Navigating Youth Services: Lapsits/Toddler Storytimes
October 23, 2009

Lapsits: Babies 0-18 months

Reasons to do a lapsit program:
- Babies need programs too
- Get the caregivers coming early and they will continue to come!

Actual Program
**This is what worked for me at my library, obviously you need to do what works best for you at your library**
- Caregivers sit in a circle with babies on their laps
- Program “introduction”
  - Puppet— you can use the same one each time or switch it up
    - Songs to sing with a puppet:
      - Hello David, Hello David, How are you?, How are you?, We’re so glad you are here at Ada Babies, Hello David, Hello David (tune of Frère Jacques)
      - Blue Fish (or whatever puppet you’re using), Blue Fish looking at me, Blue Fish, Blue Fish who do you see? I see David looking at me
  - Always sing the same opening song/rhyme
  - Books
    - Popup books work great
    - Non popup books may need simplifying
  - Activities
    - Taking a few minutes to have the caregivers read board books to the babies
    - Have caregivers use puppets to interact with their babies for a few minutes
    - Songs from a cd
    - Singing songs
    - Old MacDonald with puppets
    - Finger plays
    - Flannel boards
    - Storytelling props
Other thoughts/tips

- Themes
- Signs
- Handouts
- Repetition is OKAY!
- Nametags
- Box
  - What's in the box, what can it be, what's in the box, let's look and see
  - Stick to items that babies would normally come into contact with
- End of the class activities
  - Bubbles
  - Parachute
  - Toy box
  - Balls
  - Baby tunnel
  - Cardboard boxes
- After class
  - If you can it is great to let the caregivers have time to hang out after the program
- Early Literacy Skills
  - Storytime is a great way to introduce the Early Literacy Skills to caregivers
    - You don't have to use the words "early literacy skill" you can just say "doing such and such with your baby now, will help him/her learn to read later"
    1. Print Motivation
       - Making sure reading is fun
    2. Vocabulary
       - Calling attention to pictures
    3. Phonological Awareness
       - Singing and rhymes
    4. Print Awareness
       - Having handouts for parents to follow and babies can notice text
    5. Narrative Skills
       - Modeling talking with babies, by asking questions about the book and leaving the baby time to respond
    6. Letter Knowledge
       - Nametags
Toddler Storytime: 18 to 36 months

○ Format—more like a “normal” storytime with the presenter at the front and the children on the floor
○ Alternate book/activity/book/activity
○ Introduction
  ○ I like to do the same thing every time
    ▪ If you’re happy and you know it...clap hands, beep nose, wiggle ears etc
    ▪ You can make this last as long as you like
○ Books:
  ○ Simple is best
  ○ Interaction with the book is even better!
○ Activities
  ○ Flannel boards
  ○ Songs on cds
○ It is hard to keep the attention of this age group!
  ○ Let the caregivers know: If your child becomes “preoccupied” it is okay to leave storytime and come back after a couple of minutes
  ○ If something is not working move on to the next thing
○ End of the program
  ○ Stamps
  ○ Ending song

- Early Literacy Skills for toddlers
  1. Print Motivation
     a. Make sure reading is fun
  2. Vocabulary
     a. Calling attention to pictures
  3. Phonological Awareness
     a. Singing and rhymes
  4. Print Awareness
     a. Write out songs or rhymes and have them on display so that the parents can follow and kids can notice the text
     b. Hold the book upside down and complain that it is broken
  5. Narrative Skills
     a. Read a simple book and then ask the kids to help you retell the story after you finish
  6. Letter Knowledge
     a. Name crafts