

Supercharged **STORYTIMES**

An Early Literacy Planning and Assessment Guide

KATHLEEN CAMPANA / J. ELIZABETH MILLS / SAROJ NADKARNI GHOTING



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KATHLEEN CAMPANA is a doctoral candidate at the University of Washington Information School. She has a background in school and corporate libraries. Her research focuses on the learning that occurs for children and youth in library programs and the role that family engagement plays in that learning. She has served as a research assistant on the VIEWS2 research grant for all four years.

J. ELIZABETH MILLS is a doctoral student and a MLIS graduate from the University of Washington Information School. She has a background in children's literature as an editor and author. She studies how librarians are planning and presenting their storytimes in terms of learning theory and interactivity with respect to technology in storytimes. She has been a research assistant on the grant for three years.

SAROJ NADKARNI GHOTING is an Early Childhood Literacy Consultant and national trainer on early literacy. She presents early literacy training and information sessions at national, regional, and state conferences, and training for library staff and their partners. She has been a consultant for the Public Library Association and the Association for Library Service to Children of the American Library Association on the Every Child Ready to Read @ your library early literacy initiative and coauthor of four other books on early literacy and storytimes.

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FOREWORD

DO PUBLIC LIBRARY STORYTIMES MAKE A DIFFERENCE? THIS IS A challenging question. Do children really benefit in a practical way from public library storytime programs? Although library staff who interact with children at early literacy programs may sense that they do benefit, is there any evidence that these programs actually help children learn to read? Is it even possible to create valid and reliable instruments that can measure the effectiveness of public library storytimes?

WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

Libraries matter—or do they? In 1998, Washington’s public libraries had asked to be part of a statewide discussion on early learning, but were turned away. That denial was a wake-up call that inspired the libraries to join forces, eventually leading to the creation of the Early Learning Public Library Partnership (ELPLP). Leaders in Washington’s public library community soon realized that telling funders and decision makers, “Libraries matter,” was no longer enough. Libraries needed to be able to demonstrate that their programs really do make a difference and that funding public libraries is a wise investment. Directors of public libraries throughout the state of Washington were starting to ask researchers at every opportunity: “How can we show that the early literacy focus of storytimes makes a difference in the ability of children to learn how to read successfully?”

In 2009, the iSchool of the University of Washington was awarded the first of two successive National Leadership Grants by the Institute for Museum and Library Services (IMLS) for Project VIEWS (Valuable Initiatives in Early Learning that Work Successfully), the first study to assess the impact of early literacy storytimes in public libraries. The Washington State Library (WSL), believing in the value of such a research project, allocated a portion of its Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) grants to the state’s funds to help support the work of Project VIEWS. Thrive Washington, a public-private partnership that coordinates the work of the ELPLP, also partnered with the iSchool on what was to be a truly unique project. Ultimately, Project VIEWS was successful in providing a way for Washington’s public libraries to demonstrate their value as community early learning partners.

IT TOOK A VILLAGE OF EXTRAORDINARY PEOPLE

As project manager of Connecting the Dots, the WSL project that helped to support VIEWS and VIEWS2, I had the great privilege to work with the late Dr. Eliza T. Dresang, the principal investigator for both Project VIEWS and Connecting the Dots. I was also fortunate to have known and collaborated with many of the talented researchers, representing multiple disciplines, who worked with her on this groundbreaking study. At the advisory meeting that was held after the VIEWS2 field observations were completed, I was surrounded by a roomful of passionate, creative staff who had been randomly selected from the ELPLP membership to have their storytimes observed and filmed as part of the study. There was no mistaking the contagious energy in the room. It inspired me to refer to their work as “Supercharged Storytimes.” The name caught on—quite understandably so.

Shortly before Dr. Dresang’s death, OCLC WebJunction asked her about the possibility of providing an introduction to the tools and techniques of Project VIEWS2 using the WebJunction online platform. As with all things related to Project VIEWS2, a collegial group of partners worked together to design the program and deliver it. The name of this program? “Supercharged Storytimes,” of course! After a successful launch in Washington State, Supercharged Storytimes expanded to five additional partner states in the fall of 2015. The ultimate goal is national implementation.

