Children & LIBRARIES

the journal of the Association for Library Service to Children

Fall 2020
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ALSC
ASSOCIATION FOR LIBRARY SERVICE TO CHILDREN

2020: The Year of Pandemic Programming

Vaccine Education in the Library

Getting to Know the Grabensteins

#LookToLibraries

Discover the power of connecting with your children's library professional.

The COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent shelter-in-place orders around the country triggered a significant rise in the use of digital media by children and families as well as monumental changes to daily family routines. Now, more than ever, the work of children's library professionals serving as youth media mentors is essential.

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ON THE COVER: As many buildings closed during the pandemic, libraries had to get creative to reach children for programming. Here's a look at a fun, interactive exercise walk at the Marcella Schneider Branch of the Illinois Prairie District Public Library in Germantown Hills, Illinois. Photo by Christopher Forbis, Play in Peoria Productions.

Editor's Note

Things I Miss in the Pandemic

By Sharon Verbeten

In a year when 20/20 was supposed to mean clear vision, everything has been discombobulated! Here's a list of things I miss most in 2020—how about you?

- Storytimes! (and the occasional, parent-approved hugs from kids I know well).
- Chatting up parents and slipping in those subtle—or not so subtle!—ECRR2 tips.
- Lingering in the library. The library has always been *my* favorite "third place," as it is for many others. It's hard to see libraries turn into "grab-and-go" venues.
- The humble craft project…or even the 159th coloring sheet I've printed.
- Finding a random train car wedged between board books on the shelf.
- Summer reading program school visits (even the occasional heckler).
- Hand stamps (especially those that quickly end up smudged on cheeks).
- High fives!
- Creating inviting shelf and wall displays—that patrons will actually see.
- Three-year-old Kempton, singly loudly off key, to Jim Gill's "Alabama, Mississippi."
- The boisterous, sugar-hopped afterschool kids waiting for rides. To be honest, we often hoped for a respite from the nonstop craziness, but now after more than five months without them, we not-so-secretly wouldn't mind having them back.
- A storytime lingerer waving goodbye, saying, with a tiny lisp, "Bye, bye Mith Tharon!"

I miss you all, too! &

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Programming in Time of Pandemic

The Year Libraries Went Touchless

COMPILED BY ALLISON GRASSEL

Joel Shoemaker, librarian at Illinois Prairie District Public Library, reads a story via phone during the pandemic as part of its Dial a Story program. With a dedicated phone number, a new story every Monday, and daily statistics, the program saw as many as twenty people call daily to this rural branch in Metamora, IL.

From virtual storytimes to contactless pickups, libraries truly had a challenge to remain relevant in spring 2020. When COVID-19 fears caused many nationwide libraries to close in March and April, librarians—especially children's librarians—had to shift gears to reach patrons who could no longer walk through their doors.

A challenge indeed given the fact that libraries have always been thought of as "third places" with open access to all.

Many quickly developed plans for providing contactless or curbside pickup of materials; others focused on providing and directing patrons to online services; still others dusted off (or invested in) video equipment to tape storytimes and other programs. Phone reference was, of course, available in most places; some brightened their outdoors with cheery chalk drawings or posted hearts in windows as a way to say, "We miss you; wish you were here."

And as the pandemic continued into summer, many had to drastically alter summer reading programs—several of which opted for virtual, app-based programs such as Beanstack.

Each library did things a little differently based on their location, size, staffing, and patronage; here's just a snapshot of what some did, collected from various sources noted below.

San Rafael (CA) Public Library

Submitted by Margaret Stawowy

When the shelter-in-place order was enacted, the San Rafael Public Library immediately began becoming a virtual library. Before leaving the actual library building, librarians began gathering books, props, and other items to set up a work space at home that would allow them to offer their services virtually.

They had used LibraryH3lp, a customer service software for libraries, so converting to online communication was familiar. This, along with the use of Microsoft Teams, has been especially helpful in staying connected to each other and to patrons. With an effective form of communication now in place, the team boosted their promotion of digital offerings, including e-books, live storytimes on Facebook, book club meetings, poetry events, and many other virtual events. Some librarians invited their own children to be an audience in person to show that online storytimes were "just like storytime at the library!"

San Anselmo (CA) Library

Submitted by Jennie Waskey

At the San Anselmo Library, librarians worked hard at the beginning of 2020 to create fun and exciting events to increase their patrons' passion for reading; however, with the sudden requirement to temporarily close their facility, it became impossible to hold those events in person. Librarians worked quickly, though, to find ways to subsidize those events. One of their new offerings was a YouTube channel filled with craft videos and storytimes in video format; this was received so well that librarians chose to do live storytimes once a week and a chapter book read-aloud twice a week live.

Librarians have also created a reading challenge for multiple age groups where participants can win a gift card to a local establishment twice a month. With the cancellation of

Early in the pandemic, many businesses, homes, and libraries were putting hearts in their windows to stay connected. This was seen at the Ashwaubenon branch of the Brown County (WI) Library.

their annual Night of the Poets event, the librarians chose to record a Poem a Day for April during National Poetry Month. They have found great success in their virtual events, and they plan to continue to provide online services via Facebook and YouTube.

Howard County (MD) Library System

Culled from the library system's newsletter (https://hclibrary.org/about-us/news/enewsletter)

Virtual classes included meditation for children and families and the German Conversation Club. Librarians also made informational videos and uploaded them to their YouTube channel to be accessed any time. They also started Creative While Isolated, a collaborative creativity journal where patrons are able to submit their own work to share their pandemic experiences.

South Carolina State Library

Submitted by J. Caroline Smith

A main goal for the South Carolina State Library was to find a way to provide virtual multilingual storytimes. One of the events that librarians were most excited for this spring was *Día de los niños, día de los libros* (Children's Day, Book Day). With all in-person events being canceled, librarians wanted to find a way to help their patrons to celebrate language and diversity in their own homes while also providing a model for other libraries to plan an online event in their state.

The Parenting Center of Lexington District One and the South Carolina School for the Deaf and the Blind connected librarians with bilingual guest readers for their programs. The event included Spanish-language storytime, American Sign Language storytime (accompanied by an interpreter), and a Mandarin Chinese storytime, all of which were live-streamed on YouTube as well as on their website. They shared this plan with the other forty-two county libraries in their state in hopes that their plan would spread. Overall, the South Carolina State librarians found great success in their virtual Children's Day, Book Day celebration and they are excited to implement their new skills in other aspects of their library in the future to increase the scope of their audience.

St. Marys Public Library (PA) and Illinois Prairie District Public Library

Culled from St. Marys newsletter (www.stmaryslibrary.org) and shared by Joel Shoemaker

St. Marys Public Library created an activity walk outside of their facility and encouraged their patrons to participate. The activity walk is painted onto the sidewalk in bright colors and will be touched up as needed throughout the summer. Participants were encouraged to hop, skip, jump, dance, and spin around, and to get moving. Several other nationwide libraries also offered similar outside programs, including the Illinois Prairie District Public Library. The walk inspired patrons to not only get outside and enjoy nature but also to find a reason to visit their local library; while the building itself was closed, this course made it impossible for children to forget the magic that libraries can bring.

And inspired by the Denver Public Library, the Illinois Prairie District Public Library went "old school" and implemented a Dial-A-Story program; patrons could call in to hear a story read to them. Librarians felt this would be an awesome way to still provide a weekly storytime for their patrons, and they have seen up to twenty people call in per day!

Boston Public Library

Excerpted from *Library Journal* (www.libraryjournal.com/?detailStory=boston-public-library-finds-ways-to-safely-serve-homeless-recovering-patrons-thru-pandemic)

Boston Public Library (BPL) creatively teamed with city-wide organizations to deliver books, reallocate library iPads to shelter guests, and loan Wi-Fi hotspots to recovery and treatment programs.

The library worked with local, independent bookstores to deliver new books pulled from in-store inventory to selected nonprofits, funded by both the BPL's collections budget and a fundraising campaign by the Boston Public Library Fund.

They also collaborated with the Boston Public Health Commission and the Department of Innovation and Technology to deliver hotspots to a few of BPHC's residential recovery programs and walk-in substance use treatment centers that lack Wi-Fi for clients and staff. It also donated sixteen refurbished iPads for guests of similar facilities. &

Heroes, Hospitals, [No] Hugs, and Handwashing

Bibliotherapy in the Age of a Pandemic

PATRICIA SARLES

In a crisis, people mobilize to deliver services and resources where they are needed most. That's exactly what happened in the library world. From pandemic virtual programming to compiling booklists, librarians around the globe sought to educate adults and children during a time of uncertainty.

For me and my colleagues at the New York City School Library System (NYCSLS), that meant quickly compiling a bibliography of the picture-books that seemed to crop up daily about COVID-19 and associated topics.

The books were written by people from all walks of life. The books, both fiction and nonfiction from around the globe, addressed big feelings like anxiety, boredom, worry, and fear as well as issues such as kindness, love, compassion, gratitude, and staying positive, safe, and healthy. The books discuss helpers, heroes, handwashing, hospitalization, and the inability to hug those we love like grandparents who live separate from the child's immediate family.

Children were also introduced to many pandemic-specific terms such as droplet transmission, antibodies, social distancing, herd immunity, epidemiology, incubation period, flattening the curve, rapid testing, quarantine, and sheltering-in-place.

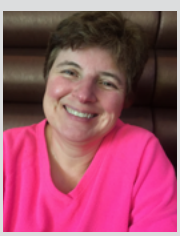
Compiling COVID

Five coordinators (including me), one for each of the five boroughs of New York City, all work under NYCSLS Director Melissa Jacobs. In our roles, we bolster and strengthen school library programs by offering professional development workshops, mini-grants, and other resources.

Among these are our libguides, where we have information about how to use the Destiny Library Automation, as well as our grant applications, and our professional learning calendar. Our libguides, sometimes receiving up to one thousand hits a day, along with our electronic mailing list, NYCSLIST (the New York City School Librarians' Information Sharing Tool), are our main ways of getting information to the field. When the pandemic crisis hit, and New York City schools closed, we turned to both our libguides and our electronic mailing list to communicate our continued support.

We created our Translation of Practice (the brainchild of our director) in which we aligned in-school practices with remote practices. We sensed that some of our school librarians were floundering from postings on the electronic mailing list.

How could we help our librarians translate their practices to remote learning? To help them put this into perspective, this document, aligned with the School Library Media Program Evaluation Rubric from New York State, ended up being so helpful and beneficial that the New York State Education Department adopted it for its own website (www.nysl.nysed.gov/libdev/slssap).



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Another problem librarians had everywhere was the lack of print books to put into students' hands. The last day of school in NYC was Friday, March 13. No one could predict that in just two more days, the mayor would close schools, and students would not return. That meant that whatever was left in libraries, classrooms, and school lockers were to stay there. Students would not be able to access their textbooks, notebooks, or any library books they might have left in their lockers. All we had access to were e-books to offer our students—some school libraries had e-book collections, and some did not.

The three public library systems of New York City, Queens, Brooklyn, and New York (serving the Bronx, Manhattan, and Staten Island), immediately offered e-card applications so that people could still access e-books. We linked to all three applications on our libguide. We also told librarians to link to these applications on their sites to tell their students where they could access reading material. Suddenly e-books, never as popular as print books, became hot.

On April 8, 2020, I saw a posting from the UK electronic mailing list, SLN, about a book called *Coronavirus: A Book for Children*, that was being offered as a free download from Nosy Crow Press in London. I shared this on NYCSLIST as well as the ALSC electronic mailing list. It is a gorgeously produced book illustrated by Axel Sheffler, illustrator of Julia Donaldson's *The Gruffalo*. A few days later, another librarian on another electronic mailing list shared two additional books, *My Hero Is You: How Kids Can Fight COVID-19*, published by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee, and *Alicia y el Coronavirus*, being offered also free by the publisher, Editorial Flamboyant, in Spain.

I then found more and kept sharing. I finally decided to set up a Google alert and created (coronavirus OR COVID) ("children's book" OR "picture book"). I also created one in Spanish: (coronavirus OR COVID OR pandemia) ("libro para niños" OR "cuento infantil").

Daily, articles began to pour into my inbox about more free books being distributed. My supervisor suggested I put all of these books into one place on our libguide. So that same day I created the "Free Ebooks about the Coronavirus/COVID-19" page (https://nycdoe.libguides.com/COVID-19ebooks/free).

Once built, I shared the guide on several electronic mailing lists, including our own, and the page went viral. As I write this, one month since I created it, we have had more than 23,000 views, and our list is linked to from places as far away as New Zealand. We gave permission to librarians from around the globe to post our guide to their websites. And the New York State Education Department asked if they could link to yet another one of our pages. We were delighted they deemed it worthy enough to share!

For example, mother and licensed clinical social worker Meredith Polsky, who specifically works in the field of special education, has written a total of nine "picture-stories" about life during the coronavirus. One of them is a book about not being able to go out and play in *Can We Play Now?* It is part of a series specifically geared toward children with special needs (www.meredithpolsky.com/picture-stories). She is also the coauthor, with fellow social worker Arlen Grad Gaines, of the I Have a Question series. The two have written a book called *I Have a Question about Coronavirus: Clear Answers for All Kids* that is available on their website (www.ihaveaquestionbook.com).

The changes wrought by this pandemic are great, from job loss to school closures to death.

These emerging issues requiring explanation to children are things adults must deal with now, and many of these books serve as bibliotherapy—books for adults to share with the children in their lives. &

Editor's Note: A selected bibliography of online books about COVID-19 appeared in the Summer 2020 issue of Children & Libraries.

STEAM Learning in Public Libraries

A "Guide on the Side" Approach for Inclusive Learning

BROOKS MITCHELL, CLAIRE RATCLIFFE, AND KELIANN LACONTE

STEAM learning at Tom Greene County Library in San Angelo, Texas.

