

Supercharged Family Engagement

Tips from Storytime Providers

- ☀ For baby storytime, try doing the same 12 songs/rhymes and fingerplays and rotate them throughout, so parents really get to know them well and babies recognize them. This also makes planning so much easier!
- ☀ Try going around the room and doing informal introductions where caregivers can introduce their babies, tell everyone how old they are, and share a milestone or fun fact about their baby. It's a great way to learn more about the babies you see and can help you prepare developmentally appropriate literacy tips for them and connect with them personally afterwards. It also helps caregivers get to know each other during playtime, which is especially helpful if your community is geographically spread out.
- ☀ Need some early literacy asides? Take a look at your state's early learning standards. In addition to helping parents and caregivers know more about their child's development, they often suggest activities that can help children to learn in informal environments.
- ☀ Try reaching families that do not come to the library by having a Pre-K Pizzeria where they can eat pizza, engage in pizzeria-themed early literacy activities, and find out more about what the library has to offer them. Many families don't make it to storytimes. The more ways that libraries can reach families where they already are, the more they will be able to have a wider impact.
- ☀ There are many parents who may visit the library, but do not attend programs and who do not realize how much children in the 9-month to 18-month age range can benefit from books. When board books are suggested to parents of 11-month olds, some may respond with "He can't read yet," or "She wouldn't know what it is." Some parents do not realize the value of a baby responding to a book's touch, sounds, and movement. Be sure to remind parents, families, and caregivers of all of the ways in which babies can appreciate books.



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- ☀️ Try having a parent tip for EVERY story time following the format found on the blog Mel's Desk: "When you do [activity], your children learn [skill]. This helps them become good readers because [reason]." This might sound like this: "When you sing with your children, they learn how to hear the smaller sounds in words. This helps them become a good reader, because they'll need to hear those smaller sounds in order to sound out words on the page. Singing with your children helps them get ready to read!" This is a perfect way to blend early literacy skills and practices, and say it in a user friendly way that is easy to understand and accomplish.
- ☀️ I create an optional sign-up sheet for parents or caregivers who come to storytime. At both the start and end of the session, I invite them to leave their email address to receive a weekly early literacy tip from our children's department.
- ☀️ Use your library's Facebook page as a resource for storytime take-aways. It's easy to follow up with parents by using Facebook and it, in turn, provides a resource for them to look for tips to help encourage literacy at home.
- ☀️ Put together a booklet for parents of song and rhymes they can do with their children at home (also great for storytime practitioners!) One rhyme or song per page, with one literacy tip highlighted in a box at the bottom of the page. Laminate for durability and bind them all with a big keyring.
- ☀️ Write out your parent tips on sticky notes and stick them on the back of the storytime books, as a reminder for yourself as you conduct the storytime.

Reminders for Parents and Caregivers

- ☀️ Interactive reading not only builds early literacy, but also helps children to build social skills, improve their ability to take turns and listen, and to make connections related to the story, helping them with comprehension.
- ☀️ It's okay to let there be silence when you ask your kid a question. Toddlers take a long time to think!
- ☀️ Use wordless picture books to get kids to tell a story.
- ☀️ Early literacy activities can take place anywhere, anytime. Take advantage of any time with your child to reinforce literacy by reading labels in a grocery store, road signs on a trip, signs at the park, etc.



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- ☀ Hunt for a “letter of the day” as you go through your normal daily activities. Or, make a list of words and post on the refrigerator to talk about all week.
- ☀ It’s OK if your babies are looking around and don’t seem to be paying attention to you. Those wandering eyes are busy taking it all in, absorbing all kinds of information. After all, it’s a brand new world to them and there’s lots to learn!
- ☀ A book can be a conversation! When you read a book with your child, use the book as a conversation and see where it leads you. Kids have amazing memories and using a book to converse with them may lead them to something they did yesterday, or on their last birthday. Of course it’s about having fun, too!
- ☀ Did you know – playing with playdough can help a child to build the muscles needed for writing?
- ☀ Getting ready to go shopping? Encourage your child to “write” a grocery list as you write yours.

Online Resources to Support Engagement

1,000 Books Before Kindergarten

A site offering resources that encourage parent and child bonding through reading.

<http://1000booksbeforekindergarten.org/>

Babies Need Words Every Day: Talk, Read, Sing, Play

Free and shareable resources for libraries and caregivers, providing clear and proven ways to build children’s early literacy skills.

<http://www.ala.org/alsc/babiesneedwords>

Baby Book Bees

Great for kids who are not yet one year old!

<http://readingwithred.blogspot.com/2013/11/baby-book-bees.html>



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Guidelines (Rules) for Storytime

From the *Born Librarian* blog, useful guidelines for setting expectations with kids and adults alike.

<http://bornlibrarian.blogspot.com/2014/05/guidelines-rules-for-storytime.html>

Project VIEWS2

Video clips provide examples of interaction for parents and caregivers.

<http://views2.ischool.uw.edu/welcome-parents-caregivers/>

Reading is Fundamental

Monthly activity calendars for printing out at home and helping children learn while doing everyday activities.

Available in English and Spanish.

<http://www.rif.org/books-activities/calendars/>

Storytime Share

Examples of storytime activities and early literacy asides for parents and caregivers.

<http://www.earlylit.net/read-storytime-share/>

Talking is Teaching

Multiple resources to help parents and caregivers help their children to grow through simple, everyday activities.

<http://talkingisteaching.org/tagged/talkingisteaching>



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Too Small to Fail

Many great tips for parents and caregivers, including “Everyday Early Math.”

<http://toosmall.org/>

Zero to Three

Some pretty amazing resources to share with parents and caregivers. Available in English and Spanish.

<http://www.zerotothree.org/about-us/areas-of-expertise/free-parent-brochures-and-guides/>



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