McKinney Public Libraries and Homeschool Families

Programming and Homeschooler Families

– The library offers over a dozen weekly programs targeted at families with children in grades 5-12.

– Our kindergarten-5th grade programs have a start time of 4:30 pm, with weekly programs So you Think You can Draw and Mad Science consistently drawing attendance above expectation and average.

– Our 6th-12th grade programs have start times between 4 and 6pm during the week, with a robotics program drawing higher than expected attendance on Saturdays at 10:15am. Snack Attack (4pm) and Volunteens (4pm) also have consistently larger than average audiences.

– The library also offers a slate of "All Age" or "multiple age group" programs. Our RPG Club program meets at 3pm, but has yet to find an audience. The Saturday Chess Meetup and the Sunday "Game-On" series are all age programs and consistently draw higher than average attendance.

– Library special events targeted at all ages are almost all consistently held on Saturdays, with a start time of either 11am or 2pm. "Ready, Steady, Fly!" recently held at John and Judy Gay Library had between 950 and 1000 participants.

– The library offered Spring Break Programs for all ages at 11am on the Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday of Spring break week, with the Native Wildlife and Texas Roots programs both drawing large crowds.

– Library Staff also provides library tours by request. In January, staff provided a behind the scenes tour for 24 homeschoolers.

– Unless the programs are held on holidays, such as spring break, we do not offer programs for school aged children during normal school hours. However, home school families are welcome to attend our preschool programs, such as Lego and Friends, held during the day on weekdays, and many do.

– In the past we did offer a homeschool meetup program on weekday mornings but have not resumed since the start of the pandemic.

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Unique by nature.

Library Materials and Homeschooler Families

- The library limits the number of items checked out one any one card at any time to 200 items. This is, in part, to accommodate homeschool families or families with many children needing access to many materials at the same time.
- Patrons can only check out 1 STEM and 1 Storytime kit simultaneously per account. This is to manage equitable access to the items.
- Patrons can reserve place on hold 100 items on an account at any time. This is for the same reason as the 200 item checkout limit.
- Patrons can have 5 Interlibrary Loans in the system per card at 1 time. This is to mitigate library risk as well as manage workflow. (We increased from 2 a few years ago to better accommodate those with greater need.)

- Patrons may also have 5 pending purchase suggestions at any one time. This allows them to request items we currently do not have and are not candidates for Interlibrary loan.
- We accept and purchase approximately 67% of these with reasons for rejection ranging from the item is already in the library collection, to the item isn't published yet, or that the item is unavailable from our vendors.
- We do not (with rare and case by case exceptions) purchase books from Amazon to fulfill purchase suggestions due to the cost of processing and cataloging a book.

- Many of these rejected suggestions are available via Interlibrary Loan, and will likely arrive more swiftly through that system.
- Over last 3 years we have accepted requests for purchase from over 1000 unique users.
- These numbers are independent of eBook and digital Audiobooks. A patron may have 12 digital books checked out at once, and an additional 12 on hold.

Online Resources and Homeschooler Families

– Texshare Databases- this is a collection of online resources purchased as a consortium with the Texas State Library and Archives Commission. While the resources offered are vast, those of special note for homeschool families include:

- Credo Complete Core Collection: Credo is an easy-to-use tool for research and homework, providing access to over 1,000 full text encyclopedias, current events resources, and over half a million images, audio files, and videos to help build lesson plans and supplement workbooks.
- Explora Elementary and High School: Explora is an age-appropriate search interface for newspaper articles, books, magazines, book and encyclopedias on the most popular school subjects.
- Gale Opposing Viewpoints: This in an engaging online experience for those seeking contextual information and opinions on hundreds of today's hottest social issues. This resource included topic overviews, full text articles, statistics, videos, and more. Opposing Viewpoints also included links to national and state curriculum standards and educator resources for lesson plans and other help.
- Gale In Context- Science: This is similar to Opposing Viewpoints, but with a focus on science instead of current affairs.
- Hobbies and Crafts Reference Center: This is a collection of hobby and crat magazines with detailed instructions to meet the interest and needs of all ages. This is searchable so that homeschool educators can find the appropriate craft to correspond with their lesson plan.
- Learning Express Library: This collection of interactive tutorials, practice tests, flash cards, and eBooks can help improve skills in reading, writing, math, and science as well as help prepare them for standardized tests and career exams.
- Teaching Books- This aims to bring to life children's and YA books with video trailers, author interview, discussion questions and more. There are also printable activities and lesson plans.

Feedback and Partnerships with Homeschooler Families

– Library staff is working to respond to feedback from homeschool families in regards to additional services and programs that they feel better suit their needs and their schedules. This includes a plan to waive rental room fees to accommodate a partnership for pilot programs on dates and times they feel works best for the homeschool community.

– Guided by our collection development policy, we will work to add additional materials to the collection with the homeschool community in mind. However, older materials still need to go through the proper suggestion or interlibrary loan process.

Materials Not Collected
The Library will not actively collect materials aimed at an academic or special audience. Other types of materials currently not collected at the Library include, but are not limited to:

- Textbooks
- Recorded music
- Outdated media, such as slides, film strips, phonograph recordings, computer software for circulation
- Other realia such as pictures or art work
- Other materials as determined by the Library Director or Library Management Team

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