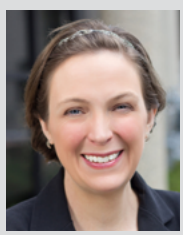
Children and their families are practicing STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Math) skills through a library program. Hand-crank generators and LED bulbs are set out on each of the tables, along with two types of dough—conductive play dough and insulating modeling clay.

Together, they work as engineers to create a model of a neighborhood, complete with houses and other structures from their imaginations. But first, they must each figure out how to light the LED bulb using only the materials provided.

The facilitator visits each table to see what strategies the families are using to light the bulb. After a few minutes, two girls still struggle to make the connection. The facilitator first prompts their thinking with a question: "What could you do to make sure the electricity goes through the lightbulb and not just the play dough?" The two girls don't say anything. They seem unsure. Rather than *tell* them how circuits work, the facilitator gives them the time they need to explore, promising, "I'll let you think about it and come back."

The girls decide to connect the LED across two separate lumps of playdough. They're on the right track! With other families, the facilitator encourages persistence: "That's part of engineering, you try again and again." After successfully collaborating on their circuits, some families look up books about electricity. One girl stays to help clean up with her family and remarks, "I want to be an engineer when I grow up."[1]

From decades of discovering how the brain works and how people learn, we now understand that the families don't simply need "the answer" given to them.[2] For learning to occur, people must experience a scenario, context, or investigation that calls for them to interact and process concepts, facts, and ideas in a meaningful way. The struggle and conversation leads families to succeed at an activity like Go GREEN with Creative Circuits.[3]



Brooks Mitchell *is Education Coordinator II at the National Center for Interactive Learning (NCIL) at the Space Science Institute (SSI) and works on professional development efforts across STAR Net projects.* ***Claire Ratcliffe****, an Education Coordinator I at SSI, received her MS in Natural Science Education from the University of Wyoming and has many years of experience teaching in formal and informal educational settings.* ***Keliann LaConte*** *is the Professional Development Manager at NCIL/SSI and Principle Investigator of STAR Net's new STEAM Equity project. The authors are part of the STAR Library Network, led by SSI's NCIL.*

Whether you are new to STEAM or building on past experiences, the STAR Library Network (STAR Net) offers this and other free Science-Technology Activities and Resources (STAR) at https://starnetlibraries.org to take STEAM learning to new levels in your library.

As a library staff member, you bring skills that are highly effective in STEAM learning, ranging from expertise in engaging both youth and caregivers to coordinating the logistical details of programs. Irrespective of your background in STEAM, you have an ability to bring members of your community together for interactive learning and to share your excitement with STEAM topics.

Families do not need you to be a walking encyclopedia of STEAM facts. As a STEAM facilitator, it can be appropriate to say, "I don't know. Let's find out together!"

In a single program, you might encounter a range of ages, backgrounds, languages, or skills. How can a facilitator empower these diverse learners to discover answers for themselves?

Facilitation Styles

At some point, you've likely sat in a lecture. This is an example of "teaching as telling," led by a "sage on the stage." Here, the experience is focused on the facilitator, who is expected to have all the knowledge and deliver specific information to a group. It is unlikely that you had much interaction with other members of the audience or their viewpoints. This style can be beneficial in certain contexts, such as giving safety instructions. However, "sage on the stage" instruction is not the most effective for STEAM explorations.[4]

A facilitator might take on the role of "trivia master" and follow a pattern where the facilitator asks a question (such as "what do we call these?"), the learners raise their hands, someone is selected to answer, and the facilitator confirms their knowledge or provides the correct answer. While this facilitation style encourages more participation than the "sage on the stage" style, such questioning is pitched at recalling facts and simple yes/no answers and tends to favor participation from extroverted learners.[5]

A "guide on the side" elicits learners' thoughts, ideas, and conceptions and encourages learners to work together to build new understanding or skills for themselves.[6] After all, science isn't just a collection of facts but a process of observation, inquiry, and exploration. Facilitators must take on the role of dialogue leader, rather than the keeper of knowledge.

Valerie Marshall, Broward County (FL) Library, notes that this strategy "puts my staff who may not be as comfortable facilitating STEM at ease, while also making customers more confident that they won't 'mess up' in front of an expert." Learners morph from being passive receptors of facts to active participants in playful discussions and explorations, and the facilitator gets the opportunity to learn alongside the participants, relinquishing the burden of being expected to know all the answers. A "guide on the side" facilitator chooses prompts, questions, and STEAM activities carefully to set families up for learning explorations. Here are simple tips to try in your own programs.

Try, Try Again

Use carefully worded questions and prompts to create a "culture of error," where participants aren't afraid to answer. Praise learners who are brave enough to ask questions ("I like your thinking") and encourage others to offer answers ("who can help him out?"). Emphasize that being "wrong" is simply sharing your current thinking and is an important first step toward discovering the "right" answer. Avoid providing the answer right away to dispel the perception that the facilitator holds all of the knowledge.[7]

During the NASA engineering design challenge, Touchdown, children discover and learn through playful failure.[8] In this activity, learners use a plastic cup and a variety of other common materials to create a shock-absorbing system to protect two marshmallows (the "astronauts") from a predetermined drop height. While it might be tempting to "give in" and provide a proven solution, instead encourage iteration with prompts like, "What about your design worked well during the first drop? What might you change for the second drop?"

As with most engineering design challenges, children will find multiple creative ways to solve this problem.

Whose Voices are Being Heard?

A key element of being a "guide on the side" facilitator is to find ways to encourage discussion among the learners while minimizing your own talking time.

Open-ended questions are based on a person's own observations and thoughts; for example, "What do you notice about this?" "What do you think will happen next?" or "How are they alike?" This opens up the conversation to everyone in the room, no matter their level of background knowledge or skills, and connects directly with their personal or family experiences. For example, in the activity "Searching for Life," questions early in the activity encourage participants to ponder the characteristics of life ("What tells you something is alive?"), then later use those same ideas in a simple experiment.[9] Illustrated activity instructions and questions are included with this activity to encourage participation from learners who speak other languages or respond more to visual prompts.

Provide a wait time of about five seconds after asking a question so that everyone can think about and articulate their ideas.[10] Try responding first to someone who took a little longer to form their thoughts—after all, we need deep thinkers to help us tackle the challenges of the future!

Atlas Logan of Gwinnett County (GA) Public Library said the "guide on the side" approach has been "a great strategy in our library, especially when working with young audiences. Children love to explore and figure things out; using 'guide on the side' keeps them much more engaged than if we were acting as a 'sage on the stage.' . . . The 'wait time' is helpful because it reminds facilitators to ask open-ended questions and it sets the expectation that we are looking for thoughtful responses and discussion."

We Learn from Each Other

Make sure all voices are being heard—and manage any individuals who might be dominating a whole group conversation—by setting up smaller groups for discussion. Pose your question, then invite the audience to "turn and talk with a family member or friend about your ideas." Allow them to chat for a few minutes, then regroup and invite everyone to share out to the larger group.[11] You can further facilitate dialogue among the participants by inviting others to build on to what was said using the prompt, "who can add to that?"

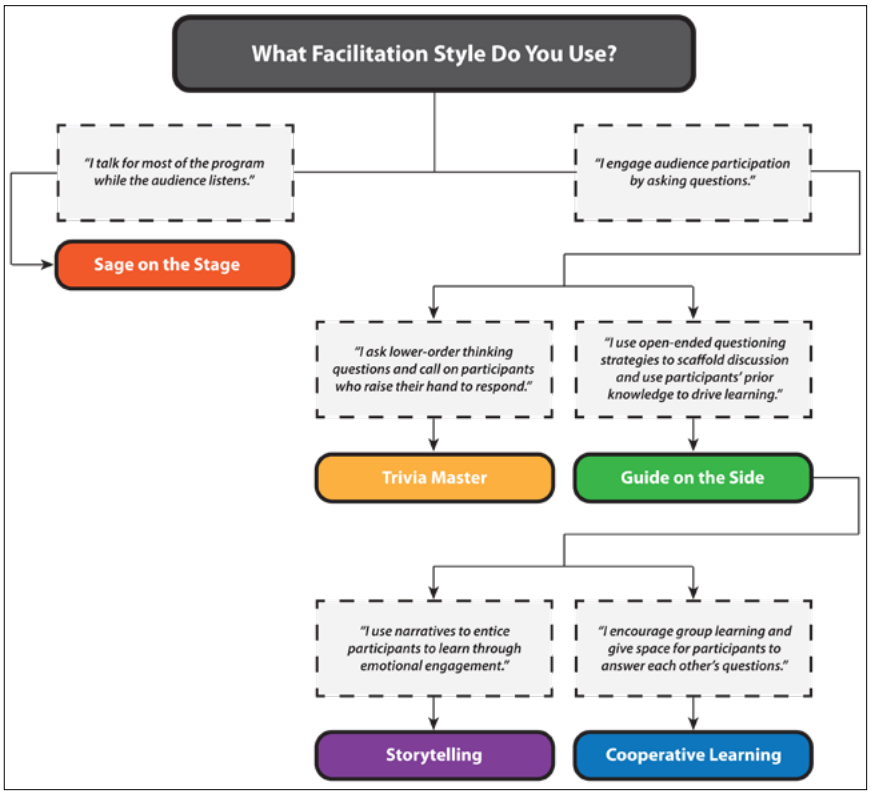


Figure 1. STEAM Facilitation Style Chart

When implemented effectively, storytelling can engage the audience emotionally and mentally and creates a shared experience.[12] In the activity "Who Dirtied the Water," the facilitator reads a story about water pollution as participants take turns adding "pollutants" (represented by everyday items) to a container of water when prompted by the narrative.[13] Probing questions are asked throughout the activity ("Would you swim in that water?" "Who is responsible for cleaning it up?"). No matter what their personal experience with water and pollution, everyone can contribute their diverse perspectives during this shared story.

Bringing It Back to Your Library

What facilitation style did you use during your last program? (Use the chart in figure 1 to reflect.) You might find that participants are expecting to have the "right" answer available to them from an instructor or an internet search, but seize the opportunity to facilitate deeper learning exploration. Like with many aspects of STEAM, this may be difficult at first but becomes easier with practice! Look for STEAM activities that lend themselves to learner-centered discovery or problem-solving and use thoughtful questions and prompts to make your STEAM programs even more inclusive. &

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PEER-REVIEWED

Every? Child Ready to Read

A Model of Successful Programming for Deaf Children

BOBBIE BUSHMAN

Children's librarians are challenged to provide inclusive programming in today's public libraries. Sensory and American Sign Language (ASL) storytimes are often common offerings.

However, many librarians are not given the tools to modify storytimes to fit special needs populations. This research focuses on how Every Child Ready to Read (ECRR) might apply to deaf and hard of hearing (D/HoH) children who visit US public libraries.

ECRR second edition states that hearing children practice five pre-literacy skills prior to learning to read—talking, singing, reading, writing, and playing. Singing, talking, or any skill that focuses on rhyming may be difficult for D/HoH children. Using grounded theory research to explore programs, services, and storytimes implemented and modified for D/HoH children in US public libraries, this study will review ECRR's pre-literacy skills to determine how they might or might not apply to D/HoH children.

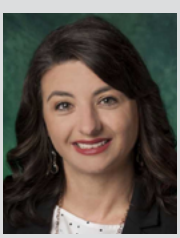
The average deaf adult reads at a fourth-grade level. This statistic has been true since 1975, when the average reading age increased from the previously held third-grade reading level.[1] In contrast, the average reading level for all American adults is ninth grade and most public health and safety information is printed at a fifth-grade reading level. The average newspaper is written at an eleventh-grade level.[2]

Public libraries can play a vital role in providing early literacy programming and education to D/HoH children and their families by offering pre-literacy instruction, access to leisure reading materials for D/HoH children (such as ASL books, graphic novels, and DVDs with closed captioning), and a physical space to hold ASL classes, support groups, and other events for D/HoH children and their families.

Literature Review

At the Safety Harbor Public Library in Pinellas County (FL), librarians offered ASL classes for family members of D/HoH individuals and people wanting to learn a new language[3] and their storytimes offered a place for both D/HoH and hearing parents and children to interact.[4] The library also offered homework assistance and language modeling for hearing children of D/HoH adults, and hosted a deaf literacy center with programs for D/HoH adults and children.[5]

Africa Hands and Amy Johnson reported that several libraries facilitated sign language storytimes for D/HoH and hearing families; taught early literacy workshops for parents of D/HoH children; offered outreach programs for D/HoH family members; and added ASL videos to library collections.[6] Steve Nail reported that Canadian libraries purchased a series of DVDs called ASL Tales, which offered children's books with accompanying DVDs featuring stories told in ASL and web-linked learning tools.[7] The Argo Library/School Media Center in Colorado reported carrying a large number of books with D/HoH characters, a video collection with ASL instruction, information on deaf culture, and books with stories told in ASL.[8]



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A librarian at the Springfield (MA) City Library responded to a D/HoH child attending their programs by purchasing books with ASL, paying the librarian to take ASL courses, and providing outreach at a local school for D/HoH children.[9] The Cleveland Heights-University Heights Public Library in Ohio hired staff with basic ASL knowledge, paid for additional ASL classes, offered paid interpreters increased D/HoH materials, and offered computer classes for D/HoH individuals.[10]

Christine Wixtrom of Alexandria (VA) founded ASL Access, a nonprofit, volunteer-run organization to supply public libraries with ASL resources. ASL Access began offering videos featuring ASL instruction and storytimes and deaf culture information and continues to offer these services to libraries to date.[11]

Librarian Harley Hamilton of the Georgia Institute of Technology created *My Sign Link,* a free online dictionary that shows a video of the sign for the word typed into the dictionary prompt. Hamilton created the 17,000-word dictionary with only a $500 budget.[12] Today, there are many of these free online dictionaries available, such as ASL Pro, Life Print, and Hand Speak.

