

***Get the Grown-ups Involved...***  
**Tips for Engaging Parents/Caregivers in the Storytime**

**Express your expectations up front.**

Let them know that your storytimes are designed to bring adult and child together. Explain that parents/caregivers are an important element in your program and that you want them to be near their children to perform the activities with them, and to model good listening behavior.

**Repeat the message throughout your storytime.**

It's difficult to retain messages that we hear only once. Tell parents in a variety of ways that you want them to participate in the activities. Here are some ideas for doing this:

- "During the preschool years, children are hard wiring their brains and learning new skills. You have an important job today! You are teaching your children how to be good listeners, how to behave in a group setting, and how to communicate with others. All of these skills will help them get ready for kindergarten."
- "What! Do I see big people just sitting there? Look at those silly big people. They think they can't do this. Let's see if we can teach them how to ..."
- "Remember you are sending very important messages to your children about how to listen and about what is expected. If you are participating, they will participate as well!"
- "We do these lapsit activities in storytime because we know that children develop healthy emotional bonding during time spend touching, hearing, and smiling with their parents and caregivers."
- "Holding and cuddling your child while sharing books builds important emotional brain connections that will actually encourage them to enjoy reading and want to be readers. Isn't that great news?"
- Try asking parents to be human props when you are sharing a story. A father's tie can become the snake's tail. A mother's hair might become tall grass.
- Preface each new activity with a direct request for adult participation. "Grown-ups, it's time for you to help! Please say the rhyming words with us."