The ABC's of StoryWalks®

Parent Resource Centre

Created by the Early Literacy Specialists of Eastern

www.parentresource.ca

What is a StoryWalk®?

A *StoryWalk®* is an opportunity for children and families to experience reading a book while walking through a chosen area such as a park, trail or neighborhood. *StoryWalks®* promote literacy, outdoor physical activity, and encourage parent and community involvement.

Along with a parent, caregiver or educator, children follow a path from one laminated poster board to the next, each containing one page of a children's picture book. Some *StoryWalks®* include collecting items along the way, or a snack or activity related to the story.

There may be a common theme between the story and the season or the location where the walk takes place, encouraging children to make connections between the text and the world around them. The boards tell a story and provide prompts for adults to guide discussions, and help children engage in the text by asking questions and making predictions.

* The StoryWalk® Project was created by Anne Ferguson of Montpelier, VT and developed in collaboration with the Vermont Bicycle & Pedestrian Coalition and the Kellogg Hubbard Library.

→The statement following the asterisk should be put on all promotional materials for StoryWalks®, along with the trademark (®) symbol beside the word StoryWalk®

Why Do a StoryWalk®?

StoryWalk® events support the 6 principles of the *Early Learning for Every Child Today (ELECT)* framework.

1. ***Early child development sets the foundation for lifelong learning, behaviour and health***
   - Exposing children to fun literacy activities allows them to develop a healthy and positive attitude towards learning.

2. ***Partnerships with families and communities strengthen the ability of early childhood settings to meet the needs of young children***
   - Working with families and community partners allows us to offer support and collaborate to host a fun and education event for everyone!

3. ***Respect for diversity, equity, and inclusion are prerequisites for honoring children's rights, optimal development and learning***
   - Respecting the needs of individuals and the community will allow everyone to participate and enjoy the activity.

4. ***A planned curriculum supports early learning***
   - Reflecting on the continuum of development allows you to effectively plan: choosing an appropriate book, preparing key questions to enrich the learning experience and choosing appropriate resources for families.

5. ***Play is a means to early learning that capitalizes on children natural curiosity and exuberance***
   - Communicating the importance of play opens the minds of those who can help children find new ways to learn.

6. ***Knowledge, responsive early childhood professionals are essential***
   - Working in a team and highlighting your professional strengths will provide a quality preschool experience and a successful event.

How to Make Your Own StoryWalk®

1. Choose a book!

- Depending on the age of the audience look for minimal text, bright illustrations and a great story line! Books can be chosen for specific occasions using themes such as seasons, festivals and celebrations. You will need 2 copies of the book.

2. Make the pages

- Look for the seams in the middle of the book. Using an x-acto knife carefully cut the seams and detach the pages. Using a ruler and an x-acto knife is the best way to get nice clean lines.
- Once the pages are detached, laminate them.

3. Put the pages together

- Number the pages (on the back)
- Place the soft side of the Velcro about 30 cm apart from each other on the page
- Stick the rough side of the Velcro on the boards 30 cm apart

These children are picking up 'caterpillars' while reading 'The Very hungry Caterpillar'

4. Extras!

- Create open-ended questions for the children to answer at each page
- Add activities related to the story along the way or at the end of the story.

5. Create a QR code

- A QR code is a code that participants can scan with their smart phones to find more information about the event or the organization.
- →Visit **http://goqr.me/#t=url** to create your own for free!
- Once you've created your QR code, you can choose which website it will link to. You can choose to link it to your own website or the author's website.

6. Set them up outside!

- Place the first page at the beginning of your path. The next page should be in sight but far enough that you have to walk over. Add large numbers on each board so participants know which number to look for next. On the last board, indicate the end of the story.

Copyright Laws

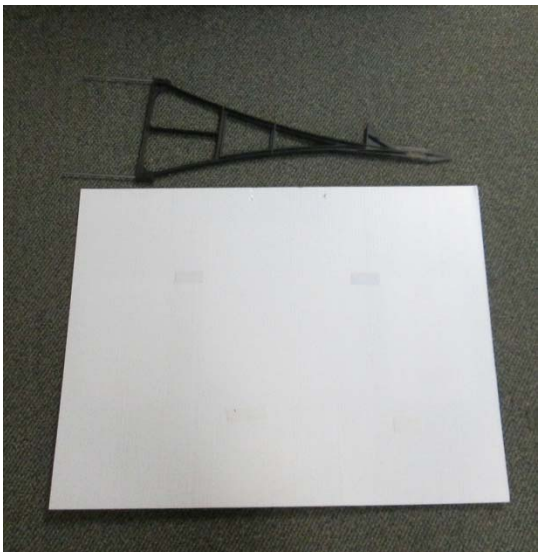
Don’t forget to respect the author’s rights

Books cannot be altered in any way, and the pages cannot be scanned or reproduced. We make a point of purchasing new books (and not taking donations or buying used books) so that writers and illustrators get full benefit. We buy all of our supplies (books, boards, stakes etc) from local businesses.

We encourage you to contact the author of books and visit their website. Sometimes you can find educational activities. Some authors even give free items to promote their books. For example, when we contacted the author of Moo! he sent us buttons, bookmarks, a personalized letter, autographed posters and inflatable cows.

What Do I Need?

- 2 copies of the book (3, if you want an extra copy to keep in your kit)
- 20-25 corrugated plastic signs 18 X 24 (with corrugated holes in the bottom)



- Velcro (from dollar store)
- Access to a laminator
- 20-25 posts – to purchase visit : ndgraphics.com
    - Ask to speak with Keri Tremblay keri.tremblay@ndgraphics.com

What are the costs involved?

- Books (can range anywhere from 5-30$ each)
- 20-25 corrugated plastic boards (about 3-5$ each)
- 2-3 packs of Velcro (1$ each from dollar store)
- Laminator (most places charge about 1-2$ per foot)

Total: 110$

***If you are on a tight budget, you can simply laminate the pages and use tape or wire to attach the pages to trees or light poles instead of buying stakes and boards.**

Every Child Ready to Read

StoryWalk® events are an opportunity to combine the **five early literacy practices** recommended by *Every Child Ready to Read*

Talking with children helps them learn oral language more quickly, one of the most critical early literacy skills. The experience of self expression also stimulates brain development, which supports all learning.

Singing (which also includes rhyming) increases children's awareness and sensitivity to the sounds in words. This helps prepare children to decode print (written language).

Play is one of the primary ways young children learn about the world around them. General knowledge is an important literacy skill that helps children understand stories once they begin to read.

Reading together or shared reading, remains the single most effective way to help children become proficient readers.

Writing and reading go hand in hand. Writing helps children learn that letters and words represent sounds and that print has meaning.

Visit your local Ottawa Public Library to borrow a book or attend a free circle time.

You can also download audio books from the library website at

www.biblioottawalibrary.ca

PRC CRP

www.parentresource.ca

Our Vision

Communities where children and youth thrive and meet their full potential.

Our Mission

The Parent Resource Centre works in partnership with families and communities to provide responsive programs and services that meet the needs of children, youth and families in our community.

Our Values

Child and family centered: we believe children, youth and families come first; we believe that parents and caregivers are the primary agents of change

Holistic: we believe in providing a supportive, creative, and caring environment for staff, volunteers, families, children and youth

Inclusiveness: we recognize and uphold the principle of equality, recognizing uniqueness; we believe in proactively engaging partners and families to support our work

Leadership: we provide opportunities for growth; we collaborate with others to maximize resources; we offer our professional opinion on matters affecting children and youth

Dynamic: we are creative, open to new ideas and work together to meet the changing needs of our communities