

What does successful programming look like?

- Promotes the library's collection and resources
- Develop early literacy and family literacy skills
- Celebrate diversity
- Develop lifelong learners
- Instill a love of reading, language, and literacy

Things to Think About Before Planning a Storytime

- Age and audience
- Size of the group
- Connection to early literacy (see resources folder)
- Your comfort with the materials
- Your presentation style
- Storytime Space

Preparation Will Help You Avoid Some Mistakes

- Plan early
- Practice the material
- Create an outline (see sample storytime outlines)
- Choose an opening and closing routine
- Know your space
- Know your audience

Key Components for a Great Storytime

- Set the mood or create an atmosphere at the beginning of each storytime.
- Welcome/Introductions (setting your expectations)
 - Introduce yourself and welcome the families
 - Introduce the storytime and age range
 - Engage with children and parents
 - Keep the welcome songs and routines the same each week
- Have an opening routine that feels comfortable to you. The ultimate goal is to have the kids seated and ready for your first book.
- Choose songs to get the little ones moving!
- Choose books that are age appropriate and engaging
- Use transitions while moving from book to song to action rhyme

Closing Routines

- Compliment or thank your participants
- Wrap up with a goodbye rhyme or song

- Provide a hand stamp or stickers and/or takeaways such as a coloring sheet or simple craft
- Remind parents of upcoming programs and events and provide materials for them to checkout

Dealing with Distractions: Although you may have planned everything out, distractions inevitably pop up. Some ways to deal with distractions are:

- Have realistic expectations of your audience and list those expectations from the beginning
- Try to redirect the child or parent's behavior
- Provide opportunities for movement and wiggling
- If the child remains distracted or is a distraction themselves, first directly speak the child and ask them to change their behavior. Make eye contact with the child so you have that connection.
- If all else fails, politely ask the parent and child to take a break outside and rejoin storytime when they're feeling better.

Early Literacy: One of our main goals in storytime is to promote early literacy.

- Why are NV Pre-K standards important?
- There are various ways to incorporate these into a storytime.

Age Group Tips: We provide many different storytimes for a variety of age groups. Here are some helpful tips for conducting storytime for each of those age groups.

Babytime – Newborn to 18 Months

- This storytime is unique because the interactions in this storytime is mainly with caregivers.
- We provide a playtime at the end so babies and caregivers can mingle. Social interaction and learning how to manipulate objects helps develop baby's gross motor skills
- The storytimes are usually 80-90% of the same material each week. Repetition is so important at this stage because although they may not be talking, they are listening and absorbing.
- We are reaching children at the very beginning of their brain development, so we help them learn communication, play, and a sense of themselves and the world in babytime.

Babytime Ideas

- Keep it simple! Babytime is a much lower key program that runs for approximately 20 minutes.
- Repetition is important, so try to use a lot of the same songs/rhymes each week so they can become familiar with them.
- Props are fun! They are great for the babies to see, explore, and interact with their caregiver. You can even introduce some STEAM activities such as mixing paint colors in a plastic zip-bag.
- Providing handouts on baby developments helps empower the caregiver to continue using these techniques at home.

- Use a soothing and friendly voice.
- Remain flexible. Not all babies will be able to do all songs and rhymes since the developmental range is so broad. Babies have very short attention spans, so try to gauge your audience and adapt.
- Staff should share one or two literacy tips with caregivers per session.

Book Selection:

- Large illustrations or photos (fewer objects per page)
- Repetitive sounds
- Simple concepts and familiar subjects

Toddler –18 to 36 Months

- It may take time to adjust to the different developmental levels.
 - 18 months – Stranger anxiety, limited vocabulary, follows one-step instructions, knows a few body parts
 - 2 years – Can copy others, more independences, 2-4 word sentences, begins to sort objects, plays mainly beside other children
 - 3 years – More interested in friends, follows multi-step instructions, separates easily from caregivers, more developed fine motor skills, 2-3 sentence conversations

Toddler Ideas:

- Over time, your group may become more familiar with your storytimes and you may add another book or additional activities
- Incorporating sign language is a wonderful way to encourage vocabulary
- Make a song cube with well-known songs. The kids will love getting to toss the cube and sing something familiar.

Book Selection:

- Clear illustrations
- Concise text (rhyming, rhythm, repetition)
- Simple Concepts

Preschool – Ages 3 to 5

- More interaction with the kids and less with the caregivers is normal in this age group
- Longer stories are great for practicing listening
- They want to interact, so encourage them to!
- Wanting to share things that happen to them and that they are learning is common
- Preschoolers are great at drawing parallels between your story and their lives

Preschool Ideas:

- Using flannel to retell a story offer a different visual component. Counting rhymes are great as flannels because you can make them as interactive as you want depending on your group size
- Having graphics or lyrics posters can help encourage audience participation

- Using manipulatives like scarves and shakers is a great way to make your music interactive
- Simple crafts and takeaways such as worksheets are a fun way to extend the storytime

Book Selection:

- Choose books that are silly, interactive, or that let them practice what they already know
- Preschool children understand humor better than the younger groups

Five & Under – Age 0-5

- The content for this storytime needs to work for all ages
- Every song, rhyme, or even book needs to have something that can be adapted for lap babies up to five years old
- Great songs and rhymes are directive, simple, and can be used with all ages

Five & Under Ideas:

- Ideas for this group can be pulled from Babytime, Toddler, and Preschool
- Over time, you will get a feel for the children and caregivers who attend, and what transitional activities work best for them
- Be prepared to be flexible, have a variety of books and activities that you are familiar with that can be substituted based on the input from your group

Book Selection:

- Select books that are engaging for all ages
- Ones that work well for this age group are based on familiar songs, interactive with lots of actions, are literal and directive, and those that involve counting

Family Storytime – 0-11:

- Content for this storytime must be flexible and easily adaptable for all ages
- A craft or activity can be added after storytime
- Your outline can be made into a PowerPoint presentation so that the group can participate

Family Ideas:

- Use flannels in conjunction of the book to help emphasize the story
- Allowing children to put flannel pieces on the board keeps them engaged and gives them confidence

Book Selection:

- Use flannels to help with your story
- Books that will engage your readers are ones where the audience can participate or that have a surprise ending

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