In 1987 The Child's Place, at the Brooklyn Public Library in New York, began offering drop-in programs in English, Spanish, and ASL storytimes and continues to offer such programming today.[13] The Monroe County (NY) Library System received $99,150 in Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) grant money to train staff in ASL and offer ASL programming, which is still ongoing today.[14]

According to Judith Mounty, Concetta Pucci, and Kristen Harmon, it is critical that ASL is the foundational language for D/HoH children, both at school and at home.[15] There is a positive correlation between ASL knowledge and literacy abilities for D/HoH children.[16] This is most evident for D/HoH children born to D/HoH parents, who outperform D/HoH children born to hearing parents in ASL fluency and reading skills.[17] This difference in ASL and reading skills in D/HoH children of deaf parents and D/HoH children of hearing parents demonstrates the importance of early language acquisition in the early literacy development of D/HoH children.[18]

Further, Thomas Allen et al. found that visual language (like ASL) benefits D/HoH emerging readers by helping them develop their visual attention, learn new words, and develop cognition, language, and literacy skills. Use of visual language for D/HoH predicts early literacy skills, including print knowledge and letter and word identification from the age of three years into adulthood.[19] Hannah Dostal and Kimberly Wolbers confirmed that children who focused on learning ASL and English simultaneously made significant progress in the acquisition of both.[20] Parents play a crucial role in developing the early literacy skills of their D/HoH children by teaching the child early meaningful communication.[21] Graphic novels assist D/HoH children who are "faced with challenges in reading comprehension, students who are D/HoH can benefit greatly from the use of words and pictures together to convey information."[22] Researchers speculate that D/HoH readers are more easily able to comprehend graphic novels due to the visual nature of sign language.[23]

It is important for deaf children and parents or caregivers to be able to share experiences, discuss ideas, and engage in linguistic and cognitive activities in both ASL and English.[24] One way is to model leisure reading to children. Judith Mounty, Concetta Pucci, and Kristen Harmon, found that seeing their parents read was as important for D/HoH children as was being read to by their parents.[25] Overall, parents can enhance their D/HoH child's chance for reading success by:

- establishing a language-rich culture in the home;
- using fingerspelling (ASL letters to spell out unknown words) as much possible; and
- investing time in reading, both as a hobby for themselves and to their child.[26]

ECRR and D/HoH Children

ECRR is a pre-literacy system designed to guide librarians in educating parents and caregivers about the importance of early literacy development for children.[27] The first edition of ECRR suggested that all children need the following pre-reading skills to support the early literacy development of children birth to age five: print motivation, print awareness, phonological awareness, narrative skills, vocabulary, and letter knowledge.[28]

The second edition of ECRR focuses on talking, singing, reading, writing, and playing.[29]

This research will use the more technical terms of the first edition, as they are more closely aligned with the research.

Print Motivation

ECRR first edition describes print motivation as being interested in and enjoying books.[30] ECRR recommends teaching print motivation by making the reading experience positive with loving and nurturing behavior, using interactive books, choosing books on topics the child enjoys, letting the child choose their own books, reading a book as often as a child requests it, and making time for reading by shutting off the TV.[31] Print motivation can be a struggle for D/HoH children as they are read to less frequently than their hearing peers.[32]

Unlike spoken language for hearing children, reading is not a natural phenomenon that children will typically acquire without instruction. Without repeated access to and explanation of printed materials, school-age children (D/HoH or hearing) will not acquire the necessary reading readiness skills

nor will they progress to being proficient readers later in life.[33] Storybook sharing and interactive books are two ways that D/HoH children can experience print motivation.

In a story-sharing study, D/HoH children wanted to continue the story when mutual dialogue took place about the text.[34] Using this dialogic reading, the parent signed the story for the child and pointed out key phrases and words, the child asked questions and made comments throughout the story. When dialogic reading was encouraged, the story's vocabulary was enriching for the D/HoH children in the same way that dialogic reading is for hearing children.[35] The shared reading and dialogue have also been found to accelerate proximal development and induce feelings of security for the D/HoH child in the same way as it occurs for hearing children.[36] Thus, D/HoH children in this study developed print motivation with no accommodations made other than the use of ASL and dialogic reading.

Sometimes children do not enjoy being read to. For children with language impairment (which includes D/HoH children), the number of children who resist storybook sharing is even higher.[37] Joan Kaderavek and Lori Pakulsk found that manipulative books (interactive books such as pop-ups) were as well received by D/HoH children as toys, thus helping to introduce books to children who might otherwise be reluctant readers.[38] Interactive books can also help children stay engaged in reading activities longer.[39] Interactive books can be introduced as toys, and dialogic reading further reduces pressure on parents because they do not have to read the book perfectly (know all the words in ASL) from beginning to end. Therefore, interactive books can help D/HoH children experience positive associations with books or print motivation.

Phonological Awareness

Phonological awareness includes rhyming, alliteration, and understanding syllables[40] and also that words are broken up into smaller parts.[41] ECRR first edition defines phonological awareness as being able to hear and play with the smaller sounds in words.[42] ECRR suggests children build phonological awareness by singing songs, rhyming, reading poetry, and playing with words.[43]

Storytimes often include singing songs, demonstrating fingerplays, and reciting nursery rhymes. Many children seem to naturally enjoy rhyming and rhyming activities.

Fiona Kyle and Margaret Harris report that phonological awareness and reading appear to be positivity correlated as the child ages.[44] Although some D/HoH children do seem to develop phonological awareness, it is thought that rather than understanding phonological coding before becoming proficient readers, D/HoH proficient readers are the select few who develop phonological awareness.[45]

Among deaf teachers and researchers, many believe that it is unnecessary to teach phonological awareness to a D/HoH child.[46]

In a case study, Andrea Smith and Ye Wang found that visual phonics might be a good substitute for traditional heard and spoken phonological awareness.[47] Visual phonics is a system of teaching deaf children phonics by teaching forty-six signs that each represent a sound in English.

Visual phonics uses special hand cues to represent sounds, while speech reading is signing and mouthing the word simultaneously.[48] Speech reading is a less commonly used way to teach phonological awareness, although it is highly successful as speech reading significantly predicts growth in word reading for D/HoH children between the ages of seven and eight.[49]

Vocabulary

ECRR first edition defines vocabulary as "knowing the names of things."[50] ECRR suggests reading lots of books, using unusual and specific words, labeling feelings and concepts, and speaking to children in the parent's native language as effective ways to build a child's vocabulary.[51] Since 96 percent of families with D/HoH children have a native language that is verbal, speaking to their children in their native language is not likely to be heard or understood by the D/HoH child and thus is not the best option.[52] Hearing parents must acquire ASL or another form of communication before they can teach their child language. Since new language acquisition can take years, this delay in parent language learning undoubtedly affects the child's language acquisition and vocabulary. Parents with slower rates of ASL acquisition may be hesitant signers who feel unqualified to read books to their children. This may be the reason D/HoH children are read to less frequently than their hearing peers.[53]

While hearing children are exposed to language from overheard conversations, verbal language on TV, radio, etc., D/HoH children often only have one language source since in most families with D/HoH children, only one family member becomes proficient in sign language, exposing the child to significantly less language than hearing.[54] The more ASL a mother knows, the larger the vocabulary of her D/HoH child will be.[55] However, many parents who use sign language do not become fluent in it.[56] Additionally, most hearing mothers only sign a small portion of what they say, further limiting opportunities for a D/HoH child to build vocabulary.[57]

Vocabulary building at school can prove difficult for the D/HoH child. Although D/HoH children are usually provided with a sign language interpreter in the classroom, only 60 percent of educational interpreters in the US were found to have adequate skills to provide full access to classroom information.[58] Additionally, communication can be further limited by being unable to be in the line of sight of the interpreter, teachers, or classmates.[59]

To learn vocabulary, D/HoH children need intense daily instruction using rich and varied words, combined with multiple exposures to picture representations of those words being signed.[60] Because D/HoH children typically start learning vocabulary later than hearing children, their vocabularies lag behind those of hearing children.[61] This is an issue made worse when those students with a bigger vocabulary read more, thus expanding their vocabulary, while students with a smaller vocabulary read less, resulting in differences in vocabulary that grow wider.[62] This is unfortunate, since vocabulary is the single strongest predictor of reading success over time and reliably predicts continued reading achievement until age eleven in D/HoH children, and school readiness for D/HoH children has been interpreted to primarily mean a large vocabulary at an early age.[63]

Although today ASL is the language most D/HoH children use to build vocabulary, it was not used in deaf education until 1960; thus, prior to 1960, oral methods were the sole form of D/HoH instruction.[64] Though ASL was founded in the early 1800s, there is not the same body of research related to it and its acquisition as there is for other languages. Though other methods are used for D/HoH individuals to communicate, signing skills are still the best predictor of reading skills.[65] Because ASL and English are not exact (word for word) matches, sharing a story with a D/HoH child can be confusing, causing further delay in language and reading development.[66] ASL also does not promote the same kind of vocabulary building as English, largely due to a lack of synonyms. In ASL, one sign can be used for many different English words. For example, in English, a child might know the word automobile, vehicle, car, truck, van, SUV, etc. while a D/HoH child may only know the sign that mimics someone holding a steering wheel. Further, a hearing child might know that you drive, operate, steer, etc. a motor vehicle, a D/HoH child conveys this information by taking that same sign that mimics steering a car and move it forward.

ASL does not use prefixes and suffixes in the same way, nor does it use articles, conjunctions, or punctuations in its common use.

Manually Coded English (MCE) attempted to resolve the issues with ASL-to-English translations by matching the English language exactly; thus it is used to teach grammar and other school subjects that require language precision. However, MCE is not usually taught until a D/HoH child enters school. Because of MCE's specific usage, D/HoH students usually do not master MCE and do not choose to use it outside of the classroom. When students are forced to use MCE in the classroom, they often modify it to more closely resemble ASL.[67]

Dialogic reading expands vocabulary for D/HoH children as demonstrated by Susan Easterbrooks, "The child may say, 'Mmm. Vanilla. That my best ice cream.' And the teacher may respond, 'Mmm. You like vanilla ice cream. It's your favorite flavor.'"[68] Dialogic reading with D/HoH children works best when the signer is proficient in ASL and MCE, which is a system for signing exact English with possessives, articles, pronouns, and similar parts of speech that are omitted in ASL.

Narrative Skills

ECRR first edition defines narrative skills as describing and telling stories and suggests teaching narrative skills to children by helping them understand that stories have a beginning, middle, and end by expanding upon what a child says, asking more questions, encouraging detail, being patient while the child talks, talking about your day, and telling stories.[69] Lynn Robertson, Gina Dow, and Sarah Hainzinger found that although D/HoH children often have weaker language skills, they seemed to experience storytelling in the same way as hearing children.[70] However, D/HoH children likely need to be told a story more frequently to accurately retell it,[71] likely due to the D/HoH not splitting their visual time between the storybook and the signer (as opposed to a hearing child who is processing the verbal story simultaneously with the written story).

Print Awareness

Print awareness is defined in the ECRR first edition as noticing print, knowing how to handle a book, knowing a book is read from front to back, and knowing how to follow the written words on a page.[72] ECRR recommends teaching children print awareness by allowing them to turn the pages in a book, following words with your finger, and pointing out printed words in a child's day to day life.[73] There is no reason to believe that print awareness develops any differently for D/HoH children than it does for hearing children.[74]

Letter Knowledge

ECRR first edition defines letter knowledge as learning the names of letters, knowing they have sounds, and noticing them everywhere.[75] Some ways that ECRR suggests teaching this to children is by playing with shapes, playing with puzzles, playing with letters using different senses (for example, tracing letters in a sandbox), singing the alphabet song, reading ABC books, and pointing out letters in your environment.[76] Letter knowledge seems to develop similarly for D/HoH children as it does for hearing children. D/HoH children can learn the ASL alphabet and there is an exact letter match for each ASL letter sign. Writing letters was found to be an effective way to enhance letter knowledge for D/HoH children.[77]

Methodology

The incentive for this grounded theory research was derived from the researcher's experience as a children's librarian attempting to apply ECRR to D/HoH children. A review of the

literature exposed both the lack of knowledge and existing models for providing ECRR modified storytimes to D/HoH children. This led to this grounded theory research to provide an explanation or a model where none is present.[78] The goal of this study was to learn how librarians deliver programming to D/HoH children, which modifications they make to accommodate D/HoH children, and how they decide which services to offer to D/HoH children and their families. John Creswell's qualitative research procedures[79] were followed as well as those for grounded theory from Anthony Bryant and Kathy Charmaz.[80] The mode of data collection was semistructured interviews conducted in 2014. (The questions can be found in the sidebar to the right.) Eleven interviews were conducted, each approximately thirty minutes. Interview questions were designed to begin a dialog with the librarian to learn about starting and maintaining a program for D/HoH children. The interview questions were designed after conducting similar research on the broader topic of library services to children with diverse needs.[81] Some questions were also generated based on personal experience with ECRR, D/HoH individuals, and the review of literature.

Interview questions were pre-tested with a librarian at a D/HoH school and an early literacy expert for D/HoH children. Both pre-test interviewees were recruited through snowball sampling via an initial contact made with a principal at a school for the deaf. Preliminary interviews were conducted, transcribed, and coded to determine if the questions were appropriate to the topic and the audience. These interviews were not included in the final data. The pre-test interviews consisted of about seven initial questions with followup questions, as needed. Each preliminary interview resulted in approximately five pages of transcribed text and included the topics of program planning, staff attitude, implementation, successes, failures, and obstacles. These pre-test interviews helped to identify gaps in knowledge and to refine the final interview questions.

Grounded theory emphasizes the use of open, axial, and selective coding when using the systematic design.[82] Interviews were coded to distill and sort data as described by Kathy Charmaz, and to make comparisons and recognize overarching themes.[83]

There are two primary ways of validating a coding scheme (or methodology) in qualitative analysis. The first method is to compare the scheme against the raw data, doing the high-level analysis; and the second method is to tell the story to participants and obtain feedback via member checking.[84] For this research, both methods were used. Interviews were cross checked with secondary sources such as library websites served and the final model was shared with three interviewees to indicate whether the model reflected their experiences and, if not, to add anything that was missing from the model. Only one participant responded, but she reported that she thought the model was "excellent" in explaining the process of providing services to D/HoH children.

