



## Background Information for Storytime

### Five Early Literacy Practices

#### Talking

Learning about language by listening to grown-ups talk and by joining the conversation.

*In storytime, we might demonstrate this by talking about the weather or how their day is so far before starting the program.*

#### Singing

Songs are a natural way to learn about language and the smaller sounds in words or phrases.

*In storytime, we might demonstrate this by using chants, rhymes, and music in between the books and activities. It does not mean you have to be a professional singer to use music or songs.*

#### Reading

Reading together with children is the single most important way to help them get ready to read.

*In storytime, we might demonstrate this by being intentional with our book choices, keeping in mind the age of the group and using a wide variety of diverse stories to represent all cultures, identities, and abilities of people and share all styles of books.*

#### Writing

Writing is a way to represent the spoken word and communicate information or tell stories.

*In storytime, we might demonstrate this by having children write their names on nametags, using draw and tell stories, and offering coloring activities for the children to work on fine motor skills in their hands.*

#### Playing

Playing is a child's way of working. Pretend and dramatic play helps children to develop language and social skills.

*In storytime, we might demonstrate this by encouraging children to play with storytime items after the program is finished and having a designated play time for children and parents after storytime.*

## **Six Early Literacy Skills:**

### **Letter Knowledge**

Knowing that letters are different from each other and that they have different names and sounds.

*In storytime, we might demonstrate this by using puzzles, shapes, letter exploration, and sharing ABC books.*

### **Print Awareness**

Noticing print everywhere, knowing how to handle a book and how to follow the words on a page.

*In storytime, we might demonstrate this by tracking by finger the words read, letting the children handle books, and sharing books that draw attention to the text.*

### **Phonological Awareness**

The ability to hear and play with the smaller sounds in words.

*In storytime, we might demonstrate this by singing, emphasizing rhyming words, and sharing books with lots of rhyme or alliteration.*

### **Vocabulary**

Knowing the names of things.

*In storytime, we might demonstrate this by explaining unfamiliar words, talking about expressions, and sharing nonfiction books.*

### **Print Motivation**

The child's interest in and enjoyment of books.

*In storytime, we might demonstrate this by emphasizing inflection, playing with voices, pausing for breaks, and having fun!*

### **Narrative Skills**

The ability to describe things or events and to tell stories.

*In storytime, we might demonstrate this by making predictions, telling cumulative tales, and sharing books that tell a story.*

## Background knowledge for Early Literacy for Librarians

### Background knowledge for children

What young children experience in the library helps them build background knowledge to support literacy, but also math and science, social skills, gross and fine motor skills, and foundational learning skills such as attention, flexibility, creativity, and problem-solving.

Background knowledge includes:

- **general knowledge of the world** – self and other, the child’s environment, things, daily routine, etc.
- **conceptual thinking** – identifying patterns, thinking abstractly, understanding concepts (e.g. emotions, relationships)
- **content knowledge** – everything learned about math, science, and social studies, from counting to animal names to family history
- **book/story knowledge**, which includes:
  - **enjoyment** – print motivation
  - **story structure** – narrative skills
  - **uses of books** – print awareness

### Constrained vs. Unconstrained Skills

#### Constrained Skills

**(letter knowledge, print awareness, phonological awareness)**

Include decoding skills like noticing print and knowing letter names and sounds. They have a fixed point; once mastered, children don’t continue to learn more about these skills.

#### Unconstrained Skills

**(vocabulary, print motivation, narrative skills)**

These comprehension skills do not have a fixed end point. Children will continue to learn new vocabulary words and improve their comprehension skills throughout elementary and secondary school, college, and adulthood.