

DYSLEXIC POSITIVE
LIBRARIES INITIATIVE

Welcoming the Dyslexic Community into Your Library

Let the Fun Begin

- Madlibs word cards
- Art supplies for group creativity time
- Sign in forms

Photo: Ceiling of the Sagrada Família by
Dyslexic Architect Antonin Gaudi

Welcome!

Today we will:

- Learn how and why to be a literacy ally for dyslexic youth and their caregivers.
- Understand the importance of neuro-inclusive practices to develop patronage.
- Develop a toolbox of affirming practices to invite and honor access needs.
- Turn your library into a Literacy Hub
- Collaborate to create pre-reading and literacy activities for your library.

Let's have some fun!

- We will get to know one another with some social polls
- Learn more about the lived experiences from some well-known dyslexics
- Flip through evidence-based literacy instructional text
- Complete a Mad Lib story together
- Learn about a library Literacy Hub right here in Vermont
- Share in a group creativity with every-day items that can amp up your library's storytime and get your Literacy Hub up and running



Dyslexic Positive Libraries

We collaborate with library workers to bring dyslexic positivity, cultural competency, and evidence-based literacy to libraries. Provide practical, affordable, ready-to-go resources. Keep up to date with our progress at www.Kellogghubbard.org

Emily Carley, M.Ed

- PreK-12 Lic. Literacy Specialist
- Literacy Spark (expertise + love + neurodiversity-valuing lens)
- “I am a reader.”

Nicole Westbom

- Head Youth Librarian at Kellogg-Hubbard Library
- Serving central VT: Montpelier, Berlin, Calais, East Montpelier, Middlesex, & Worcester
- Practical expertise, neurodiversity expertise, and “know how”

