

Stages and Storytimes—Part 2

Age	What It Means for Storytimes (some ideas)	Say to Parents/Caregivers
Birth to 6 months (non-mobile infants)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate ways parent/caregiver can interact with baby around books, songs, and rhymes. Include bouncing and body rhymes where parent does motions on baby's body. • If storytime presenter wants to interact directly with baby, must come up to each baby and make eye contact • Use activities such as fingerplays and songs that encourage eye contact and interaction between parent/caregiver and baby • Include music, songs and rhymes that expose them to the sounds and rhythm of language • Include peek-a-boo books and games (Cover your own face, not the baby's) • When speaking with babies before or after storytime, use "parentese." 	<p>Some things work best one-on-one, adult and child together. Some are easily demonstrated in storytime; others are not. The following tips include things that you can point out to adults in storytime whether or not you are actually demonstrating them.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When you read with your baby, you can read anything. They love the sound of your voice and they are learning language by hearing you speak. If you are using books with pictures, it will be easier for them to see those that have bright, clear pictures, with high contrast between the picture and the background. I have a display of some of them here on the table. • If the book you are reading has only one or two words on a page, talk more about what the picture makes you think about. You want to give them lots of language. • Watch your baby's reactions. If he keeps looking away, he may be overstimulated. Try again another time. • When you talk with your baby, about a picture in a book or about anything, leave time for your baby to babble back. This is the beginning of developing narrative skills which will later help your child understand what she reads. • Use lots of different words with your baby even if they don't understand the meaning of what you say. This is the beginning not only of understanding but also hearing the sounds of language. • Speak with your baby in "parentese." Parentese means speaking to a baby in a higher-pitched voice and using very clear words. Repeat the words. Your baby will listen to you longer than when you speak in your normal adult voice. You can still use your adult words! • When you play peek-a-boo, cover YOUR face, not the baby's. At this age, when your baby can't see you she thinks you are gone. • It is only natural that your baby will put a book in his mouth. Babies this age explore the world by putting everything into their mouths. Their hands are not so coordinated yet so they use their mouths too. Just gently take the book from the baby's mouth and read it to him! Give him a rattle to suck on. • Board books, cardboard or cloth books are ideal for your baby because they will hold up longer than traditional books. Babies do not yet have good coordination, so you should have a couple of books that you know are going to get messed up or destroyed. They are learning about books!

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7 – 12 months (mobile infants)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use music, fingerplays and games that include bounces, standing bounces and clapping • Use books and songs that include animal and other environmental sounds • Use books with bold colors and easily discernable pictures of familiar objects and actions, and labels items while reading book • Label items while reading books • Incorporate actions with large movements • Use props or real objects and descriptive terms (soft, hard, smooth, rough, light, heavy) • Allow time for children to respond by babbling or talking • Use one-step directions when explaining what to do • Use motions to explain ideas and concepts. Examples include stirring, patting, hopping, patting the floor when asking them to sit down. • Repeat 70 – 80% of rhymes and songs each week; also repeat rhymes and songs in each program. • Use peek-a-boo books and activities • Use consistent storytime structure and “signals” to help with transitions (such as opening and closing songs, a puppet that signals a certain activity, etc.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Your baby may be batting at the pages of the books you read together. Your child is learning to turn the pages. Encourage your child to do so. As your child learns to pick things up using his thumb and index finger, he will also be better able to turn the pages of a book. This is the beginning of print awareness. • Your child is learning that things are there even if they cannot be seen. Try playing some games like hiding something under a blanket and see if your child looks for it. Your child is learning object permanence—that an object exists even if it cannot be seen. • Your child may enjoy flap books. It’s a kind of peek-a-boo game using a book! • Babies like to look at objects especially faces. If you have photos of family, try talking about them and telling stories about what is happening in the photo. You build your child’s vocabulary when you use some words he doesn’t know yet. • The small cardboard books are good for small hands. Expect that the books will get damaged. It is better for children to play and damage a book than not to play with books at all. As they get more coordinated, they will be better able to handle them. • Your children are getting around a lot now, so keep some books in every room, where they can reach them easily. When children see books all around, it will help motivate them to later read them. • Babies talk but you may not understand everything they say. That’s ok. Still be supportive of what they are saying, repeating what you think they said and adding more information. • Children this age like routines and a sense of structure. They are beginning to connect objects with actions. In terms of reading, you can set aside a special reading time and place and perhaps a signal so they know it’s time to read together. Having a special time to read together helps develop print motivation. • As you read books with your baby, name the objects in the pictures and talk more about them—what they do, how they are used, something you remember. You are adding to your child’s vocabulary.

