

Text Chat Transcript for Feb 20, 2014: Beyond the Rhymes, Part 3

Beth Saxton:We do different levels of engagement in teen services, makes sense to do it for the little ones

Nora:My management, bless their hearts, allowed me to change my schedule so that I now work every Saturday. I love being able to accommodate whole families at programs on Saturdays.

Michelle A:Hi Deb!

Christy Bridges:Christy from Colorado Springs, Hi Deb and Michelle :)

Evan Kendrick:Hey ladies! PPLD represent! :)

Mary Anne:We use to have Family Drop-in Storytime on Saturday, but it had very low attendance!

Rick Samuelson:Building a following on Saturday as a new ST time can take a lot of time. I see a lot of libraries try and when the numbers don't jump over a few months, they drop it.

Mary Shaw:We have tried evenings & weekends multiple times, but don't have much attendance except for the teens.

Alan Bern:Hello from Berkeley! We still need rain.

Anita V:We have had the same response - low attendance on weekends.

Rita:Mary, we have the same issue. We don't get enough attendance on a Saturday to justify staffing.

Evan Kendrick:We are in the same boat for Saturday story time at my library.

Christy Bridges:Saturdays are interesting. Not big but a huge age range.

Meg Thackoorie:I also tried on Saturday In Moorpark, CA and dropped it due to low attendance.

Natasha F.:What about developmentally appropriate practices? How do you plan a storytime if you don't have a core age group you are planning for?

Krystal Pederson:We've had success when we have an additional family program to tag along with the storytime. The tricky thing is gaining the trust of those families that we've left behind. It takes some outside of the box thinking to get them in the library.

martha de aquino:we have a monthly book giveaway on Saturdays and also a sensory storytime one Saturday a month

Meg Thackoorie:Great idea martha!

Mary Anne:We have a lot of Stay at Home Moms and they like the weekday mornings. We do have a night time Pajama Storytime that has fairly good numbers.

Krystal Pederson:(on weekends)

Rick Samuelson:I am thinking it is better to brand storytimes around the activities that occur during the event than around the ages.. see here:
<http://storytimeunderground.wordpress.com/2014/02/18/ask-a-storytime-ninja-so-many-ages-so-few-storytimes/>

Infopeople Project:You can get handouts at;
<https://infopeople.org/civicism/event/info?reset=1&id=373>

Martin Blasco:The library should offer services and programs to everybody without distinctions. Even those with developmental issues.

Beth Saxton:I think the point is developmentally appropriate practice is great, but blending isn't the end of the world

Beth Saxton:I mean, little babies are going to benefit from anything going on around them involving language and interaction right?

Mary Shaw:I find a major difference in using picture books with a single child vs a large group... The children get really restless if the language is too high. It's good to have a variety of experiences.

Stephanie Smallwood:The blending itself needs to be developmentally appropriate too though, you can't just invite toddlers to a storytime designed for preschoolers and call it mixed age and assume that the younger children are having quality experiences. Blended age storytimes and programs can be excellent, but they have to be carefully designed.

Anita V:we find that we fill any time slot that we offer.

Marsha Weeks:I agree with Stephanie

Natasha F.:Blending happens no matter what - I'm just saying that maybe a mix of multi-ages and specific ages is good, not just limiting to one or the other.

Deb Ehret:Wonder how it would work to do a morning storytime, afternoon storytime, and Saturday storytime - all for all ages? Manitou used to have only "all age" storytimes

Darla Jones:Hello from Darla Jones! Amy Dickerson is trying to get signed in to webinar and will not allow! She is here with me listening, but could you please send her a certificate since she is unable to login?!

Mary Anne:consistency is great, but with all the other duties we have, we have gone to every other month. It is a problem with the patrons. They just get started and the session is over:({

Penny Peck:Consistent schedule important for English learners.

Deb Ehret:I agree, Penny.

Krystal Pederson:My 2 cents based on being a parent with practical "home-storytelling" experience. I have an age gap of 4 years between my 2 kids. I read to them at the same time, a variety of materials. My younger child has language skills

at the level of children 2 years older than her. Kids are smarter than we give them credit for!