ELEVATING THE PROFESSION

Ask yourself the following questions:

- Are librarians who provide early literacy programs in public libraries considered “early learning professionals” by external organizations in your city, county, region, or state?
- Do public libraries even register in the minds of your local external early learning organizations when the topic of early learning comes up?
- Are librarians truly early learning professionals?

One of the most exciting aspects of Project VIEWS2 is its enormous potential to elevate the profession of librarianship (and by extension, museums and other informal early learning programs). By linking behaviors observed in library programs to the indicators of Washington State’s Early Learning and Development Benchmarks, Project VIEWS2 has paved the way to make the connection between other specific, measurable library activities and educational benchmarks such as the Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework and Common Core standards; by demonstrating the ability of library staff to positively influence children’s learning behaviors (as defined by state agencies dedicated to education), libraries may be seen as equal partners in the education of children and as legitimate early learning professionals.

TOGETHER IS BETTER

Partnering strengthened the ability of public libraries to fully participate in the advancement of early learning in Washington. Collaboration of effort in the early learning community—from planning to funding—made Project VIEWS2 a fantastic success.

Let this work inspire you. Experience the power of partnerships. See where the excitement of Supercharged Storytimes takes you!

—DIANE HUTCHINS

CONSULTANT/PROJECT MANAGER LIBRARY DEVELOPMENT
WASHINGTON STATE LIBRARY

READ ME FIRST!

THIS BOOK IS DESIGNED TO BE A GUIDE FOR YOU AND YOUR PRACTICE. However, it by no means represents the upper limit of what you can do to supercharge your storytimes. Rather, the tools and tips in this book represent a research-based approach that you can then infuse with your own creativity, imagination, and deep knowledge of your community. You do amazing work, and you know your audience best. We hope to make your job easier by helping you to be more intentional and advocate for what you do.

Based on the research of Project VIEWS2, we are offering some effective practices to enhance your storytimes with early literacy behaviors that have been demonstrated to impact children's early literacy outcomes.

INTENTIONALITY, INTERACTIVITY, AND COMMUNITY

These three words carry such weight in summing up the most important pieces of this research.

- When you are *intentional* about including specific early literacy behaviors in your storytime, you are impacting the children who attend. In addition, by intentionally articulating early literacy connections to caregivers, you are helping to support children's early literacy development.
- When you are *interactive* in the delivery of your storytime, you are demonstrating to children and caregivers alike that reading and learning are integral parts of a shared, enjoyable experience.
- When you rely on and learn from your peers, you are building a *community* that will help you continue to improve and hone your practice.

THIS BOOK FEATURES FOUR PARTS

Part I is an introduction to the VIEWS2 research and Supercharged Storytimes.

- Chapter 1 presents the main principles of Supercharged Storytimes and introduces the VIEWS2 Planning Tool (VPT).

Part II is an examination and exploration into how the VIEWS2 Planning Tool (VPT) fits into and supports the practices of Every Child Ready to Read at your library, 2nd edition (ECRR2). This is done through five chapters, each one looking at an ECRR2 practice in depth. Each chapter discusses the importance of that practice and ways that it can support early literacy.

- Chapter 2: Talking
- Chapter 3: Reading
- Chapter 4: Singing
- Chapter 5: Playing
- Chapter 6: Writing

Throughout these chapters, you will find sidebars with information and insights from library staff just like you whom we interviewed just for this book. We're calling them our experts, and it's true, they are! The sidebars offer tips and tricks for talking to parents, addressing large groups, scaffolding, and more. Though we don't specifically cover mixed-age storytimes, we do discuss each age group within each domain so you can draw on that information to help you plan for and respond to multiple ages in your storytime. At the end of each chapter, you'll find worksheets to guide you through a reflection of your storytimes with respect to the practices. In addition to information from our experts, you will see some quotes from VIEWS2 participants discussing their storytime practices.

