

Storytime Bootcamp

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Agenda →

Introduction

Early Childhood
Development

Early Learning
Messages

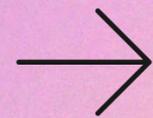
Best Practices

“The people in a child’s life are the most important ‘toys’ in the room.”

Institute for Learning & Brain Sciences,
University of Washington [1]



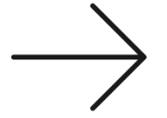
Early Childhood Development



How **do** kids learn to read anyway?



Learning to Read



Speech ≠ Reading

“Infants learn to speak by listening to and repeating sounds made by adults and connecting them to meanings.” [2]



Reading Isn't Automatic

Reading depends on the language children are learning and does not naturally develop simply via exposure to text.



Alphabetic Languages

- Learn how written letters represent spoken sounds.
- Recognize patterns of letter sounds as words.
- Match those to spoken words whose meanings they know. [2]

Conclusion?

Children need systematic, explicit phonics instruction to learn to read.



How does all this relate to storytime?



WE ARE THE EXPERTS!!!



Be Intentional

Storytime is not just 'let's have fun reading a story and playing.' We are instructing both the adults and the children the **entire** time.



Modeling

Walk the walk, not just talk the talk. Everything we do in storytime should be what we want to see our grownups do with their kiddos.



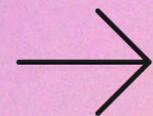
Direct Instruction

We should be telling our grownups exactly what is happening in storytime and why. Storytime is the training ground, not the battlefield.

What does direct instruction look like?



Early Learning Messages



Early Literacy Message Contents

Two Types:

1. Decoding
2. Meaning & Motivation

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Letter Knowledge

Knowing that the same letter can look different and that letters have names and represent sounds.

Print Awareness/Print Conventions

Knowing that print has meaning. Knowing how to handle a book, follow text on a page, and recognize environmental print.

Phonological Awareness

The ability to hear and play with the smaller sounds in words, beginning with recognizing environmental sounds and progressing to hearing syllables and rhymes.

Print Motivation

Being interested in and enjoying books. Yes, reading should be fun, grownups!

Vocabulary

Knowing the meanings of words, including words for things, concepts, feelings, and ideas.

Background Knowledge/Narrative

This is prior knowledge, what a child knows from their experiences with living and language. They should be able to describe what is happening to and around them.

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ELM Examples

Letter Knowledge	Print Awareness	Phonological Awareness	Vocabulary	Background Knowledge	Print Motivation
<p>When we teach children about letter names and letter sounds, we are teaching them reading skills. Letter names and sounds are one of the steps on the road to reading.</p>	<p>When we show children how written words work, it helps them understand how books and print should be read.</p>	<p>When we have kids focus on the sounds of language, it helps them learn to read. Good readers can play with the sounds of language!</p>	<p>When we help children learn new words, it increases their vocabulary. When you have a bigger vocabulary, it is easier to read!</p>	<p>When we have conversations with children, it can improve their reading and writing skills. Taking turns talking with all ages of children will make a big difference in their lives!</p>	<p>When we make reading and learning fun, it gives children a love of books and an interest in reading. It is easier for children to learn to read if they enjoy books!</p>
<p>You can play a game to find the Letter of the Day in the world around you! Let's find some in our room right now and then you can look for the letter when you leave.</p>	<p>When you read with your child, try holding the book upside down or backwards. See if your child notices that it is upside down. Children need to know which is the cover and the back of the book.</p>	<p>Singing songs slows down language to help kids hear the smaller parts of words like syllables and letter sounds. We are going to clap to the rhythm of this song to help kids hear the smaller parts of language.</p>	<p>Take a picture walk. Instead of reading a book, look at the pictures and name unknown things in the pictures. This will help build vocabulary!</p>	<p>Practice answering in complete sentences! It will be easier for your child to write in school if they are used to speaking in complete sentences!</p>	<p>Children who enjoy being read to are more likely to want to learn how to read. Read a book that you love reading and tell your child about your favorite part. Ask them theirs!</p>
<p>You can practice writing wherever you are. No crayon or pencil needed! Let's write some letters in the air right now!</p>	<p>When you read with your child, you can run your finger under words as you say them. This helps children understand that you are reading the text, not the pictures, and that text is written from left to right.</p>	<p>Let's move to the rhythm of a song because it helps kids hear that language has a rhythm and can be broken into smaller parts.</p>	<p>When we find new words in stories, we can use them in new sentences to help our children understand what they mean. We will find a few words in this book and make up new sentence with the words!</p>	<p>When you are reading, comment I wonder if (fill in the blank) and let your child respond to your wondering. Don't forget to give them 5-10 seconds to respond!</p>	<p>Including sign language makes reading even more interactive and engaging. Look up a sign for something that your child likes in a story and then use that sign as you read.</p>