Rita:one mixed age program we do in the summer is “book buddies” where teens and middle schoolers read to preschoolers

Suzanne Flint:Consistency is also important for the kids.

Nora:Amen to consistency.

Martin Blasco:No doubt, consistency throughout the year is crucial

Susie Serrano:We usually only break the week of Christmas and New Years.

cen campbell:Consistency is important for sleep-deprived parents, too!

Anita V:In a perfect world, we would have enough staff to offer enough times for everyone. Our best people get used hard, we need to give them some reprieve and time to refuel.

lcompton:We only stop for major school breaks and the month of June

Martin Blasco:Stopping storytime during school breaks is more work for parents.

lisa ebert:We break during the winter because of all the snow & cold (Minnesota) because many of our area daycares walk to the library. Not many drive.

Deb Ehret:Great idea, rotating location staff through, love the team approach

Marsha Weeks:We take breaks around the holidays as attendance had been very low during those times in the past.

Evan Kendrick:Our district only stops regular story time when we have another program to offer in its place, e.g. Summer Morning Fun in place of Story time in the summer, but at the same time.

Martin Blasco:During that time you could get a sub to keep the show going.

Rick Samuelson:Hmmm... teams work in middle & large size libraries but are highly impractical for tiny libraries. There are many undersized, underfunded libraries who cannot afford nonstop storytimes.

conniesutton:Interesting presentation.... our staff members have had many discussions this past year about “age restrictions” for storytimes..

Jane Dyer Cook:Hello Alan Bern!

Mary Shaw:We have 3 staff for children’s services—one is also assistant director, one is the cataloger, one processes materials. Finances don’t allow for more staff.

Suzanne Flint:Small libraries could draw on the community for community members who might volunteer to be on your storytelling team

Karen J Maj:Karen Maj here.

Martin Blasco:That’s the way!

Marsha Weeks:We used to offer our regular programs and there was a drop-off during the holidays so after a few years of this, we decided to take a break. Our attendance is fine when we resume.

Alanna jones:people still want programming during holiday times at our library.

Deb Ehret:Sometimes I wish we were open on those holidays when schools close - great time to have services at the library!

Christy Bridges:Yay Alanna! You got on!!

Evan Kendrick:The one problem with community members can be that they don't have the same early literacy training. So that would either have to be a prerequisite or an additional component of volunteerism.

Natasha F.:I do a break 3 times a year, but we have Preschool Playtime or Read, Sing, Play! during the same time during the breaks - put out toys, books, puzzles, and let families have a play group.

Alanna jones::-)

Anita V:I agree that staffing is an important part of the planning. We can only do so much ourselves...but can we truly depend on volunteers for quality ?

Suzanne Flint:Make early literacy training a requirement for your community storytime volunteers

Nora:Question, what does using community members to do storytimes say about the professionalism of the children's librarian? Does it send the message, "Everyone can do this?" Is that a message we want to be sending, or not?

Beth Saxton:Natasha that sounds like a good solution

Kathleen McVey:Our community is pretty used to our schedule and expect the breaks now. It may take a month to build back the numbers, but with the amount of programming we do at our library, we all must have a break.

lcompton:I only work 8 hours a week and run the desk, help patrons, etc and still do the program. We feel it is very important to get parents bringing children in. Other wise who knows if we will be a priority.

Stacey:I agree Nora!

Kathleen McVey:We are really fortunate to have a budget to bring in outside people for programs when we break

conniesutton:We take a 2 week break over the holidays and a 2 week break after summer reading. These seem to work out very well.

Suzanne Flint:We want families to continue your storytime practices so yes I would suggest we do want folks to feel like this is something everyone one can do

Karen J Maj:What do you do when story time is in session and a parent or parents are there with their children but are texting and are showing others they are not invovled; I feel it does give children especially the message that story time really isn't important.

Rick Samuelson:I really don't think there is a one-size-fits-all for every library. Also, I'm not totally comfortable with volunteer models.. it undervalues the professionalism of library staff.