You may notice as you go through each practice chapter that some of the early literacy behaviors and practices overlap. You are right! These activities do indeed support different aspects of early literacy. For example, there are similarities between talking and singing, especially with respect to domains such as alphabetic knowledge and phonological awareness. You can look at this overlap as confirmation that what you do touches on so many aspects of early literacy development; use this to advocate for the importance of your work in the lives of the children who attend your storytimes.

TITLES

Across the country, individuals providing library storytimes carry many titles, such as librarian, storytime provider or presenter, and storyteller. These titles may be based on job description, education, or a myriad of other things. The result is that there is not one universal term to use when referring to individuals who provide storytimes. Therefore, for the purposes of this book, we had to make an intentional decision as to which term to use. You will see in the following pages that we chose to use a combination of *librarian* and *storytime provider*. We recognize that many of you prefer the term *storytime provider* or *presenter*. However, we chose to continue to use the term *librarian* in specific cases.

- *Librarian* is used to refer to the participants in the VIEWS2 research. These individuals were referred to as the VIEWS2 librarians from day one and many now self-identify as a VIEWS2 librarian. In addition, we kept the term *librarian* intact in the quotes from our interviewees, as we did not want to change the content of their quotes.
- *Storytime provider* is used in all other content in the following pages.

We hope that you will understand that in most places, regardless of the term we use, we are addressing and referring to all of you who provide library storytimes.

Part III presents the findings of the last year of the Project VIEWS2 study, focusing on storytime assessment. We explore various types of assessment as well as their benefits and challenges; we look in depth at three library systems and their approaches to assessment; and we present recommendations based on our findings.

- Chapter 7 explores self-reflection as the most inward and personal method of assessment, one you can do every day and every time you offer storytimes.
- Chapter 8 explores peer mentoring as an assessment method that will more likely be used intermittently, perhaps even just a few times a year. We examine three case studies of ways in which library systems have implemented peer-mentoring methods that suit their needs.
- Chapter 9 explores how self-reflection and peer-mentoring fit together in an outcome-based assessment model that can help you develop an assessment program in your own practice. Our experts offer their recommendations about what to keep in mind when developing an assessment program, and we also discuss the importance of community.

Part IV covers next steps for research and practice, especially the community of practice orientations.

- Chapter 10 offers some final thoughts as you go forward to supercharge your storytimes.

Lastly, the appendices offer the VIEWS2 Planning Tool (VPT); self-reflection and peer-mentoring worksheets; and a crosswalk between the VIEWS2 Planning Tool and the Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework. The VPT language is based on the Washington State Early Learning Benchmarks. You can use the VPT to relate to your own state's early learning guidelines for language and literacy. The VIEWS2/Head Start crosswalk will help you understand how the VPT aligns with national benchmarks, and, in turn, will shed some light on how you can align the VPT with your state's early learning guidelines.

We hope you enjoy this planning and assessment guide to supercharging your storytimes the VIEWS2 way!

A COMMITMENT TO EARLY LITERACY IN STORYTIMES



It is so exciting to be a part of the cutting edge of research that empowers librarians to be the leaders in early childhood literacy that we have always been, but now with the authority that gives us confidence and enthusiasm to do what we need to do, with focus and intent, to make a big difference in early literacy and lifelong learning for our youngest patrons.

—Gailene Hooper, Senior Librarian, NCRL Republic Branch



PROJECT VIEWS2

The Storytime Study

PROJECT VIEWS2 WAS A FOUR-YEAR STUDY FUNDED BY AN IMLS grant. During the first two years, we sought to understand whether the early literacy focus of public library storytimes is making a difference with the children who attend.

RESEARCH DESIGN

- Researchers used two tools (that together provide the foundation for the VIEWS2 Planning Tool, or VPT) to observe storytimes in forty libraries—including fourteen small, thirteen medium, and thirteen large libraries.
- One librarian from each of the forty libraries participated in the study.
- Three storytimes were observed in each library in each year.
- A total of 240 storytime observations were conducted in the forty libraries over two years.

Year 1

- Storytime were observed to establish what types of early literacy content and behaviors are occurring in storytimes.

