Supercharge Your Library's Storytimes

15-minute briefings + 45 minutes of office hour chats = **Power Hours**

**SATURDAY, 11:30 AM – 12:30 PM**

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Learning Community Manager

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Project Coordinator
“To an outsider, a library storytime can seem deceptively simple—grab a favorite book and ham it up. Use a puppet, silly voices, and everyone will have fun.

Storytimes are entertaining! But libraries are in a unique position to connect with families and their children from birth.

Skillful, thoughtful storytime practitioners are key to the role libraries can play as anchor institutions within a broader community learning infrastructure.”

– Saroj Ghoting
You already provide great storytimes.
Supercharge your practice to make them even better.

Getting Started / Module One / Module Two / Module Three / Module Four / Module Five / Module Six
What we’ve heard – Intentionality

“It's made me think more about **why I do what I do** and has me thinking more in-depth about **what methods would benefit my audience** more than what feels like a ‘full-meal’ storytime.”

“…the more **intentional** I become with incorporating **early literacy tips** into my storytime, the more **parents want to talk to me** afterward about **reading to their kids**.”
What we’ve heard – Tools & Methods

Using the toolkits automatically adds in those [early literacy] concepts in a very easy way.

I really like that Supercharged Storytimes encourages only a couple early literacy concepts each storytime.

It forces me to slow down and be intentional about how I craft storytimes as well as not overloading myself and the participants.
What we’ve heard – Equity Lens

“Ralph’s talk inspired me and also reminded me that this process is a constant and active journey of: connecting with community members, overcoming biases, building relationships, and removing barriers.”

“I want everyone to feel welcome and comfortable at our library.”

“…often we jump into programming (with the best of intentions) but miss the mark if we don't have relationships with those we serve.”
Project VIEWS2, a University of Washington Information School research project was conceived in response to public librarians and library directors across the state of Washington asking:

“How can we know whether the early literacy focus of our storytimes makes a difference for the children’s learning to read successfully?”

http://views2.ischool.uw.edu/
“An intentional focus on early literacy content in public library storytimes can increase the children’s early literacy behaviors while at storytime.”

—VIEWS2 Research Team

Photo: Dr. Eliza Dresang on VIEWS2 website
What is early literacy?

Early literacy is what children know about reading and writing before they can actually read and write.

Photo: Mother and daughter playing at daycare; Getty Images
Early Literacy Practices
Early Literacy Components

Oral Language – Foundation for all language

Phonological Awareness – Hearing smaller sounds in words

Print Awareness/Concepts – Knowing that print has meaning

Letter Knowledge – Exploring letters

Vocabulary – Knowing words

Background Knowledge – Prior knowledge about the world
  – Conceptual Thinking
  – Content Knowledge
  – Book and Story Knowledge
4 Pillars of Supercharged Storytimes

1. Interactivity
2. Intentionality
3. Assessment
4. Community of Practice
Interactivity

Interactions between:

- Practitioner and the children at storytime
- Practitioner and the parents or caregivers
- Parents & caregivers with their children any time

Photo: Monkeys, elephants & giraffes in storytime by Harris County Public Library on Flickr/CC BY-NC-SA 2.0
2 Intentionality

- being **mindful** about planning storytimes
- being **purposeful** about including key early literacy components
- and **reflecting** afterward on storytimes

Photo: Library storytime by Government of Prince Edward Island on Flickr CC BY-NC 2.0
### Early Literacy Planning Tool

**Oral Language**/
Listening skills, speaking skills, social communication skills

**Goals:** Children demonstrate an understanding of language by listening and speaking. Children use language for a variety of purposes. Children understand and use the conventions of social communication.

#### Birth to 18 months

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Storytime Provider/Educator/Adult</th>
<th>Children</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Uses a variety of voice sounds when sharing books, songs, including demonstrating the use of “parentese”</td>
<td>Respond to frequently heard sounds and words Orient to speaker in response to speaker’s words</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provides or recites oral stories, nursery rhymes to children in order to prompt them to express simple thoughts or ideas</td>
<td>Attends to stories, rhymes, songs Use single words to express thoughts and ideas (e.g. when seeing the sun, say “sun”)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Repeats rhymes, songs, stories to increase familiarity and engagement</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pauses so that children can interject and repeat</td>
<td>Vocalize/use words and gestures in response to person’s voice or gestures and to solicit attention imitate words and gestures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encourages children to imitate simple sounds, repeated words in books and stories</td>
<td>Imitate words/sounds (e.g. simple greetings)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greets children with nonverbal gestures (e.g. waves hello) in order to communicate</td>
<td>Use nonverbal gestures for social conventions of greeting (e.g. waving goodbye) Communicate needs through facial expressions, words, actions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encourages children to join in with songs and movement activities that use gesture</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adds gestures to books, songs, etc. that support communication</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Intentionality can transform storytime

Photo: Story Time by New Jersey Library Assoc on Flickr/CC BY-NC-ND 2.0
Intentionality and Early Literacy Tips

Empowering parents and caregivers to support early literacy at home

Photo: DSCF0743 by JBLM MWR on Flickr CC BY 2.0
**Print Awareness and Concepts** / Knowing that print has meaning, how print “works”

**Goals:**
- Children draw meaning from pictures, print, and text.
- Children demonstrate awareness of print concepts: how to handle books, direction of print, concept of word, concepts of print (punctuation, table of contents, etc.).
- Children use writing implements to communicate through written representations, symbols, letters.