Age	What It Means for Storytimes (some ideas)	What It Means for Storytimes (What do YOU think?)
13-24 months (toddlers)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use interactive elements to keep attention of the children, including pointing to a picture in a book and asking what it is. Put motions to words. Have children repeat one or two words in rhyme or story. Encourage children to say the sounds of animals • Do not press or force participation, but do encourage it. • Allow time for children to respond • Use one-step directions when explaining what to do • Use gestures to explain what you want child to do—pat floor as you ask him to sit down • Use motions to explain and repeat to allow child time to absorb the information or material • Include rhymes, songs, songbooks, and music in a variety of ways, including loud and soft, fast and slow, stop and go • Have enough of items so each adult and child has their own (for example shakers, scarves, etc.) • Repeat words, rhymes, songs, books within each storytime and over different storytimes • Use big books and books with clear pictures, repetition of phrase or action. Books depicting familiar situations engage children’s interest. Using props and other aids help children understand and remember stories better. • Use facial expressions in pictures and situations in books to talk about feelings • Introduce sign language • Include shape matching in flannel board and other activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As your child is showing signs of independence, encourage him to turn the pages of books at his own pace. Learning how to handle books develops their print awareness. Following your child’s lead will make the booksharing experience enjoyable for both of you—print motivation! • Asking a “what” question like “What’s this?” is more effective for developing language than saying, “Do you see the ___?” • You may get tired of reading the same book over and over again, but young children need repetition to learn. Their brain cells are making all kinds of connections which help them learn. • Your child may now start humming songs with you or singing some of the words. Singing songs with your child helps them hear the smaller sounds in words. Songs slow down language so they hear the individual sounds in words. Hearing these smaller sounds develops phonological awareness. • Try having a special time for book reading or book sharing. Don’t force it, but many children this age like routines. Book reading can be part of your daily routines. • Play is one way you can talk about feelings. Putting names to feelings helps with vocabulary development and also helps children identify their feelings. They can then slowly control their emotions by saying how they feel. When playing with dolls or stuffed animals and putting them in different situations, you give your child a chance to express feelings. • If you are teaching your child sign language, make sure they not only sign but say or try to say the word. • Playing with puzzles is one good way to notice shapes which helps later with identifying letters. • Encourage your child to scribble and to draw. Let your child tell you what she has drawn and write what she says. This helps with print awareness and prepares her for later writing.