Christy Bridges:I think that it is important that it does seem like anyone can do a storytime. It still takes work, but helping children enjoy reading or learning isn't an exclusive "librarian" skill. It take a community to grow great readers!

Beth Saxton:Music and movement or babydance would be a good way to fill in gaps

Rita:I'm not against volunteers, but have been burned by voluntary attendance.

Stacey:I have had bad experiences with volunteers too.

Rita:If you have advertised a program and the volunteer doesn't show up, you are still on the hook for the program.

Marsha Weeks:We use volunteers for our Saturday Stories program, but attendance has been iffy for us

Marsha Weeks:volunteer attendance, that is

Tamara Palmer:Aren't there also Union issues with having volunteers present STs?

Alanna jones:I like the idea of using music and movement programs

Suzanne Flint:I'm not suggesting volunteers replace librarians and their storytimes might not be as good but they can supplement. Check out the state library's Get Involved initiative...where all the union issues have been addressed.

Mary Anne:We had the same problem with volunteers calling in 20 mins. before the storytime and telling us they can't make it!

Jane Dyer Cook:I like how Sacramento PL's South Natomas Branch has a Play and Stay program in place between Toddler Storytime breaks. I think it's a nice and practical solution.

Karen J Maj:I have preschool story time and infant/toddler story time and it turns out that I must always adapt. So the stories are first preschool then I add a board book; the other day is the infant/toddler and then I add a picture book. I mentioned to the parents this is great because it's all story time, it's all fun and it's all about learning! One mother said...and chuckled....well, when you look around the room....each of us have preschool kids AND an infant!

Marsha Weeks:We have a play period after storytime and it is wildly popular!

Rita:We have a "closing song" that we use in ALL our storytimes, from babies on up. Parents get really nostalgic about it. :-)

Beth Saxton:You can suggest modifications like in a yoga class :-)

Carolyn Brooks:We sing Francie Dillon's "Read to Your Child" song at the beginning and end of every storytime, after all, that is the most important message that we want them to remember!

Karen J Maj:Thank you!

Nora:I remind parents each story time that is is an INTERACTIVE program for the child and their adult. I have also posted no cell phone signs to storybook chairs! ;-)

Beth Saxton:Librarian personality types are often very rules oriented sometimes we have to pick our battles. Great advice from a formr administrator.

Carolyn Brooks:You can find Francie's song on the CA Library Early Learning Youtube channel...Suzanne, do you have the link?

Tonya Kennon:Francie's song is at http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BdrnSic_OZY

Krystal Pederson:@ Carolyn Brooks - what a great idea :) It's easy to forget that the point of storytime is to empower caregivers to practice "storytime" themselves at home. Parents are a child's best and favorite teacher.

Suzanne Flint:Hi Carolyn - here's the Francie video
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BdrnSic_OZY

Susie Serrano:We started a Storytime tour with our children's staff to visit each others storytimes.

Karen J Maj:Lol....thank you both. You bring up a good point about the bright light. Yup. That's it right there. The other parents and children are involved though. Then again, maybe this is a Moment a very busy parent needs for themselves and yet are there with their child/children! Glad I asked. I feel so much better about accepting it now. :-)

Rick Samuelson:The child of the texting parent looks at the parent as a model for proper behavior. I think it is very important to upfront set the expectation. Love of literacy is not going to be built in storytime alone. We need to get across to the primary caregivers that the storytime environment needs to become habitual.

Karen J Maj:Thank you too Rick!

Nora:My own opinion, superlarge storytimes for babies and toddlers are NOT a good idea. Many little ones freak out when the crowd gets big. Again, just my opinion.

Anita V:For something texting, it is difficult to overlook, but a negative response to the parent would have such negative consequences, it is not worth making an outward comment. Also, there may be a personal issue at stake(personal in hospital, etc.) I believe a watch and wait would be best, and follow up about "how are you doing today?" may be better for this issue.

Karen J Maj:Thanks Anita V. !