Year 2

- Twenty of the librarians completed the VIEWS2 training, using the VPT to be more *intentional* with planning and reflecting on their early literacy content. The training accomplished this by providing librarians with:
 - the VPT, which offers early literacy behaviors they can use to encourage early literacy skills in children;
 - a more in-depth understanding of how their early literacy content maps to the early literacy skills so they can explain to parents why they are doing what they are doing in storytime;

- training and information on how to make their storytime practices more *interactive*;
 - a *community* of practice made up of their peers to share ideas and gain feedback on what works and what does not; and
 - information and support to help them reflect on the content of their storytime in order to grow and develop more effective storytime practices.
- Subsequent storytimes were observed to see if using the VPT to be more intentional in planning made a difference in early literacy storytime content and the children’s early literacy behaviors.

THE FINDINGS

Year 1 established that:

- The librarians are including a wide variety of early literacy content in their storytimes.
- The children are demonstrating a wide variety of early literacy behaviors when attending storytimes.
- The children are responding to the early literacy content that librarians are including, with corresponding early literacy behaviors.

Year 2 established that:

- Training librarians on the principles included in the VIEWS2 training led to increased early literacy storytime content as well as increased early literacy behaviors from the children attending those storytimes.

➤ For additional information, visit the VIEWS2 website at <http://views2.ischool.uw.edu>.

SUPERCHARGED STORYTIMES AND THE VIEWS2 PLANNING TOOL



EARLY LITERACY STORYTIMES ARE THE CORNERSTONE of children's programming at the public library. And yet, up till now, we have not known whether these storytimes were truly making a difference with the children who attend them. The Project VIEWS2 research demonstrates that children are in fact responding to the early literacy content that storytime providers include. Storytimes are indeed making a difference in children's early literacy behaviors at storytime!

Furthermore, the Project VIEWS2 research demonstrated that an intentional focus on early literacy content in public library storytimes can increase the children's early literacy behaviors while at storytime. This is momentous news for library storytime providers across the nation and should be used to advocate for and demonstrate the value of your storytimes.

So what does this mean for your storytimes and your storytime practices? Essentially it means that being more intentional about incorporating early literacy content into your storytimes makes a stronger impact on children's early literacy behaviors. Storytimes are full of early literacy opportunities. You are already doing a number of things that support early literacy. By inserting more early literacy content into your storytimes, you can supercharge your practice and take it to the next level.

WHAT IS EARLY LITERACY?

Early literacy is what children know about reading and writing before they can actually read and write. Or, to be more complete, you could use this definition: Early literacy is what children know about communication, language (verbal and nonverbal), reading, and writing before they can actually read and write. It encompasses all of a child's experiences with conversation, stories (oral and written), books, and print. Early literacy is *not* the teaching of reading. It refers to laying a strong foundation so that when children are taught to read, they are ready.

Luckily, supercharging your storytimes can be easier than you think. Being intentional about incorporating a variety of early literacy content can be done even without a lot of planning time. This guide will help you learn how to supercharge your storytime by inserting the early literacy behaviors from the VIEWS2 Planning Tool into your storytime activities using the five practices from Every Child Ready to Read 2nd Edition (ECRR2): talking, reading, singing, playing, and writing.¹ Using these practices in an interactive manner is crucial for incorporating early literacy skills in informal learning environments such as library storytimes.

THE OVERALL *HOWS* OF SUPERCHARGING YOUR STORYTIME

So, what *is* a supercharged storytime? It is one where you:

- intentionally support early literacy;
- fill it with interactive moments that allow the children to interact with the storytime content;
- find creative and fun ways to insert early literacy into all storytime content;
- are flexible in adapting to the children’s needs; and
- articulate early literacy connections to parents/caregivers.