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2 year olds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow a predictable routine, provide repetition. Present at a slow pace. • Use opening and closing songs, signals to indicate what's coming next (musical sound, host puppet, pulling something out of a bag) • Introduce stories with a basic plot about familiar things and situations, familiar characters, animals, feelings. • Avoid books with scary pictures or situations (example: Emberley's <i>Go Away Green Monster</i> or Hutchins' <i>Where's the Baby</i>) • Use books and activities that incorporate concepts such as opposites, size, colors, shapes, comparison, spatial relationships • Include books and activities that promote interaction and physical activity • Be patient and schedule in extra time to allow for participation, answering questions. • Include books, fingerplays and activities with rhyming words and simple actions • Share books that are silly/humorous, especially physical silliness and obvious humor such as wearing shoes on your ears. • Encourage but do not force participation • Use expressive voice especially in phrases they may repeat • When passing out toys or materials, easier if all children have the same items (all shakers, etc.) • Repeat words, rhymes, songs, books within each storytime and over different storytimes • From time to time point to a picture and ask what it is • Use music and songs with clear rhythm, beat for children to dance/move to. • Use actions that include running, jumping, galloping, walking on tiptoe, balancing on one foot • Include flannel board and other activities to match objects by color, shape or size • Use gestures to explain words or instructions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Your two-year-old is learning language at an extraordinary rate, understanding much more than he can say. Watch what your child is interested in and share books with him on those topics. If he's interested in the body or a particular animal, we are happy to help you find books on the topics that interest your child. • Don't worry about reading a book all the way through. Some children won't sit for a long time with a book. Read as much as you can in an enjoyable way and save some for next time. This approach will develop your child's love of books, print motivation. • Your child will want favorite books over and over again. You need not read a book the same way each time. Your child may talk about the pictures and tell you the story. You might talk about one page, talk about the colors, shapes, relating something in the picture to an experience something you remember. All of these are good ways to share books. • When you come across a word in a book that your child does not know, don't replace the word with an easier one. Explain the word if you can. • Children like to imitate you and they will also imitate your tone of voice. When you read a book, you may keep your child's interest longer when you change your voice from time to time—loud/soft, high/low, fast/slow. • When you play together, try matching games of colors or size or shape. Noticing what is alike and different is a beginning step to letter knowledge and being able to recognize letters. • Putting words to your child's feelings will help him express his feelings and then control them as he gets older. Also, using words in a situation helps your child learn word meanings, which develops his vocabulary. • When you ask your child a question, give them plenty of time to answer, at least 5 seconds. • Their brain cells need more time to make connections. By giving them the gift of time, you are helping them to develop their narrative skills as you listen to them. • Your child may like to hear the same book over and over again. It may get boring for you but they need repetition to learn! • Look for opportunities to talk about signs, labels and symbols. For example, labels on food boxes or cans, signs at the store or on the road, symbols for gas stations, stores, or on traffic signs. Your child is learning print awareness, one of the six early literacy skills, by noticing print all around. • Every time you sing songs and say rhymes with your children, you are helping them to hear the smaller sounds in words. This early literacy skill is called phonological awareness and will help them later when they try to sound out words. • Play games using prepositions—above, below, between, in, on, under. This helps develop their vocabulary and understanding of position. • Children this age often need routines, need the familiar, to feel secure. You might like to think of a song or a rhyme as a signal for what you want to do, like put toys away or start getting ready for bed.

Age	What It Means for Storytimes (some ideas)	What It Means for Storytimes (What do YOU think?)
3 year olds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow a predictable routine and provide repetition. • Use opening and closing songs, signals to indicate what's coming next (musical sound, host puppet, pulling something out of a bag) • Introduce simple stories about familiar things and situations, familiar characters, animals, feelings, that reflect social situations, characters overcome fears • Use books with repeated phrases or actions, rhyming books, song books • Use books with unfamiliar words, explain words from time to time • Introduce books of simple fantasy • Use factual books that explain the world around them • Use books and activities that incorporate concepts such as opposites, counting, size, colors, shapes, comparison, spatial relationships • Include books and activities that promote interaction and physical activity • Allow some time for children to talk about a story or picture in a book • When reading song books or books with rhyme, allow time for children to chime in with rhyming word. • Use books with humorous situations—where the incongruous or unexpected occurs • Ask a few open-ended questions: what is happening, how did that happen, what can the character do, how is character feeling? • Demonstrate what you want them to do so that they can more easily understand what to do. • When doing flannel board or other activities, include matching by color AND shape, i.e. blue triangle, blue circle, red circle • When doing flannel board or other activities, include matching by category—animals, foods • Allow time before, during, after storytime for children to tell you about personal experiences. • Use nametags, upper and lower case letters. If possible, allow them to write/scribble. • Use movement activities that include not only walking, clapping and tapping, but also hopping and tiptoeing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When saying rhymes and singing songs with your children, stop and allow them to fill in the rhyming word. This helps them hear the smaller sounds in words. • Children respond to routines, so having a song as a signal for what to do—like cleaning up a room—can be a way to help with transitions. • When we clap our hands to the syllables of words, we help children hear words broken down into parts, which will help them later in sounding out words. • Encourage your children to tell or retell you stories. This helps develop their narrative skills which helps with comprehension/understanding. • When you come across new words while reading books, don't replace the words with familiar words. Use those unfamiliar words and explain them if necessary. • Children this age are so curious about the world around them. Read factual books about the topics that interest them. We are happy to help you find books on those topics. • Your children may pretend to read. They tell you a story from the pictures in the book and say that they are reading it. Encourage this kind of storytelling. They are learning how books work, that stories have a beginning, a middle, and an end. • When your children play, they may use one object to represent another. For example, they may say a block is a phone. This symbolic play is an important step, learning that one object can represent another, just as letters can represent sounds! • Play time is a great time for children to make up stories and for you to add more words or to think of different situations to talk about. • Sometimes children are worried about new situations. Playing can put the child in the situation and you can practice together what might happen. This also gives your child an opportunity to talk about his feelings and what he is thinking. • Give your child plenty of opportunities to write or draw. This is one way they learn about print awareness, that print has meaning. • By putting words to your child's feelings, you help them identify their feelings, a first step to managing their feelings. Children are starting to use words, rather than hitting, to solve conflicts. You can support this by reading books and talking about how the characters are feeling and what they can do to solve problems or fix a situation. • Make your booksharing times enjoyable by giving your children opportunities to tell you what they are thinking. Children this age like to ask questions, so even if you don't get all the way through the book, allow time to talk about their questions. By making your booksharing time less stressful and more interactive, you are making it more enjoyable which develops print motivation, a child's enjoyment of books and reading! • Your children can now identify some colors, shapes and sizes and can sort by them. Playing matching and sorting games is helpful for them to identify letters as well. • One fun way to play around with letters is for you and your child to try to make your body or fingers make the letters.

