



The Dacorum Toy and Book Exchange



Toy and Book Exchange held at St Thomas More School, Berkhamsted

How to organise a Toy and Book Exchange



What is a Toy and Book Exchange?

The exchange is a chance for children to swap items they do not want any more and pick up something they do. All for free!

This guide is designed to give advice on how to run your own event. The guide will provide best practice guidelines but these should be adapted to suit your event and your children.

Why hold a Toy and Book Exchange?

Holding the exchange teaches students about the importance of reusing old items and instils a message that what they consider rubbish may be a great toy or book to someone else. The exchange is also an opportunity for the students to learn about the waste hierarchy (reduce, reuse, repair, recycle, disposal) and how exchanging (reusing) old items fits into this.

The event can also be used to teach children life skills including donating items and sharing with others.

The aim of the Toy and Book Exchange is to:

- Raise awareness of reuse as an alternative to throwing away things
- Encourage children to swap unwanted items
- Divert materials from landfill.

What will you need?

Exchange events can be adapted to be as simple or as complex as you like. The following are definite requirements that you will need to get you started.

Venue

A large space is a good idea so there is plenty of room for the children to browse the toys and books and minimise crowding to reduce the risk of anyone getting hurt.

Venue suggestions:

- School hall
- Empty classroom – with tables around the edge of the room.
- School playground on a sunny, dry day.

People

It's important to have enough staff to help out during the event and for everyone to know what they are responsible for. The concept of giving items away for free is unusual and

some children may feel overwhelmed by the choice – they may need some help choosing.

Setting up

Items can be laid out on tables or on the floor. If you have time it may be nice to categorise them into types such as books, soft animals, dolls/action figures etc. this may make the exchange easier as the children will be able to find things easily.

Opening hours

You could have donations in the morning and taking in the afternoon – giving time to set up during the lunchtime period.

Hints and tips

Handy tips to avoid arguments:

- *Brief the children* – It is important before the event that the children are briefed on what will be happening. The children must be aware they may not find another item they really want however that the importance of the event is to take part by donating an item for somebody else to play with.
- *Set a quota* - set a limit to the number of items the children can pick up. If a child knows they can only have two items they will be much more selective
- *Introduce a token system* – So children can “buy” the items with their tokens. A child that donated 3 items will only be able to take up to three items.
- *Set a price limit* – ensure that all donations are within a certain value i.e. £20 new. This will ensure there are no high value items and minimises the risk of conflict.
- *Keep a check on the children*- If two children want the same item there may be some conflict. Decide how to decide who gets to take the item (e.g. flip a coin)

Things not to bring:

It is advisable to put together a refusal policy outlining what can and cannot be accepted for the children’s parents:

Broken/Incomplete Toys/ Damaged Books:

To avoid disappointment and upset on the day, set out to the parents that all items must be complete and in full working order and books of a reasonable condition. Ensure that any toys with multiple parts are packaged together so pieces cannot go missing during the exchange.

Age Appropriate

Ask parents to ensure the items they are donating are not above the age range of the children. The exchange may work better if done between two classes or similar age rather than as a whole school so young children are picking age appropriate items.

Electrical items

There are safety implications in people donating electrical items. Try and make it very obvious on all the publicity material that you don't want anything electrical.

Wanted toys and books

Ensure parents are aware that the toy(s) and book(s) their child chooses to bring in will not be coming home even if they do not find something else they want, as another child may have selected it.

Dealing with Leftovers

Any leftovers from the exchange can be donated to a nursery (if they are suitable) or classroom toy box/library.

Any unwanted items can be taken to a local charity shop or the local household waste recycling centre (HWRC) if they are not suitable to be resold.

Please let us know if you choose to hold a Toy and Book Exchange – your story could be mentioned in the next edition of the Dacorum school newsletter the SEED!



Toy and Book Exchange Toolkit
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