

Wiggle-Giggle Storytime

Presented by Jill Hutchison

St. Mary's County Library

*Save the trees! I have limited my paper handouts for a "greener" presentation.

To download the detailed presentation files, please visit <http://greatreads.pbwiki.com/presentations>.

Participants will learn:

- About the partnership between the Library and the Infants and Toddlers Program
- What Wiggle-Giggle Story Time is, and how it differs from Toddler Story Time
- Ideas for adapting story time activities to include young children with developmental delays

What is the Infants and Toddlers Program?

The Infants and Toddlers Program exists in every county in Maryland, and Baltimore City. It is an early-intervention program providing testing, special education and therapy services free of charge to young children with developmental delays. A child and family may be eligible if the child is under three years of age, and:

- Has a delay of 25 percent or more in any area of development; or
- Is developing in a way that is considered "atypical" for his or her age; or
- Has a diagnosed condition that is likely to affect development.

Typical reasons why a child may receive services from the Infants and Toddlers Program include mild to severe issues like speech and language delays, low birth weight, autism, Down syndrome, cerebral palsy, hearing impairment, or vision problems. To find your local Infants and Toddlers Program, visit:

http://www.marylandpublicschools.org/msde/divisions/earlyinterv/infant_toddlers/directories/local_program.htm

What is Wiggle-Giggle Storytime?

Wiggle-Giggle Storytime is a once-a-week, half-hour library storytime. Families participating in the Infants and Toddlers program attend Wiggle-Giggle Storytime alongside their peers from the general public. Children's librarians lead the storytime, while staff from the Infants and Toddlers Program sit with the children and help their young clients participate. A free-play session follows the storytime, led by Infants and Toddlers staff.

The stories and activities in Wiggle-Giggle Storytime are specially adapted to meet the shorter attention spans and other unique needs of the group, and each child is encouraged to participate to his or her own best ability.

In one year, Wiggle-Giggle Storytime has grown into the most popular storytime program offered at the Leonardtown Branch, where it began. New Wiggle-Giggle Storytimes are planned this year at all St. Mary's County Libraries.

Adapting Stories & Activities for Wiggle-Giggle Storytime:

General Hints & Tips:

- Establish the rules and expectations clearly, but keep them simple & realistic.
- No single sit-time activity should be longer than 3 minutes.
- Follow each sit-time activity with a “wiggle”- a chance to get up and move!
- Sit up slightly higher or stand so that, when children stand up, others behind them can still see.
- Be prepared to tell the stories while standing up and even moving around the room to keep the kids engaged.
- Bridge between every activity! Help the children through switching tasks.
- Be flexible. If you’re losing them, switch to something else! Ditch that final book, break into song, or just cut to the closing activity and announce that it’s playtime!
- Incorporate sign language if possible- all kids and parents enjoy sign, not just kids with language and hearing difficulties.

Choosing & Adapting stories:

- Use only large books (Big Books if you have them!), or tell stories with flannel boards, puppets, or props.
- Choose stories with simple concepts, large text, and short lines.
- Mix up your formats- if you tell three stories, do one big book, one flannel or prop story, one pop-up, etc.
- It is good to repeat a story across several storytimes. Perhaps read from the book one week, then re-tell it with flannel the next! Repetition and familiarity help the children feel mastery.
- Sing or chant the words, and have the kids/parents keep time by slapping their thighs (easier than clapping).
- Look for stories that lend themselves to interaction- the kids make the sounds, call out something predictable, etc.
- Look for stories that can be shortened or expanded depending on the kids’ attention.
- Repetition & refrains are great. Shorten them if need be, but let the kids chime in!

Games & Activities:

- Choose games in which each child can participate to their own level and ability.
- Pick-up and simple color-matching games work very well.
 - Handing one or a few pieces to directly to each child is more supportive than simply scattering them about, as you might in toddler storytime.
- Copycat games like Simon Says & Monkey-See-Monkey-Do are excellent.
- Sensory games like parachute play or rhythm instruments are usually a hit .
- AVOID:
 - Complex rules
 - Games in which only some children can participate
 - Waiting for turns
 - Winners and losers, or being “out”