Reference Notes

Montgomery City-County Public Library

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The Importance of Promoting Early Literacy: Storytime in Libraries

One of the most important skills children will need early is literary skills. How can we, as parents, teachers, and librarians, help them in this effort? One valuable source is storytime from their local library. Let us talk about how storytime started and what it evolved into overtime. The Evolution of Early Literacy sheds light on the history of storytime. Librarians in the 40s and early 50s knew the importance of children learning to read and offered story hours for reading readiness. Reading readiness was the theory that children needed to become mentally prepared for reading by being exposed to literature before being given a physical book. Those librarians focused more on repetition and rhyme and how they could increase developmental skills. (Albright, Delecki, and Hinkle)

According to the Teaching Children to Read Report in 2000, The National Institute of Child Health and Human Development partnered with the Public Library Association to enlist parents and guardians to prepare children to learn to read. The Public Library Association joined the Association for Library Service to Children to test this program and used it in libraries all over. (Foote, pg.1) After much testing, they came up with the following six pre-reading skills to help parents improve their child's literacy skills:

Print Motivation: Having fun with books

Phonological Awareness: Take time to rhyme, sing, and play word games

Vocabulary: Talk, talk, talk

Narrative Skills: Tell stories about everything

Print Awareness: Notice print all around you

Letter Knowledge: Look for letter everywhere (Foote pg.3)

Today, public libraries have all types of resources to help parents and guardians select materials with those six pre-reading skills. Children's librarians play a major part in that effort by increasing literacy awareness with storytimes that include reading physical books, providing kid-friendly educational sites or databases, and reading aloud stories from memory. Storytimes can also include sing-a-longs, dancing, puppets, and arts & crafts.

Children's librarians do a lot to engage children in having fun, but also increase their literary skills without them being aware that it is even happening. Each storytime is also dependent on the age group. Babies and toddlers may require more singing and dancing than actual books. With preschool to elementary-age children, librarians can add more books to their storytime and include a craft at the end. With public libraries offering these services, either through weekly programs, library events, summer reading programs, etc., it could significantly aid in the development of literacy skills in children.

When the COVID-19 pandemic hit, many libraries closed. Some libraries have begun reopening their buildings and following guidelines from the local and state health departments. They have come up with plans to keep staff and patrons safe by limiting occupancy and quarantining materials. (Witteveen) Many libraries have not opened to the public but are only open to the staff. These libraries now host virtual

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Works Cited

☺ Albright, Meagan, et al. "The Evolution of Early Literacy: A History of Best Practices in Storytimes." Children & Libraries: The Journal of the Association for Library Service to Children, vol. 7, no. 1, Spring 2009, pp. 13-18. EBSCOhost, search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=tfh&AN=40507760&site=ehost-live.

☺ Foote, Anna, and Bradley Debrick. Six Skills by Age Six: Launching Early Literacy at the Library. Libraries Unlimited, an Imprint of ABC-CLIO, LLC, 2016. Call number: 027.62 Foote

☺ Witteveen, April, and Lisa Peet. "COVID-19 Outbreaks Roll Back In-Person Services." Library Journal, vol. 145, no. 10, Oct. 2020, pp. 8-10. EBSCOhost, search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=aph&AN=145926874&site=ehost-live.

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programming. Children librarians have become more creative in reaching their audience in this virtual setting. The great thing is that children will still be able to participate in those programs just like they did when they were in library spaces. Children's librarians are still offering the same programs such as read-a-loud, sing-a-longs, arts, and crafts. They want to continue to promote reading and learning, so children can continue to succeed in their literary journey regardless of what may be going on around the world.

Pathfinder and Suggested Reading

The Montgomery City-County Public Library has physical and online resources and databases to help parents/guardians increase their child's literacy skills. We have board books, designed for babies and toddlers. We also have early learning books, categorized by reading level, designed more for preschool to elementary students. Visit mccpl.lib.al.us and search through our online catalog for reading materials and a list of our databases. Don't forget to check out our Facebook and YouTube pages for Virtual Storytimes and Programs!

Databases:

TumbleBooks: A database that includes our unique animated, talking picture books, read-along chapter books, National Geographic videos, non-fiction books and playlists.

BookFlix: A database that includes thematically paired fiction and nonfiction titles that are designed to bridge learning-to-read and reading-to-learn. Animated classic storybooks introduce early learners to the delights of reading while sparking curiosity, creating a natural springboard into the paired nonfiction text for deeper discovery.

Hoopla Kids: A database with a collection of children's E-books, audio books, and comics.

Reading Suggestions:
Board Books:

Nana's Garden by Larissa Juliano Call Number- E Juliano
Touch and Feel Christmas by DK Publishing Call Number- E Touch
Dream Big Little One by Vashti Harrison Call Number - E 920.72
Star Wars Colors by Scholastic Call Number- E537.6 Star

Beginner Books:
Go, Dog Go by P.D. Eastman Call Number-E Eastman
Peppa's New Friend by Michael Petranek Call Number- E Petrane
Don't Let The Pigeon Drive The Bus! by Mo Williams Call Number- E Willems

Elementary Books:
Pete the Cat: Rocking in My School Shoes by James Dean and Eric Litwin Call Number- E Litwin
Hair Love by Matthew A. Cherry and Vashti Harrison Call Number- E Cherry
7 Ate 9 by Tara Lazar and Ross MacDonald Call Number- E Lazar
The Rainbow Fish by Marcus Pfister and J Alison James Call Number- E Pfister

Online Resources:
PBS Kids: https://pbskids.org/games/
Accelerated Reader Bookfinder: https://www.arbookfind.com/
Children's Literacy Initiative: https://cli.org/

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