Semi-Structured Interview Questions

1. Describe the deaf population at your library.
2. How did you begin serving this deaf population?
3. How did you decide what programming to provide for deaf children?
4. Is your programming "mainstreamed"? That is, do all children participate in programming regardless of hearing ability? Or is it specific to only deaf children?
5. Can you tell me about your experience serving deaf adults? How does this relate to library services to deaf children?
6. Describe the implementation of your deaf programming.
7. Tell me about the training you have related to deaf literacy.
8. Does your library use Every Children Ready to Read or a similar "reading readiness" program? If so, which one? Where can I get a copy or more information about the reading readiness program your library uses?
9. How well do you find that this "reading readiness" program applies to deaf children?
10. Tell me about a program for a deaf child at your library that was a great success.
11. Tell me about a time when you tried to provide a library program for deaf children and encountered difficulties or failure.
12. Have you partnered with any other facilities, early educators, schools, libraries, etc., in order to serve deaf children?
13. Is there anything else you would like to add? Do you have feedback about things I should have asked or should not ask?

Participants

Library information was obtained from the data file for the 2010 Public Libraries Survey from the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) website, which contained 9,308 records.[85] Only libraries with service populations greater than 100,000 people across the US were selected, and the list was

narrowed down to 544 medium- and large-sized public libraries. Email addresses were obtained from library websites for 499 librarians, who were sent recruitment scripts and surveys. Of those, fifteen indicated that they would be willing to be interviewed and only ten of those were interviewed; one more interviewee was added through snowball sampling. As a result, eleven participants (ten women, one man) were interviewed.

Six of the participants were children's librarians; others had the titles youth services coordinator, deaf literacy coordinator, early literacy specialist, youth services manager, community engagement coordinator, and adult services coordinator.

Although demographic information was not collected, statistics are available for librarians who are members of the American Library Association (ALA). As of January 2017, a survey of 37,666 ALA members indicated most (66 percent) fall between the ages of 35 to 64, are white (86.7 percent), hold a master's degree (87.5 percent), are female (81 percent), and do not identify as having a disability (only 2.91 percent do).[86]

Results

The Model of Successful Library Services for D/HoH Children explains how librarians are serving these children in US public libraries in the absence of existing systems to serve D/HoH children. This model explains which services, early literacy instruction, staff training, and programs public libraries offer to children who are D/HoH and the four stages of providing those services.

1. The first stage highlights staff attitude as being warm and welcoming, taking initiative, and not seeing D/HoH as a disability.

2. The second stage describes the impetus for providing services as encountering a D/HoH patron in the library, knowing someone with a disability personally, or encountering a nearby agency that serves D/HoH individuals.

3. In the third stage, librarians made accommodations by providing inclusive programming, customizing programming, and involving the target audience.

4. In the fourth and final stage, this model demonstrates outcomes such as educating both hearing and D/HoH individuals and creating a sense of community.

Staff Attitudes

Being Warm and Welcoming

Librarian 4 noted that they are "trying to say that we're warm and welcoming and we want you here," and Librarian 3 concurred that their programs are "always open" to anyone. Similarly, Librarian 8 emphasized, "All of our programs are inclusive and welcome children of all different developmental needs," which was echoed by Librarians 1, 5, and 11. Librarian 4 also noted that they "make sure [to] have an interpreter available to make the [D/HoH] community feel comfortable and to let the parent know that they are welcome in our storytimes."

Seeing Differences, Not Disability

Librarians consistently reported not viewing individuals with hearing impairment as disabled. As stated by Librarian 6, "Differences are celebrated" and "[Deafness is] communication, which isn't a disability." Librarian 9 echoed, "We just don't really make a big deal about it. We just help every child to the best of our abilities." Deafness is often considered a culture rather than a disability since deaf people speak their own language and have their own norms as stated by Librarian 7. Librarian 6 described how her library perceives deafness as simply a group who speaks another language. "We offer storytimes in Somali, Spanish, etc., so having an ASL storytime was just a natural offshoot" (Librarian 6).

Taking Initiative

Staff initiative was a vital component in successfully providing D/HoH programming. Librarians reported feeling a personal responsibility to ensure that programming and accommodations were available for D/HoH children. Many times, librarians reported doing this without consulting supervisors or other staff members; as Librarian 9 describes, "I just took a chance and said, 'Yes. I commit to doing this.' And then I went to my manager. If I'd gone to my manager first, I don't know that it would've happened." Another librarian reported that the reason that a program occurred is, "There was a staff member who really took the reins" (Librarian 10).

Librarian 7 stated, "It's really hard to reach [D/HoH] children. That's why I go into the school. These parents are overwhelmed between doctors' appointments and the fact that you just found out that this child is deaf and you have speech therapy and 500 other things. The last thing you think of is bringing your deaf child to the library to storytime. So, whatever program we do we bring it there."

Impetus

Utilizing Staff Passions

Librarians who served deaf children reported feeling responsible to the D/HoH population, often due to knowing someone with a disability in their personal life. Librarian 9 described a fellow librarian who had "passion for deaf children and their education," while she, herself, felt passionate about D/HoH programming because she had a "profoundly deaf nephew."

Librarian 4 reported coworkers who also worked at a school with developmentally delayed children, which made "staff members who feel this is a personal thing for them" (Librarian 4). Librarian 9 described her passion as saying that the opportunity to serve the D/HoH population "came to the right person."

Encountering a Patron with an Unmet Need

Librarians reported that a common reason for beginning to offer a D/HoH library service is that they encountered a D/HoH child at the library. Anticipating or reacting to the needs of those D/HoH children was an impetus for a library to offer the programming. For example, Librarian 5 reported they began offering programming because, "We had a child who was deaf who came in and wanted to participate." Librarian 6 said, "If we have a child who's deaf and needs support in a program, we hire interpreters." Similarly, Librarian 8 said, "If we see a child that is not responding to what we're doing, we modify."

Librarians 2 and 11 reported that a deaf family made their needs known and the librarian responded. Librarian 8 had a baby start coming to their programming who was deaf and blind and took it upon herself to "learn her language."

Partnering with Nearby Agencies

Libraries often partnered with a school for the deaf, employer for the deaf, or other deaf community agency to provide D/HoH programming. Librarian 7 described how she sought out volunteers, "I went to the college and talked to the program director [of deaf studies] and said, 'I understand your students need contact hours. They need to be out there with the deaf. I have the deaf and I have nobody with them." The same librarian reported getting different volunteers from a local company that employs the deaf. That company pays its employees to volunteer up to twenty hours a year. Librarian 9 began a program that relied exclusively on volunteers for the first three years to read stories in ASL and provide translation services for the library.

Employing Diverse Staff

There were several examples of how hiring D/HoH or ASL knowledgeable staff led to increased D/HoH programming. Librarian 8 thinks they have more D/HoH children coming into the library due to their HoH children's librarian because "her presence reassured parents that we consider it normal and it's not a big deal." Librarian 10 also noticed D/HoH children coming in to talk to their staff member who has hearing loss and knows sign language. Likewise, librarians 5, 8, 9, and 10 reported employing staff who knew sign language, had a cochlear implant, or were HoH as an impetus for offering D/HoH programming.

Modifications/Accommodations

Provide Inclusive Programming

The majority of the librarians interviewed reported efforts to provide inclusive programming and services. Librarian 1 revealed that she gave away a free book as the prize for completion of their summer reading program and participants could choose to receive a printed book, a Braille book, or an audiobook. Librarian 2 brought in a sign language translator for the children's performer they hired. Librarian 6 used a projector for hands-free storytelling to help the storyteller communicate via sign language.

Customizing Programs

Making accommodations specifically for D/HoH individuals such as restructuring storytimes, changing policies, and purchasing items or services were some examples. Several librarians reported writing or exchanging notes with their D/HoH patrons. One librarian kept a dry erase board behind the front desk as a practical communication tool for staff unfamiliar with sign language. A library that served deaf/blind patrons requested one interpreter per deaf/blind individual so that each interpreter could sign into each deaf/blind patron's hand.

At one library, a deaf boy came to a year-long program that consisted of children reading to service dogs. The boy had verbal outbursts which, of course, he could not hear. As a result, the service dogs became afraid and uncooperative. To customize this program for the child, the librarian spoke to his mother and they made a plan to ask the service dog provider to offer their most tolerant dog to the boy and to offer a separate room (away from the other children and service dogs) for the boy to read to the dog. This modification allowed the child to remain in the program for its year duration.

Librarian 6 bought an easel so their deaf storyteller could easily hold the book and turn the page during storytime. Librarian 9 customized a storytime craft by helping attendees make a "who book" that featured "the sign for who on the front of the book and the sign inside for me, mother, father, grandmother," etc., inside. Librarian 7 holds regular sign language classes at all library branches, which are open to all ages to help friends and family members of deaf individuals learn sign language.

Librarian 4 built a collection of DVDs related to signing and books to educate hearing people about deafness. Librarian 8 served deaf children in storytimes and accommodated D/HoH children and aging adults by applying for a grant to get a t-coil system installed under the carpet of their auditorium, which allowed the library to host events where the speaker wears a special microphone that is automatically picked up by anyone wearing an assistive hearing device. Libraries 4 and 10 stated they had been serving the D/HoH community a long time, listed having a TTY, a device that allows D/HoH

individual to use a landline telephone, as the thing that first got D/HoH people coming into their library.

Librarian 5 reported staff had complaints from D/HoH patrons that some of the library's videos were labeled closed captioned, but the patron would take them home only to discover that they were not. To rectify this problem, the library purchased a DVD player to keep at the front desk so patrons could test the DVDs for closed captioning before taking them home. Librarian 7 hosted a deaf culture event at the library once a month by modifying recognized national holidays and events such as Black Deaf History Month and Deaf Hispanic Heritage Month. Librarian 7 also reported hosting book discussions for deaf individuals. These book discussions were different than a typical book discussion in that they did not assume the individual attending had read the book and were led by a deaf proficient reader who had read the book. Librarian 6 also reported having a book group in sign language that focused on deaf adults.

Librarian 7 described the process of deciding her library needed to offer customized computer classes and storytimes for D/HoH individuals, "We had computer classes and we would try to bring the deaf to the computer classes. Because they're looking down and they have to look at the interpreter and then type, the teacher was already speaking and going on to the next thing."

Involving the Target Audience

Having programs for a particular group means it is necessary to include them in planning, delivering, and evaluating the program. As Alana Kumbier and Julia Starkey explain, the popular slogan used to advocate for people with disabilities, "Nothing about us, without us," means that we must make room for people with disabilities in leadership roles, not just as members.[87] Librarians 6 and 9 accomplished this by having a deaf signer conduct (rather than interpret) storytimes. Librarian 9 explained, "The reason we wanted deaf signers is because then children and families are seeing real deaf people doing something for the community."

Librarian 9 helped deaf individuals in the community advocate for D/HoH services to the library, which included having a deaf person write a grant so the library could pay for the requested services. Librarian 7 echoed, "Everyone knows about [our library services for the deaf]. People move into town and right away they're here" at the library.

Outcomes

Meeting the Needs of the Minority Culture

Librarian 9 recalled her experiences meeting the needs of deaf children, "This is one of the places where they get regular exposure to sign language and an opportunity to use it and to see it [used]." Librarian 9 further described positive programming outcomes for D/HoH children, stating that "our programming increased the reading comprehension of D/HoH children who attended by 43 percent."

Librarian 7 was responsive to her library's deaf families by hosting programs like domestic violence prevention for deaf adults. Librarian 7 explained why meeting the needs of the deaf community is so important, "I think that this is where deaf people need to be. We have everything that they don't have: information. Nobody tells them what's happening around them."

Educating the Majority Culture

Librarians reported when they provide programming targeted at D/HoH populations, hearing people also attended and reported positive experiences. Hearing parents bringing their hearing children to ASL storytimes taught them about deaf culture and diversity according to Librarian 9. Librarian 9 also describes teaching a hearing parent sign language in order to communicate with their deaf child: "The hearing people that come [to programs for the deaf] get exposed to deaf culture."

During a storytime with a deaf storyteller, "We explain to the children that although it could be a male voice or a female voice that you hear, we want you to focus on the individual who is signing because they're communicating" (Librarian 6). Librarian 4 described parents conveying their excitement about the educational experience of having their hearing child attend ASL storytime. Librarian 6 observed, "There's a comfort that comes [for hearing children] with understanding deafness."

Build Social Connections

Librarian 9 explained the importance of using programming to build social connections by stating, "It's really not just their literacy, but it's building their social network." Librarian 4 echoed, "We are very active in seeking them [deaf people] out because . . . we want to make this a first thought for people: that this is a place for lifelong learning and no matter what your needs are we should be able to accommodate them."

Conclusion

ECRR teaches children's librarians to focus on pre-literacy skills in story time programming. While learning pre-reading skills is important for the parents of hearing children, it is vital for the parents of D/HoH children. Especially since four out of the six pre-reading skills found in ECRR require some sort of modification for D/HoH children. This research contributes to the field of librarianship by generating a model that

describes the modifications and accommodations librarians made to create successful programming for D/HoH children.

Because library services for special populations is more prevalent than ever, it is critical that librarians are constantly questioning existing models and asking themselves, "Does this apply to everyone?" or "Who might this model exclude?" Being aware of obstacles, taking the initiative when a child needs to be served, and not treating/viewing children as different were significant findings in this research.

