

OLA Conference 2016

Guerilla Storytime Share Notes

What are some ways English-speaking-only staff can provide programs for the Spanish-speaking community?

- Spanish-speaking parents and teachers can help you out
- Utilize a volunteer with Spanish language skills
- Try bilingual books that are mostly in English with Spanish vocabulary words
- Try English-language books that reflect Latino culture (Pura Belpré Award List is a great place to start: <http://www.ala.org/alsc/awardsgrants/bookmedia/belpremedal>)
- Try books with lots of action words for kids to act out
- Try books that use visual storytelling
- Try wordless books
- Use ASL (American Sign Language) in your storytimes. Local author Dawn Prochovnic of SmallTalk Learning has a really useful blog to help you get started: <http://www.dawnprochovnic.com/>
- Tell the kids that you're learning Spanish and ask them to teach you numbers, colors, etc. They love the opportunity to be the teachers!
- Replace colors and numbers with Spanish vocab in songs you usually do in English
- Try *Rubia and the Three Osos* by Susan Middleton Elias
- *Once Upon a Cuento: Bilingual Storytimes in English and Spanish* by Jamie Campbell Naidoo and Katie Scherrer is a brand new bilingual storytime guidebook published by the American Library Association this spring. You can ILL it through the Oregon State Library or buy it through the ALA Store at <http://www.alastore.ala.org/detail.aspx?ID=11683>

What are your favorite flannelboard activities?

- “Watermelon” to the tune of “Frere Jacques”:
Watermelon, watermelon
How it drips, how it drips
Up and down your elbows, up and down your elbows
Spit out the pits! Spit out the pits!
Repeat using different fruits and vegetables.
- “Rainbow Stew”: <http://librarystorytimeabcs.blogspot.com/2012/02/flannel-friday-magical-rainbow-stew.html>
- Play with circles of all sizes and colors to practice concepts like size (big, bigger, biggest), color names, and counting. Make sure there are enough supplies for each child and parents. You can make a travel felt board out of a file folder: <http://www.mamasmiles.com/travel-felt-board/>
- Tell a flannel version of *The Mitten* by Jan Brett. Give each child an animal to put in the mitten.

- “Little Cat, Little Cat, Are You Under the _____ Hat?” using a different animal under each hat: <https://storytimekatie.com/2012/05/25/flannel-friday-little-cat/>

Any ideas for working with an overactive special needs child during storytime?

- Ask the caregiver to sit in the back with the child so they have space/ability to take breaks as needed
- Have a “take a break” chair or throne for all kids to use as needed
- Talk to the parent about what works best for their child, work together to design a successful storytime strategy for their family.
- Use wobble discs for kids who have trouble sitting still. This HemingWeigh disc is inexpensive and easy to clean: http://www.amazon.com/HemingWeigh-Balance-Disc/dp/B00HS5IGW4/ref=sr_l_l?ie=UTF8&qid=1461961104&sr=8-l&keywords=hemingweigh+balance+disc
- Debby Laimon, who does Sensory Storytimes at the Eugene Public Library and Springfield Public Library, is a great resource in this area. She presented on storytimes for kids with special needs at OLA last year: <http://b8f.645.myftpupload.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/Storytime-Share-Sensory-Storytime-Handout.pdf>
- Kids don’t have to be sitting still in order to listen
- Don’t draw attention to the behavior
- Make sure you have age-appropriate expectations for all children
- Adult interruptions are usually more disruptive than kids’ disruptions, so we need to remember that adults are the ones who need the most training

What are your favorite storytime songs?

- “Puffer Train” to the tune of “Itsy Bitsy Spider”:
Here’s a little puffer train, going down the track (chug arms like train wheels)
Now it’s going forward (chug arms and lean forward),
Now it’s going back (chug arms and lean backward)
Now the bell is ringing (tug bell), what a lot of noise (cover ears)
Stopping at the station (put hands up), for all the girls and boys (wave)
- “Put the Oil in the Pot” chant:
You put the oil in the pot and get it real hot (mime pouring oil)
You put the popcorn in and get a big grin (smile)
Sizzle, sizzle, sizzle (crouch down on the ground, say as many times as you need)
Pop! (jump up)
- Have kids pick a nursery rhyme. You start to tell them the rhyme and ask them to say the word “What?” in the middle of the rhyme. When they do, you do the “Stir It Up” chant:
Stir it up, stir it up (mime stirring)
Push it, push it, push it, push it (mime pushing)
Jump baby, jump baby (jump)
Monkey, monkey, monkey, monkey (do “the monkey”:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hWuw5XV8_9E)

- Try these two call-and-response chants to bring everyone back together:
 - Mama, mama, can't you see? (group repeats) / Storytime was great for me! (group repeats)
 - North and south and east and west (group repeats) / Toddler time it was the best! (group repeats)
- Do "Sleeping Bunnies" by Kathy Reed Naiman, repeat the melody with different animals. Have kids act out different animal moves and then fall down "asleep" on the floor:

https://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B0033MG0C4/ref=dm_ws_sp_dp

What's the best way to run a storytime with kids 1-5 years old without losing the very young or the more advanced older group?

