

Get Ready for Storytime

Latah County Library District

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Fall storytimes will be starting again soon at all Latah County libraries. At the Moscow library, storytimes begin right after Labor Day, on Tuesday, September 7, at 10:30 am, with our Lap-Sit program. The Lap-Sit Program is for babies from nine months to two years. It's filled with music and songs, nursery rhymes, movement activities, bells and shakers. It's a language enrichment program that encourages babies to learn words and concepts through weekly repetition. We do a bit with counting. We talk about letter sounds, especially the importance of animal sounds. Asking a child how a cow sounds may seem silly to us, but when she learns that cows say "Moo," she's actually learning a key literacy concept, which is the sound of the letter "M." A few years down the road she'll learn a whole lot more about those familiar sounds and their usefulness. The Lap-Sit program includes reading one book, a big book of few words, and often many animal sounds.

But the Lap-Sit program isn't all that's offered at the Moscow library. Family storytimes, for children ages 2-6, will be held on Wednesdays and Thursdays at 10:30 am, and on Thursdays at 1:30 pm, beginning on September 8th. For many years we held separate storytimes for toddlers and preschoolers and families with more than one child would struggle to bring each child to the most age-appropriate event. This year those are all combined into Family storytimes. Parents are invited to bring their children, age six and under, to whichever time best suits their needs and schedule. The Thursday afternoon storytime is a great option for families with children who attend preschool in the morning.

If you've never brought your child, or children, to storytime at the library, you might wonder why you should. Isn't reading at home the same thing?

I do wholeheartedly encourage you to read to your children every single day. Read as widely and as much as possible. It will create warm memories of closeness for you and your children. It will also develop their enjoyment of books and reading. Studies have shown that children who've been read to learn to read sooner, and more easily, than children who haven't.

But attendance at storytimes offers some things that can't be accomplished by reading together at home. It gives your child an opportunity to interact with a peer group. It gives him the opportunity to develop self-confidence and self-esteem in that setting. Storytime might feel like school to him. It feels grown-up and important. He'll be encouraged to answer questions and be praised for participating. There is no testing or grading—no reason to fear—storytime. Because young children are frequently shy, the library's non-

threatening environment is a good place for them to feel comfortable with their peers, with their “teacher,” and to practice speaking up. It is the best steppingstone to preschool or kindergarten.

Storytimes at the library also help to start children on the exciting journey of lifelong learning. Libraries are the place where children can pick out the books they want to read. Storytimes expose them to a larger world than their homes. Storytimes help children understand that they are important and their contribution to their world is important.

Storytimes, though primarily focused on books, also include movement and rhymes, flannel stories and crafts, which all serve to develop a child’s imagination. Last but not least, storytimes are free. As is the vast wealth of books and other materials you can check out from the library.

If you are looking for opportunities to enrich your child or children’s lives in a meaningful and lasting way, please, bring them to storytimes at your library. For storytime schedules throughout Latah County, please visit our website at www.latahlibrary.org.