Kristine:well said Anita

Nora:Very useful perspective, Anita V. Thank you.

Beth Saxton:Yes Anita, something I've had to learn but so important. Build that relationship and the behaviour will change anyway

Marsha Weeks:It's all about making those connection with families :)

Nora:Does anyone have issues with room/building capacity in terms of fire codes?

Mary Anne:Love the picture - very expressive crowd!

Martin Blasco: Responding to Anita V.: you can set up the rules before the storytime. If you need to text or use your smartphone, please, do it outside the room.

Karen J Maj: Good point Nora!

Carolyn Brooks: It is important to build our attendance/audience, but they do not all need to be there at the same time...

Mary Shaw: Every community is unique. We have small groups. A nearby town gets 100+ people regularly. We keep trying...

Beth Saxton: I've found the more kids in storytime the less material I need

conniesutton: I did notice one mom (with 2 children) texting yesterday at a storytime with 65 attendees. I was disappointed because she usually seems to really enjoy storytime. But I realize that she was not causing any problems for anyone. And I decided to not take it personally. I think we do need to be careful to not take children's or caretakers behavior personally.

Martin Blasco: The more the merrier.

Anita V: I am trying to understand how everyone sees the story - do you use a document camera? Or do you have other people with copies showing the pictures in other parts of the audience?...

Marsha Weeks: We are fortunate to have a large community room where we hold our storytimes as that can accommodate 125 people. We have hardly any room in our main children's area though for doing programs.

Jane Dyer Cook: Small groups are fine, too. Children have different experiences and needs.

Alan Bern: Especially true for some kids with disabilities small groups work better

Jane Dyer Cook: Or shy children. Or shy parents and caregivers.

Evan Kendrick: Having the words to rhymes/songs printed on cards for everyone to see can really help.

Karen J Maj: Martin, very true. I feel better about my question as you'll see above. It will all depend on the day as it should. Then again, looking at the picture.....parents leaving to go outside....more disruption. I guess it took me awhile to not shhhhhh so now I'm adapting to texting! lol A good friend did give me a Nancy Pearl shhhing action figure though. I'm glad our libraries don't shhhh anymore. We're busy and happier and making a difference!

Rick Samuelson: One note about small groups... it is much easier to form a personal relationship with the kids and the primary caregivers. When you have the relationship, you build trust and can be seen as a valued resource on early learning.

Nora: Rick, that a major advantage I've enjoyed over the years.

Karen J Maj: So WONDERFUL that we are balancing Special Needs story times with Inclusion for ALL!

Marsha Weeks:We offer to email lyrics to patrons for our Baby Rhyme Time program to encourage parents to do the rhymes and songs at home

Tamara Palmer:We project most of our ST activities/songs/etc. via PowerPoint slides, to enable participation.

Nora:We had several families form a regular playgroup based on their attendance at Baby Bounce, continued until the children went to Kindergarten.

Rita:Oh, Marsha, I like that!

Beth:Great idea Marsha!

lcompton:I have placed all the songs, rhymes on a 11 by 17 sheets and then they can all read and sing them

Nora:I love the emailing idea. Saves on wasted paper, too!

Marsha Weeks:@lcompton, we do the same at our Baby Rhyme Time program

Nora:You **have** to be flexible. If you're not, it won't go well, for sure!

Nancy V:I strongly feel that rhymes should be learned the traditional way. Hearing and repeating. But I seem to be alone.

Karen J Maj:Very great points! Thank you. Very well said!!!!

Linda Henderson:I have done an online newsletter of sorts that have the songs and activities, along with the books read and the literacy skills covered.

Deb Ehret:I have just started projecting the rhymes and songs onto our large TV from my laptop, seems to be working really well

cen campbell:You can upload ppt or keynote slides to the library's website or facebook page, too!

Anita V: really like the idea of the 11x17 sheets - trying to establish pre-reading connections of text to story or song is accomplished with this simple activity.

Nora:Nancy V., think of it as just a learning aide.

Evan Kendrick:Exactly, it's print motivation and print awareness.

