STORYTIME FOR THE EARLY LITERACY NEWCOMER

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WELCOME, STORYTIME CREW!

Are you...

...new to storytime?
...new to early literacy?
...new to both?
Why do storytime at all?

❖ Core service that people expect
❖ In some communities, the only game in town for families with young children
❖ Build an audience for your collection
❖ Build support for library
❖ Build community of families

Most importantly, storytime helps young children get ready to read!
WHAT IS EARLY LITERACY?
EARLY LITERACY IS...

...everything you know about reading before you’re able to read.

❖ Six skills: Vocabulary, Letter knowledge, Phonological awareness, Print awareness, Print motivation, Narrative skills
❖ Five practices: Talk, Sing, Read, Write, Play

http://everychildreadytoread.org/
SIX SKILLS

❖ Print motivation: Being interested in and enjoying books
❖ Print awareness: Noticing print everywhere, knowing how to follow words on a page
❖ Vocabulary: Knowing all kinds of words
❖ Letter knowledge: Knowing letter names and sounds
❖ Phonological awareness: Hearing and recognizing the smaller sounds in words
❖ Narrative skills: Telling stories, describing things, making predictions
FIVE PRACTICES

❖ Talk: Engaging children in conversation
❖ Sing: Singing with children
❖ Read: Reading aloud to children
❖ Write: Scribbling, drawing, intentional marks on paper
❖ Play: Dramatic play, puzzles, blocks, sensory activities
COMPONENTS OF A SUCCESSFUL STORYTIME
STEP ONE: CONTENT

❖ Stories
❖ Songs
❖ Movement
❖ Rhymes
❖ Fingerplays
❖ Flannel Activities
❖ Crafts
THE EARLY LITERACY CONNECTION

❖ Stories: Introduce new vocabulary, build narrative skills, and encourage print motivation

❖ Songs: Singing itself is one of the five practices that support early literacy, so sing out and sing often!

❖ Rhymes: Like singing, rhymes slow down the language and makes the small sounds in words easier to hear – phonological awareness!

❖ Fingerplays: Like rhymes, these slow down language, also build motor skills

❖ Flannel Activities: Reinforce story, build narrative skills

❖ Crafts: Build motor skills that support pre-writing
THE INTERACTIVE PORTION
STEP TWO: ENGAGEMENT

❖ Storytime asides: Provide early literacy tips to caregivers during storytime

❖ Early learning space: Create a physical environment that supports the five practices and encourages family engagement

❖ Print resources: Information to send home with caregivers

❖ Unstructured play time: Get to know your patrons, listen to concerns, model open-ended play
STEP THREE: CONNECTIONS

❖ Loanable kits: Pre-packaged, themed activities that help support early literacy at home (books, games, toys)

❖ Resource center: Creating a space in the children’s area where the library provides resources on how to build early literacy skills

❖ Marketing/promotions: Putting early literacy information/materials in places where families are – doctors’ offices, grocery stores, Laundromats

❖ Partnerships with community agencies: Working together with other agencies that serve families with young children – deposit collections, outreach visits

❖ Early learning workshops: For caregivers, early childhood educators
STORYTIME OUTSIDE THE LIBRARY
CONSIDERATIONS FOR OUTREACH

❖ Who is doing the outreach visit?
❖ Adapting to a potentially larger audience
❖ Activities that travel well
❖ Library card sign-ups/checkouts
❖ Encouraging library visits
❖ Promotional materials/giveaway books
❖ Time constraints/requested focus of organization
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS
WHAT BOOKS SHOULD I READ?
STORYTIME BOOKS

❖ Age-appropriate
❖ Provide opportunities for engagement
❖ Hot off the press vs. old favorites
❖ Fiction vs. nonfiction
❖ Wordless books
❖ No themes required!

Whatever books you choose, read them aloud in advance! You’ll thank us later.
TIPS FOR READING

❖ Take your time
❖ Build in time for audience participation
❖ Modulate your voice
❖ A word on accents/voices
❖ You do not have to read the entire book
❖ Read the room; if they’re not into it, feel free to move on to something else
GENERAL TIPS

❖ Slow down
❖ Repetition is good/Familiarity encourages participation!
❖ Picture walking (dialogic reading)
❖ A framing device (puppet, whiteboard, theme, magic box, etc.)
❖ Storytime as improv and not performance

https://dppl.org/blog/post/saying-yes-and-to-storytime
TO PUPPET OR NOT TO PUPPET?
ARE CRAFTS REQUIRED?
OPPOSING VIEWPOINTS: CRAFTS

No, crafts are not required...

If you have:
❖ limited time,
❖ limited budget,
❖ limited storage space,
❖ limited affection for crafts...
❖ Don’t worry! They are not mandatory.

But they are valuable!

Crafts:
❖ build the motor skills necessary for writing
❖ can reinforce the stories and encourage language development
❖ are a take-home reminder of storytime
❖ Are undeniably popular with small children and their caregivers
Open-ended exploratory art

- Allows child more choice
- Puts less pressure on parents to recreate your example
- Offers a different kind of dialogic language experience
- Is easier to plan for—whatever you have on hand is fine!
- Scales well to differing skill levels
- Can be part of storytime or a separate early literacy workshop
ADDITIONAL RESOURCES
LEARN MORE ABOUT EARLY LITERACY

- Ready to Read at New York Libraries
- Saroj Ghoting’s EarlyLit.net
- Supercharged Storytimes for All webinar
- Early Childhood Direction Center: Located throughout NYS, offers resources and trainings
- Check your county for a child care council to connect with further local resources
STORYTIME RESOURCES

- Jbrary
- ALSC blog
- Sturdy for Common Things
- Storytime Katie
- Mel’s Desk
- Storytime Underground (Storytime University/Guerrilla Storytime)
- Abby the Librarian
- Library Makers

You can also explore the social media platform of your choice!