Libraries can play an important role for D/HoH children and their families. Not only can they offer materials to check out such as books, graphic novels, and DVDs with closed captioning, they can also provide a wealth of information about early literacy and a place to build a D/HoH community. Libraries can help bridge the gap for early learners by providing early literacy programs modified for D/HoH children, free classes for families of D/HoH children to learn ASL, and other library programming with a D/HoH audience in mind. For public libraries to play this critical role, they must be knowledgeable about early literacy interventions for special populations like D/HoH children. &

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Vaccine Education in the Library

Lessons Learned from a Hot Topic Program

KATHERINE HICKEY AND ANNIE EMMONS

Recent data from the US Department of Health and Human Services indicate a small but growing number of unvaccinated children under the age of two.[1] Low vaccination rates can result in outbreaks of preventable diseases and even death. The World Health Organization (WHO) identified vaccine hesitancy as one of the top ten threats to global health in 2019.[2]

Public libraries are uniquely situated to address low vaccination rates and vaccine hesitancy. They enjoy public trust and are a hub for parent education.

Vaccine Hesitancy

The term "vaccine hesitancy" refers "to delay in acceptance or refusal of vaccination despite availability of vaccination services."[3] As vaccine hesitancy increases, so do preventable diseases and related deaths, severe enough for experts to declare a generation at risk.

Vaccine hesitancy is particularly concentrated in Oklahoma, evident by low immunization rates and vocal advocacy groups actively lobbying for lax immunization-related legislation. Data from 2018 ranks Oklahoma forty-third in the country for immunization requirements.[4]

According to State Department of Health officials, the rate of children receiving immunization exemptions has doubled.[5] Researchers point to a rise of "fake news" with fueling misinformation. Active online groups and forums tend to inflate the likelihood of vaccine injury, cater to emotion instead of science, and argue pharmaceutical companies compromise safety for the sake of profit.[6]

The term "anti-vaxx" is a colloquial term used to describe individuals who question the safety of vaccines. However, vaccine hesitant individuals tend to reject the term as "inflammatory and derogatory" and may choose to describe themselves instead as "vaccine-risk aware,"[7] pro-parental choice, or pro-informed consent.[8] To respectfully engage with the vaccine hesitant community, the term "anti-vaxx" is intentionally not used in this article.

The Belle Isle Library, a branch of the Metropolitan Library System of Oklahoma County, is located in a busy residential and commercial area in north Oklahoma City. Staff regularly receive reference questions about vaccines and immunization and overhear conversations among patrons about vaccine safety during programs. Given the data about vaccine rates in the state and patrons' interest in this topic, the library hosted an educational program specifically geared toward vaccine-hesitant caregivers.

Program Description

Several considerations were taken into account when deciding on a program format:

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- The fact that caregivers may not want to identify themselves as having questions or concerns about vaccine safety in a public setting.

- The importance of reassuring attendees they would not be judged or labeled for attending.

- The challenge of offering a program for caregivers who may not have childcare available.

With this in mind, staff borrowed a playtime format from the national Family Place program. Promoted as a Play Time, this program connects caregivers with community experts. Caregivers and children are free to play with toys, while an expert on a topic roams the room and visits with them individually.[9]

These programs are offered on a regular basis at the Belle Isle Library. This format was selected for its efficacy in addressing the aforementioned concerns; it grants privacy, allows caregivers to come with their children, and replicates a program community members are already familiar and comfortable attending. We held it on a Saturday at 10 a.m. A local pediatrician and immunologist volunteered his time and agreed to be the community expert.

Marketing and Promotion

We paid specific attention to the marketing and promotion of the program. It was important for the promotional materials to not appear judgmental and avoid giving the impression the program was a debate.

The library's Marketing and Communications Department came up with the name "Take the Ouch Out of Vaccines" and designed a poster that was displayed in the library, along with small flyers. The program was briefly promoted at the beginning of weekly storytimes. The copy on the poster read "Join us for a come-and-go play program! There will be toys and activities available for you and your children to play with. A pediatrician will be present to answer any questions or concerns you may have about vaccines."

Several days before the program, we shared the flyer on the library's Facebook and Instagram accounts causing a near instantaneous reaction from the public. The post received more than 150 comments, 19 shares, and 61 reactions, ranging from enthusiasm to anger. Approximately 50 percent of the comments were positive, 15 percent negative, 30 percent neutral, and 5 percent off topic.

Positive comments largely expressed gratitude that the program was being offered; one commenter wrote, "Thanks for caring about the safety of our community and offering a neutral place for informed conversations!" Negative comments expressed concern over the perceived bias and qualifications of the pediatrician, "Is this medical professional specifically trained in vaccine ingredients, safety, and efficacy to be able to answer questions from a truly educated standpoint?" Other commenters claimed the library itself was compromising its value of neutrality by offering the program. "A library system, not a medical informational source, [has] joined a very serious debate by offering this event the way you have, with an obvious bias towards 100 percent vaccination for all, which is not right or safe."

A user shared the post on a Facebook page known for protesting immunization-related events. Comments on the post indicated the possibility of protestors attending the program or handing out flyers. Additionally, one poster in the library was defaced with the words "don't get any." The divisive nature of the program soon became evident to staff and the public.

Program Preparation

To prepare for any protests the day of the event, all library staff were provided with the following talking points:

- The library is not taking a stance on vaccination.

- The program is being held in response to an increase in the number of reference questions on this topic.

- Libraries do not interpret information or provide medical advice, but instead connect people with reliable information and resources so they can make their own informed decisions.

- The program is a Play Time. A physician board certified in pediatrics and immunization will be present to answer questions about vaccines or other topics if parents have them.

- The doctor has donated his time as a library volunteer.

- The library strives to provide free access to information and resources on the topics that interest them. The library offers diverse resources to reflect the interests and needs of our community in our many physical and digital resources. Programming is an extension of this service.

Staff also discussed the following practice scenarios and appropriate responses:

- A parent whose child has recently attended playtimes at the library is concerned that the library is promoting "provaccine propaganda" and threatens to stop using the library. How do you respond?

- After you respond to a customer that the library is not taking a stance on an issue, but just connecting people with resources, a customer asks when are you going to have a program about the dangers of vaccinations. How do you respond?

- A customer comes up to the desk holding the flyer for this

program, saying, "I can't believe my taxpayer dollars are funding this. This program should be cancelled. I will be writing to the director of the library to complain." How do you respond?

- A library customer is upset because protesters held up signs with offensive imagery. How do you respond?

The library's Marketing and Communications Department, as well as library administration, was informed of the pushback.

Day of the Event

On the day of the event, we set out toys and a play dough station for children and had a table with chairs available in a far corner for attendees who wanted to speak privately with the physician. We prepared a library display of materials about parenting, health, and immunization—including materials about the benefits of and potential dangers of vaccines. Twenty-four individuals attended the event, mostly regular library patrons who wanted to show their support of the program in light of its pushback. Two patrons spoke with the physician. There were no protestors or individuals acting in any adversarial way.

Reflection and Conclusion

We realized that immunizations continue to be a topic of interest to many community members. But in spite of the few negative comments, the response was largely positive. Promoting the event as a play program was particularly effective in creating a welcoming environment and helped attenuate concerns that the library was entering the vaccine debate.

Coordinated efforts to challenge vaccine education are increasingly carried out online.[10] Therefore, it is no surprise that the social media posts garnered so much traction. The possibility of a social media pushback is a reality that libraries should consider and plan for if offering a vaccine-related, or other potentially controversial, program.

Interestingly, some of the social media profiles of the individuals contesting the event appeared not to live in or have any connection to Oklahoma. While unable to be confirmed, it is possible these profiles were "social bots" (bots on social media that comment or promote content) given their prevalence in online spaces discussing vaccines.[11] This may provide some reassurance that vocal online opponents may never actually come protest in person.

As individuals express concern over the safety of vaccines, libraries may play a key role in their communities. Experts specifically identify community organizations as important agents of change and information literacy.[12] This call to action fits squarely with the mission of a public library to be a hub of accessible and reliable information. It will be important moving forward for libraries to document and share their experiences promoting vaccine education to anticipate challenges and learn from each other's successes. &

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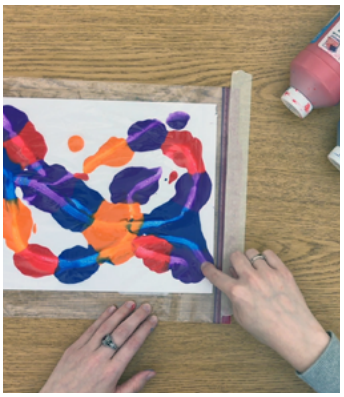
More Than a Story

Engaging Young Learners Virtually

JAIME EASTMAN AND LAURA HARGROVE



Art in a bag (left) and Discovery Time: Shadows

The content of this article was originally developed as a presentation for the Texas Library Association Annual Conference in March 2020. We intended to share about the importance of intentional early literacy-based programs, staff training, and using programming templates to create sustainable programming outlines. In light of current events, we have adapted our content to include strategies for shifting to a virtual programming environment while continuing to support early literacy and caregiver engagement.

Reaching children during their first three years is critical to early brain development.[1] Connecting with caregivers is also vital to developing successful habits. As library programs constantly evolve (and even shift to virtual platforms), how do we adapt? Now more than ever, libraries need intentional strategies to engage young learners.

Reaching your audience requires being intentional about your work. It's easy to say children's programming is fun, because it is. We also can't forget programming is critical to children's development, and libraries have a unique role in educating and supporting the adults who love them. Get intentional about your programming and the results will follow.

Define Your Learning Outcomes

Successful programs use learning outcomes as roadmaps. To be a good guide, outcomes must be measurable. What do you want attendees to take away or learn from your program? Be as specific as possible. Consider focusing on a certain area or teaching a specific skill. Outcomes might look different for in-person versus virtual programs. Consider how your outcomes translate to the adults. A baby painting program might give caregivers an understanding of why to paint with their babies. You're sharing both how to do something and why they should do it.

Determine Your Focus and Goals

Early learning spans many unique needs. What's appropriate for infants may not work well for active toddlers. Start by choosing your target age and focusing on what's age and developmentally appropriate. Community surveys help you connect with your patrons to find their interests and preferences. Think about where limits make sense. Restricting your age group allows for a more targeted, meaningful approach. Reducing your participation range also focuses on the quality of interactions rather than attendance.

Identify Your Resources

While designing programs, think about your available resources and supplies. With virtual programs, also consider what patrons have at home. You can't engage families if your activities require supplies they don't have. Since we hope to make early learning accessible, simple supplies like cotton balls, crayons, and clothespins work well. These encourage caregivers to make use of everyday learning opportunities. Also think about how these resources encourage your target skills, like sensory play, fine motor skills, or comparison skills.

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Plan for Caregiver Involvement

Engaging adults in your programs isn't accidental. Design activities with direct engagement so adults lead their children in the activity, not you. Provide ample hands-on training for repeating the activity at home. Handouts and other resources also engage families. For virtual programs, provide detailed instructions and suggestions for adults to encourage participation. As new instructors, the adults at home need both the how of the activity and the why behind it. They can easily find activities. It's the library's role to demonstrate why each activity helps build early literacy skills in ways caregivers understand.

Developing Meaningful Program Templates

Program templates identify the audience and intention of the program. Templates help content creators organize and know what information presenters need. Presenters receive succinct information and don't need to do additional research before hosting the program. This lets you present programming even if you have limited staff or filming capabilities. Templates also guide consistent patron experiences and create program archives.

Include a description of the program, target audience, duration, and staffing/volunteer needs. List required technology, room setup, and attendance limits. The supply list should include prices and vendor links. Share supply information as a resource for virtual programs. Also include any background information, resources, slides, handouts, and activity instructions.

Choosing Your Program Type (and Platform)

Standalone programs don't build upon previous sessions, but can be done more than once. Consider programs on specific topics (like dinosaurs) or activities (like painting). Series are usually hosted in consecutive weeks. Attendance at the first program isn't required, but succeeding programs usually build on concepts it introduces. Consider specific concepts, like math, science, or nursery rhymes. Be careful not to overdo your series with too many sessions. Three to four programs introduce the topic without being overwhelming or overdone.

Virtual programs offer different engagement levels. When choosing your platform, consider what matches your goals. Do patrons need to be passive attendees or active participants? Do they need access to handouts or other resources? Facebook posts allow patrons to interact with the library through comments, pictures, and videos as they engage alongside staff. YouTube easily gathers content and creates playlists. Blog posts on early literacy topics allow for more caregiver content than videos and target an adult audience. &

Successful Program Ideas

Here are a few of our favorite programs that have been successful, both in-person and virtually, at engaging children and caregivers at the library.

Baby Picasso

This come-and-go program is for children up to eighteen months old. It introduces babies to art and shows caregivers how to replicate activities at home, connecting fun with development. Babies use finger paints to create their artwork. A "mess free" alternative uses paint drops on cardstock, sealed in a gallon zipper bag.

Online, we highlight the benefits of infants and art while demonstrating the activity. While geared toward infants, this activity is also applicable to older children.

Discovery Time

This is an abridged, concept-based storytime, followed by hands-on activities introducing simple STEAM concepts. It makes STEAM understandable from an early age, and helps adults understand that bigger concepts start small.

Online, we forgo storytime for a revised format focusing on the benefits of each activity and the importance of exposing children to their natural world. We encourage adults to take cues from what's already popular. For example, a gross motor spiderweb can be done with chalk or tape.

Ocean Lab

This traveling program demonstrates how everyday activities develop early literacy skills. It can adapt to any popular theme, like dinosaurs or insects. A take-home activity encourages continued learning outside the library.

We're in the process of adapting this program virtually to focus on the at-home activity with everyday supplies. The host will provide more information about the activity's benefits and what children learn.

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Couples Who Collaborate

Chris and J.J. Grabenstein

MARY-KATE SABLESKI

Chris and J.J. Grabenstein

How will you *Shine!*? This question is at the heart of the new middle grade book by married couple J.J. and Chris Grabenstein. Inspired by the story J.J. always wanted to read, but no one had yet written, this book is the first collaboration by the duo. Funny, sensitive, and relatable, *Shine!* is a delight, just like the couple who created it.

