

Module Three: Library of Things - Backyard Games

Library and Information Studies, Old Dominion University

LIBS 658: Knowledge Resources

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Demarest, New Jersey is family-oriented town. With a population of 4,942 in the 2019, 93.3% of their residents are families. (US Census, 2019). All across the country, families are faced with challenges of children needing to disconnect from electronics and reconnect with playing outside to support healthier lifestyles. Demarest is no different. As a trusted resource for the community, it is important for the library to offer options and tools/games to support the wellbeing of its members- young and old. There are a few parks, playgrounds and nature trails in town, but it is also convenient to play in backyards too, especially during the pandemic when social distancing and everyone's health should be top of mind. "Outdoor play helps children grow socially, helping them to develop healthy ways of forming friendships, responding to physical interaction, and using their imaginations to entertain each other, says pediatrician, Dr. Lockwood of Children's Hospital of Philadelphia." (Lockwood, 2020)

To address the community's need, it's suggested that the Demarest Public Library consider a Library of Things with an initial ten kit mini-collection of backyard games. According to statistics, these games are in demand in the United States in 2020. Outdoor and sports is the largest segment in the U.S. toy industry (Statista, 2021).

Given the popularity of backyard games, these were selected by using principles similar to those applied for other collections within the library while leaning toward quality toys and specialist approved items.

Principles Broadly Applied for Yard Toys Selection

- Relevance for children/families and general ease of learning rules/Portability/maintenance/skills emphasized
- Audience best suited
- Safety -no small choking or easily breakable pieces
- Game builder quality/game function authority

In conclusion, selecting 10 backyard game kits was far more exciting and challenging than I originally thought. Supporting the connection of children, games and outdoors is something the family-friendly community would revel in. The Demarest Public Library does not have a Library of Things yet, and although I am an assistant librarian without a MLIS, I feel compelled to at least share this idea with my Director and team. Ultimately if they were interested, those that are trained could do the actual selection, but offering ideas is never a bad suggestion.

References

- Bedford, E. (2021, March 1) Retail revenue of toys in the U.S. in 2020, by type. *Statista*
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- Lockwood, K. (2020, July 28) Benefits of Outdoor play: why it matters. *Children's Hospital of Philadelphia* <https://www.chop.edu/news/health-tip/benefits-outdoor-play-why-it-matters>
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