The supercharged approach, based on the VIEWS2 training that occurred as a part of the research study, is designed to encourage storytime providers to be intentional about including early literacy content in their storytimes. The name Supercharged Storytimes was adopted as the principles highlighted by the VIEWS2 training were transitioned into practice. Three main principles are emphasized when supercharging your storytime:

- **Intentionality**—being more intentional with including early literacy in your storytime planning and reflection as well as offering early literacy tips to caregivers as part of storytime
- **Interactivity**—providing a variety of ways for the children to interact with and participate in your storytime content
- **Community**—building a community of your peers to allow you to share and receive ideas and get feedback

In addition to these three main principles, the Supercharged Storytimes program also emphasizes scaffolding as a method for supporting children’s learning and self-reflection as a method for supporting your own learning and growth in your storytime practices.

Intentionality

An intentional focus refers to being more proactive about incorporating early literacy content into your storytime planning and reflection. It involves identifying

the specific skills that you want to encourage and being thoughtful about how you are encouraging them in storytime.

While I was already doing some things to support early literacy, participating in the VIEWS2 training made me want to do that much more to reinforce the early learning skills and to think about it more as I plan my storytimes. So instead of just choosing my books and maybe doing one thing that would reinforce it, I might add three things that will reinforce skills.

—VIEWS2 participant

An intentional focus does not stop with planning your storytime. Intentionality is also crucial to your storytime delivery, making sure you are deliberate in your interactions with the children and their parents/caregivers during storytime in order to best support their learning. Finally, intentionality also includes reflecting on your storytime to understand its impact as well as successes and challenges.

The VIEWS2 Planning Tool (VPT) supports this intentional focus by providing a framework that helps you:

- understand the behaviors you can use to encourage specific early literacy skills;
- recognize when the children are responding to the early literacy content you are including; and
- provide additional behaviors to support and scaffold children’s early literacy development.

This intentional approach enables you to be more specific and deliberate about the types of early literacy skills that you include in your storytimes and the ways in which you include them. By intentionally planning and reflecting on the early literacy content in your storytimes, you will be able to constantly tweak your storytimes to better serve the early literacy needs of the children who attend, thereby making a stronger impact in your community.

Interactivity

The VIEWS2 training hinges on and centers around the key concept of *interactivity*. Interactivity is the most important research-based “how” of inserting early literacy into storytimes.

By *interactivity*, we mean that the storytime provider incorporates elements during which the child can interact with the content of the storytime. It is about having a dialogue with the children, a back-and-forth exchange around the storytime content. Most important, you want to give the children time and opportunities to respond.

One very important thing is to make sure that you give the children time to respond. That may seem like a self-evident thing, but I wasn’t really giving them enough time to think about my questions and respond before I might answer for myself and move on.

—VIEWS2 participant

Whenever I can,
I have the children
help me tell the
story. It improves
a lot of their early
literacy skills—
their narrative
skills, their
vocabulary—and
we are trying to
build those skills
before they start
school.

—Erica Delavan,
Children’s Librarian,
Seattle Public Library

This is a change from the traditional storytime model of a one-way performance for the children. Interactive storytimes have gained importance because we now understand that, for young children, learning mostly occurs in the interactions they have with adults. Interactivity serves as the umbrella technique, or the overall *how*, to incorporate and model talking, reading, singing, playing, and writing (the five ECRR2 practices)² in order to supercharge your storytimes.

Some methods for encouraging interactivity are:

- Having the children act out something that is happening in the book, song, or rhyme
- Asking the children questions about the book and pausing so that they have a chance to respond
- Asking children to repeat or fill in words in a book, song, or rhyme

Being interactive with your storytime children allows you to shape the early literacy concepts that you are sharing with them through books, songs, rhymes, flannelboard activities, and other storytime elements. We want to emphasize that you can incorporate interactive elements throughout and in all of your storytime practices. Most important, interactivity allows you to identify where the children are developmentally so that you can support and encourage them to reach the next level in early literacy skills.