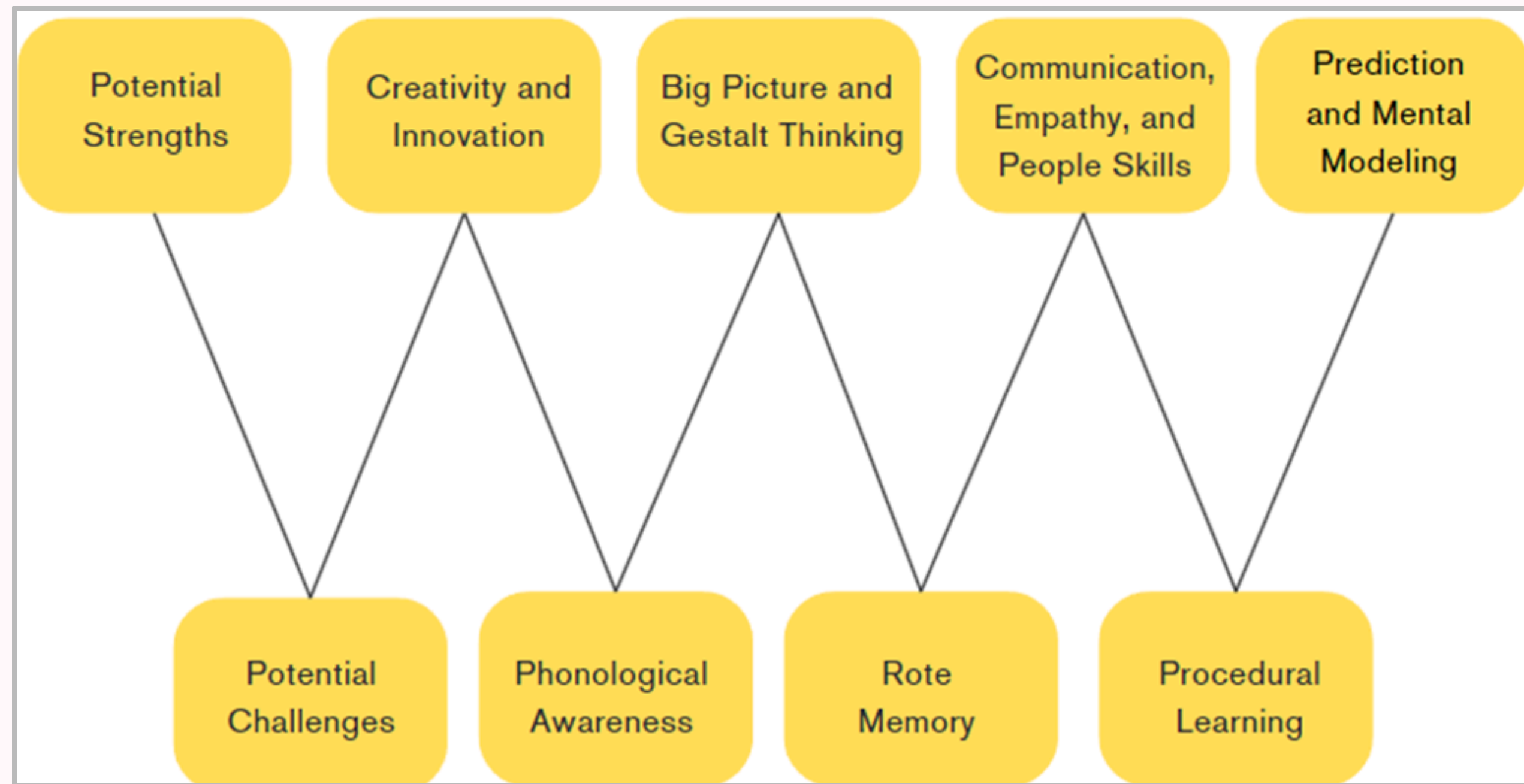
Susan Whitehead

- DEI & Lived Experience
- Academic Research & Resources



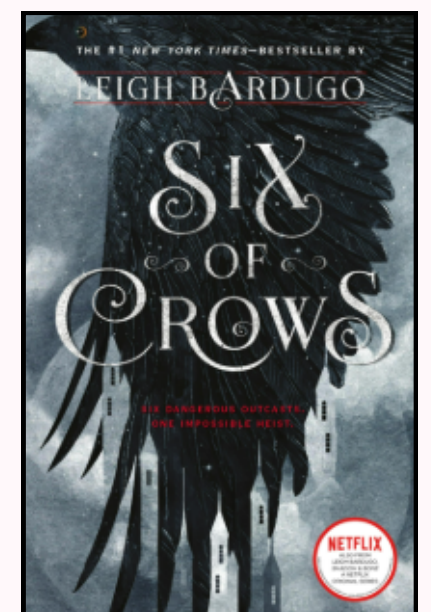
