

LITTLE LIBRARY TOOLKIT



- PROMOTES LIVABILITY •
- INTERGENERATIONAL CONNECTIONS •
- NEIGHBORHOOD ENGAGEMENT •

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Choosing a Location for a Little Library

Qualities to Consider When Choosing a Good Location

Do pick a location that has foot traffic.

Do choose a place that is accessible to people of all ages and ability.

Do consider snow removal and snowplows.

Do consider proximity to sidewalks (3-5 feet is ideal) and nearby seating.

Do consider safety and make sure the Little Library is out of the road or other high traffic areas.

Do get permission to install a Little Library on property that you don't own.

Do reach out to your town's Department of Works and call Dig Safe (free service) at 811, to ensure when installing your Little Library you avoid hitting utility lines, water main or natural gas pipes underground on your property.

Don't obstruct views or access to: driveways, snowplows, emergency vehicles, fire hydrants, delivery trucks etc.

Don't place your Little Library near someone's driveway or utility poles.

Don't place the Little Library on the strip of grass between the sidewalk and the road.

Who to ask for Permission

1. Get permission to install a little library on property you don't own.
2. Approach town early (planning and zoning office and/or public works) to make sure there are no roadblocks, and get permission.
3. Ask the owners of private businesses, apartments, community gardens, town offices, rec facilities, and other semi-public spaces to host the Little Library.
4. Ask your town if they can help install the little free library. Some town's public works/road crews can support these efforts.
5. If on a state highway, reach out to VTrans and obtain permission. Or preferably, avoid state highways and higher speed streets.

Installing a Little Free Library



Tip: If you want a mobile Little Library use a planter and fill it with soil or concrete.

Ground Installation

Supplies -- a shovel or post hole digger, tape measure and level

1. First call Dig Safe, 811, a free service to identify underground utility and natural gas pipelines on your property. Call your town's Department of Public Works to identify underground water and sewage pipes on your property. This will help you to avoid unintentionally hitting a pipe when installing your Little Library.
2. Next, start installing!
 - Dig a hole 2 feet deep by 1 foot wide
 - Place your post in the hole and fill with soil half way. Check that it is plumb (vertically straight). Finish filling the hole with soil and pack down firmly.
 - Secure the library on the post if not pre-attached.
 - Re-check the library to make sure it is level with the ground.

Get Started: Promote Your Little Library

- 1. Get the Word Out.** Let your community know what you're up to through your local paper, Front Porch Forum and social media. A community meeting, block parties, and association picnics are all great places to talk to neighbors about it.
- 2. Be a Leader.** If you're not comfortable approaching your neighbors to get involved, go it solo. Choose action items that can be completed on your own. Your acts of literacy kindness will not go unnoticed. You may soon have others approaching you to get involved.
- 3. Get Organized.** If you do have a group of people who want to participate, decide who will be in charge of which aspects of your new neighborhood initiative.
- 4. Hold a Community Meeting** to decide on activities. Decide which activities will work for your community. It might help to set up a calendar to decide when each initiative will take place.
- 5. Divide Responsibilities.** Try to involve as many people as possible to take on different aspects of the activities you decide to implement.
- 6. Have Fun!** Be creative. Get to know your neighbors and watch your community become stronger.
- 7. Share Your Stories on AARP's Facebook Page.** We'd love to hear from you! Please send us updates and photos from your efforts. Please email us: vtaarp@aarp.org
- 8. Activities to Support Literacy:**
 - Host story hours!
 - Have a book mark-making party.
 - Celebrate Dr. Seuss's birthday
 - Designate a place where children's self-published work from school can be displayed.
 - Organize book-related crafts and games.
 - Use books as "treats" during Trick or Treat.
 - Host a book swap. Kids can come dressed as their favorite book character!
 - Have people copy down recipes and have a recipe exchange or a potluck featuring their recipe. Be sure to bring lots of hand-written copies of the recipe to share with others!

Problem Solving (FAQs)

Won't people steal the books?

No. You can't steal a free book. And if you have a good steward and lots of active users, eventually someone who tries to "steal" books will realize that it's not a good thing to do. You can stamp your books which helps prevent used bookstores from buying them. If someone is repeatedly clearing out your Little Library, put up a sign explaining that your Little Library is a community resource for everyone to enjoy and that you and others notice when the Library is mistreated. You could even consider moving the Library to a more public location, like a coffee shop or a school, if you continue to have trouble.

What if we run out of books?

Ask library users, neighbors and friends to contribute books. Keep them informed about what they can bring by leaving a note in your library asking for a certain type of books. But don't let people assume that someone else (you, for example) is solely responsible. The more people who participate, the better.



Little Free Library on the front porch of the General Store in South Strafford village

Maintaining a Little Free Library

What is the recommended maintenance for a Little Free Library?

Treat the library like an exterior deck by sealing it for protection from the elements initially and then again every few years. Stop by your local hardware store or paint shop and ask what sealant works best.

Daich Hi-Build Clear Thick Acrylic Sealer and Sikkens Cetol Translucent Wood Finish work well, but it's up to you. Libraries with art work on them should have several coats of sealer to be safe.

If a Library is leaking, what is the best way to figure out where the leak is and how do I fix it?

First, remove all the books from inside the Library. Then spray it with a hose from above to expose any leaks. Once you have found the leaks, caulk them with a silicone caulk.

Condensation is forming on the inside of my Library. How do I fix that?

You can create an air vent by drilling four small holes in the floor of the Library. Drill the holes close to the front (near the door) so that the moisture can flow out without reaching your books.

My Library's front window is broken, how do I replace it?

Measure the size of window with a tape measure. Then, take those dimensions and head to your local hardware or home goods store and ask them to cut a piece of Plexiglas for you according to your dimensions. Adhere the piece of Plexiglas to your Library with wood glue.

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