'We do it together here.'

Demonstrate Demonstrate Demonstrate

'You do it together at home.'



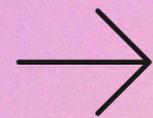
We are the Model

What we do, the grownups will do worse. Tell them **what** and **why** with everything you say and do. This is show AND tell.

We are *not* their Grownup

We cannot replace the other adults in their lives. It is our job to equip these adults and send them forth to do battle at home.

Best Practices



Storytime Formats



Family Storytime



Baby Storytime



Toddler Storytime



Preschool Storytime



PJ Storytime



And More!!!

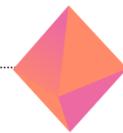


Storytime Structure



Introduction

Talk to the grownups, set the stage for what is to come after this. Set expectations quickly and clearly.



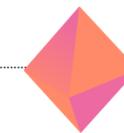
Welcome Song

I use the same one from week to week. Repetition is important.



ELM

I used to do these at the end of storytime. PPL suggests doing them at the beginning. Don't skip this!!!



Rhymes/Songs

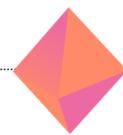
I tend to use the same ones at the beginning and end of my storytimes. Either way, these transitions are important to reclaim their attention.

Storytime Structure, cont'd



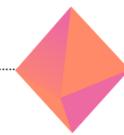
Letter of the Day

Keep the discussion brief, but this simple activity supports nearly every aspect of early childhood literacy needs!



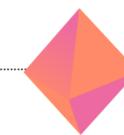
Breathing Exercises

Do this before each book you read. It “sends a signal to your brain to tell the anxious part that you’re safe and don’t need to use the fight, flight, or freeze response.” [5]



More Rhymes

I do try to add unique rhymes into each of my storytimes. Introduce new concepts and make time for movement. The kiddos need to get their wiggles out!



Closing

Restate your ELMs. The grownups need an extra nudge. [6] Announce upcoming programs. Introduce post-storytime activities.



Book Selection Basics



Enjoyment



Look for Short Books. Shorter Than You Think.



Interaction!



