Sensory Storytime

A Way to Make Storytime More Enjoyable for Everyone
Inclusion

- A term used in education and special education, but what does it mean?
- All children, with or without disabilities, are educated together
- According to the National Inclusion Project, inclusion means all participate and all belong
- Accommodations and adaptations help the child with disabilities participate in the same activities as their typically developing peers
Reflective of communities

Benefits of Inclusive Education

Here are key findings about the benefits of inclusion for children and families:

- **Families’ visions of a typical life for their children can come true.**
  - All parents want their children to be accepted by their peers, have friends and lead “regular” lives. Inclusive settings can make this vision a reality for many children with disabilities.

- **Children develop a positive understanding of themselves and others.**
  - When children attend classes that reflect the similarities and differences of people in the real world, they learn to appreciate diversity. Respect and understanding grow when children of differing abilities and cultures play and learn together.

- **Friendships develop.**
  - Schools are important places for children to develop friendships and learn social skills. Children with and without disabilities learn with and from each other in inclusive classes.

- **Children learn important academic skills.**
  - In inclusive classrooms, children with and without disabilities are expected to learn to read, write and do math, with higher expectations and good instruction children with disabilities learn academic skills.

- **All children learn by being together.**
  - Because the philosophy of inclusive education is aimed at helping all children learn, everyone in the class benefits. Children learn at their own pace and style within a nurturing learning environment.

Next: What It Means to Be Inclusive
Storytimes at the library

- Your libraries already offer storytimes
- Give children and their parents an opportunity to participate in an everyday activity
- Can easily be adapted for students with or without disabilities
- Adaptations require little money and skill
- Librarians are already competent
A little effort goes a long way!

- Your staff are making story time an even more enjoyable experience for the entire family
- Your proactive approach will be appreciated
- You may be able to reach out to an entirely new audience/create new partnerships
- In most instances, staff can modify an existing program
Before You Begin Your Program Planning

- Keep in mind that all disabilities are not obvious
- Don’t focus too much on one segment of the population
- Not all children with disabilities are the same
- Research what other library systems offer
This is a story time especially designed to provide support for children with special needs and is also suitable for all children to attend. At an inclusive story time you will find the same great stories, songs, rhymes and activities that you love at all our story times. The addition of supports like carpet squares, a story time schedule and big books make the story time more enjoyable for kids with autism and other special needs.
1) Make it active!: Activities that make use of props, visuals, and movement work well with typically developing children too, of course, but for children with special needs, these elements may be even more necessary to catch and hold attention and foster understanding.

2) Use your resources: Ask the child’s parent or caregiver what kinds of activities may work best. Don’t be afraid to establish a dialogue; just make sure you are always broaching to topic from the standpoint of wanting to provide the best possible storytime experience for the child.

3) Think about placement: Location is particularly important for deaf and hard-of-hearing students, who should be seated near the front of the room for best sightlines. If you are working with an interpreter, he or she should be as close as possible to the speaker, so that the child can follow both. For children with mobility issues, find a place that is easy to get to and will allow for maximum participation on the part of the child.

4) Use consistent visual or signals for transitions: Some students with special needs may find it difficult to transition from one activity to another—that is, to transfer their attention from one task to another. Getting students’ attention may be as simple as using a visual signal, such as raising two fingers in a letter V, flickering the lights, singing a certain song, or repeating a special verse. These sorts of “rituals” help children make sense of their world.

5) Wait 10 seconds: When you ask a question or ask for volunteers, wait 10 seconds before calling on someone. This gives everyone time to process the request (and, if you are working with an interpreter, gives him or her time to interpret it!), providing a fair chance for everyone to answer. Due to differences in learning styles, allowing an extra moment before calling on someone to answer can level the playing field for typically developing children as well. Some children naturally take more time to process than others.

6) Use movement response: When you ask a question, have all the children respond simultaneously via a gesture. For example, you might say, “If you think the fox will try to eat the grapes, touch your nose. If you think the fox will run away, touch your bellybutton.”

7) Manage turn-taking: Many special needs students respond well to visual or tactile prompts, and so a “talking stick,” stuffed animal, or other special object that denotes whose turn it is to speak will help keep storytime orderly.

