

Why????

Why begin a new story time program for children with special needs and their families?

To provide support for a vastly underserved area of the public. Parents preferring a story time for children with special needs may have previously shied away from coming to the library, apprehensive of other parents' lack of understanding of their child's behavior. Programs such as these are very welcoming for all members of the family, siblings other care givers and therapists.

You will will not be able to please everyone, but speaking with parents will help you to adapt the programs to their child's needs, likes and dislikes. Always keep a sense of humor and you will have a light and enjoyable program. Remember: there is always next week!!

My hope is that all of you will give this type of programming a try. My personal experience has taught me so much about these children, how they learn and what their reactions or behaviors mean. these types of programs work well with this segment of our population, encouraging reading, social interactions and building self esteem

Types of Programs Libraries Could Offer

- One on One Peer Mentor or Buddy Program
- Adapted Computer Classes for Children with Physical disabilities.
- Braille Buddies
- Community Special Education Night
- Stories in Sign Language
- Gaming Nights for Asperger Kids
- Adaptive Art for the severely disabled.

Special Needs Story Times at Your Library

Things To Remember:

- short attention span
- Routine - Same-
- visual clues
- sensory issues
- personal space
- no surprises
- tactile issues
- weighted blankets
- stress balls
- X marks the spot!
- specific needs/interests
- Keep age restrictions loose due to developmental differences in children that age does not reflect.
- Be Adaptable.
- Space - is there plenty of room for a wheelchair?

Planning Your Story Time:

- The Program should last under 20 minutes.
- You should always start and end with the same song, book or activity.
- Very structured, and very predictable
- You may want to use individual carpet squares, or mark off seating areas with masking tape (visual clue).
- Pick books carefully! Do not use books with confusing language or slang.
- Crafts should be easily adapted to everyone. Success with craft is important.
- Try to dim the lights if possible.

Afterthoughts

- Predictability is Key
 - Change is Uncomfortable for Special Needs Children.
 - Musical Instruments May Bother Youth on the Autism Spectrum.
 - Many will have personal Space Issues.
 - Some Children will walk around, stand in the Back of the Room, Rock or make noises. This is OK!
 - If your budget allows, have weighted Blankets or Stress Balls available.
- Never expect these children to hold hands, sit in a circle or touch each other.

Programming Books

28 Instant, Fun Filled Activities for Kids, 978-1935567080

Activites for Adults with Learning Disabilities, 978-1843109754

Bonding While Learning: Activities to Grow Your Relationship While Preparing for Reading Success, by Gary Kosma, 978-0615138299

Danceland, for Sensory Motor Skills(Audio and Book),
by Aubrey Lande, 978-19311615044

Expressive Arts for the Very Disabled: All Ages, 978-0-3908067045

Fine Motor Skills in Children with Down Syndrome,
by Maryanne Bruni , 978-1890627676

Gross Motor Skills in Children with Down Syndrome,
by Patricia C. Winters, 978-0398067045

The Out-Of-Sync Child Has Fun: Activities for Kids with Sensory Integration Dysfunction, by Carol Stock Kranowitz, 978-0399532719

Songames for Sensory Intergration, 978-1931615082

Booklist

Special Needs Books Recommend for Parents

1-2-3 Magic: Effective Discipline for Children 2 -12, by Thomas Phelan, 978-1889140162

Babies with Down Syndrome, A New Parents Guide, by Karen Stray-Gunderson,
978-0933149649

Cerebral Palsy: A Complete Guide for Caregiving, By F. Miller, 978-0801883552

Children with Tourette Syndrome, A Parents Guide, by Tracy Lynne Marsh, 978-1890627362

Epilepsy and the Family: A New Guide, by Richard Lechtengerg, 978-0674009738

The Everything Parent's Guide to Sensory Intergration Disorder, by Terri Mauro,
978-1593377144

The Misunderstood Child, Understanding and Coping with Learning Disabilities, by Larry B.
Silver, MD, 978-0307338631

New Hope for people with Bipolar Disorder, by Jan Fawcett, 978-0307353009

The Out-of-Sync Child: Recognizing and Coping with Sensory Intergration Dysfunction, by
Carol Stock Kranowitz, 978-0399531651

