



OUR STORIES, OUR SHELVES

MLA • DLA Conference 2026

Don't Miss!



50/50 RAFFLE

Tickets are **\$1** each and can be purchased from **Conni Strittmatter** or **David Dahl!** The winner takes home half the pot.



PUB QUIZ

Thursday, May 7
8:00 – 10:00 p.m.
Choptank Ballroom



SILENT AUCTION

Visit the Silent Auction in the exhibitor hall to place your bids **before 10 a.m. on Friday, May 8th**.



KARAOKE

Thursday, May 7
6:00 – 10:00 p.m.
Windjammer

The Trouble with Teens

Gretchen Benson



Tyler Chadwell-English



Objectives

- 1: PARTICIPANTS WILL BE ABLE TO EXAMINE PERSONAL ATTITUDES AND BIASES.
- 2: PARTICIPANTS WILL BE ABLE TO APPLY PRACTICAL, AUTHENTIC STRATEGIES FOR BUILDING RAPPORT WITH TEENS.
- 3: BY ATTENDING PARTICIPANTS WILL UNDERSTAND HOW TO REFRAME CHALLENGING INTERACTIONS WITH TEENS.
- 4: PARTICIPANTS WILL DISCOVER INNOVATIVE WAYS TO CREATE WELCOMING SPACES AND ENGAGING PROGRAMMING.



Work sheet

We'd like you to write down the teen behaviors you personally struggle with — the moments that raise your stress, frustration, or uncertainty.

Column 1

Column 2

Column 3

- **THEY SIT ON THE TABLES**

Teens are not a problem.

They are a population.

- Unique needs
- Predictable behaviors
- Incredible strengths
- Specific ways to interact with space



Who we are trained to work with:

- Children
- Adults

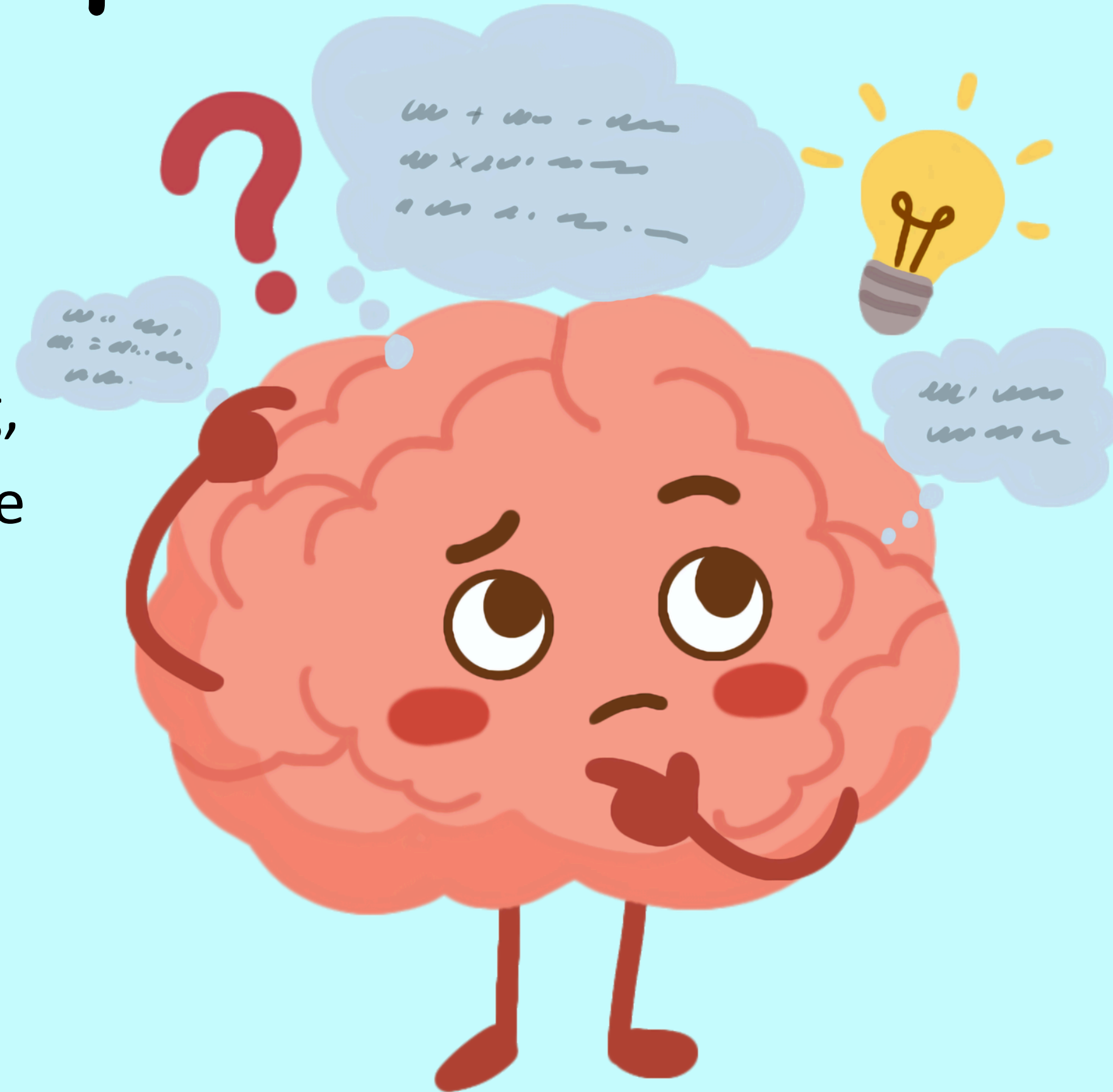
Developmentally Appropriate Behavior

Cognitively & Emotionally

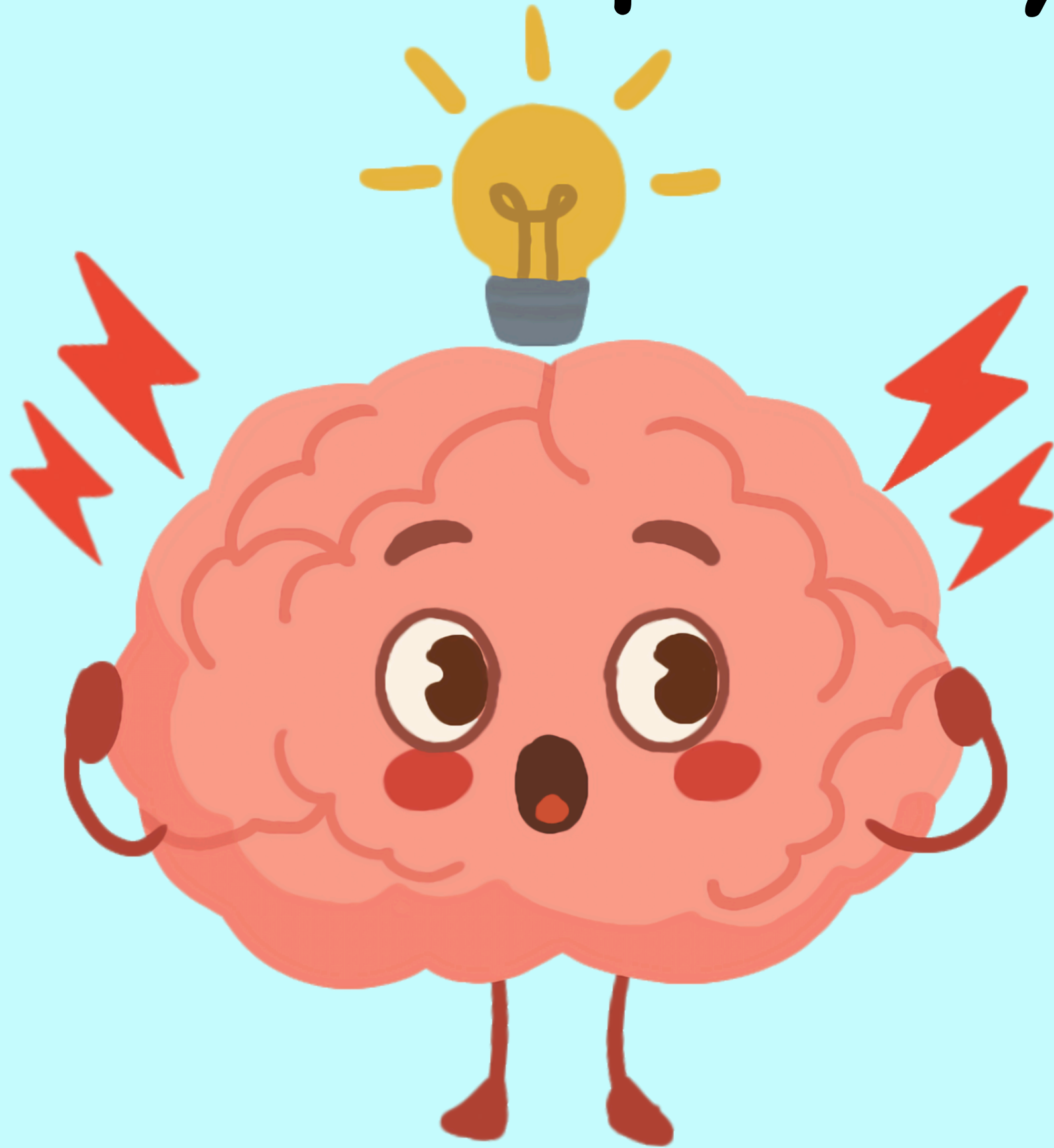
- Emotional Center of brain is fully active
- Impulse control, long-term thinking, consequences part is not fully active

RESULT:

- Brain is wired for **big** emotions and *poor* impulse control at the same time



Developmentally Appropriate Behavior



Risk-Taking & Boundry Testing

- Predictable
- Test limits
- Importance of Peer Relationships

Teens are figuring out:

- Who am I?
- Where do I belong?
- How much control do I have in the world?



