

Adult Participation

Get the Grownups Involved

Children learn by example. When parents and caregivers participate in storytime activities, children are more likely to feel excited about participating themselves. Also, when adults participate in storytime, they are more likely to learn the songs and activities, which they can then take home and continue with their children away from the library. This makes storytime even more meaningful. You are not just teaching children during storytime; you are giving grownups their own tools to use to promote early learning in the home.

Things to try

- Help grownups learn songs by making words and lyrics available. You might pass out song sheets to every family or display the words on large hanging posters.
- Repeat some songs from week to week so both parents and children have a chance to learn the words and movements.
- Set a fun and friendly tone by letting adults know they do not have to be perfect. If you make a mistake, add a light comment like, “Grownups, your children will have fun and learn with you even if you’re not the perfect singer!”
- Leave time for open play after storytime. This less-structured time is great for kids, but it also gives parents a chance to get to know you and the other families.
- Encourage adults to participate as much as they feel comfortable, but don’t put too much pressure on them. Singing and dancing in a group of strangers is not something most grownups do every day!

Book Suggestions:

Books that model adult interactions with children get grownups thinking about how they can be involved with their children’s learning.

- *How to Babysit a Grandma* by Jean Reagan
- *The Last Stop on Market Street* by Matt de la Peña
- *Tea with Grandpa* by Barney Saltzberg
- *Forever* by Emma Dodd
- *Let’s Go Home, Little Bear* by Martin Waddell

Getting Started:

- Make your expectations for storytime just as clear for adults as you do for the children. Let adults know you would like their participation.
- Talk directly with grownups during storytime. Take a moment to explain why you are doing something or what the benefits of an activity are.
- Help grownups feel more comfortable in the storytime setting by making conversation and answering questions before and after storytime.