Shine! is J.J.'s first book. An actress, singer, and voiceover performer, she's no stranger to the children's book world, however, having narrated several of Chris' books in audio format. J.J. grew up in Michigan, moving to New York after graduating from Northwestern University.

Chris is well known for his chapter books, including the *New York Times* bestselling Lemoncello series, Wonderland series, the Haunted Mystery series, and *The Island of Dr. Libris*. Chris has partnered on the award-winning *I, Funny* books with James Patterson, as well. Chris has worked as an improvisational comedian, an advertising executive, and is also a playwright and screenwriter.

J.J. and Chris are a couple who truly *Shine!* with their enthusiasm, creativity, and generosity of spirit. Though this is their first official collaboration, their past work together built the foundation for this debut coauthored novel.

Q: How did the two of you meet?

J.J.: We were fixed up on a blind date.

Chris: It was kind of fun because I knew the friend [who set us up] from church so I always say we were fixed up at a church social, like something from *Little House on the Prairie*.

Q: J.J., how did your theater career influence the book?

J.J.: When we started writing *Shine!*, I really wanted to approach things from an acting standpoint because that's what I'm used to. I really wanted to act out the scenes. I would say to Chris, "Oh, and then Ainsley says . . . " And Chris . . . has a background in typing and journalism. He thinks through his fingers while he's typing. But I didn't know this because we'd never worked together, of course. So, I'd come in the room and I'd say, "Wait, Ainsley has to say this." He'd signal for me to stop because he had a whole scene going on in his head that I couldn't hear. And I was interrupting him, and I didn't even know it.

Chris: My [college major] was communications, broadcasting, journalism, advertising, and we had to pass a typing test in

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freshman year before we could take any next level courses. I can do like a hundred words a minute. So now I can't write by hand. It's too slow.

I've also done some acting. I wasn't as good as J.J., but I always tell kids if they want to be a writer, one of the best things they can do is get involved in their drama club. Be either backstage or onstage because a play is nothing but character and dialogue. And those are two tools that you're going to need when you try to write a story. You can shape a character, just slightly, so people can tell who's talking without you having to even tag the dialogue. J.J. was great at helping create characters like that.

Q: How did your collaborative process work writing *Shine!*?

J.J.: We started with a really, really, really detailed outline. For, I want to say months, we worked on that outline. It had specific lines of dialogue in the outline for different characters. We really talked through it for quite a long time before we ever actually got to writing the book.

Chris: The technique we used is very similar to what I used to work in advertising, in which they put you in teams of writers and art directors. My partner and I in advertising, we had to toss good and bad ideas back and forth, and try to flesh them out and block them out. So, J.J. and I did all that blocking out together, then I'd go to my room and write what we talked about into its first form because you always need something on paper to react to. Then, J.J. would look at it and tell me, let's do this. It's like clay, someone's got to mold the clay first, and then you sculpt all the details.

J.J.: When Chris writes a book, I am his first editor. We sit down and discuss each and every reaction that I had. And, of course, it's always up to him. Sometimes he agrees with me; sometimes he doesn't. But he always has the last word. Well, this time was a little different. My name's going on this book, too. This was my idea. So, it was very interesting the first couple of times we sat down to talk through the notes we had for each other and for the book.

Chris: When we talk to kids about collaboration, we say the enemy in collaboration is the word "no." The most powerful tool is to say "yes." We've both done some improvisational work in our theater days and the whole rule of improv is, say "yes." You take what your partner gives you and then you move it forward. You can never say "no" when you're doing improv or else you're just kind of wasting time. You have to say "yes" and move the story forward. So, at least in your first draft, there are no bad ideas.

Q: Chris, how is collaborating with J.J. different than collaborating with other authors, like James Patterson?

Chris: It's much more fun; she's better looking than James! He was my boss back in the day and taught me a lot about writing, about grabbing people's attention and stuff. I guess it's exactly the same thing that J.J. was saying about how she gives me notes; he's always the boss on the things that we write together, so he'll give me an outline and then I execute it. The guy reads and works harder than anyone I've ever met. With J.J., it was more daily back and forth. With J.J. and I, it's like, we're living this and here's these three pages, what do you think? You know, as opposed to it being once a month like it is when I work with Jim.

Q: Can you tell us about the space in which you work?

J.J.: Part of the time when we were working on it, Chris was on the road visiting schools and I was here. So sometimes when we were in the same place, we would work in Chris's office and that's when I'd be interrupting him with my dramatic renditions for what I think it should say.

When we were actually in different places, we could send the pages back and forth with notes in the margin and sometimes that was almost easier. We weren't clashing with each other in terms of how we wanted to work. We could just write notes and send them back and forth, and work in our own time, and then address it and write back to the other person. So sometimes we'd send the same page back and forth like seven times. The whole book actually took two and a half years. We went back and forth seven different times with our editor as well and did seven different versions of it.

Chris: Part of that was because we both almost had two ideas when it started and my idea wasn't as good as J.J.'s. Finally, after about the third draft, we just got rid of the idea I had and focused on this other one.

Q: What role does your work play in the call for more diverse books in children's publishing?

Chris: Well, we obviously can't do our own voices for any ethnic group, but we always try to have a colorblind cast and make attempts to make it inclusive and broad. We've been able to get authenticity readers for books when I include characters who are diverse. We try our best to show the rainbow that is America, without pretending that we could have anything close to an "own voice." In all of my books, I try to write them in a way where I'm not too specific about what the characters look like, so kids have an easier chance of seeing themselves in that role.

Q: Any final thoughts?

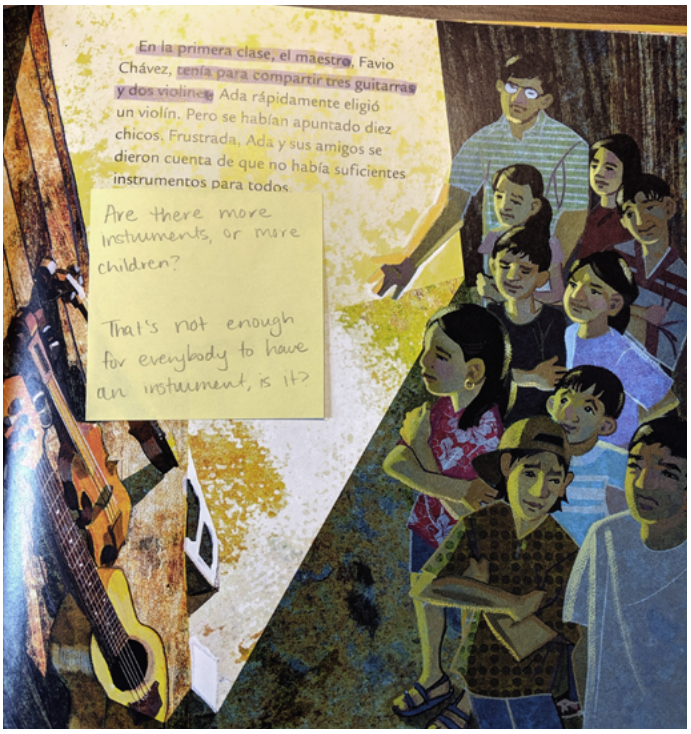
Chris: Somebody wrote a review of *Shine!* and it said, that by working with J.J, it has opened up like a whole new aspect of my work. I think all my books always have humor and heart, but probably heavier on the humor. And writing with J.J. created a book with even more heart than usual. J.J. is Piper—she has a huge heart. &

PEER-REVIEWED

From Outreach to Translanguaging

Developing a Bilingual Storytime

LAURA KELLY AND CINTHYA BOLANOS



Translanguaging with *El Violín de Ada*

A college student shows the illustrations of the bilingual book *What Can You Do with a Rebozo?* She turns to several pages that she has marked, shows the pictures to children gathered for bilingual storytime, and talks about each picture in English. The student stops on the page that describes a *baile,* or dance, that the child in the book does with her mamá's *rebozo*, or brightly colored shawl. The student reads this page in Spanish and asks the children if they would like to dance with their own rebozos. The children excitedly say they would, and the student passes out play scarves. The children jump, clap, stomp, and sing along with their rebozos while dancing to an English song.

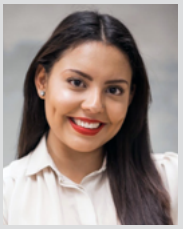
A family recently arrived from Colombia and still learning English joins the fun. So does a family from Mexico, whose children use more English than Spanish; this family wants to support their children's connection to their heritage language of Spanish. Some English-speaking families have enrolled their children in dual-language schools or after-school Spanish clubs. They bring their children to bilingual storytime for even more exposure to Spanish. Other families with internationally adopted children or who are serving as sponsors or foster families for unaccompanied Central American minors bring their children to celebrate their cultural and linguistic background.

Scenes like this one unfold monthly at our library. In this article, we present our bilingual storytime program as a case study and share research findings about developing strong programming and outreach to sustain such a program.

Why Does Bilingual Storytime Matter?

We, a college-based researcher and student team, started bilingual storytime in collaboration with the Memphis (TN) Public Library system. We initially envisioned it as supporting immigrant families to keep Spanish alive in their homes. By the second or third generation, many immigrant families lose their home language.[1] In focus groups we held with parents before designing our program, local families reported speaking to their children in Spanish with children responding in English.

These families had begun to experience the home language loss that many immigrant communities experience, and they



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expressed that maintaining Spanish in their homes mattered to them.[2] These families described wanting their children to remain connected to their roots, communicate with family, travel in their home countries, and have strong job prospects due to their bilingualism. They explained, "Es nuestra tradición hablar español" (Speaking Spanish is our tradition) and that children should learn Spanish "para que no se olvide la raíz" (so they do not forget their roots).

When English surrounds children in school, stores, and services (like the doctor's office or the library), some children start to see English as a more legitimate and prestigious language, and they may resist their parents' efforts to keep Spanish alive.[3] Other children may shift to English because it becomes their stronger language, and they do not feel confident communicating in their home language as they grow older.[4]

Thus, community organizations can play a critical role in promoting children's home languages.[5] Programs like bilingual storytime serve as important "sites of validation" to support children's positive views of Spanish.[6] Such programs do not just "tolerate, but value, support, and sustain the diverse linguistic and cultural practices of communities of color" and "reshape discriminatory public discourses about racially and linguistically marginalized communities."[7] That message matters for children who grow up speaking Spanish and those who only speak English.

It is not reasonable to argue that children will improve their Spanish because they come to one thirty-minute storytime per month. However, hosting a regular bilingual event at the public library (a government building) communicates the legitimacy of Spanish. Children who attend see people from a variety of racial backgrounds proudly using Spanish. They learn that Spanish has a rich oral and literary tradition and that published authors write in Spanish. They build relationships with other attendees who speak or want to learn Spanish, and they can check out materials to take home and read with their family. Regular use of such materials may support their ongoing biliteracy development.[8]

Once we started bilingual storytime, we learned that families had many reasons for attending. Some felt strong in Spanish and wanted to learn English. Other families did not speak Spanish, but their children wanted to learn. Bilingual storytime ended up bringing diverse families together for multilingual early childhood fun.

Literature Review

Services for Spanish-Speaking People in Public Libraries

More than 40 million people speak Spanish in the United States.[9] Libraries that develop programming and special collections for multilingual people most commonly target Spanish speakers. Some of the most successful programs librarians report include English as a Second Language (ESL) classes, second-language materials, computer programs, and storytime programs.[10]

In a nationwide survey about public libraries, Latinx people reported appreciating book lending, the quiet safe space of the library, and services beyond book lending.[11] This survey found that 72 percent of Latinx respondents had visited a public library and 62 percent knew about services their library offered. Latinx respondents who were first-generation immigrants were less likely than US-born Latinx families to have a library card, have used the library website, have taken their child to a storytime, and consider it "very easy" to visit the public library. Of course, "Latinx" does not automatically equate to "Spanish speaker," but there is some overlap between these groups, and these survey results are nevertheless informative for libraries that want to welcome Spanish-speaking communities.

Many libraries have tried to become more inclusive of Spanish-speaking patrons.[12] To do so successfully, libraries should hire bilingual staff and collaborate with their communities to develop collections that those communities find culturally and linguistically relevant.[13] Creating a welcoming environment for Spanish-speaking people also involves providing information in Spanish such as the library website, the catalog interface, library card applications, signs in the library, and instructions on public computers.[14]

In addition to creating a welcoming space and relevant programming, libraries need to do outreach in Spanish-speaking communities if they want those communities to use the library. Some immigrants may have fears about disclosing their citizenship status, such as needing to show identification to get a library card.[15] Of course, not all Spanish speakers are immigrants or immigrants with tenuous legal status, but libraries will need to acknowledge these possible issues.

People may also not be familiar with the range of useful services the library offers to them. Providing information can help assuage these concerns. Libraries should collaborate with communities to understand their needs; it may not be helpful to just promote programs the library already has.[16] After developing programs in response to community needs, the library can promote those programs in Spanish-language print and social media,[17] and it can partner with people in the Spanish-speaking community to promote library programs and services.[18]

Second-Language Storytimes

Latinx people report in surveys that they value library services for their children; they are more likely than other demographic groups to say that closing their local library would have a negative impact on their families.[19] Libraries often find storytimes a comfortable way to begin outreach to Spanish-speaking populations.[20] Furthermore, "storytimes in other languages can be a point of entry to the library for many

adults."[21] If families bring their children to storytime, they may also learn about other library programs and services.

Little research has described effective bilingual storytime programming. Some librarians have reported their outreach at local schools to recruit children to come to bilingual storytime.[22] Others have described working with community members to facilitate and promote bilingual storytimes,[23] while others have given suggestions for building a bilingual storytime program.[24] With this article, we hope to add to the small, but growing, research base about developing effective bilingual storytime programming and outreach.

