

Ideas for Storytime Troubleshooting

- Survey attendees to see if a different day and time would work for a specific age group.
- Simply tell caregivers that all ages are welcome, but x storytime is designed for y age group.
- Label the storytime based on what happens, not on an age group. For example: "We will share songs, lap bounces, tickles, 1-2 short books, and information about how to make books a part of your regular routine" or "We will share longer stories, flannel stories, and other participatory activities that help kids practice focusing." (Thanks, Rick!)
- Try different labels: lapbounce, music and movement, sit and listen, etc. (More from Mr. Rick)
- Focus on two ages: 2-3 and 3-5, especially if a "baby" storytime isn't drawing a crowd.
 - ★ MAKE IT EASY: Use the same theme all week, but change the difficulty level for each age group.

Helpful Tools/Tricks

- Use puppets; they reach a wide age range. Try to give them specific characteristics or lines. (Create a friend!)
- Bubbles at the end of storytime are great for many ages.
- BE FLEXIBLE. Even if 9/10 times you have x age range, have backup stories for younger/older as applicable.
- Remember that every community is unique, and that what works for x may not work for y.
- Consider adding K-3 Storytime in the summer.
- Let the parents know that if children get restless or fussy, they are very welcome to play in the children's area/away from the story area with parental supervision, and that this is okay! A 1 or 2 year old will not have the attention span of a 4 year old.
- Crafts are about the process, NOT the product. Provide materials and an idea, but the kids to what they want with the media. Parents should not have to provide much assistance (if any).
- Handouts, Handouts, Handouts – Describe, explain, entice, and write the rules down.
- Include information on early literacy at all storytimes.
 - ★ Favorite term: Emergent Reader

Likely Issues that may or may not have a solution...

- Parents want a one-stop-shop storytime for multiple ages.
- Parents may think that children are more advanced than they are, or not know what level their kids are or should be at all. Traditional "Baby, Toddler, PreK" may not be the best way to sell a storytime to a given community.
- Unrealistic expectations are not uncommon. Gently educate and adjust expectations over time.

Resources

- <http://storytimeunderground.wordpress.com/>

"One of the most important things I've learned over the years is to keep smiling, and to remember, to quote Pete the Cat, that it's all good. (Did Pete cry? Goodness no!) I enforce my very few rules and explain my expectations with a smile and sense of humor (sometimes through gritted teeth), and most parents and kids eventually learn." - Sara

Contributors (THANK YOU!)

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