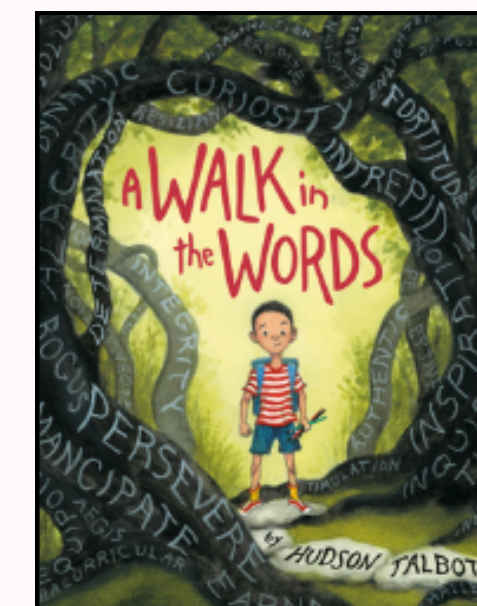
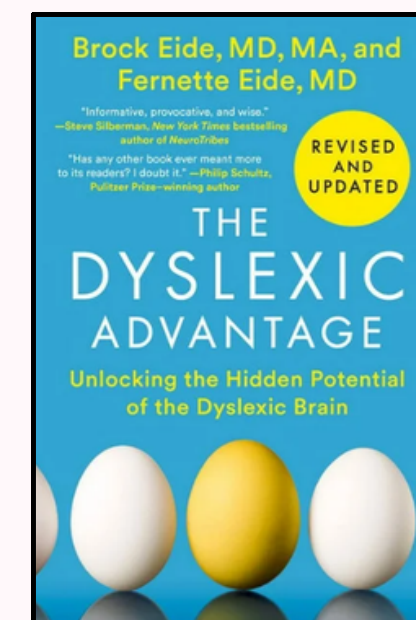
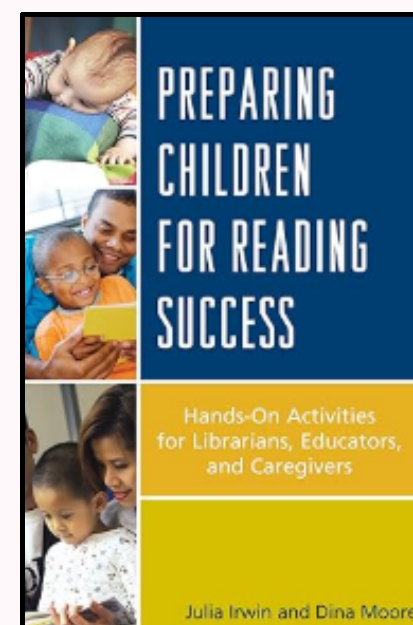
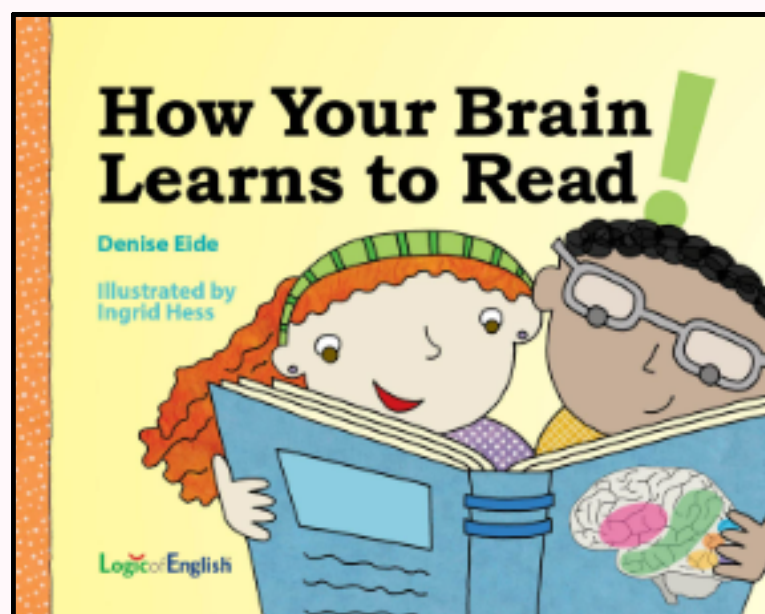
What is Dyslexia?