- At STEP Into Storytime, Saroj recommended:
 - start with an activity for everyone
 - then work from youngest to oldest (let parents of littler kids know that they can step out of the area or play with the baby during older kid activities)
 - end with an activity for everyone
- Make sure that you're engaging the parents and older siblings by giving them a role and specific instructions (e.g. we're going to do this activity TOGETHER), helps with parents on their phones
- Storytime leader doesn't always have to do the motions for songs and movement activities, let the big kids show the little kids how it's done
- Bring 6-7 books for a variety of ages with you to storytime and choose 3-4 based on the crowd that shows up
- Be flexible!
- The parachute is a great equalizer. Big kids can lift it up and down over little kids or hold it while walking in a circle to spin the little kids.

How do you encourage parents to participate in storytime?

- Invite them and share your expectations
- Remind them that their kids think they're Superman and will do what they do
- Remind parents to turn off cell phones. We liked the language, "No phone calls, texting, or online shopping."
- Remind parents that their children are biologically wired to pay attention to THEIR voice
- Use the bouncy circle method
 - Tie a bunch of strips of swimsuit fabric together to make a circle
 - Have everyone (kids AND parents) grab on
 - Practice bouncing up/down, in/out, big/small, fast/slow, noes/toes, etc. and do songs like "Row, Row, Row Your Boat"
 - When you're done, you have parents sitting with their children in a circle...and they participated in the first thing you did
 - Shows you expectations in addition to telling them

- Set expectations in a welcoming way
- Give the parents nametags to remind them that they're participants and to acknowledge their identity as someone other than so-and-so's mom or dad
- Use positive reinforcement techniques like telling the parents how proud you are of them when they do sing
- Paid caregivers are challenging to work with, often feel like they've done their duty by bringing children and are reluctant to participate
- Try being self-deprecating: "I know it sounds crazy but this is fun!"
- Change your marketing language...turns out non-storytimers don't know what the phrase "storytime" means!
- Use parent/child photos in your marketing
- Utilize peer pressure to encourage positive behaviors
- A BRIEF poster with the rules can help. Whatever you're thinking of doing right now, it needs fewer words than that. No, really.
- Try using humor: "Have we all had our coffee this morning?"
- Create a coffee parking lot if you need to encourage parents to put their drinks elsewhere
- When teachers or aides on classroom visits or field trips are talking through your storytime, try saying, "You probably haven't seen that we're having storytime over here...would you like to join us?"
- Physical location can be a challenge, especially when you only have one staff member on duty, they're doing storytime, and adult patrons expect immediate service (i.e. to drop what they're doing with the kids to help the random grownup who just walked in the door)

I got not one, not two, but THREE questions about how to respond to parents who aren't following your instructions or are otherwise causing a disruption during storytime. So let's talk about it. What DO you do when it's the parents, not the kids, who need to be positively redirected?

How do you deal with a parent who is not doing what you've asked (coming to sit with their child, leaving storytime if child is screaming, etc.)?

I have a parent who brings four kids to story time and sits in the very front. The older kids can pay attention but the youngest (toddler) starts to fuss. She [the parent] will then pull out a toy and start to interact with him. All the children in the immediate area shift their focus to the toy/mother. If it was a child doing this on their own I would have no problem refocusing the group, but I don't know what to say to a PARENT. She thinks she is helping by focusing the fussy one, but I lose the front row. What can I do?

You've already made your opening announcement about saving adult conversations until after storytime, but 2 parents you've never seen before come in and are constantly whispering back and forth and it's raised the noise level of the room enough that people notice. You know it's their first time, and you don't want to scare them off. What do you do?

- Make eye contact with the parents, especially when you're singing—sing TO them
- Ask parents “Do you know this one?” before singing a common children’s song
- Highlight a post-storytime playtime as an opportunity to socialize
- When giving instructions, try using phrases like “you will be...” or “let’s try...”
- If parents are talking too loud, remind them that “voices really carry...”
- Smile at the parents who are talking and wait to move on with storytime until they notice your friendly yet unsettling stare (works in many challenging adult patron situations, not just storytime)
- Enlist the kids to help you by saying, “I can hear some grownups talking...” which usually encourages children to hush their parents
- If you use a welcoming song that calls kids out by name, include parents in that song to demonstrate that they’re participants as well
- If you need to address a problematic parent behavior right away, try whispering so you don’t embarrass the parent
- Try taking the parent aside AFTER storytime to discuss the situation, identify what problem of their child they’re trying to address, and brainstorm some strategies that will be more effective for the group setting
- Emphasize that you “love all the good things” the parent is doing and call those things out by name
- Try being funny by saying things like “I’m getting jealous of all the attention you’re getting...”
- Ask the parent to help you do this for the other children
- Keep in mind that this, whatever you do, won’t necessarily work
- Give the parent options
- Provide the parent with a chair on the back edge of the group, invite them to use it as needed
- Have a “baby corner” in the back of the room so parents with fussy little ones know where they can go

What are some of your favorite storytime books?