Beth Saxton:Ooh, facebook. Also a great way to remind people what is going on in their community

Karen J Maj:You're not alone Nancy V.

cen campbell:@nancy: I agree too that "best practice" may be that parents learn new rhymes by hearing and seeing them, but so many parents often ASK for the lyrics, or speak a different language at home, or just learn differently, and benefit from seeing the words written down

Nancy V:Thank you, Karen!

Marsha Weeks:good idea, @cen campbell re: adding slides to the website/facebook

lcompton:The do start to learn them, but is great for new parents not to feel lost. I want them to want to come back. I have a lot of ones I do just around a monthly themes. Ground hog day etc.

martha de aquino:We provide “song books” for the parents to take home and practice with their children - the children still learn by the “hearing and repeating” rather than power points

Anita V:Facebook - just be sure you have permissions if you include children’s faces.

Rick Samuelson:Start a storytime blog for families so they can check back to remember the songs, books, etc. That way you can extend the storytime environment into the family home.

Karen J Maj::-) Nancy

Nora:Again, my opinion only, I hope to keep my story times tech free for as long as possible. I’m a Luddite, I admit, but I want kids to have plenty of NON tech assistive experiences, as well.

Rita:I find too, that so many parents don’t know the standard rhymes that we need to jumpstart them with print.

Jane Dyer Cook:Listening to stories (not read from books), rhymes and songs is just as powerful as being read to from books themselves. You don’t always need to have print.

Karen J Maj:I hear you Nora!

Evan Kendrick:I’m so glad they said that!

Nancy V:Amen, Nora! More face to face. Less screen to screen!

Nancy V:OK, I’m starting to preach now. I’d better stop.

Nora:LOL, Nancy... me, too!

martha de aquino:Yay Nora!

Karen J Maj:Don’t stop! lol

Anita V:The rhymes are replaced with other materials, so a common base for memories is being eroded. Our inclusion is a great way to keep them going!

Marsha Weeks:We use a MP3 player in our storytimes, but no real technology beyond that, lol

Evan Kendrick:Well if we are trying to make our programs more accessible for parents, we might need to admit that they don’t know the rhymes or songs and if we want them to participate we need to facilitate.

Kathleen McVey:When I have noticed a parent feeling upset over their child acting out, I’ll sometimes seek them out after storytime and let them know how great it is that they’re there, and let them know it’s sooo normal and completely ok for kids to get used to the storytime idea

Nora:Okay, Marsha. We can still be friends. :-)

Marsha Weeks::)

Martin Blasco: a great blog for rhymes and suggestions for storytime:
<http://kids.wccls.org/>

Mary Anne: We had a horrible, horrible experience with pre-registration. A lot of families haven't returned since we tried it once at the beginning of the school year.

Alanna Jones: I agree Evan

Beth: Kathleen - I think parents appreciate that so much!

Natasha F.: One nice thing about using an app or other tech in storytime is you can talk to parents about how to use technology as a literacy tool, not just as a babysitter.

Beth Saxton: Again, lyrics on cardboard vs powerpoint have no magical properties. Do what works for you

Rita: Yes, Natasha!

Christy Bridges: I think it is important that it be "ok" if parents don't know all the rhymes right away because we want kids to be ok not knowing too. They will learn, but if parents feel uncomfortable, so will the kids.

Karen J Maj: pre-registration: too formal! I want to welcome people into our/their library home!

Nora: No registration, here, either.

Kathleen McVey: Thanks, Beth. I have found it really makes a difference. I've even had parents hug me and tell me how grateful they are that I sought them out

Nora: Yes, Beth, absolutely.

Rita: Not to be contrary, but we find that registration helps formalize storytime. If people have to register, they are more apt to come regularly.

Rick Samuelson: @Nora ... I'm with you on the face-to-face ... but tech can help caregivers remember rhymes later so they can do rhymes/activities face-to-face in the home. I would never do rhyme videos if the purpose was to entertain kids. The purpose is to help parents interact with kids.

Marsha Weeks: We offer so many storytimes I can't imagine how much work it would take to require pre-registration. Luckily, we've never had to do anything like that.