### 18 to 36 months

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Storytime Provider/Educator/Adult</th>
<th>Children</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Labels objects in books, using descriptive words, encouraging children to label as well</td>
<td>Relate pictures to real objects, people, events, stories</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Shows actual item of object pictured, uses props</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Shares books with objects and situations children can relate to their own experiences</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Points to title and some text, uses big books when possible</td>
<td>Show ability to handle books, turn book right-side up, turn pages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Narrates how books work (e.g. “Let’s see what’s on the cover.” “I am turning the page to see what happens next.”)</td>
<td>Begin to understand that print represents spoken words</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• “Plays” with orientation of book, holding it upside down/backwards</td>
<td>Pretend to read text</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Allows opportunity for parents/caregivers and children to look at board books together, encouraging adults to narrate how books work</td>
<td>Recognize when book upside down</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Includes movement activities and action songs to build gross and small muscles later used for writing</td>
<td>Participate in movements in action/movement activities</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Provides opportunities for writing, asking children about what they have written, age-appropriate material (i.e. scribbles)</td>
<td>Scribble and makes marks on paper purposefully</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tell what scribble means</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Provides opportunities for open-ended play, encouraging symbolic play</td>
<td>Use symbols or pictures to represent what is said</td>
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Assessment

A variety of ways to assess a **supercharged storytime**:

- Self-reflection
- Observation and peer mentoring
- Observing children’s behaviors

- Structured assessment tools, such as PLA’s Project Outcome toolkit for early childhood literacy development

Photo: Journal by kulinetto on pixabay
Project Outcome Toolkit

- A free set of evaluation tools from PLA
- Ready-to-go surveys
- Easy to use process
- Leads to improved programs and evidence of value
Community of Practice

Connecting with your peers and colleagues to share and receive ideas and feedback
You already provide great storytimes.
Supercharge your practice to make them even better.

Getting Started / Module One / Module Two / Module Three / Module Four / Module Five / Module Six
36 – 60 months
Strategy: Provides opportunities to discuss what happens in a book/story

Pathway to Equitable Programming

- Decide
  - Identify Local Priorities
  - Build Relationships
  - Deliver Services

- Gather Information
- Plan Services
- Evaluate Services

Highlight your community assets. In conversation with internal and external stakeholders, identify 1-2 priorities.
Supercharged Storytimes

Discussion: Early Literacy Tips for Parents and Caregivers

1/5/2018

Discussion: What do you feel might get in the way of including an early literacy tip for parents and caregivers in your storyline? How might you address these concerns?

Permalink | Show parent | Edit | Delete | Reply

Re: Discussion: Early Literacy Tips for Parents and Caregivers

by 4/14/2018

My biggest challenge is adults (mostly preschool teachers) talking to each other throughout storytime, not paying attention to what I’m doing (preparing crafts or snacks, cleaning tables, etc.). Many are very focused on the children’s behaviors and less on what I’m doing, as well. I put the early literacy tips on the handouts I provide. I like the idea of using a tip jar or the Early Literacy Binge Wish You poster, because sometimes adding new visuals to storytimes attracts the teachers’ attention. I plan to try one or both of these techniques.

Permalink | Show parent | Edit | Delete | Reply

Re: Discussion: Early Literacy Tips for Parents and Caregivers

by 11/20/2018

I think people talking during storytime is something we all experience. I think this is a struggle because we expect a certain behavior from adults in storytime (paying attention and interacting with kids), but not all adults know what the storytime expectations are for their behavior. I realized that I need to tell the adults what the expectations are and to set some rules for their behavior as well. In my introduction before storytime, I use this phrase, “Adults, for the kids to get the most benefit out of the program, I need you to please participate as much as possible and please keep conversations until the end of the program so that everybody can hear our songs and rhymes today. We will have time after storytime for the kids to play and the adults to visit.” This has really reduced the amount of chitchat that happens during the program.

Permalink | Show parent | Edit | Delete | Reply

Re: Discussion: Early Literacy Tips for Parents and Caregivers

by 1/5/2019

I used to start every storyline with, “And remember parents, you are your child’s first and best teacher. If you are excited and participate in storytime your child will as well!” and that always worked for me. But in the position that I’m in now it’s never been a problem. The parents were engaged and interactive, except for this one mom. She would sit outside the storytime room and do whatever on her computer. It annoyed me, but I never said anything because her daughter came in with her best friend and the best friends mother. Recently the best friends mother has taken to sending both girls in by themselves and the two moms sit outside chitchatting. I do not know what to do in this situation! I don’t want to call them out— that seems rude—but their daughters are becoming disruptive in storytime.

Permalink | Show parent | Edit | Delete | Reply

Re: Discussion: Early Literacy Tips for Parents and Caregivers

by 12/6/2018

I can relate. One of the challenges I had in a previous position were parents on their phones during storytime and not engaging. In my new position, part of my introduction is the experience of bonding with their child and participating.
I enjoyed being able to work on the course in my own time. It gave me time to reflect and try applying strategies while going through each step.

I love that it was self-paced, well-organized, and relevant to providing great storytimes.
You already provide great storytimes.
Supercharge your practice to make them even better.

Getting Started / Module One / Module Two / Module Three / Module Four / Module Five / Module Six

https://oc.lc/supercharged-course
Project Partners

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thank you