**HOW TO CREATE STORYTIMES**

Storytime is a fun and exciting way to spend time with your children and develop their pre-reading skills. Below are some tips and strategies on how to create the type of the storytimes you might see at the library.

**STORIES** Include a minimum of three stories which meets the needs of the different ages in your storytime – from youngest to oldest.

**ROUTINE** Do storytime at the same time every day, night or week; using the same opening and closing song each week

**VARIETY** **AND ACTION** Incorporate a variety of activities – books, singing, felt stories, movement, fingerplays, rhymes, music, etc. Making storytime active and interactive makes it fun for everyone!

**REPEAT** Repetition is one of the ways children build strong brain connections. Repeat songs and rhymes as well as books.

**SWAY** Go with the flow and be adaptable. Don’t be afraid to put down a book no one is interested in. Sing a silly song instead.

**HAVE FUN!** Be silly and pick books and songs that you enjoy too. When you have fun they have fun and they LEARN.

**SAMPLE STORYTIME (Material from Sillies Storytime Kit)**

**Opening Song:** If You’re Happy and You Know it

**Book:** Animals Should Definitely Not Wear Clothing

**Song:** Here We Go Looby-Loo

**Book:** Duck! Rabbit!

**Song:** Head, Shoulders, Knees and Toes

**Felt story:** 5 Little Monkeys

**Book:** Silly Sally

**Closing Song:** The More We Get Together

**Developing Pre-Reading Skills through….Playing**

* When you read, sing, talk or play with your children, you’re helping their brains develop and building the connections that will help them get ready to learn to read.
* Keep magnetic letters on the refrigerator for your children to play with. When it’s time to learn their letters, they will already be familiar.
* Play letter hide and seek. Pick a letter and have your children find objects in the room or throughout the house that start with that letter.
* Play around with the sounds in words. Take a word and see how many different words you can make by just changing the first letter. (h-at, m-at, c-at, f-at, d-at). Silly made up words are funny to children and help them hear the different sounds in words.
* You don’t need to use special tools and flashcards to help your children with pre-reading skills. Spending time reading and playing sound games with them is one of the best ways to help build the skills they will need to learn to read.
* After reading a book have your children act out the story. This is fun and helps them remember what you have read.

**Fun Activities**

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| **The Wiggle Song**  **(*tune*: For He’s a Jolly Good Fellow)**  My thumbs are starting to wiggle,  (wiggle thumbs)  My thumbs are starting to wiggle,  My thumbs are starting to wiggle,  Around and around and around.  *Continue with hands, arms, toes, feet, head and end with:*  All of me is starting to wiggle,  All of me is starting to wiggle,  All of me is starting to wiggle,  And now I need a rest! | **Roly Poly**  Roly Poly ever so slowly  *Roll hands slowly*  Roly Poly ever so quick  *Roll hands quickly*  Roly poly, roly poly  Up, up, up *(roll hands up in the air)*  Roly poly, roly poly  Down, down, down *(roll hand down)*  Roly Poly, roly poly  Out, out, out *(arms out away from the body)*  Roly poly, roly poly  In, in, in *(give yourself a hug!)* |

**Developing Pre-Reading Skills through….Reading**

* Reading to children is the single most important activity that you can do to prepare them for learning how to read. Read to your children every day.
* Choose books that appeal to your child’s interest. Do they love dressing up? Read *Fancy Nancy* by Jane O’Connor. Do they watch the garbage truck pick up the weekly trash? Read *I Stink* Kate McMullan. Dinosaurs, dolls, robots, bugs, kittens, camping and more--the library has it all!
* Read favorite books over and over again. It will encourage their love of books and repetition helps create the strong connections in their brains that they need to learn to read.
* Learning letters is an important first step in reading. Help your children identify the first letter in their names and find it in books, on streets signs and labels.
* Don’t be afraid to set a book aside if it just isn’t appealing to your children. If it is hard for your children to sit still, read to them while they eat or play or read in little bits throughout the day.
* Find a comfortable place to read and sit together. This helps children create a special feeling at reading time.

**Fun Activities**

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| **Two Little Feet**  Two little feet go tap, tap, tap  Two little hands go clap, clap, clap  Two little fists go thump, thump, thump  Two little legs go jump, jump, jump  One little child turns slowly around  One little child sits quietly down.  **I’m Bouncing**  I’m bouncing, bouncing everywhere.  I bounce and bounce into the air.  I’m bouncing, bouncing like a ball.  I bounce and bound, and then I fall! | **Make Your Arms Go Up and Down**  **(*tune*: London Bridges falling down)**  Make your arms go up and down,  Up and down, up and down.  Make your arms go up and down,  Just like me  -Move your hands up and down…  -Move your shoulders up and down…  -Flap your elbows up and down…  -Make your legs go up and down…  -Make your feet go up and down…  -Move your body up and down… |

**Developing Pre-Reading Skills through….Singing**

* Singing helps your child learn the sounds of language. Singing with your children is not only fun, but also it teaches them words, rhythm and rhymes.
* Sharing traditional rhymes and emphasizing those rhyming words help children learn different sounds and how they work together.
* Songs let your children play with the smaller sounds in words. Being able to hear the sounds that make up words helps children sound out written words as they begin to read.
* Sing songs with hand motions and actions. Movement helps stimulate brain growth and encourage key connections for learning.

