**Muskegon:**

My current system doesn’t circulate puppets or puzzles, but my last system in Texas did.

We had a notebook with an index of puzzles and descriptions in the front, pictures of each individual puzzle (with an assigned number, the barcode in the catalog system, and a short description of the puzzle including the number of pieces - all of which corresponded to a tag attached to each puzzle’s mesh bag). When patrons found a puzzle they wanted to check out, they were instructed to put a slip saying “Checked Out” into the plastic sleeve page that contained their puzzle’s picture. The puzzle ‘catalog’ notebook was set on top of our puzzle drawers (big storage drawers – we had a lot of puzzles). In practice patrons forgot to put in slips continually and some branches in the system handled puzzle checkouts for patrons (patrons would select puzzles from the notebook but staff added the “Checked Out” slips). When puzzles were returned (to the desk, never the book drop), staff would check them into the notebook as well, removing the slips and putting them back into their labeled drawer. Every so often a staff member would check through the puzzle drawers and see what was actually there and make sure the slips in the notebook corresponded to the notebook.

We also circulated puppet kits – mesh backpacks that had a picture book with a  matching puppet. These also had tags with the barcode and a short description of what the kit should contain (example: Kit: 1 copy “Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See?” and ONE Brown Bear Puppet). These kits were kept on S-hooks on a wire spinner display at the end of our Easy Reader section. There was no extra notebook catalog for these kits since they were on display.

I don’t know what the replacement costs for damage to bags, puzzles, or puppets tended to be. We set items aside as damaged or missing items for no more than 6 months before recycling or discarding the item (many puppets lived on as in-house puppets for our little wooden theater). As far as sanitizing, we’d occasionally take puppets home to wash or set them aside for repairs. You can wipe down puzzles, but I recommend maybe a 10% bleach solution at most – some cleaners will fade or remove the paint. Patrons also had to be reminded not to take the toys out at the library, that they were for checking out and taking home – this is an ongoing battle, even with signs. Both kits had limits of three kits per card (or per patron, though some patrons learned to bring multiple cards from family instead).

**Alice & Jack Wirt Public Library in Bay City:**

We circulate puppets and I take them home and wash them every once in a while (in a mesh laundry bag or a pillowcase). We discard them when they start to rip. We do have a washing machine at the library I could use (the maintenance staff has one because we use cloth towels for cleaning) but it tends to be on the grimy side.

We circulate puzzles on the honor system and do not track their usage. When a patron reports a puzzle has missing pieces, we take it out and use the pieces for craft projects in the children's department.

**Putnam District Library:**  
We circulate cake pans, adult jigsaw puzzles, family board games, and kids' puzzles.  
  
We've never had one not be returned . . . knock on wood . . . but would charge a replacement cost if necessary.  
  
All our lending items have been community donated at this point so the cost would help us maintain the collection.  
  
If something is returned with pieces missing, we discontinue it from use.  We don't check this upon return, we let families report it on the next checkout . . . thus, we don't fine for missing pieces.  The time to check pieces isn't needed since we have a very little investment in the collection.  
  
We also have some backpacks with books, toys, activities in the kids' room.  We do check those for all components upon return.  We have had to fine for missing bits . . . or assess overdue fines as we wait for toys to be discovered at home and then returned.  :)  
  
**Bloomfield Township Public Library:**

Our library has two collections of kits with non-traditional items, our [Special Needs Kits](http://www.btpl.org/youth/special-needs/) for children  and  [VITALITY Kits](http://encore.btpl.org/iii/encore/search/C__Svitality%20kits__Orightresult__U?lang=eng&suite=cobalt) for adults and seniors.

Karrie Yukon and I oversee the VITALITY Kits which are resources to help seniors and their caregivers deal with the many issues of aging.  These contain all sorts of items:   reading pens, hand exercise balls, strength bands, and heart rate monitors.  We also have helping aids and tools:   easy-grip can openers, button fasteners, magnifiers, talking calculators and jar grips.  And, we have games for low vision and memory improvement. These contain lots and lots of pieces, IE card games, Dominoes and Scrabble tiles, puzzles pieces, etc.

