



Lap Storytime for infants 0-2, Plus Parents and Caregivers

Bozeman Public Library Model

1. The 45-minute program is held in the Library meeting room every Tuesday and Thursday morning at 10:15 a.m. and Wednesday afternoons at 1 p.m. The children's librarian makes sure the room is childproofed, tables are moved along the wall, and there is plenty of open space in center of room.
2. Board books and song sheets (in plastic sheet protectors) are displayed on the floor in a large circle. We have 20 to 35 adults attend each program, so I try to make the circle large enough for all to sit comfortably.
3. We begin by singing hello to each baby around the circle. We do whatever favorite movement (wave, stomp, wiggle, clap, sway, etc.) the parent selects.
 - "Let's wave hello to Zachary, Let's wave hello to Zachary,
 - Hello, hello, hello, hello, Let's wave hello to Zachary."(Song is from the Kindermusik program.) If there are too many infants to do this individually, we just all sing "Let's clap hello, hello. (etc.)" We do three different movements. (We do lots of rhymes in threes.)
4. The children's librarian leads the caregivers and babies in 15 minutes of chants, rhymes, lap games, songs and movement. Although we have several sheets of rhymes, we do many of the same ones over and over again. Parents like learning them, kids like the repetition and nobody seems to mind that we always do our favorite ones. I do ask for any requests, and occasionally parents have one they want to do.
5. The librarian leads the songs and rhymes. I tried at first to make it more democratic and have other parents lead, but our parents seem to like following along with whatever songs I choose. I intersperse some child development and other topics of interest to parents throughout the program. Our group has grown too large to try for any formal type of discussion, and adding an outside speaker makes the program too long.
6. On a table inside the door, I put parenting books and magazines that can be checked out, lots of handouts, including the song sheets, information about upcoming programs or parenting classes, and any new materials they might be interested in. We get new people every week, so it's important to keep a supply of song sheets available.

Ready 2 Read!



7. At the end of the 15 minutes, we sing a final song, such as “Twinkle, twinkle, little star” and I bring out baskets of toys for infants and toddlers, including balls, rattles, blocks, and soft toys. The children play under supervision of their caregiver, while the parents talk, introduce themselves to each other, share information and relax. This socializing period is very important. Lots of good stuff gets shared here: friendships form, news gets passed along, and parents have a healthy break from being alone with their child. I think this portion could last most of the morning if we had the time! During this period, I greet some of the new parents, model some playing, supervise the activities so no one gets hurt, and talk to any parents that have concerns.
8. At 11:00, after a half-hour of play, I sing “Toys away, toys away, it’s time to put the toys away,” as I gently go around and put the toys back in the baskets. I encourage parents to make this a gentle and slow transition. Parents and children all help, and we all help to slowly put the toys away. I gather up all the materials, and allow the parents to ease out whenever they’re ready. (I book the meeting room until 11:30 to allow for leaving time.)
9. Publicity is mostly word of mouth, although I have sent out flyers to hospitals, doctor’s offices, referral agencies, preschools and other community groups. It’s an extremely popular program, and continues to grow each week. We don’t limit attendance, and we have the program all year long except for August, when we use the room for school-age workshops. We started a second, then a third, group to alleviate the crowding, but it’s just continued to get larger all the time. There is a great need for these kind of programs now!

For more information, please contact:

Cindy Christin, Children’s Librarian
Bozeman Public Library
626 East Bozeman, MT 59715
(406) 582-2420
cchristin@bozeman.net