- *Baby Beluga* by Raffi
- Anything by Jan Thomas
- *If You’re a Robot and You Know It* by David A. Carter
- *Bee & Bird* by Craig Frazier
- Anything by Kevin Henkes
- *Grumpy Bird* by Jeremy Tankard – perfect as a book to always have in your back pocket, great way to get an ornery group on track
- *The Baby BeeBee Bird* by Diane Redfield Massie
- *The Perfect Nest* by Catherine Friend
- *Bark, George!* by Jules Feiffer – great for kids up to Grade 5 and big groups
- *Snack Time for Confetti* by Kali Stileman
- *How Chipmunk Got His Stripes* by Joseph Bruchac
- *One Day in the Jungle* by Colin West

- *Chicka Chicka Boom Boom* by Bill Martin Jr.
- *Press Here* by Herve Tullet
- *It's Not a Box* by Antoinette Portis
- *It's a Tiger!* by David LaRochelle
- *It Looked Like Spilt Milk* by Charles Shaw
- *Tap the Magic Tree* by Christie Matheson
- *Don't Push the Button!* by Bill Cotter
- *Pom Pom Panda Gets the Grumps* by Sophy Hen
- *Clip Clop* by Nicola Smee
- *Manana Iguana* by Ann Whitford Paul
- *Froggy Gets Dressed* and *Froggy Learns to Swim* by Jonathan London
- Spot books by Tad Hill – interactive

What do you say to a child that absolutely refuses to move away from the book, thus blocking everyone's view?

- Hide your stuff (if kids see it, they want to touch it)
- Try saying, “these are my tools, you can't touch them” instead of calling your supplies “toys”
- Ask kids to sit down whenever they need to be reminded and just keep repeating it as many times as you need to
- *No Drama Discipline* by Daniel J. Siegel and Tina Payne Bryson has some good strategies for “whole-brain” disciplinary strategies
 - Example: When you need kids to wait for something, say, “Yes, you can have/do it _____” instead of saying “no” or “not now”
- Ask kids to take 3 giant steps back when they start crowding you

How do you naturally and successfully share early literacy tips with adults during storytime?

- Need levity!
- Practice out loud
 - At STEP Into Storytime, Saroj had everyone practice saying a tip to their hand at first
 - Practice in the mirror, in the car, on your peers to get comfortable
- Use the structure, “**When we** [do whatever early literacy practice you're talking about], **they** [experience the benefit of that early literacy practice]”
- Early Literacy expert Saroj Ghoting has tons of tips on her website <http://www.earlylit.net/>
- Tie your tip to one of your storytime books or activities to give yourself a better context
- Put your tip in your lesson plan so you don't forget to do it
- Teach your storytime parents the “5 Practices Song” to the tune of “Bingo” and have them count each tip on their fingers:
 - Talk, sing, read, write, play,
 - Talk, sing, read, write, play,
 - Talk, sing, read, write, play,
 - Do these 5 things every day! OR Grow a reader every day!

- Reassure parents by reminding them that they're doing this stuff already, it doesn't cost lots of money to give their kids good early learning experiences
- Reinforcing natural behaviors – it's not rocket science
- Make sure that your tips don't feel like lecturing
- Give parents a “pat on the back” since they don't hear that message very often
- Put an early literacy tip on your storytime handout if you give parents a printout with song lyrics
- If you want an easy way to share early literacy tips with parents, try CSD's Early Literacy Calendar available at <http://www.csdola.org/early-literacy.html>
 - 366 librarian-generated early literacy activities
 - Not tied to any specific calendar year, so you can use it indefinitely (kids are at different developmental stages as they grow, so they'll benefit from the activities in different ways every year...no need to reinvent the wheel every 12 months)
 - Designed to look good in black and white or color
 - Two formats: a PDF that's ready to print and a Publisher file that can be customized for your library
- You can share these calendars and other library information with other organizations in your area that work with children. They often love to support the library and will help connect families to us. Some ideas:
 - Oregon Childhood Development Coalition: <http://www.ocdc.net/>
 - Your local health department, which sponsors a variety of programs that work with children and families
 - Public Health Department Program List: <https://public.health.oregon.gov/HealthyPeopleFamilies/Pages/index.aspx>
 - Oregon Health Department Directory: <https://public.health.oregon.gov/providerpartnerresources/localhealthdepartmentresources/pages/lhd.aspx>
 - Local pediatricians, especially if they offer the Reach Out and Read program: <http://www.reachoutandread.org/>
- Another cool resource for parents with smartphones is the free Daily Vroom app, which sends parents a daily early learning activity and small, accessible piece of information about how that activity helps their child's brain grow: <http://www.joinvroom.org/>