Each of our kits has an exact count of pieces as listed both on the kits and in the item record.  Below is the content note our Low Vision Game kit:

"1 kit folder (10 leaves), 1 deck of playing cards (54 cards), 1 Rubiks cube, 1 set of Uno cards (108 cards, 1 instruction sheet), 1 set of dominos (28 tiles), 1 tic tac toe game (9 pieces, 1 wooden game board), 1 Rummikub game in box (106 tiles, 1 cloth bag, 4 tile holders, 1 instruction pamphlet), 100 Scrabble tiles."

Each time a kit comes back from circulation, it is checked by our department clerical aide, myself or Karrie.  Our Circulation staff checks all other Library items but since the kits need a little more attention, we actually count every piece and we make sure items are in working order.  That includes checking batteries.  Balls and exercise bands and anything that looks used, are wiped down with a sanitizing wipes.   We have replacement items for some things so we can swap them out if needed.

Special Needs kits are also checked for parts and condition.    Some of these kits have puppets and stuffed animals.  Many of these cannot be washed so they will try to spot clean as best they can when needed.    Jenn Taggert oversees this collection and she tries to have replacements should she need them.

**Dearborn Public Library:**

Laura – Not trying to be a smart-aleck but, *Been there, done that, lots of work*.  With all the backroom work our Circulation staff has to manage with all our media and different formats – it was just one more thing to do that took a lot of time.

Missing puzzle pieces – *“It was like that when I got it”*

Sanitize puppets – staff had to take them home to wash them and we couldn’t do it after each circ.

Perhaps others have come up with a solution to make these non-traditional collections easier to manage – but I wouldn’t do it again.

If your circulation is on the lower side – it might be easier to manage, but as a Class VI library – it was a very staff-intensive service for us to offer.

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**Ann Arbor District Library:**

Ann Arbor District Library does not have puzzles or puppets, but we do have outside games, musical instruments, telescopes and a wide-range of other things. We don't charge for missing pieces, only damaged materials. We have a LOT of "unusual" collections as we like to call them.  You can see them at <http://www.aadl.org/catalog/browse/unusual>. I'd also encourage you, if you don't get a response from him, to contact Jody Harnish at [(734) 327-8303](tel:%28734%29%20327-8303).  He's the one who's mostly in charge of our "Tools" collections, developing them and maintaining them.

**St. Joseph Public Library:**

At our library we do circulate puzzles.  We assign the puzzle a number in our catalog and then on the back of each piece, we put that number on it in sharpie. This is in case we find a random puzzle piece on the floor, we know what puzzle it belongs to.  
  
We have the number of pieces in the puzzle on the marc record and also on the bag that the puzzle is housed in so the patrons can see how many pieces are in the bag.  When a staff member goes to check it out or in, a message on the screen pops up saying "check for 25 pieces" or however many the puzzle has.  
  
If they do loose a piece, we will charge them full replacement costs since we obviously can't circ after that.  
  
Hope that helps and good luck!  Our puzzles are pretty popular and it is a nice thing to offer to families.

**Rauchholz Memorial Library:**

We do a “puzzle exchange” at our library and it’s simple. Patrons bring in a puzzle, they take a puzzle. We do not keep track of missing pieces, if a patron discovers a piece missing we do note on the box. We  keep if only 1 piece missing; more than that missing and we use the puzzle for crafts, programming or give to local schools for their art programs.

Since the puzzle are here all by donations, we do not charge a fee if puzzle not return or returned with a missing piece. All we ask is that patrons bring in puzzles of similar prices to  take one out; meaning if you bring in a dollar store puzzle (they tend to be in smaller boxes) then we will check out the puzzle they want using temp barcode on their card and they do have to return it. We had to do this only because some patrons were abusing the exchange and bringing in $1 puzzles and taking out $10 ones and not returning the pricier ones but bringing in more dollar store ones.

We’re in our third year of this program and the patrons do use it; especially during the winter months. And the puzzles get exchanged quite frequently so there are always new ones to choose from; better yet, it cost the library nothing!

**Bad Axe Area District Library:**

We circulate some puzzles and games.  Staff is supposed to check for missing pieces when the items are checked in.  If missing pieces are identified, we would charge the patron for the cost of the item.