Dyslexia is a common neurobiological difference in the way someone learns and processes information, leading to a variety of potential strengths and challenges. ~17.4% of your community is on the dyslexic spectrum.



Be an Ally

- Dyslexia and literacy are complex (this is a brief intro)
- You Don't Need to Be an Expert — Be an Ally!
- Neurodiverse-valuing language
- Visit the Dyslexic Goodreads Listopia (show and tell)
- Expertly curated, discrimination-free, fantastic books!
- Hand selected, expertly reviewed evidence-based literacy instructional text for caregivers and educators



Sticker Poll

What was your experience like learning to read as a child?

1) Effortless, easy, and fun

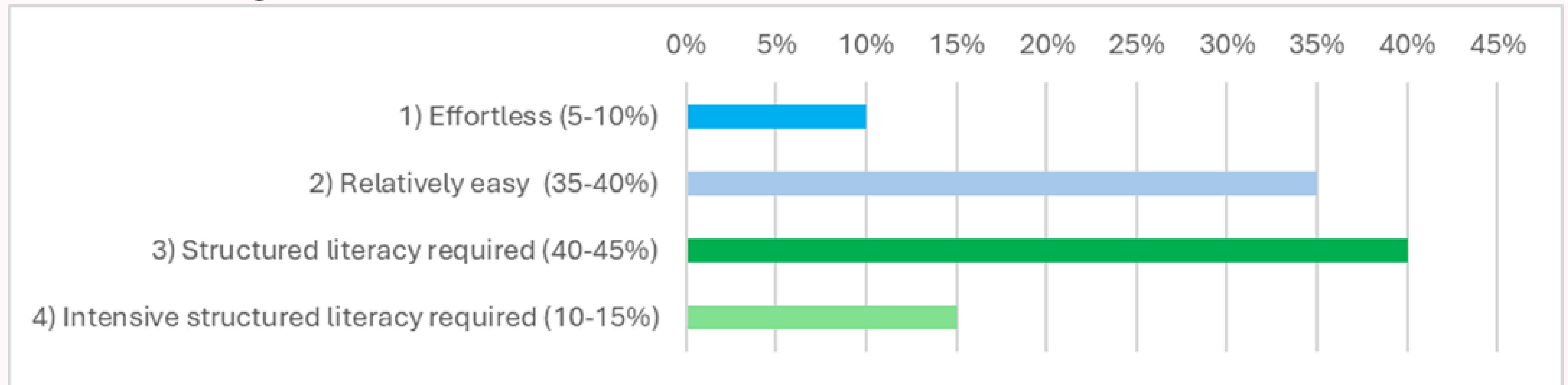
2) Relatively easy. I was able to learn to read/spell/write in the general classroom.

3) It was difficult. I needed evidence-based literacy to learn to read/spell/write proficiently.

4) Level 3 plus intensive instructions and frequent repetition required. I experience shame or fear.

5) I have not yet learned to read/spell/write proficiently. I am still developing these skills.

Reality



1) Effortless. Learning to read seems effortless (5-10%)

2) Relatively Easy. Learning to read is relatively easy with broad instruction; some explicit instruction for spelling/writing likely needed (35-40%)

3) Evidence-Based Literacy Required to learn to read/spell/write (40-45%)

4) Intensive Evidence-Based Literacy Required. Intensive instruction & frequent repetition required (10-15%)

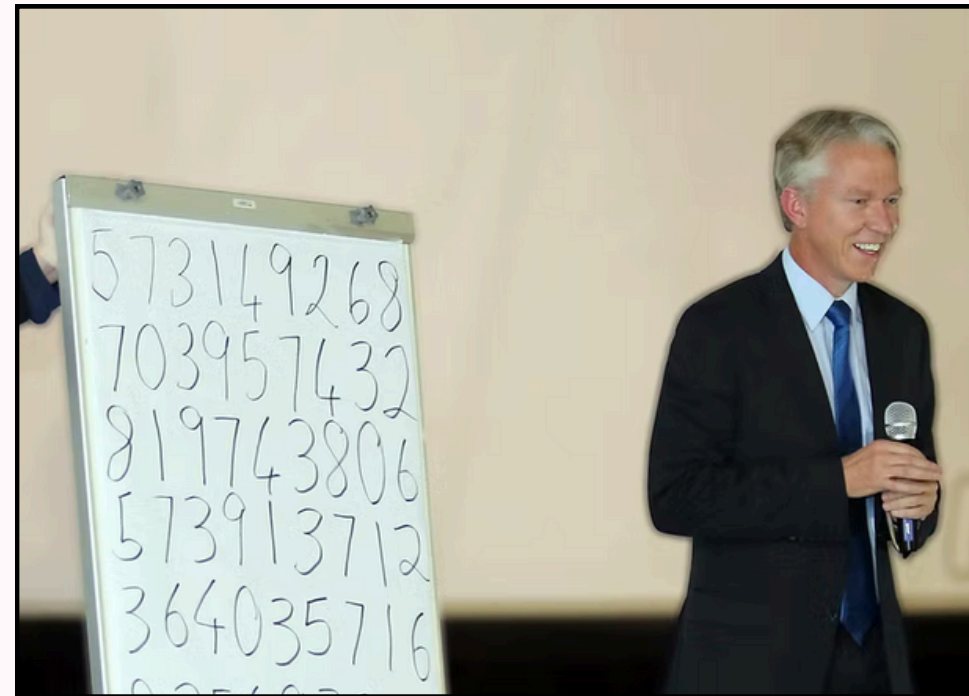
5) 28% U.S. adults (58.9M) are not yet reading fluently (NCES 2023 PIAAC report, level one or below. 2017=19%)

Don't Count These Kids Out



Maggie Aderin-Pocock

- Considered unteachable
- Left in the back of the classroom with art supplies
- British space scientist and dyslexia advocate
- Has her own STEM barbie doll