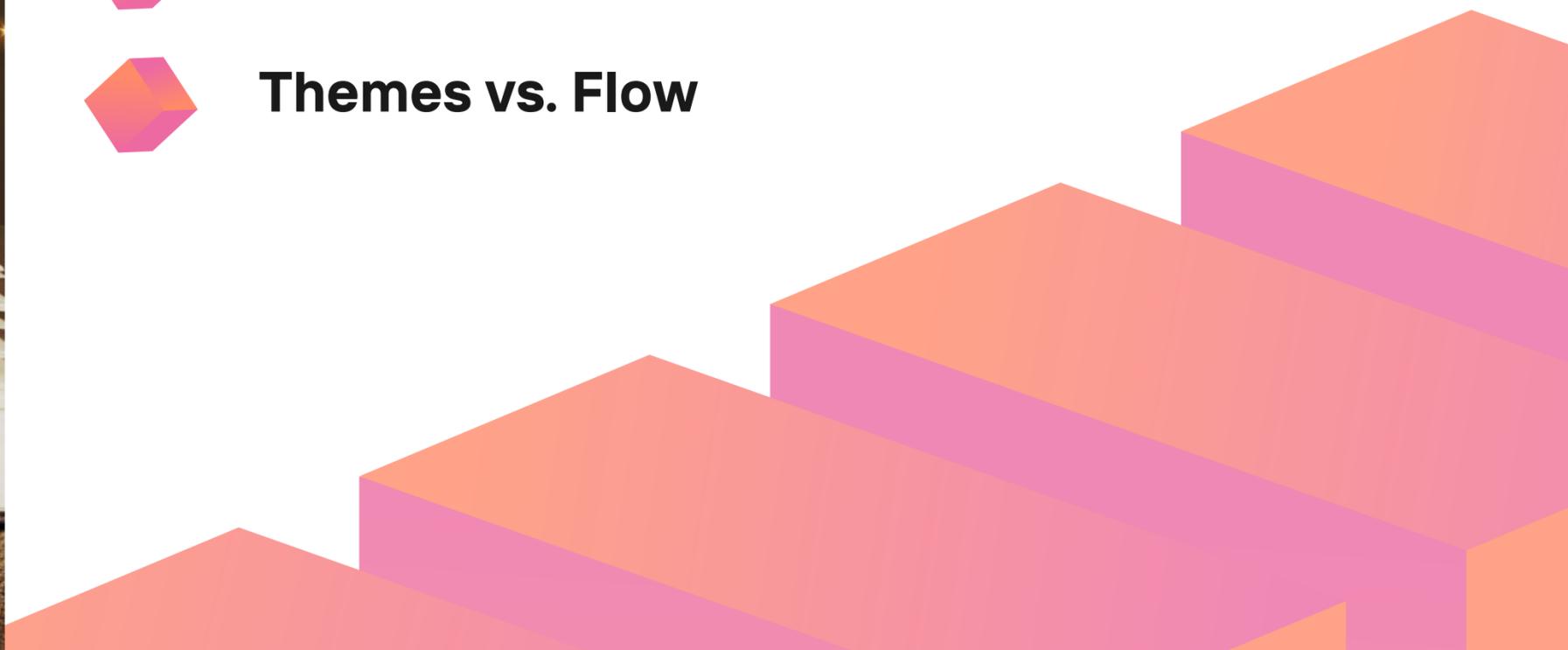
Bright, Colorful Illustrations. Big Size.



Diverse Stories & Authors



Themes vs. Flow



The Reading



- Be engaging & entertaining. This **is** a performance.
- Modulate your tone.
- Stop. Pause. Breathe.
- Ask questions. Engage with the audience.
- Don't worry if the kids don't engage back.
- Talk to the grownups, too!
- Use both open and closed questions. Pair them up.
- Practice in advance!
- Figure out what works for you.

The Call to Adventure

BE INTENTIONAL. "Language, phonological awareness, print knowledge, decoding, and early writing skills are important early predictors of later language and literacy development." [7]



Storytime is a crucial tool in a child's early development. What we do today will impact the entire lives of our kiddos.



Thank you!

Questions?

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References

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- [5] The University of Toledo Counseling Center. (2023). Deep Breathing and Relaxation. <https://www.utoledo.edu/studentaffairs/counseling/anxietytoolbox/breathingandrelaxation.html#:~:text=Deep%20breathing%20and%20relaxation%20activate,oxygen%20to%20the%20thinking%20brain.>
- [6] The Hechinger Report. (2018). Text-based tips may help parents and preschoolers learn. <https://hechingerreport.org/text-based-tips-may-help-parents-preschoolers-learn/>
- [7] Herrera, S., Phillips, B. M., Newton, Y., Dombek, J. L., & Hernandez, J. A. (2021). Effectiveness of early literacy instruction: Summary of 20 years of research (REL 2021-084). U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Regional Educational Laboratory Southeast. <http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs>.