8) Keep it uncluttered: You may need to keep program materials out of reach or even out of sight until needed. Children on the autism spectrum may become easily overstimulated or distracted. Keep your program area uncluttered to maximize their focus.
About Mother Goose

MGOL is a program, a method and a formula.

Mother Goose on the Loose is a method for helping children develop early literacy and school readiness skills that combines music, movement, art, picture books and puppets with nursery rhymes in a fun way.

A typical session of Mother Goose on the Loose lasts 30 minutes but can be formatted to fit the needs of individual groups; it is designed to encourage participants to listen, to like, and to learn.

Originally created for children from birth to age two with their parent or caregiver, this adaptable program can be used in childcare circle times, in playgroups, as an after school enrichment program for kindergarten children, or at home.

Children under the age of three LOVE Mother Goose on the Loose because it is age appropriate and playful, includes experiences that build self-confidence, takes place in a safe and nurturing environment, activates many senses, ignites imagination, provides opportunities for play with other children, allows experimentation with musical instruments, and makes use of colored
Why a Storytime Like MGOL Works

- Repetitive and interactive
  - Incorporates musical instruments and scarves
- Uses multiple books, but only one is read from cover to cover
- Follows a sequence
  - Can be depicted visually or spoken
- Gives the child freedom to explore
Adaptations to MGOL

- More description
- Big books, print/Braille books, pop-up books
- Silky scarves instead of nylon scarves
- Sheep finger puppets
- Bells with grips
- Use real or life-like objects
- Other options include:
  - Carpet squares
  - American Sign Language
  - Picture Communication Symbols
Picture Communication Symbols (PCS)
Mayer–Johnson’s Boardmaker Software starts at $329
Adapted Books – Free

Adapted Books

These are adapted books and materials created with Boardmaker, Writing with Symbols, and PowerPoint software. They have been converted to Adobe Acrobat (.pdf) format as well.

Additional Resources

A Pet, Please!  Holiday Images  P390: Penny Harvest
A Red Raccoon  Horses  The Park
Animals at the Zoo  How Many People?  Party Time
Artist  I Spy: Animals
BINGO: Family  I Spy: Jobs
BINGO: Friends  I Spy: My Neighborhood
BINGO: School Jobs  I Spy: Professionals
Cups for Sale  I Spy: Transportation
Checking out the Hood  LeffTech Catalog Books
Chinese New Year  Italy and America
Christmas  Jobs Around Us
Shopping with Velas

Contacts

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Coaches
Susan Abrahams
Jodi Adler
Ilene Levy
Robert Stefani
Leah Vasquez
Other visuals

Head Start Center for Inclusion:
http://depts.washington.edu/hscenter/teacher-tools#circle
# Assistive Technology

## Search Results

To reduce download time, the Board Maker files have been compressed and will require an unzip utility to install. Winzip is available for evaluation or purchase.

Each Zip file in this elementary library collection has a folder. Within each folder are a series of files that are labeled to indicate the purpose of the file. Suggested questions have been developed that connect to a 9-location, 20-location, or 56-location communication topic board.

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More about pictures

- All children benefit from the use of pictures and visual supports paired with your verbal directions.
- There are other types of visuals besides PCS, including flannel board pieces.
- Consider adding texture to flannel board pieces by gluing on bits of fabric.
- Adaptations in Action, created by Inclusion Collaborative, has other useful tips.
Excellent Resources

Inclusion Collaborative

ALSC Blog
Where to Buy

- Silk scarves: Fairy Cove Silks – 20 inch square
  http://www.fairycove.com/
- Easy Grip Bells: Lakeshore
  http://www.lakeshorelearning.com/product/productDet.jsp?ASSORTMENT%3C%3East_id=1408474395181113&bmUID=1331522449992&productItemID=845524441768697
- Finger puppets: Folkmanis
- Cardboard blocks: Melissa & Doug
  http://www.melissaanddoug.com/jumbo-cardboard-building-blocks
Contact Information

- Lori Guenthner, Youth Services Coordinator
- Maryland State Library for the Blind & Physically Handicapped
- lguenth@lbph.lib.md.us
- 410–230–2457