Parenting Your Out-of-Control Child, by George Kapalaka, 978-1572244849

The Oasis Guide to Asperger Syndrome, by Patricia Bashe, **978-1400081523**

All Dogs Have ADHD, by Kathy Hoopman, (picture book) 978-1843106517

Websites:

www.ldonline.org - LD online is the leading website on learning differences that parents and educators will find useful.

www.do2learn.com - Games, songs, communication cards, print resources and information for special needs persons.

www.thejointlibrary.org/autism/ - Libraries and Autism programming, resources and links. Great site for parents too.

www.childrensdisabilites.info - Articles and resources that help parents and educators who work with disabled children.

www.aspergersyndrome.org - Articles, bookstore, educational resources, support groups, message boards. The very best Autism and Asperger site available.

Books for Asperger Kids:

All Cats Have Asperger Syndrome, by Kathy Hoopmann,
978-1843104810 (picture book) (ages 4 and up) *(The best book EVER to explain the disorder.)*

Asperger Syndrome, the Universe and Everything, by Kenneth Hall,
978-1853029301 (age 9 to 12)

Blue Bottle Mystery, An Asperger Adventure, by Kathy Hoopman,
978-1853029783 (age 9 to 12)

The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night Time, by Mark Haddon,
978-1400032716 (age 12 and up)

Freaks, Geeks and Asperger Syndrome, A User Guide to Adolescence, by Luke Jackson, 978-1843100980 (age 12 and up)

Cf Mice and Aliens, An Asperger Adventure, by Kathy Hoopmann,
978-1843100072 (age 9 to 12)

The Red Beast, Controlling Anger in Children with Asperger's Syndrome, by K.I. Al-Ghani,
978-1843109433 (age 3 to 7) *(OK - I really dislike the artwork, but the words are accurate.)*

SPECIAL NEEDS STORY & ART PROGRAMS

In Woodstock we are lucky to have a vibrant special needs community. Individuals accompanied by caregivers, along with participants of Zack's Place Enrichment Center, visit Norman Williams Public Library (NWPL) regularly. Commonly, these patrons come once a week for a special story hour geared for fun and stimulation. Regular sessions involve memory – reaching back to recall where the prior weeks chapter left off - reading the current chapter(s) with discussion of unfamiliar words and ideas, and lastly, what we might expect and hope for in the next week.

We also schedule Art Projects, usually corresponding with our current story but not necessarily. The participants are encouraged by the stories but are free to follow their own desires and imaginations. We are lucky to have a room at NWPL that is wheelchair accessible. For story hour we get comfy in wheelchairs, folding chairs or lounging on pillows on the floor. The participants know (and I've learned) where they are most comfortable, both physically and emotionally. For art projects, although we can spread sheets and papers to cover floors and tables, what we love best is to go out onto the NWPL lawn where the next rain washes away any paint messes we accidentally leave behind and the fresh air makes us all inspired. We have learned to adapt (and continue always to experiment) with the best way to do things. Since participants have a variety of needs, we look to both physical and mental space and attention. Boards are placed over wheelchair armrests, paintbrushes can be fastened around hands with bandages. I or their caregivers aid in arm movement, color selection and helping them direct brushes according to their desires. Colors play an important role in pleasing or disturbing some individuals. Yellow and purple seem to be absolute favorites in this group. We have one participant who will regularly illustrate the author and book title of each story. She's an amazing artist and I wouldn't be surprised if she becomes well known and respected among professional outsider artists. Here at NWPL we have a yearly art exhibit with works by many of our young library patrons including participants of this group. It's very impressive!

Finally, to cap off our finishing of each novel, we treat ourselves to a party. Anyone is welcome. If the book has been made into a film, we show it then. The kids love it and it's great for visual stimulation. We also discuss what does or doesn't correspond to the book. Their art work is displayed and treats are provided, often corresponding to the books theme- chocolate for Charlie and the Chocolate Factory, cheese & crackers for Mrs. Frisby and the Rats of NIHM.

Believe me, a great time is had by all!!!

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