Age	What It Means for Storytimes (some ideas)	Say to Parents/Caregivers
4-5 year olds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow a predictable routine, provide repetition but with some new elements to keep their interest. • Use opening and closing songs, signals to indicate what's coming next (musical sound, host puppet, pulling something out of a bag). • Use familiar songs from your routine and then change them to something unexpected (change a word or action) for humor. • Introduce more complex stories about familiar things and situations, familiar characters, animals, feelings, that reflect social situations, characters overcoming fears. • Use books with repeated phrases or actions, rhyming books, song books. Add piggyback songs—familiar songs with different words. • Use books of poetry. • Use books with unfamiliar words, words of exaggeration (gigantic, colossal). Explain words from time to time. • Introduce books of fantasy, larger than life • Use books about past events. • Use factual books that explain the world around them. • Use books and activities that incorporate concepts such as opposites, counting, size, colors, shapes, comparison, spatial relationships. • Include books and activities that promote interaction and physical activity. • Allow some time for children to talk about a story or picture in a book. • When reading song books or books with rhyme, allow time for children to chime in with rhyming word. • Encourage children to make up their own nonsense rhyming words. • Use books with humorous situations—where the incongruous or unexpected occurs. <p>Use books and activities that encourage silliness around words: tongue twisters, change first sound of words in a rhyme or song (Bow, bow, bow bour boat . . .)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sing songs that play with sounds (I like to eat apples and bananas, apples and benenes, etc.) • Use prop that are real, not toys and allow time for children to explore them. • Explain one action using words. See if they can do it. THEN demonstrate. • Ask a few open-ended questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ What is happening? ○ How did that happen? ○ What can the character do? ○ How is character feeling? • Use different voices, loud/soft, fast/slow, high/low pitch and allow time for children to imitate you and to come up with their own voices. • When doing flannel board/activities, include matching by color, size AND shape, i.e. large blue triangle, small blue triangle, large blue circle, small red circle • When doing flannel board or other activities, include matching by category—animals, foods • Allow time before, during, after storytime for children to tell you about personal experiences. • Use nametags, upper and lower case letters. If possible, allow them to write/scribble. • Use movement activities that include hopping, tiptoeing, and galloping. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sometimes children are worried about certain situations, like going to the doctor or dentist, moving, meeting new children. There are many books, both factual and stories, about a variety of situations. Reading the book together and then talking about it is a good way to help your child prepare for the situation. • Giving your child time to talk about what he is thinking also develops his narrative skills, which helps with comprehension. • Giving you child some props related to a story is one good way to encourage them to retell stories. Putting the props in order helps your child tell the story in order which helps develop narrative skills. • Children this age just love the silliness of language! Encouraging then to make up nonsense words that rhyme is just one way to support phonological awareness, hearing the smaller sounds in words. • Researchers have found that children can often recognize letters when they are in their name, but this does not necessarily mean they can recognize the letters separately. You can play I Spy a letter and see if your child can find it. If not, then show your child what the letter looks like and see if he can match it. • Have your child make a book, drawing pictures and telling you stories, either made up ones or ones telling about something the child did or will do. Write down what your child says for each page. This helps your child's narrative skills, telling stories, as well as print awareness, how books work. • Your children may enjoy books that have detailed and complex pictures. You may sometimes read the book for the story, and other times not finish the book, but take more time to talk about what is happening in the pictures. There are many ways to share a book. Your children learn to listen. Having a conversation around the book adds to their understanding.