TEENS AT THE LIBRARY

Why are teens loud?

Because emotional regulation is still developing and social interaction is their priority.



Why do they gather in groups?

Because peer connection is a developmental need.

Why do they test rules?

Because boundary-testing is how they learn autonomy.

Why do they seem unpredictable?

Because, neurologically, they kind of are.



Space Problems

- Visible, but not surveilled
- Flexible and Comfortable
- Activity-Friendly Spaces
- Owned by Teens

Space Solutions

- Moving Furniture around
- Adding a whiteboard or bulletin board
- Letting Teens create displays
- Ask: What would make this space better for you?



Setting Expectations

&

Managing Behavior

- Clear Specific Expectations
- Co-creating guidelines with teens

- Signage & Staff phrases
- Respond with curiosity, not confrontation
- Restorative Practices instead of punitive ones

**#1 YOU DON'T HAVE TO BE
COOL**

**#2 BUILD RAPPORT WITHOUT
PERFORMING**

**#3 SET BOUDARIES WHILE
MAINTAINING TRUST**

**#4 KNOW WHEN TO ASK
FOR HELP**

**Working with
Teens when
you are not a
"Teen
Person"**



Work sheet

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Column 1

Column 2

Column 3

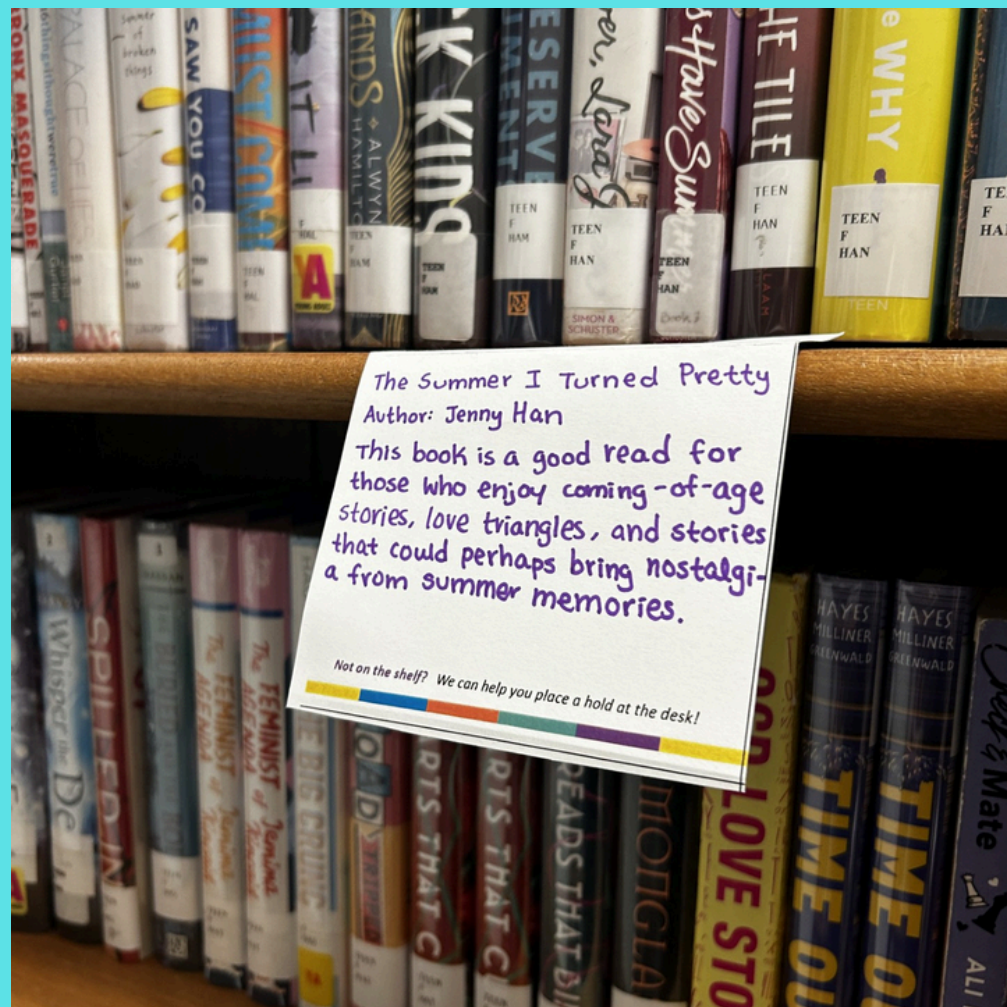
- **THEY SIT ON THE TABLES**

- **SPACE IS NOT WORKING**

