Case Study

Fowler Branch – Fresno County Public Library

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What follows is a case study showcasing how various aspects of the *Reimagining School Readiness Toolkit* were tested and implemented during the pilot phase in Spring/Summer of 2017. The case study outlines what type of programming existed before the pilot, how things were modified during the implementation phase, and any post-pilot reflections. The Appendices that follow include example signs, templates, and activities created and utilized by library staff. At the top of each, we highlight the relevant skills associated with the key findings (i.e., Talk & Play, Science & Math, or Body & Brain).

Before the Pilot

Before the pilot, the Fowler branch did not have a formal school readiness program. Since they had no specific staff dedicated to running a program for young children, their early childhood programming mainly consisted of working with an organization associated with a local school district to host playgroups for children ages 0 to 3 at the library. In addition, the Summer Reading program at Fowler consisted of providing a log to track books that were read, and if participants read so many books, they would get a little prize. The staff at Fowler saw this project as an opportunity to not only experiment with new programming but to also infuse the resources into pre-existing programs like Summer Reading.

During Implementation

The programming developed as part of the pilot consisted of multiple parts: Family Storytime, Program Boxes and the Summer Challenge.

Family Storytime

A family storytime was run in the evenings throughout the summer because the parents and caregivers were more available to attend after work with their child and to accommodate families with children of varying ages. The Fowler Branch advertised this new program in a variety of ways: a web banner on their site, postings on their children's blog, social media, flyers in the library, and even secured placement on the back of the local water bill! The program slowly grew all summer from zero to 30+ attendees. "It just takes time to catch on. And because this community is smaller, it has to be very word of mouth and constant."

By focusing on specific and concrete tips from the *Promising Practices* guide, such as, reading non-fiction books or incorporating movement between each book, the staff developed templates for each storytime.

In addition, many activities had small write-ups with probing questions. "I made these for myself so I could remember, and then after the storytime when we'd have the activities, I'd place them out there so that the parents could see them as well, so if they wanted to specifically ask these questions and go over these things with their child, they could."

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>
> - A staff member
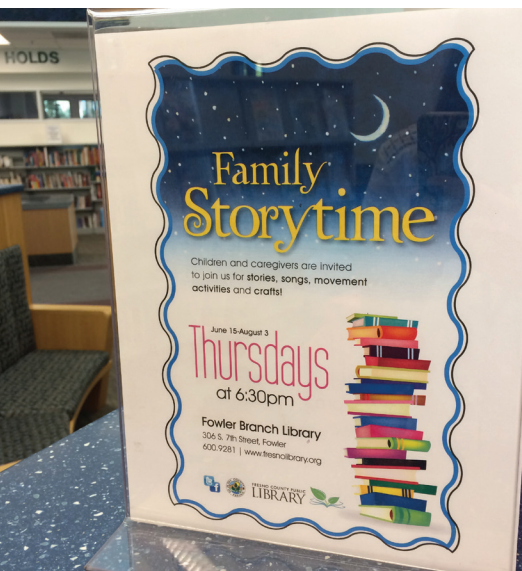
Program Boxes

The Children's Program Boxes were bins of supplies with instructions created to make activities at storytime easier to implement when staff are short on time. Ultimately, the vision for the Children's Program Boxes is to have eight different ones that can circulate throughout all of the library branches. The boxes contain all of the materials for an activity and exist for three topics: process art box, coding necklace and a tangram puzzle kit. Some are open-ended and some come with a particular goal or challenge, but they are flexible enough for library staff to adapt. For more information, view the Program Box overview in Appendix A.

Summer Challenge

Because the staff wanted the program to focus on more than reading, they first changed the name from Summer Reading to the Summer Challenge. Next, they implemented the use of two logs: one log was for pre-readers (mainly children ages 0-5) and the second log was used for current readers (mainly children ages 6-12). Before distributing the logs, the staff stapled the appropriate bookmarks included in the *Reimagining School Readiness Toolkit* to each one.

The pre-reader log was geared toward both the child and their caregiver, and included activities such as playing with blocks and puzzles in addition to reading books. The current reader log was geared toward children that could read independently, but in addition, it asked children to engage in open-ended activities such as trying a new food or designing a paper airplane. Furthermore, the staff strived to have any necessary tools or supplies for the activities on hand at the library, in case children did not have access to the materials at home.

The pre-reader and current reader logs are featured in Appendix B and C, respectively.