Our Research

As of this writing, we have conducted monthly bilingual storytimes across two school years. Our team includes seven people—a bilingual educational studies professor at a local college and six students from the college. Two students grew up in Spanish-speaking families in Memphis; these students took a more active role in designing storytime and informing its outreach strategy. A third student grew up speaking Spanish and English in Chicago. The other three members grew up speaking English and learned Spanish to intermediate or advanced levels through study in school. The students' majors include educational studies, psychology, urban studies, Spanish, and Latin American and Latinx studies.

Local Context

Over the past thirty years, Memphis has become part of the Latin American diaspora and is home to more than 45,000 people described by the US Census as Hispanic or Latino.[25] Spanish speakers in Memphis have developed vibrant businesses, numerous activist groups and nonprofits, multiple newspapers and radio stations, schools, sports leagues, and religious organizations. Shelby County Schools, the major public school district serving Memphis, reports having more than 24,000 students who speak languages in addition to English; of those who receive ESL instruction, 91 percent speak Spanish.[26] Most Spanish speakers in the school district grew up in the United States, and their parents are Mexican. Among recent arrivals, most Spanish speakers come from Guatemala and Honduras.

Methods

Our research took a formative and design-based approach, which began with identifying a goal, implementing a program (based on theory and prior research) to meet that goal, collecting data about the program's success, and modifying the program based on the data.[27] Based on research about the value and importance of children maintaining their home languages, our goal was to develop a well-attended early childhood bilingual storytime that Spanish-speaking families find supports their goals to maintain Spanish in their homes. Our primary research question, consistent with formative and design-based research, was, "How can the intervention (bilingual storytime) be modified to achieve the goal more effectively and efficiently and in a way that is appealing and engaging to all stakeholders?"[28]

We collected the following data to guide our efforts to modify the program. Prior to designing the program, we held two focus groups with Spanish-speaking parents to learn about their goals for their children's Spanish, their current use of the library, and their suggestions for developing and spreading the word about bilingual storytime. Once we began the program, we documented how many families attended, how many books on display in the storytime room were checked out, and how many people signed up for a library card. We wrote collaborative reflections after each storytime that documented what went well at storytime and ways we could improve. These reflections include our observations about children's behavior and families' participation and engagement with library resources and personnel.[29]

At each storytime, we collected exit surveys from parents. We also maintain a Facebook page for storytime, and we have data on how many people responded to (and then actually attended) storytime events, who "shares" our events on their pages, and how many people our posts reach through social media.

We analyzed this data qualitatively to identify key themes and lessons learned in establishing our storytime program.[30] In this article, we share our findings related to modifying our program (what we actually do during storytime) and modifying our outreach, both with the goal of building a well-attended bilingual storytime that supports Spanish language use.

What Does Bilingual Storytime Look Like?

Our bilingual storytime occurs once a month on a Saturday morning. We selected this time based on feedback in our focus groups; we wanted to accommodate working families. The all-ages program lasts thirty minutes with an additional fifteen minutes for a craft. Funding for books and craft supplies comes from small grants and the library children's programming and collection development budgets. So far, each bilingual storytime has drawn forty to sixty people.

An average storytime might include two picturebooks, three songs with movements or dance, a game, and several poems or fingerplays. For example, the most recent storytime had the theme of clothing/*ropa*. The activities included a "Buenos Días" song (an echo song), a movement activity while repeating vocabulary in both languages from a large poster, a Spanish song about clothing, a Spanish picturebook about dresses that we introduced and reviewed in English with props, the rebozo book and dance described in the introduction to this

article, a bilingual read-aloud of a picturebook about *chanclas* (flip-flops), two more songs in Spanish that we explained and taught in English, bilingual announcements, and then the Spanish "Adiós Amigos" song (another echo song). Because the activities are bilingual, children of different language backgrounds participate even in activities that use a language they are still learning.

How Can We Develop Strong Bilingual Storytime Programming?

Of course, what makes *any* storytime successful also makes bilingual storytime successful. We select engaging books and songs. We encourage participation from families. We keep our energy high and our pace quick to accommodate children's short attention spans; we do something new every two or three minutes. However, we have learned two lessons specifically about making bilingual storytime successful.

Lesson #1: Do Less

First, we learned to do fewer activities and spend more time on them so that everyone could understand. Slowing down mattered because many of our participants understood one language much better than the other, but we wanted everyone actively engaged both when we used Spanish and when we used English. When we first started, we tried to do lots of books, songs, and activities. Each activity was thematically related to the overall storytime theme, but we were doing something different, and in a different language, every few minutes. On exit surveys, parents commented, "The pace felt a little fast." They encouraged us to slow down so we could fit in "more repetition of songs . . . sing them enough that everyone can catch on (and slowly enough)." Exit surveys also suggested repeating key phrases two or three times before beginning a new song or activity.

We started writing the lyrics to songs on large posters, doing activities and movement to teach children the vocabulary, and then singing the songs. We recorded in our research journal how this strategy increased participation. During one program, we sang "Debajo del Botón," a traditional rhyme about Martín, who finds a mouse hiding under a button. We showed pictures to explain the song in English, had children repeat key words, and then we sang the song. The recording we sang along with plays the song five times: the first time with singing, the next time with removing a syllable and clapping in its place, then removing two syllabus and clapping (like the English song "B-I-N-G-O"), then whispering the song, and then singing it loudly. This activity with pictures, repeating, and multiple renditions of the song took longer, but each element felt different enough to keep children's attention, and since they sang the song so many times, everyone was singing by the end.

We also read fewer books, finding that was better because we could explain the book, do movement and response activities that go with it, and talk about the same text in both languages. For example, after one storytime in which we tried to read parts of five books, we realized it would be better to select a bilingual book and read it in both languages than to read one book in English and then a different book in Spanish. We tried that strategy later by reading the Spanish version, doing an activity, then returning and reading the English version. We found that using the same text twice helped everyone understand and kept children's attention.

These findings make sense in the context of what we know about early language learning. Children need more time to process new language,[31] and multiple repetitions build their fluency.[32] Providing opportunities to practice the same language through different means (activity, song, discussion) makes the language more comprehensible and easier to learn.[33]

Lesson #2: Translanguaging

When we began bilingual storytime, we alternated English activities with Spanish activities. However, we quickly realized that this artificial separation between languages is not how bilingual communities actually talk; they regularly use both languages within the same activity.[34] Furthermore, reading an entire book or doing a whole song in only one language made it hard for people still learning that language to follow along. On exit surveys, families requested that we repeat activities we did in Spanish and do them or explain them in English as well. While we kept the name "bilingual storytime," we decided to shift to a "translanguaging storytime" approach.

In educational activities, translanguaging means welcoming children's participation in whatever language they feel most comfortable, and it means strategically using both languages within the same activity to help everyone understand.[35] Taking this new approach allowed us to tell stories bilingually, which made all our stories always understandable to everyone in the room. Our translanguaging approach connected well with what we learned about doing less. We could spend longer on one activity because we did part of it in Spanish, part in English, and then reviewed again in Spanish. Translanguaging facilitated language learning because instead of hearing a solid two minutes in a new language, children heard little bits at a time, alongside illustrations and the language that they understood best. When we did an entire song or book in only one language, we translanguaged by previewing the book or teaching the song in the other language.

For example, while reading a Spanish book about colors (*Mis Colores, Mi Mundo*), facilitators engaged the children by asking questions and making comments about the text in English, as well as encouraging the attendees to recreate the motions. By going back and explaining what had just happened in English,

without repeating the same material, all participants understood what was going on without being bored. This approach proved more inclusive for all in the room.

We also developed a translanguaging read-aloud routine. This routine allowed us to read longer and more complex books in Spanish, but with English support. For example, we read *El Violín de Ada*, a book entirely in Spanish that is too long for an early childhood storytime, and another month we read *Little Chanclas*, a bilingual book that has Spanish paragraphs on every page and is also too long for storytime. Following our translanguaging read-aloud routine, we underlined in advance key sentences (one or two per page) that we read in Spanish. We added sticky notes throughout the book to remind us of what we wanted to say in English to clarify or expand the Spanish and to point children's attention to specific aspects of the pictures. This process turned what would be a ten-minute read in complex Spanish into a three-minute bilingual interactive read-aloud.

On exit surveys, families have responded to this approach positively: "I love how you blend, or explain, in English and Spanish!" They stated that they liked the "mix of Spanish and English" and "seeing very young language learners comprehend in both languages." Parents found "shifting from English to Spanish . . . is very helpful" for children to notice similarities and differences between languages.

Adopting this approach had many positive effects in keeping with other research on translanguaging. Children's participation and attention increased even when we used a language that they were still learning, and parents of all language backgrounds felt included.[36] Children could rely on their background knowledge of one language to support their learning in the other language.[37] Children had opportunities to develop metalinguistic awareness, or more developed understanding of how languages work and how they are alike and different.[38] Translanguaging allowed us to model the actual practices of bilingual communities.[39] It allowed all members of our team, even those with intermediate proficiency in Spanish, to participate in leading any part of storytime.

Outreach

Throughout this experience, one of the most important lessons we learned was meeting people where they are. When we started this project, we placed flyers in places such as restaurants and laundromats in predominantly Latinx neighborhoods; however, when we spoke to families at storytime, they reported that they learned about storytime through Facebook, a flyer received through their child's school, or the library's advertising.

Ultimately, we found that Facebook was the most effective means of communicating with people and gauging how big of a turn out we have each month. This finding confirmed what parents told us in focus groups, that they learned about community events through Facebook. We created Facebook "events" for each storytime and shared them via Messenger with more than twenty Spanish-language organizations (such as nonprofits, schools, and news organizations); up to ten organizations reposted or shared these events each month. We also purchased Facebook ads to promote the events.

In addition to creating social media events, we maintain a regular Facebook page, @MemphisBilingualStorytime. We translate our enthusiasm to the digital-scape by posting positive bilingual content one to three times a week. We post content that either informs parents about library services, or casts bilingualism in a positive light, as well as promotional content for storytime, such as pictures of books we plan on reading, or pictures of posters we plan on utilizing. We take a strengths-based approach to bilingualism in our programming, and try to convey this in our Facebook content as well. Facebook helps us to maintain contact with our audience throughout the month, which allows us to continue building relationships, even when we are not physically in the same space. These combined strategies of sharing our events with other organizations, purchasing ads, and posting regular content lead to 80–120 responses per month to our Facebook event; 10 to 20 percent of those respondents attend the event. (Other people attended who did not respond on Facebook.)

We have worked hard to establish relationships with schools to promote storytime. We targeted schools that had a high percentage of Spanish-speaking students or bilingual classes. We ensured that our flyers had dates for the entire school year, and we have shared them with local elementary and Head Start classes. We have found ESL and bilingual teachers especially responsive to our outreach efforts. They have invited us to attend parent nights to share storytime information, and some of our most faithful attendees come from these schools. We meet teachers where they are by taking their limited printing budgets into account. We bring printed flyers to schools to make promoting storytime easy for teachers.

Setting up at community events has been a great way of establishing relationships with the Spanish-speaking community and other organizations who serve them. For example, the City of Memphis invited us to Latinx Night hosted by the department of parks and recreation, and a bilingual theater group invited us to table at Latin Fest, a festival held during Hispanic Heritage Month. In addition to handing out information, we do pop-up storytimes and book giveaways at events. Community events help us get to know the population we serve better as well as increase our visibility in the community.

Conclusion

Bilingual storytime has helped our library communicate that it is serious about welcoming all members of our community. Since this program has been successful, the library staff is considering how to implement regular bilingual storytimes (not dependent on us or other outside volunteers) as part of its early childhood literacy programs. This step matters for the sustainability of such programs. Bilingual storytime has brought together diverse families, promoted Spanish and English literacy, and been fun for all of us! It takes effort to build relationships in a community and learn what that community wants, but the resulting program has rewarded everyone involved. &

Launching a Bilingual Storytime

1. **Identify a team.** If no one on your library staff is bilingual, consider partnering with a university, community organization, or public school. High school or college students who speak or study the second language could make great partners. If your library serves a large bilingual community, and no one on staff is bilingual, it may be time to ask why. Library staff should represent the communities they serve.

2. **Assess the community's wants**. Hold focus groups to find out when and where to hold storytimes, what impediments might prevent people from coming, what library services the target community is aware of or using, and how the target community thinks about early education and reading.

3. **Build a robust bilingual or second-language collection.** You can do this as you go. If you are trying to build your Spanish-language collection, consider reviewing awards lists like the Pura Belpré Award, Tomás Rivera Award, and Américas Award. Review catalogs from multicultural and multilingual publishers such as Lee & Low, Cinco Puntos Press, Arte Público, Lectorum, and Lectura Books.

4. **Implement an outreach plan.** Connect with other organizations serving the community you hope to attract to storytime. Send home flyers through local schools. Promote your event on social media.

5. **Start holding storytimes and collect feedback.** Start with one event and see how it goes. Short (bilingual!) surveys that ask families how they learned about the program, what they liked, and what suggestions they have will help you refine your program over time.

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Serving Up Outreach with a Side of Information Literacy

Liz Hartnett

Liz Hartnett *is a Program Coordinator at the South Carolina Center for Community Literacy, part of the University of South Carolina's School of Information Science, and a co-chair of the ALSC Intellectual Freedom Committee.*

Information literacy can add new dimension to outreach programs. Just like sneaking healthy food into a kid's meal, these techniques will enrich the work you already do as a librarian. Here we'll focus on tips for incorporating information literacy into outreach programming for kids.

Consider these tips to build information literacy skills at any age.

- Create opportunities for kids to brainstorm and come up with good questions about things they'd like to know (identifying the information need).
- Help kids become aware of tools they can use to answer their questions—library materials, community groups, and individual experts (planning how to find information).
- Provide practice in using keyword searches, taking notes, and designing things like simple surveys or interview questions (gathering information)
- Show how to look critically at sources, identify high-quality information, and investigate questionable claims (evaluating sources).
- Have your participants put their information to some use, help them with strategies for presenting it effectively (organizing and communicating information).