Natasha F.: We do have fire marshall set room limits, so we just have a sign-up sheet on the door that people mark off, and once we hit the limit, supposedly the sign gets flipped over to let folks know we're "full".

Rita: we have an online tool that is connected to our events calendar. we will also register in person or over the phone.

Marsha Weeks: Yep, it's first come, first serve but we are fortunate to have a room large enough to not have to turn people away

Alanna jones:The nice thing about the songs is that they use familiar melodies and that they use movements...both are great ways to remember them later when they see the words again in the booklet

Nancy V:Caregivers learn the rhymes the same way as the children. As far as second language learners are concerned, hearing and speaking precede reading.

Nora:Rick, I understand, but I'm still going to take a step back. We have many families who can't afford tech. I want to keep it accessible to all, regardless of economics.

Deb Ehret:The relationships are so key, goes with consistency. Right on, Patrick!

Mary Shaw:We have registration so we have the same audience & can build on previous experiences. The children learn things through practice. We can do turn taking with babies since we've worked toward that.

Marsha Weeks:A few years back our city made a big push to "go green" so we shifted from handing out baby rhymes and movement to emailing them.

Rick Samuelson:@Nora, I agree. Tech works for some but not all.

Nora:Yes. It really is individual from community to community.

Nora:I need to work with my staff to think of and see themselves as part of the story time "team."

Rick Samuelson:My home library has nursery rhymes over the changing tables in the restrooms. :)

Karen J Maj:It is. Maybe going green and handing out the paper with the rhymes on them could be changed to like origami or paper airplanes or folded flowers....then you have a couple things taking place at the same time. Sigh....I think I need to slow down here. Lol

Beth Saxton:Rick, I love that idea so much!

Nora:@ Rick... nice touch!

Marsha Weeks:cool, rick

Alanna jones:we also use an alphabet poster near the changing table.

Janet Parr:Our library, Rapid City Public Library, just put in a nursing room!

Kathleen McVey:@Rick, Totally stealing that idea! Love

Nora:I ask parents to please bring the smallest stroller necessary, or not at all, if possible. HATE the SUV strollers!

Beth:Good for you Rapid!!

Jane Dyer Cook:Yay Rapid City!

Marsha Weeks:yeah, stroller parking has been a challenge for us at times

Janet Parr:-)

Anita V:We created a family bathroom, so either parent has space to take care of their children.

Nora:We have a family bathroom, as well. Only problem is convincing full on grown-ups that it's not specifically for their bathroom privacy needs!

Marsha Weeks:we found a way to fit them in by changing the orientation of the meeting room

cen campbell:great soundbite, heidi! "play thrives in stress-free environments"

cynthia:Our storytimes have volunteers to greet, direct, take count, and put out toys at the end.

Marsha Weeks:great use of volunteers, @cynthia

Nora:Ooh, Cynthia! EXCELLENT use of volunteers!

Linda Henderson:I love this interaction with other Children's Librarians. Thanks for all the ideas!

Nancy V:Yes! Having trouble with sound, but loving the chat!

Anita V:I am still a little lost about the books themselves and how a large group can see a book?

Karen J Maj:I hear you Linda Henderson!

Kathleen McVey:@Cynthia, love that use of volunteers!

Rick Samuelson:Another plug for storytime underground... they are always there to help crowdsource questions about unexpected situations:

<http://storytimeunderground.wordpress.com/> and
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/storytimeunderground/>

Nancy V: Thanks, Rick and all!

Marsha Weeks:dialogic reading, ftw!

Karen J Maj:You too Nancy V.!

Nancy V:Is that wtf backwards?

Marsha Weeks:ftw = for the win

Rick Samuelson:Thanks to everyone for another great dialog about the most important topic ever. :)

Nancy V:Sorry. I'll go now!

Marsha Weeks:i've been doing YA programs too logn, I guess

cen campbell:books are tools, yes! they come in many different formats, some digital, some analog.

Karen J Maj:You know it, Rick!