Post Pilot Reflections

Because Fowler was starting from scratch for a lot of their programming, the staff first felt overwhelmed by the amount of resources provided in the toolkit. However, once they sat down with the *Promising Practices* guide, staff teased out the things they could specifically do at their library and recognized the small steps they could take to implement the toolkit over time. For example, one of the tips was to 'Read non-fiction books.', so they tried incorporating a non-fiction book into storytime. Another example was "Try to have movements in between each book.", so, the staff made a template for storytime, and between each book, wrote down the songs and movement activities that would be incorporated. See Appendix D for an example. The small, concrete steps they took each week resulted in a positive cumulative effect, and they found that families were appreciative and coming back for more!

From interviews with parents after the Family Storytime, many commented on the program's quality. One individual worked at a local Headstart and commented that the program at the library was very organized and utilized strategies to engage children in a number of ways to build social, emotional and cognitive abilities. Others were grateful that the program was designed to be in the evening so they could attend after work. Finally, one caregiver commented on how important it is to get her child ready for school and that she had never had opportunities like this as a child herself. She noted how the programming had helped her child develop her motor skills and increase the frequency of her conversations while engaging with others at the library.

Children's Program Box: Process Art

Process art is where the end product is not the principal focus but rather on the process of creating the piece of art. Art is viewed as a creative journey as opposed to an end product.

In Process Art:

- There are no step-by-step instructions.
- No samples.
- No right or wrong way.
- The art is focused on the experience and the exploration of techniques, tools, and materials.
- The art is original and unique.
- The experience is relaxing and calming.
- The art is entirely the child's own.

Materials in Box:

Art paper   Tissue paper
Paint   Sponges
Bowls/Cups   Cling wrap
Paintbrushes   Bubble wrap
Watercolors   Oil pastels
Foil

Tips for Leading Process-Focused Art:

- Set out a variety of materials and see what happens as children lead the art experience, similar to open-ended play.
- Provide plenty of time for children to create.
- Encourage children's ideas.
- Play music in the background.
- Make art joyful!
- Display children's books with artful illustrations, such as Eric Carle, Lois Ehlert, and Javaka Steptoe.
- Let the child decide whether the art goes home or gets displayed in the library.

What Skills Will Children Learn?

- **Social and Emotional:** Building confidence with their own abilities and learning to negotiate with others for limited supplies/materials.
- **Language and Literacy:** Adopting new vocabulary from unfamiliar media/materials and opportunities for children to communicate their thinking to others.
- **Cognitive:** Planning and problem-solving as they create.
- **Physical:** Using fine motor skills to paint and draw.

Talk & Play

Science & Math

Body & Brain

CAREGIVER & CHILD

Summer CHALLENGE
Pre-Reader Log

Color in each completed activity square. After you have completed 10 activities or 2 full lines of Bingo, bring this log back to the library by **July 9** and get entered into a drawing for a prize.

Complete all the activities and bring this log to the library by **August 6** to earn a free book and get entered into a drawing for a grand prize.

TALKING teaches children words—talk about what you see and where you go.

READING together is the best way to help your child get ready to read.