Scaffolding

One way that you can support children in their early literacy learning as they progress to the next level is *scaffolding*. To understand scaffolding, think of climbing up a ladder to the top of a construction-site scaffold. It means adding on a little bit to what a child is demonstrating that they already know. Scaffolding is essentially taking the broader skill that you want to encourage and breaking it into smaller portions, with each portion being a little more difficult until the child has mastered the skill. When an adult scaffolds information for a child, the child can interact with the information in smaller, more manageable pieces. According to Gray and MacBlain, “In practice, scaffolding is happening everywhere around us. We see parents structuring activities for their children, older siblings structuring tasks for younger members of the family, and attentive grandparents patiently taking their young grandchild through sequences of activities, which they have broken down into small steps and which they explain carefully along the way.”²

Scaffolding is incredibly important to a child’s learning process. Research in children’s museums has shown that children will stay at museum exhibits longer and learn more when an accompanying adult is actively involved in scaffolding their learning process.³ You can use scaffolding to move early learners beyond their current developmental stage or skills set and into progressively more difficult tasks. Scaffolding involves you and the other adults and children in the storytime providing support and modeling strategies for the child or other children in the storytime. Scaffolding also helps children build on information they may have already learned to extend their knowledge.

Repetition plays a significant role in scaffolding. As you repeat activities from week to week, children will begin to master the skills included in the activities, which then allows you to include new skills in the activities. Think of the age groups in the VPT as the children’s developmental stages. Say your storytime is for children ages 18 to 36 months. Consider looking at the behaviors for children who are 36 to 60 months and incorporating those into your storytime activities if you notice your children have mastered the level for their age group. Exposure to different techniques will help their overall early literacy development.

Storytime Provider Community

Another important piece to developing supercharged storytimes is to find a group of fellow storytime providers (or even one other storytime provider) who are just as excited as you are about taking storytimes to the next level. See if they want to work through this guide with you. Working with peers to develop early literacy storytimes will give you a community with whom you can share and receive activity ideas; get support, advice, or feedback; and ask questions. Try to meet regularly in person, over Skype, or via conference call to support each other. If you cannot meet very often, use e-mail or social media to stay connected to your community. This emphasis on community was incorporated into the Project VIEWS2 training and the storytime providers felt that being able to share with their colleagues and ask questions was incredibly helpful in supercharging their practice.

[The community] helped me to feel connected, like I don’t have to reinvent the wheel. There are others out there that are doing this, too, and I don’t have to be perfect at it, but every little bit helps—also knowing that there are others that are also working through what’s going to work and what’s not going to work.

— VIEWS2 participant

Self-Reflection

A final important piece to supercharging your storytime is finding ways to reflect on your storytime and get feedback on it. Self-reflection and peer mentoring (peer coaching) will become important to you as a storytime provider because both techniques can help you grow and improve. As a children’s storytime provider you have the freedom and creativity to plan, adapt, and change your storytimes. You are not held to a curriculum. Because of this flexibility, you constantly need to reflect on your storytime content as well as how the children (and parents/caregivers) respond to it in order to understand whether your activities are impactful. Peer mentoring based on storytime observations can also be a powerful feedback method for you to use. Because of their experience observing your storytime, your peers will be able to give you positive and constructive feedback on your content as well as how the children responded. The final section in this book will dive deeper into self-reflection and peer mentoring.

It's not something that turns storytime into dull boring lessons. The lessons and techniques are really invisible, but they are something that librarians naturally do and parents naturally do. When they know to emphasize [storytime] and know to emphasize certain techniques in reading to their children, then the research shows that children do succeed.

—Dr. Eliza T. Dresang

Now that you know the big picture of Supercharged Storytimes, let's take a look at the VIEWS2 Planning Tool and how you use it.

WHAT IS THE VIEWS2 PLANNING TOOL?

The VIEWS2 Planning Tool (VPT) evolved from the research to help you be more intentional in including early literacy elements in your storytime in interactive ways. Early literacy can be broken down in different categories, as evidenced in the language and literacy divisions in the early learning guidelines for each state. VIEWS2 researchers used the 2005 Washington State Benchmarks.