FROM PROBLEMS TO POSSIBILITIES

CREATIVE PROJECTS

Shelf Talkers



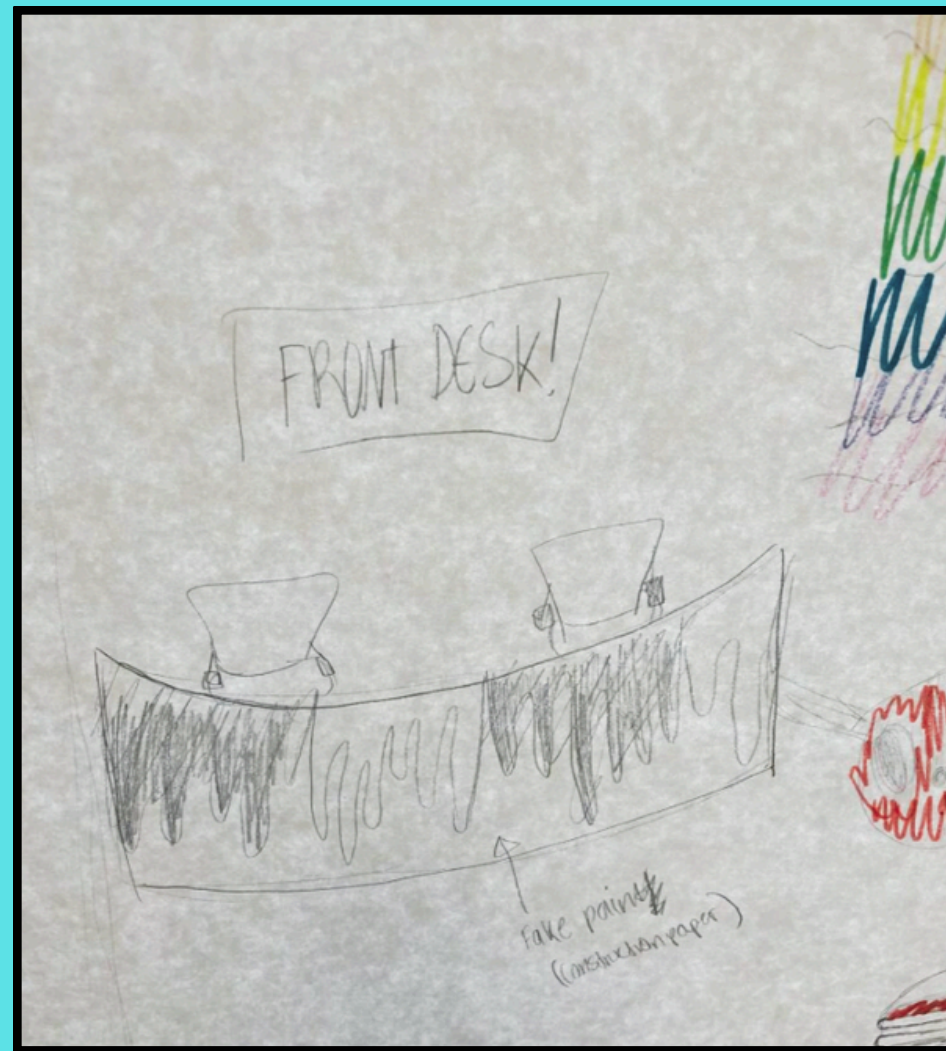
Book End Decorating



Rock Garden

FROM PROBLEMS TO POSSIBILITIES

**Designing Summer
Reading Decorations**



**TEEN ADVISORY
BOARD**



**Installing and
Creating Decorations**

FROM PROBLEMS TO POSSIBILITIES

POP-UP OR "BOX" PROGRAMS

- *Ready Made*
- *Easy to set up*
- *Tried and True*



Work sheet

We'd like you to write down the teen behaviors you personally struggle with — the moments that raise your stress, frustration, or uncertainty.

Column 1	Column 2	Column 3
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• THEY SIT ON THE TABLES	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• SPACE IS NOT WORKING	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• CAN I MOVE FURTUNITRE TO MAKE A HANGOUT ZONE?

WHAT TO REMEMBER

- *Teens are not a problem- they are a population.*
- *Teen Development*
- *Spaces that work with Teens, not against them*
- *Practical Strategies*
- *You don't have to be a "teen person"*



Comments

or

Questions?

Thank you!

CONTACT INFO

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**Please take a moment to
complete the program survey.**



SCAN ME!



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