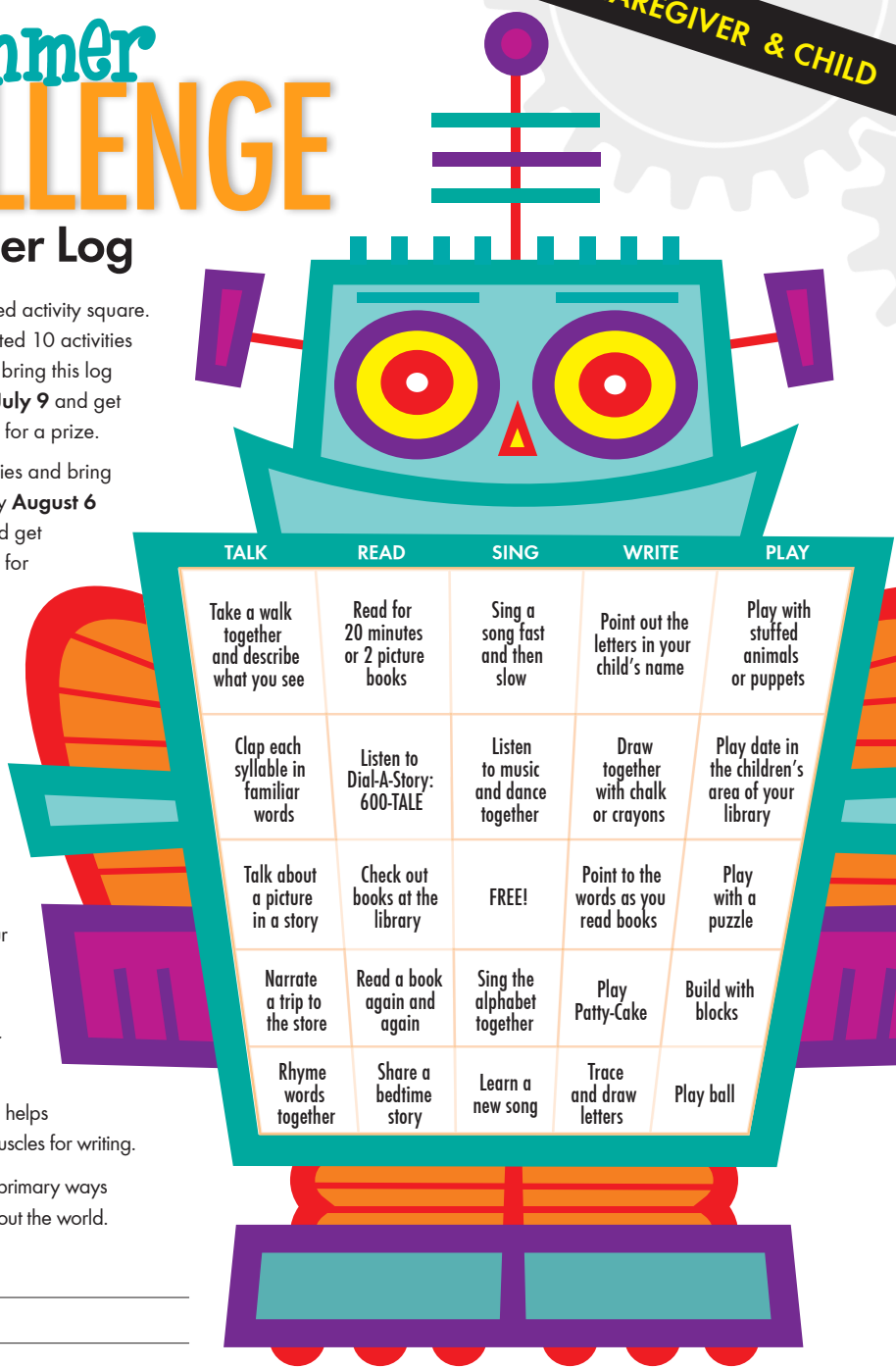**SINGING** helps children hear the smaller sounds in words.

WRITING and drawing helps children develop their muscles for writing.

PLAYING is one of the primary ways young children learn about the world.

Name _____

Staff Initials _____

TALK	READ	SING	WRITE	PLAY
Take a walk together and describe what you see	Read for 20 minutes or 2 picture books	Sing a song fast and then slow	Point out the letters in your child's name	Play with stuffed animals or puppets
Clap each syllable in familiar words	Listen to Dial-A-Story: 600-TALE	Listen to music and dance together	Draw together with chalk or crayons	Play date in the children's area of your library
Talk about a picture in a story	Check out books at the library	FREE!	Point to the words as you read books	Play with a puzzle
Narrate a trip to the store	Read a book again and again	Sing the alphabet together	Play Patty-Cake	Build with blocks
Rhyme words together	Share a bedtime story	Learn a new song	Trace and draw letters	Play ball

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Summer CHALLENGE

Reader Log

Color in each completed activity square. After you have completed 10 activities or 2 full lines of Bingo, bring this log back to the library by **July 9** and get entered into a drawing for a prize.