VIEWS2 Early Literacy Domains

- **Communication:** the ability to vocalize, move, or speak in a way that other people can understand and respond to
- **Language Use:** the ability to communicate for a variety of purposes
- **Phonological Awareness:** the ability to recognize the sounds in words
- **Vocabulary:** children's development of a collection of words and language rules that are used and understood by others
- **Comprehension:** understanding what has been read or said
- **Print Concepts:** understanding that written language has meaning and can provide information and pleasure
- **Alphabetic Knowledge:** the ability to name letters, distinguish letter shapes, and identify letter sounds
- **Writing Skills:** include demonstrating the understanding that written shapes and letters have meanings

For each of the above domains there is a chart of early literacy behaviors. Each chart addresses one or more of the seventeen goals across the eight domains. Below is the VPT for Phonological Awareness.

As you can see in this chart, each domain goal is divided into two columns. The first column lists behaviors that the storytime provider can do to support the goal. The second column lists the behaviors that children will exhibit with the goal. So, if you incorporate the behaviors in the first column into your storytime content, you should start to see the children at your storytimes exhibiting the behavior in the second column. You may notice in other domains that some behaviors in the first column for the storytime provider do not have a direct correlation to the children's behaviors in the second column. This means that if you do incorporate that behavior in your storytime, even though they do not have a corresponding explicit behavior, they still work to encourage the broader early literacy goal. In addition, there are behaviors not listed in the first column that can still support the early literacy goal. The VPT is a guide, not a comprehensive listing.

In addition, each domain is divided into three age ranges: birth to 18 months, 18 to 36 months, and 36 to 60 months. Whether you are presenting a storytime

There are behaviors beyond what is listed in the VPT that can still support early literacy skills. The VPT is a guide, not a comprehensive listing.

for a particular age level or for a mixture of ages, this breakdown allows you to simply look down and find behaviors to insert. Each age range includes several behaviors that relate to early literacy concepts. Keep in mind: these age ranges are also a guide. If most of your group is toward the older end of the targeted age range, feel free to include behaviors from the next age range. For example, if you have an older group at baby storytime, you could use some behaviors from the 18 to 36 month group. To continue to solidify early literacy skills for the children, you can also borrow from the behaviors in the younger age group to use with the older children.

Figure 1.1

Phonological Awareness / Playing with Sounds

■ Birth to 18 Months

READING GOAL 66: Children demonstrate phonological awareness

Educator/Adult	Children
Reads to children from books with developmentally appropriate content, and pauses to provide them time to insert the sounds of familiar words	Vocalize familiar words when read to
Uses rhymes in stories, greetings, and directions	Recite last word of familiar rhymes, with assistance

■ 18 Months to 36 Months

READING GOAL 66: Children demonstrate phonological awareness

Educator/Adult	Children
Uses reading style (e.g., pauses, providing children time to respond) where children can say the last word of familiar rhymes/songs	Complete a familiar rhyme or fingerplay by providing the last word
Invites children to act out a variety of tempos or speeds of sounds (e.g., clapping hands rapidly and then slowly; speaking rapidly and then slowly)	Imitate tempo and speed of sound

■ 36 Months to 60 Months

READING GOAL 66: Children demonstrate phonological awareness

Educator/Adult	Children
Reinforces recognition of beginning word sounds (e.g., “ <i>Book</i> begins with the <i>b</i> sound.”)	Identify initial sound of words, with assistance
Encourages children to find multiple objects in a picture with the same beginning sound	Find objects in a picture with the same beginning sound, with assistance
Points out the differences between similar-sounding words (e.g., <i>three</i> and <i>tree</i>)	Differentiate between similar-sounding words

Adult component (PET) by E. Feldman, E. Dresang, K. Burnett, J. Capps, and K. Campana. Children’s component (BCPAF) by E. Feldman.

SUPERCHARGING YOUR STORYTIME WITH THE VIEWS2 PLANNING TOOL

The VPT is designed to be used in a flexible manner for planning. VIEWS2 research starts with *your* storytime. There are no prescribed materials; there is no prescribed format, order, or “dosage” for your storytime.

