



Program & Read-Aloud Information for Parents & Caregivers

How can you and your child get the most out of the Story Time experience?

What parents or caregivers can do *after* Story Time:

1. Practice the fingerplays, songs, and other activities from story time at home. This further enhances your child's enjoyment and understanding of the program.
2. Check out books (and magazines and audio, too!). Story time is designed to inspire a love of books — follow through with having your child select books afterwards!
3. Story times often feature music. Check out children's CDs and cassettes. (Some experts say that some musical abilities are established by age 5!)
4. Talk to the youth services librarian (storyteller) afterwards and have her help you find books and other materials.

What parents or caregivers can do *during* Story Time:

1. Be on time to avoid distracting the other children. We recommend that you arrive 5 minutes early to allow time to settle in.
2. If children (or babies who come along) are unable to sit quietly, it's best to take them out of the program area. Try them again another day when they're ready! This helps us keep the other children's attention.
3. Encourage your child to sit towards the center and near the storyteller.
4. Parents and caregivers can join in on the songs, fingerplays, and group participation activities!

Read-Aloud Tips

Why read aloud?

- Reading aloud is often the most-cited factor for the development of early reading.
- Kids' listening levels are much higher than their reading levels.
- It improves their reading, writing, and speaking skills.
- Children *imitate* what they hear and see.
- It points the way to books they could read and makes them aware of different types of books.
- It's a close family experience.

When?

- Start when they're infants. They won't understand the words, but the rhythm of the language will make an impression on them.
- When to stop? Never — both for the reasons cited above, and because it's wondrous to catch your kids in the spell of a good story.

Tips for Preschoolers:

- Use repetitive chorus lines, props, sound effects, stuffed animal audiences, etc.

Tips for older kids:

- If they haven't been read to regularly up to this point, it's best to start out with something simpler (but a good story) and then to build to the "classics."
- Use food — eat a snack while listening! Think of it as good stuff going in both the body and the brain.
- Read in a darkened room with just a flashlight or a reading light, or with kids under a blanket.
- Read on trips.

Youth Services Librarians

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