Welcome to Kindergarten

Siouxland Libraries

Children

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Tweens (10-12)

Welcome to Kindergarten

Dec 28, 2016

$1-50

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Byline
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For our Welcome to Kindergarten program, children entering kindergarten were invited, with their parents, to a special story time featuring books, songs and flannel boards to help make their first day worry-free. After the story time we offered several exploratory activity stations focusing on kindergarten skills such as cutting; name-writing; recognizing shapes, colors, letters and numbers; and shoe-tying.

We also introduced the children to beginner reader books, discussed our Read Squared program and displayed parenting books on school-aged topics. Each child who attended received a Ready to Read certificate.

Advanced Planning

Our goal was to celebrate kindergarten and ease apprehension about starting school. Two of our storytellers, Patti and Ashley, came up with the idea for the program in the spring. Over the next several months, they read and selected engaging stories about the transition to kindergarten and paired them with songs and flannel boards for the story time portion.

For the activity stations, we began by researching important skills to aid in reading readiness for kindergartners. After we had our six focus areas, we came up with an activity for each of the skills and paired it with a related book. **(Learn more about the activity stations under Attachments at right.)**

We also needed to plan for a wider range of abilities to target children who were already reading. For this, we had a shoe-tying station, which was frustrating for many children.

Marketing

The event was promoted on our website, calendar of events and fliers. A local TV station contacted us and asked for a televised interview about the program, as well. Watch the interview.

Budgeting

We spent less than $50 on the program. In addition to the materials we used in the story time, we also needed paper, scissors and multiple office supplies to fill baggies for the counting activity. We had all the supplies we needed, so the cost came from printing Ready to Read certificates and fliers. **(View the certificate and story time outline under Attachments at right.)**

Day-of-event Activity

We had six stations that required set-up. The week before the program we gathered materials for the stations so everything was ready the morning of. We had two staff members there for each program with two more on hand. It took staff less than 30 minutes to set up the story time room and activity tables before the program.

Twenty people attended the program. We had been hoping for more, which is one reason we're working toward collaborating with the public schools next time we provide this program.

Program Execution

Children were greeted by library staff and asked to write their names on a nametag. They then received a heart-shaped stamp on the palm of their hand, which we discussed later after reading "The Kissing Hand" by Audrey Penn.

Families then followed footprints into the program room for story time. We began our kindergarten celebration with a song, "Talk, sing, read, write, play / (repeat 3x) / Growing readers every day!" and discussed how the children have been preparing for kindergarten by talking, singing, reading, writing and playing.

We followed our traditional story time format, alternating books with songs, activities and flannel stories all related to starting school.

After story time we invited children to the activity stations located at tables in the youth area. We included supplies and directions so library staff were free to interact with families. We focused on cutting, shoe-tying, counting, letter recognition and recognizing shapes and colors.

This culminated by enrolling children in our Read Squared reading program and showing them the location of the easy readers. Before leaving, they received certificates that said the child's name and that they were ready to read in kindergarten!

Advice

Our advice is to work with the schools to target incoming kindergarteners. We hope to partner with them next year and may expand the program to a four-week series that works on a new skill every week, culminating in a big celebration.

Did you try this program at your library? Share your experience using this form.

Supporting Materials

Document
activity_stations.pdf
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storytime_outline.pdf
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growing_readers_certificate.pdf
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Audiences:

Audience
Children (9 and under)