members arrived around lunchtime and were greeted by students. Participants stood in a large circle around the city so that each group could say something about their section. We concluded the event with a nice lunch and conversation.

One other group leader said "I worked with the 1st and 2nd graders. Every day the students loved walking into the commons to see what had been added to the City Build. They loved seeing what had been built and commenting on what they would have done. They hope to do it when they are older!"

~Alana Pearson, Community Support and Innovation Specialist -
Nebraska Children and Families Foundation

Give It a Try: Fall Paperweights

Welcome autumn with this fun and easy keepsake craft! First, collect some small, fall leaves and smooth rocks that fit nicely in the palm of your hand. In a disposable container, mix up the decopage glaze with water and white school glue (a.k.a. Elmer's glue), using a ratio of 2:1 (2 oz. of water for every ounce of glue). Clean your rock, then paint the top and sides of your rock with the glaze. Arrange your leaves in a design on your rock, trimming the leaves if necessary. Paint over the leaves with the glaze. You can layer the leaves, painting a layer of glaze over the leaves each time you add a new one. Let dry for at least 24 hours. When the glaze dries, it will permanently stiffen the bristles of your brush, so wash them immediately, or use throw-away brushes. You can pair this activity with [this information](#) from the Smithsonian to create a lesson on why leaves change color in the fall.



Put it Into Practice: Hands-on with Disabilities

Our youth programs work hard to make sure all feel welcome; however, just having someone new at the activity table might not be enough. Consider the materials you use, the activities you are facilitating, or the words you say to ensure everyone feels welcome and that they can participate. Often, we may not even be aware someone has a disability. Take the time to meet with parents and guardians as they drop-off or pick-up, even encourage them to stay and help out. This will help you learn more about the youth and what support is needed, or not needed. Encourage the youth to submit their ideas on different topics, sometimes this might not be available ahead of time, but during. If it is during, let them select from activities you have already prepared. Allowing them to have input will help you see comfort and excitement levels, but also any hesitancy or communication barriers. There is not a one-size fits all to this topic, but if you engage the youth and their family, or strategize on how to gauge your audience, you are already working towards positive outcomes for all.

~ Claire Sponseller, Area Extension Educator, University of Idaho Extension 4-H

Tips and Tricks

To continue making our programs welcome for all, be observant and flexible.

- Take the extra time to prep a few materials ahead of time so someone is still able to participate without being singled out (for pipe cleaner bracelets, maybe strip the ends for a stronger connection for an autistic youth who may struggle with those fine motor skills).
- If it is a new audience to you, perhaps start with an activity that is a little bit simpler rather than jumping straight to expert levels.
- Finally, make sure to teach terminology, but avoid words that may be too large or foreign.

~ Claire Sponseller, Area Extension Educator, University of Idaho Extension 4-H

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