**Fun Activities**

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| **Walking Song (*tune:* Are you sleeping?)**  Walking walking, walking, walking  Hop hop hop, hop hop hop  Running, running, running  Running, running, running  Now we stop, now we stop  **Here we Go Looby Loo (Circle Song)**  Here we go looby loo  Here we go looby light  Here we go looby loo  All on a Saturday night  I put my right hand in  I put my right hand out  I give my right hand a  shake, shake, shake  And turn myself about.  **Continue with: left hand/right foot/**  **Left foot/whole self** | **Down on Grandpa’s Farm**  Chorus:  We’re on our way, we’re on our way,  We’re on our way to Grandpa’s farm.  We’re on our way, we’re on our way,  We’re on our way to Grandma’s farm.  Down on Grandpa’s farm  There is a big black dog.  Down on Grandpa’s far  There is a big black dog.  The dog, she makes  A sound like this: woof woof.  The dog, she makes  A sound like this: woof woof.  Down on Grandpa’s farm  There is a little white chicken…  Down on Grandma’s farm  There is a big brown horse…  *Etc.* |

**Developing Pre-Reading Skills through….Writing**

* When your children draw or pretend to write they are developing their reading skills by experimenting with pictures and symbols they have seen. Eventually they will make the connection between these play experiences and the activities of reading and writing.
* Try to provide your children with lots of opportunities to play with crayons, pencils and markers. This will prepare them for learning to read and write in school.
* Have your child use a finger to trace a letter while saying the letter's sound. Do this on paper, in sand, and with soap bubbles in the bathtub.
* Make your own “non-fiction book.” For example, after reading a book about trucks and cars, find some old magazines, let your children cut out pictures of cars and trucks and paste them in a book or a piece of paper. Talk with your children about the pictures, and write down the words they say.
* Before learning to read children need to understand that each letter has a name and a unique shape, and that specific sounds go with specific letters.
* You can help your children learn letters by reading alphabet books, focusing on a certain letter for a day or week and writing out the letters in their names.

**Fun Activities**

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| **Friend of Mine**  **(*tune:* Mary had a little lamb)**  Will you be a friend of mine,  Friend of mine, friend of mine  Will you be a friend of mine  And clap your hands with me?  …jump around  …spin around  …skip in place  …sit right down | **Popcorn!**  Pop, pop, pop! *(clap hands)*  Pour the corn into the pot  Pop, pop, pop! *(clap hands)*  Take and shake it until it’s hot.  Pop, pop, pop! *(clap hands)*  Lift the lid – what have you got?  Pop, pop, pop! *(clap hands)*  Popcorn! |

**Developing Pre-Reading Skills through…Talking**

* An important part of getting ready to read is being able to describe things and events and to tell stories. Have your children tell you a story or tell you what happened in a book you read to them.
* Tell a story together. Help your children start by giving a clue. "A frog was \_\_\_\_\_ in the lake." Then ask, "What color is the frog?" What is he doing?" Who are his friends?" etc
* Teach your children the specific names of things such as the objects in your living room.
* Talk your children about what you are doing, even when just doing the dishes, and listen to them tell you about things they do. Ask questions that require more than a yes or no answer. Talking with children develops comprehension skills that will help them understand what they read.
* By the time children are two years olds, they understand 300 to 500 words. You can help your children learn new words by talking and reading together.
* Research shows that children who have larger vocabularies are better readers. Knowing many words helps children recognize written words and understand what they read.

**Fun Activities**

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| **Row, Row, Row Your Boat**  *Row your boat throughout the song*  Row, row, row your boat,  Gently down the stream,  Merrily, merrily, merrily, merrily,  Life is but a dream.  …down the stream; if you see a  Crocodile, don’t forget to scream – aggghh!  …to the shore; if you see a lion,  Don’t forget to roar – rooooaarrr!  …down the river; if you see a polar bear,  Don’t forget to shiver – brrrr! | **One is a Giant**  One is a giant who stomps his feet  *Stomp your feet*  Two is a fairy light and neat  *Twirl on tiptoe*  Three is a mouse who crouches small  *Crouch down on the floor*  And four is a great big bouncing ball  *Jump* *up and down* |