Outreach is critical for extending service to non-users or underserved groups. Effective outreach for children often involves community partnerships -childcare providers, schools, shelters, hospitals, summer camps, or local festivals, for example.

Here are two sample programs to try. Adapt them to fit your community!

Sample Program #1

THEME: Nutrition

SKILLS: Collect and use data

Am I eating a nutritious lunch?

Following a shared lunch (perhaps through outreach programs such as Summer Food Service), read and share books relating to the elements of good nutrition, like *How Did That Get in My Lunchbox?* by Chris Butterworth or *The Monster Health Book* by Edward Miller.

- Which food groups are represented in today's lunch? Are the meals balanced? *Search for nutrition information*, using related nonfiction titles or materials from sites like Nutrition for Kids (Mayo Clinic) or the USDA's Choose My Plate site.

- Which foods are most popular? How can we find out? *Create a survey, gather and organize results, produce a visual representation.*

For older kids: Provide nutrition labels for a variety of food products. Using these, challenge kids to assemble a healthy menu for a meal or a day. EatRight, from the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, has some accessible information on reading nutrition labels.

Sample Program #2

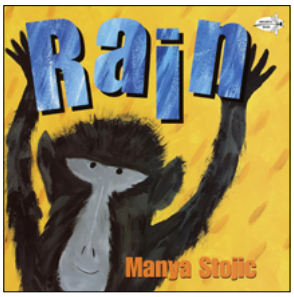
THEME: Weather forecasting

SKILLS: Identifying information need; locating information

Why are weather forecasts important, and how do we find out about the weather?

This topic could be of particular interest to kids taking part in outdoor programs, such as those provided through local parks departments.

- Get the conversation started by appearing in clothes that are inappropriate for the weather that day (a big coat in summer, flip-flops in winter, etc.). How do you know what to wear for the day?
- Share the book *Rain* by Manya Stojic and discuss ways to tell when the weather is changing.



- Talk about the value of weather forecasts.
- How do we know what the weather will be (what are some sources)?
- What's the forecast for tomorrow?

Close the session by reading about the completely outlandish weather conditions in Judi Barrett's *Cloudy with a Chance of Meatballs.* &

Every? Child Ready to Read—continued from page 20

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We Are ALSC

Profiles from the Field

Bios compiled by the following members of the ALSC Membership Committee: Allison Knight, branch manager, MidPointe Library System (OH); Deidre Winterhalter, assistant manager of youth services, St. Charles (IL) Public Library District; and Jennifer Knight, youth services librarian, North Olympic Library System, Port Angeles, WA.

What does ALSC membership mean? It could depend on a person's stage in their career or how long they've been a member. Here's a glimpse of several ALSC members—from a new member to one in the ALSC fold for almost four decades.

Christina Carpino, Connecticut, Children's Library Assistant, Bristol (CT) Public Library. ALSC Member for 2 years, 2.5 years on job.

How have you been involved in ALSC?

I'm participating in the ALSC mentorship program as a mentee. I've also been a live blogger for the ALA Midwinter Meeting and participated in several of the ALSC meetings at the conference. I'm looking forward to getting more involved in the coming months, especially if more things become virtual.

Why did you join ALSC?

To connect with other children's librarians and learn more about the field I was entering. I found myself looking things up and being referred to the ALA and ALSC websites a lot, so I decided to join!

What's your best ALSC memory?

When I attended an ALA Midwinter Meeting—from getting to meet others at the member dinner to attending the Youth Media Awards to being energized by all of the great children's librarians I met!

What makes you want to work with young people?

Before working in libraries, I was an elementary school teacher. I've always loved working with kids and watching them learn. As a librarian, I have the ability to work with the whole family and really build that lifelong learning drive.

How has your ALSC work benefited your day job?

I utilize a lot of the ALSC resources when doing program planning, especially when I first started working in libraries. Reading about others' experiences on the blog or watching the recorded webinars is really helpful for getting an idea of what others are doing and what best practices are.

Five words to describe your ALSC involvement.

We're better and stronger together.

Hadeal Salamah, lower/middle school librarian, Georgetown Day School, Washington, DC. ALSC member for five years.

How have you been involved in ALSC?

In 2017, I was a member of the Building Partnerships Committee and in 2018 became co-chair of the Membership Committee. Additionally, I participated in the 2020 Morris Seminar, and it was a fantastic experience that would not have been possible without ALSC! I will also be serving on the 2022 Newbery Award Committee.

Why did you join ALSC?

When I first started working in libraries and attending local youth services meetings, I was fascinated by how much children's librarians shared with one another. There was so much to learn and so many professionals who were transparent and willing to share programming ideas, successes, failures and simply just brainstorm together. It felt great to be part of such a wonderful community.

I was already happy to be part of a local group of libraries and didn't think much about joining a national organization, but then I attended the 2014 ALSC National Institute. I once again saw the same collaboration, but bigger. I learned so much about children's services and programming, networking, and connecting. I was excited to join the ALSC community. Being involved in ALSC has helped me advocate for myself and for libraries, as well as connected me to so many other supportive librarians and provided many professional development opportunities.

How has your ALSC work benefited your day job?

I'm now at a school, and I have used so much of the information I gained from committee work as a children's librarian in a public library—from partnering with a local firehouse and police station to collaborating with teachers to promote library resources and so much more. I've learned and strengthened my skills as an everyday advocate for libraries, children, and children's programming. The Building Partnerships Committee created the Imagine Infographic (www.alsc.ala.org/blog/2020/07/imagine-building-partnerships) to help libraries assess, plan, and manage community partnerships. This was a great guide, especially for summer programming.

Because the committee is responsible for researching and creating tools on best practices for library partnerships, my knowledge has changed, and I've learned a variety of different ways to communicate and work with others in the community and to bring more resources to patrons. I've enjoyed listening to committee members share their expertise and experiences from different backgrounds and areas.

What's your best ALSC memory?

Attending the 2014 ALSC National Institute (so much fun at the conference, specifically going to Children's Fairyland with other librarians).

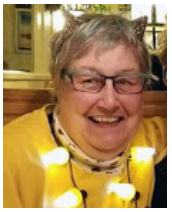
What makes you want to be a children's librarian?

Helping children, tweens, teens, and their families find the resources they need to succeed. I chose to become a children's librarian because I love connecting books and readers.

Five words to describe your ALSC involvement.

Community, support, collaboration, connections, knowledge.

Tish (Letitia A.) Wilson, retired after more than 43 years as children's librarian/assistant, director of youth services, Dayton (OH) Metro Library. ALSC member for more than 35 years.



How has your ALSC work benefited your day job?

I have served on/chaired more ALSC committees than I can remember. I regularly used incredible amounts of programming ideas, information, and management skills picked up at ALA/ALSC conferences, institutes, and workshops, which I attended for the last 31 years. I cannot thank ALSC enough for the many management and administration lessons I learned by serving and leading.

Why did you join ALSC?

Every profession has an association that one belongs to if one wants to "affect change" and be a contributing professional. In my first job as a children's librarian, I was involved in the Ohio Library Counsel (OLC). I got involved, quickly, in the children's division and held every office, even serving on the board of trustees during my first two years as coordinator of youth services in the Dayton library system. As a present, at the end of my first year as coordinator, my retired boss in Greene County, Ohio, paid my ALA membership dues if I would then pay my ALSC division dues. Who could turn that down?

During my time on the OLC Board, I met and made friends throughout Ohio's public libraries. One of the people I had worked with in Ohio was Linda Silver, then head of youth services at Cuyahoga County Public Library System. About that time, she was serving as president-elect of ALSC and was appointing people to committees; she appointed me to serve on the Randolph Caldecott Committee. And that was the beginning of my involvement in ALSC.

What's your best ALSC memory?

In 1986, the book awards committees attended the Monday morning ALSC Board Meeting at the ALA Midwinter Meeting

and the chairs announced the award and honor books. I don't recall us getting together in the early morning hours as a committee to call the winners. There was no well-attended press conference in the largest capacity meeting room like today. Back then, we all were crammed into a small room in the Palmer House in Chicago. Besides the members of the ALSC Board, and the members of the awards committees, a few editors of the publishing houses were there, too. My, how times have changed. There was still loud cheering, though.

What made you want to be a children's librarian?

I wanted to be just like the children's librarians I had when I was a child. Mrs. Ridings and Mrs. Bjella in Syracuse, Indiana, greeted me every afternoon after school with good books and little tasks to keep me out of trouble. I was an original "latch-key child" back in 1960.

When I was old enough to work, the children's manager of the Elkhart (IN) Public Library hired me during the summer months while I was home from college. Since I had taken a children's literature course as an education major, I got hired to work the circulation/reference desk. One of my tasks was to file new library card applications for children getting their first library cards. And would you believe . . . I found my very own, poorly printed first name, parent-signed library card application one day while I was filing applications. Of course, Mrs. Webb gave it to me.

Can you share an anecdote about your committee experience?

My best ALSC memory was one year at Annual Conference in Chicago at a swanky luncheon held by a publisher. Two very important-to-me people were at that luncheon—Linda Hahus, who taught my children's literature class at St. Mary-of-the-Woods (IN) College and Andrew Medlar, then children's librarian at Chicago Public Library, but he had been one of my kids at the Trotwood (OH) Library in 1983. I got to introduce one of my children's librarians to one of my kids who was also a children's librarian. Talk about COOL.

How have you been involved in ALSC?

I had the incredibly good fortune to be appointed to several book award committees, including the Sibert Award; the Legacy Award (previously the Wilder) twice; Newbery Award twice; and the Caldecott Award Committee, twice, once as a member and once as chair. I look on the many winners and honor books from those committees as "my children." I hope those many books will enrich the lives of all the children who find or are guided towards them in the children's rooms of public libraries and elementary school media centers.

Five words to describe your ALSC involvement

Friendships, travel, professional contributions (giving back), lifelong learning, joy! &

Words in the Age of Corona

Julie Cummins

What would we do without words to express ourselves, whether in print, vocally, audibly, or with our hands? Dictionaries add and delete words responding to usage, both current and archaic.

Our culture reflects our language, especially in today's technology. The following list of words shares examples of how meanings have evolved from previous days to life in the age of a global pandemic. Remember when these words meant these things . . . and not something more?

- WEB, a snare woven by a spider (not the ever-present computer network)
- MOUSE, an undesirable rodent (again, another, albeit less furry, computer term)
- LINKS, sausage (not just click bait!)
- WINDOWS, panes of glass (how many can we open at once?)
- AMAZON, a river in South America (a lifeline during the pandemic)
- FILES, implements used for manicures (how many files do I have to read today?)
- ZOOM, going fast in a vehicle (the omnipresent video tech of choice . . . or a 1970s education TV show)
- THUNDERBIRD, a fast car or an inexpensive wine
- BYTES, when someone uses their teeth (not just their keyboard)
- INTERFACING, iron-on fabric stiffener (I see you, so look prepared!)
- QUICKBOOKS, ones you could read in an hour
- PASSWORDS, something spies used (now used by all students, even the youngest)
- DIGITAL, giving someone the finger
- ACROBAT, trapeze performer (will I ever get that file to download properly?)
- SPAM, mystery meat in a tin can (What? Another email I can't open?)

To sum up, here are a few thoughts on words by some of the world's greatest minds. John Milton said, "Apt words have the power to suage the tumors of a troubled mind."

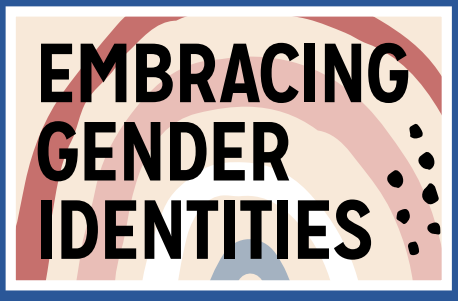
Poet George Herbert said, "Good words are worth much, and cost little." And founding father Benjamin Franklin said, "A word to the wise is enough, and many words won't fill a bushel." &

Julie Cummins *is the former Coordinator of Children's Services at the New York Public Library, a previous ALSC Distinguished Service Award winner, Grolier Award winner, children's book author, and word maven.*

Got a great, lighthearted essay? A funny story about children and libraries? Books and babies? Pets and picture books? A not-so-serious look at the world of children's librarianship? Send your Last Word to Sharon Verbeten at CALeditor@yahoo.com.

NEW ALSC Booklists

alsc
ASSOCIATION FOR LIBRARY SERVICE TO CHILDREN



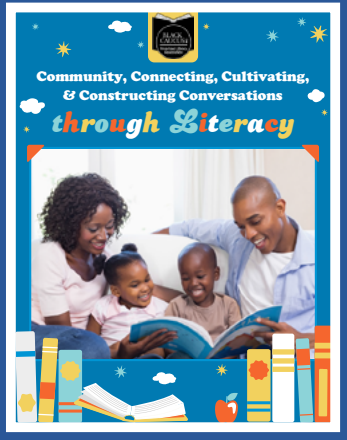
Embracing Gender Identities was created to help support conversations about gender identity and expression. This list, which is divided into books for 0-5 year-olds, elementary school students and middle schoolers, includes recommended informational picture books, as well as works of fiction and non-fiction that challenge gender norms and explore the wide spectrum of gender identity.
It includes additional resources for parents.

Download: bit.ly/alscembracinglist

In **#LookToLibraries,** ALSC has compiled a suite of tools and resources to support library professionals and the families in their communities.

These resources include booklists for children that cover a variety of topics from understanding germs to managing anxiety.

Download: bit.ly/LookToLibraries



Community, Connecting, Cultivating & Constructing Conversations Through Literacy

This list was developed by members of the Black Caucus of the American Library Association (BCALA) and ALSC's Quicklists Committee.

It is intended to support conversations about dismantling systems of racial injustice.

Download: bit.ly/bcalaandalsclist2020