

Choosing Materials for Library Time with Adults with Intellectual Disabilities

Rebecca Wolfe, Allen County Public Library, 2024
rwolfe@acpl.lib.in.us

Choosing Books:

Note: If you're new to reading aloud to a group, do some research on best practices. One site to look at: <https://library.com/new-to-storytime-how-to-read-books-to-a-group/>

I often read picture books. I like to use books with adult protagonists. I also use many books with animal main characters, as they often can be seen as possibly being adults. I am careful with books with children as main characters. I avoid those with very child-centric plots, such as losing a tooth or first day of school. I will use them if they have a universal story or universal humor. A few with child protagonists that have gone over well:

On Account of the Gum by Adam Rex
This Book is Out of Control! by Richard Byrne
No, David! by David Shannon
The Day Louis Got Eaten by John Fardell

Other books that have gone over well:

A Girl and Her Gator
A Greyhound, A Groundhog
Bear Came Along
Bill Grogan's Goat
Blue (by Seeger)
Bodies Are Cool
Brave Miss Muffet
Creepy Carrots
Duck! Rabbit!
Giraffes Can't Dance
Hooray for Birds
Hopefully the Scarecrow
How Tickles Saved Pickles
I Just Ate My Friend
I Like Myself

I'm Not Afraid of This Haunted House
I'm the Biggest Thing in the Ocean
Miss Mary Mack
Move Over, Rover!
Mrs. McNosh Hangs Up Her Wash
RESPECT: Aretha Franklin, Queen of Soul
Silenzio, Bruno!
Silly Sally
Snowflake Bentley
The Lady with the Alligator Purse
The One and Only Wolfgang
The Three Canadian Pigs
There Was a Coyote Who Swallowed a Flea
There Was an Old Lady...
Waking Beauty

Choosing Music:

I do use some children's songs, but I stay away from songs that clearly have children singing on the recording or songs that are traditional versions of children's songs. I will use updated, hip-hop style versions of children's songs, as they are novel and not the same as those the participants heard when they were very young. For example, Mr. Chris (Christopher Tyler) has a hip-hop version of "Itsy Bitsy Spider;" most of the participants enjoy it.

Kids' songs can be great because they have lots of movement and action, so participants practice listening and following instructions, as well as creativity. I try to include at least one song with minimal action, for those who cannot stand up. We also often wheel out participants in wheelchairs (after asking for permission) so they can participate in the dance.

Other children's songs and artists that have worked well:

- Mr. Chris (Christopher Tyler) has many hip-hop style movement songs.
- Jim Gill has many songs for children. Some of my favorites:
 - "Poison Ivy"
 - "Stick to the Glue"
 - "Beethoven's Five Finger Play"
 - "Knuckles Knees"
 - "Jump Up, Turn Around"
- I like story songs. One example: "Three Little Pigs" by Mr. Eric and Mr. Michael
- "Crazy Eights" and "Rhythm in the Scarves" by Johnette Downing for scarves or ribbons
- "Shake It Up" by Milkshake for shaker eggs
- "Popcorn Song" by Laura Doherty for parachutes, scarves, and beanbags

Pop songs that go over well:

- "We Will Rock You" for rhythm sticks
- "Happy" by Pharrell Williams
- "The Mississippi Cha-Cha Slide" by Mixx Master Lee (The lyrics tell you exactly what dance moves to do!)
- "The Cha Cha Slide"
- "The Cupid Shuffle"
- "Texas Hold 'Em" and "Single Ladies" by Beyonce
- "Old Town Road" by Lil Nas X
- "Hokey Pokey" by Big Mucci
- "HandClap" by Fitz and the Tantrums
- "Jolene" by Dolly Parton
- "Life is a Highway" by Rascal Flatts
- "Whoomp! There It Is"