Complete all the activities and bring this log to the library by **August 6** to earn a free book and get entered into a drawing for a grand prize.
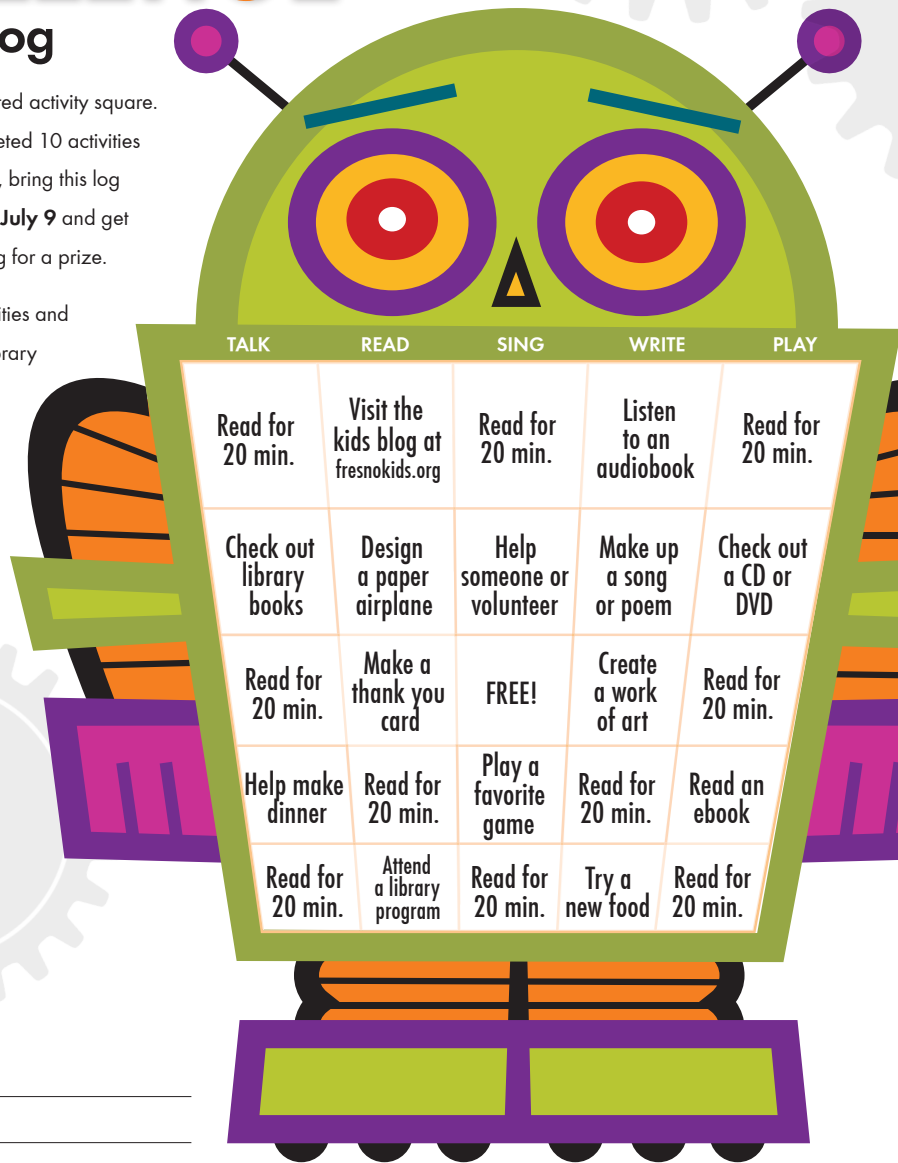
TALK	READ	SING	WRITE	PLAY
Read for 20 min.	Visit the kids blog at fresnokids.org	Read for 20 min.	Listen to an audiobook	Read for 20 min.
Check out library books	Design a paper airplane	Help someone or volunteer	Make up a song or poem	Check out a CD or DVD
Read for 20 min.	Make a thank you card	FREE!	Create a work of art	Read for 20 min.
Help make dinner	Read for 20 min.	Play a favorite game	Read for 20 min.	Read an ebook
Read for 20 min.	Attend a library program	Read for 20 min.	Try a new food	Read for 20 min.

Name _____

Staff Initials _____

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Talk & Play

Science & Math

Body & Brain

Ocean Storytime

Song: Dance Your Fingers Up
Dance your fingers up, dance your fingers down
Dance them to the side and dance them all around.
Dance them on our shoulders, dance them on your head.
Dance them on your tummy, and put them all to bed!

Book: The Pout-Pout Fish by Deborah Diesen

Song: The Waves on the Beach
(to the tune of "Wheels on the Bus")
The waves on the beach go up and down,
up and down, up and down,
The waves on the beach go up and down
All day long.

The crabs on the beach go snap, snap, snap..
The clams on the beach go open and shut...
The sand on the beach goes swish, swish, swish...

Book: All the Water in the World by George Ella Lyon
(Non-Fiction)

Song: Row, Row, Row, Your Boat

Story with Flannel Board: Five Little Sea Shells
5 little sea shells lying on the shore,
Crash went the waves and then there were 4.
4 little sea shells down by the sea,
Crash went the waves and then there were 3.
3 little sea shells smooth as new,
Crash went the waves and then there were 2.

2 little sea shells sparkling in the sun,
Crash went the waves and then there was 1.
1 little sea shell left by itself,
I took it home and put it on my shelf.

Action Rhyme: Clap Your Hands
Clap your hands slowly, slowly, slowly
Clap your hands quickly, quickly, quickly
(stomp your feet, shake your body, wiggle your fingers)

Book: Swimmy by Leo Lionni

Song: Slippery Fish