Inclusive Early Literacy in Public Library Programming

Inclusive Storytime Team,
Portland State University Partnership between College of Education and Washington County Cooperative Library Services
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LAURA JUSTICE (2006)
Clinical Approaches to Emergent Literacy Intervention

There is no evidence suggesting that exposing children to emergent literacy intervention is harmful and no research supports withholding intervention until children are sufficiently "ready"
Our objectives for today

• To become familiar with the principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL)
• To become familiar with how to embed the principles of UDL into shared reading opportunities in community literacy programs
Every Child Ready to Read: Our Changing Libraries

- Children’s librarians can play a key role in modeling research-based practices for parents
- Support social skill readiness
- Serve as a resource to families on supporting early literacy
Big ideas from VIEWS2

• Be intentional about early literacy in your programming
• Engagement signals that learning is a shared, enjoyable experience
• Collaboration within the library community and outside can improve your library practice
What is shared reading?

- A practice that focuses on the interaction between an adult and a child to build skills in communication, language and early literacy skills
- Evidence-based practice to support communication and model important concepts about print
- Research consistently suggests this practice supports the same language and literacy skills developed in children without disabilities (e.g., Swanson et al., 2012)
Shared reading

- The purpose is to encourage students to communicate about their interests, connections, knowledge about the book
- Students must have access to needed communication supports
Early literacy content in library programming: The Big Five (+1)

• Phonemic Awareness
• Phonics
• Vocabulary
• Fluency
• Comprehension
+ 1 Early Writing
The Big Five

**Phonemic awareness** The ability to hear and manipulate the sounds in spoken words, and the understanding that spoken words and syllables are made up of sequences of speech sounds
Print awareness in our storytime
Phonics in our storytime
Comprehension in our storytime
Vocabulary in our storytime
What is Universal Design for Learning?

- A framework in which teachers (and storytime leaders, related service providers, etc.) are *intentional* in planning learning environments that are accessible for all learners
UDL Guidelines identified by CAST
(Center for Applied Special Technology)

• Multiple means of *engagement*
• Multiple means of *representation*
• Multiple means of *expression*
Thinking about engagement in shared reading

• Recruiting interest through the selection of good children’s books AND remembering what the research tells us about the early home experiences of children with disabilities

• Varying the demands (e.g., first-then supports, supported seating)

• Offering hands-on activities to promote interactive engagement
Some engagement in our preschool storytime

Supporting self-regulation

Visually supported routines
Flexible seating options
Thinking about representation in shared reading

Provide options for representing language

Support need for background information and comprehension
Some representation in our preschool storytime

- Where do shirts go?
- Where do shoes go?
- Where do socks go?
- Where do shirts go?
- Where do jackets go?
Thinking about expression in shared reading

Provide multiple ways to demonstrate understanding
Incorporate assistive technology
Some representation in our preschool storytime

Include simple and low-tech support for communication

Provide options for action
Welcome to our model
Inclusive Storytime

Use your UDL checklist to guide your observation of our session
Questions?
Your questions

• The length of the storytime varies according to the participants, but we typically have the attention of the children for almost an hour. This includes two songs, a social story, two books with targeted engagement strategies, a “writing” activity and a craft.
• Feedback from libraries I have worked with have indicated low attendance at sensory storytimes. All of the tools and strategies can be included to make your existing programs more accessible.
• Language for talking to parents of a diverse group can be focused on “support needs” of the child. “If your child has additional support needs related to loud noises, seating, etc., feel free to ask!”
• Behavior is a common question. The truth is the more tools you have to engage, the fewer the challenges. There are some things that can help (e.g., first-then visuals, familiar attention getting strategy (ours is our listening song), flexible seating is a game-changer.
• Storytime space more welcoming question: add visual supports, social stories, core boards for communication, fidgets, flexible seating
For more information, visit our website, Facebook page or contact Inclusive Storytime Team 
Dr. Melissa Pebly (mpebly@pdx.edu)  
Associate Professor of Practice 
Portland State University 
College of Education 
Department of Special Education

Pam Graves, Project Coordinator, Inclusive Storytime, pam.graves1@gmail.com
Crystal Loman, Project Coordinator, Inclusive Storytime, crystal.loman@gmail.com
Mayra Gonzalez, Teacher of the Visually-Impaired, Project LIBROS mayra22@pdx.edu