Kevin Horsley

- SpEd Kid. Psychologist “diagnosed” him with a type of “brain damage” called dyslexia.
- Struggled to read, learn, and retain information.
 - International Grand Master of Memory.
 - Matrix memorization of 10k digits of Pi
 - (Dominic O’Brien Current Sr. World Memory Champion is also dyslexic)



Philip Schultz

- Considered dumb, a bully and unteachable
- Pulitzer Prize-winning poet
- Founder and director of the Writers Studio, a private school for fiction and poetry writing
- Author of My Dyslexia, proof that one can rise above dyslexia’s so called limitations on the brain

Mad Libs Game Time

Instructions:

Each table has a word card

Please add a word to each category

Be ready to share out so we can collaboratively
write a Mad Lib

The Library is for Everyone!

There is a magical place in our community called the library! It's where smart, interesting people with big imaginations go.

Lex wanted to be one of those people. But learning to read was challenging, and spelling words and writing their ideas was even harder. They only get a few words right no matter how long they take and how hard they try. The library felt like the last place Lex could find relief and joy.

"The words won't come out right. I'll never be able to read or write," Lex sighed. "Everyone thinks I'm dumb." Ms. Loving overheard Lex while preparing her presentation about summer programming at the library with Lex' class at 11:30 am. She began to think about Lex' discouragement and literacy challenges. A lightbulb went off in her brain!

What if library workers understood more about how human brains learn to read? What if library workers understood more about dyslexic superpowers, like creativity, resourcefulness, problem-solving and willingness to persevere through challenges? What if library workers recognized high quality evidence-based instruction and included foundational skills in children's programming at their own community libraries? What if libraries could become known as local literacy hubs for everyone who has a unique way of thinking and doing things?

Ms. Loving's summer programming at the library presentation for Lex' class didn't go as she originally planned... "Differences in the way we learn make us each creative, smart and amazing!. Sometimes people can think the library is not a place for them. The library is for everyone! It's a magical place where people with differences on the outside and with differences on the inside play games, do puzzles, read or listen to books that interest them, and learn new things together or independently. If you are challenged to read, spell and write, you can find lots of information about your interests, and people who are extra creative and smart like you too. You can also ask for help with challenging words, and finding just right books with your librarians."

Lex began to understand that when they wanted to run and hide from their dyslexia, thoughtful people like Ms. Loving the librarian could see how amazing and wonderful they were. The Library was a place for Lex! Summer vacation at the library didn't mean they had to sign up for the reading challenge, but Lex could ask questions and find books they could read themselves and make new friends with Ms. Loving's help.

Written by Emily Carley, M.Ed @theliteracyspark for downloadable use as a component of the Dyslexic Positive Libraries Initiative Toolkit

Reluctant Readers

Reluctant readers are curious, creative and smart folks who may not be your library's patrons, yet.

Reluctant readers may be experiencing:

- a cycle of under education and socio-economic suppression
- neurodiverse ways of thinking and socializing
- learning differences, such as dyslexia, dysgraphia with concurrent processing challenges
- anxiety, social / emotional trauma
- ADHD and ADD

They need to read more books!