You can begin the planning process by looking at your storytime plan and thinking about what you already do or will do in your storytime. Review the VPT for each domain. What specific domains and goals are you already incorporating? Is there something in the first column that you could easily include? Another way to plan is to review the VPT for all the early literacy domains. Is there any domain that you notice you rarely include in your storytimes? Consider ways you might include it. The VPT allows you to be flexible in the amount of specific behaviors to include in a storytime program. You can choose to incorporate one behavior, several behaviors from one goal, or behaviors from several goals. You can also decide how to include these behaviors—through presentation of a book, a rhyme or song, or an activity; whatever works best for your storytime children. You have the flexibility to tailor your programming to the children and families who attend your storytimes. Trust your own instincts and knowledge of your storytime community.

The important thing at the beginning is to start out slowly. You don’t want to overwhelm yourself. Pick one or two behaviors and decide how to insert them in your storytime. Don’t worry! The next section of the book explains this process using the five practices from ECRR2 mentioned above: talking, reading, singing, playing, and writing. You are probably already including some of the behaviors in your storytime activities; you just may have not been as intentional about inserting them, or you may have not been able to articulate to parents why you were using these behaviors. These tools will help you to be more intentional and to communicate the importance of what you are doing to parents and other stakeholders.

Work with these practices and behaviors until you feel comfortable with them and then try some different ones in the VPT. Again, there is no specific way to do this. There is no prescription or recipe. Trust that you are best able to build on your storytime experiences, knowledge, approach, and style based in part on knowing your own community. By the same token, be open to expand how you plan and present storytimes as you reflect on the VPT and the principles of Supercharged Storytimes: intentionality, interactivity, and community. These tools give you the flexibility to create a supercharged storytime, filled with early literacy content that benefits your storytime community.

An important benefit of the VPT is that it also gives you a way to talk with parents and caregivers about what you are doing. As you are doing an activity with the children, you are also modeling for the parents and caregivers, so take a moment to explain the importance of what you are doing and why you are doing it. Based on feedback from our VIEWS2 librarians, we also included some more approachable terms in the VPT that you can use to refer to the skills when talking to parents and caregivers. For example, while you are playing a rhyming game, you can mention to parents and caregivers that rhyming encourages playing with the sounds of words

(or phonological awareness), which can later lead to understanding the sounds that letters make and then being able to read words. Essentially the VPT will help you link your storytime content to the early literacy skills. Each of the following chapters features tips from librarians on how they talk with parents and caregivers about a particular practice.

What we want you to take away from this book and from the VPT is that you can infuse early literacy learning into most anything you do in storytime, through all activities, and not just be tied to the reading of a book. The most important thing is to keep activities fun and interactive. If the children have a chance to interact with you, they will engage in and learn from whatever you are doing. Be intentional about including early literacy behaviors throughout all your storytimes. The VIEWS2 research demonstrated that the children are responding to the early literacy content that you are presenting, so being intentional about increasing your early literacy content in your storytimes is going to have a positive impact on the children that attend them.

Before we move into the nuts and bolts of how to supercharge your storytimes, we want to emphasize a few key points.

1. Most important, the library is an informal learning environment, so the learning process will be very different than in a formal learning environment. While an informal learning environment works to support the learning that is taking place in formal learning environments, informal learning environments are also supporting lifelong learning.
2. In order to support lifelong learning, it is important to demonstrate that learning can be fun and enjoyable, self-motivated, self-paced and a social experience. One of the most significant ways that you can support lifelong learning with young children is to show them that learning can be fun and enjoyable.
3. Along with this, we want to emphasize that your storytime can support all types of learning without turning them into lessons and classes. By being intentional, interactive, and fun, you can incorporate all types of learning into your typical storytime activities.

Bottom line: As you work through this book, strive to ensure that all your early literacy activities are interactive and fun!

NOTES

1. Public Library Association (PLA) and Association for Library Services to Children (ALSC), “Every Child Ready to Read @ Your Library—2nd Edition,” 2011, www.everychildreadytoread.org.
2. Colette Gray and Sean MacBlain, *Learning Theories in Childhood* (Los Angeles: SAGE, 2012), 142.
3. Laurel Puchner, Robyn Rapoport, and Suzanne Gaskins, “Learning in Children’s Museums: Is It Really Happening?,” *CURA Curator: The Museum Journal* 44, no. 3 (2001): 237–59.

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