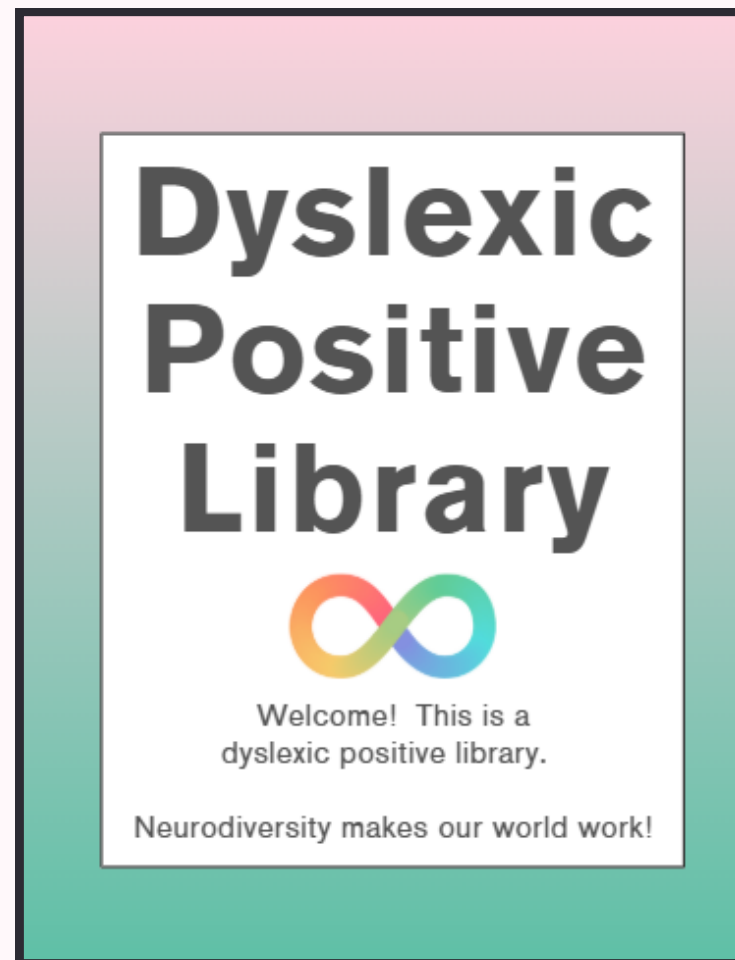
What's the matter with these reluctant readers?

I need to read more books so I can understand dyslexia, offer evidence-based literacy support, and create library spaces where dyslexic youth can thrive. I want to be a champion for them, a member of their team.

Go team!



Explicitly Welcoming Signs



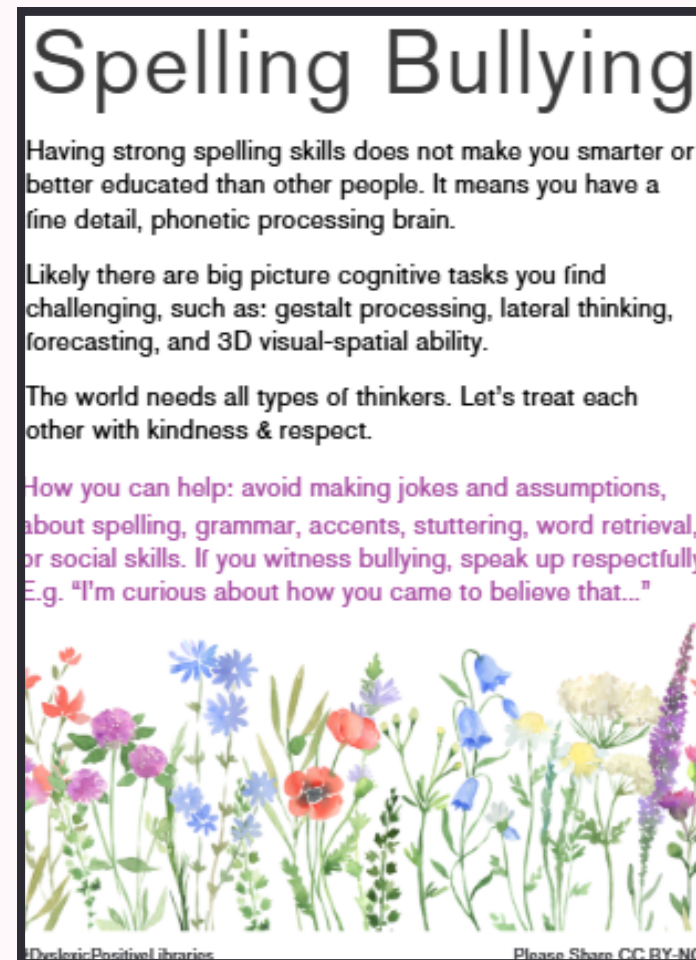
DPLI Welcome Sign

- Explicitly welcoming
- DPLI “ready to go”
 - Expertise
 - DEI lived experience



READ Signs

- Reading portrayed?
- How can we make space for everyone’s reading journey?



Spelling Bullying

- Signals safe space
- Gentle reminder for all of us

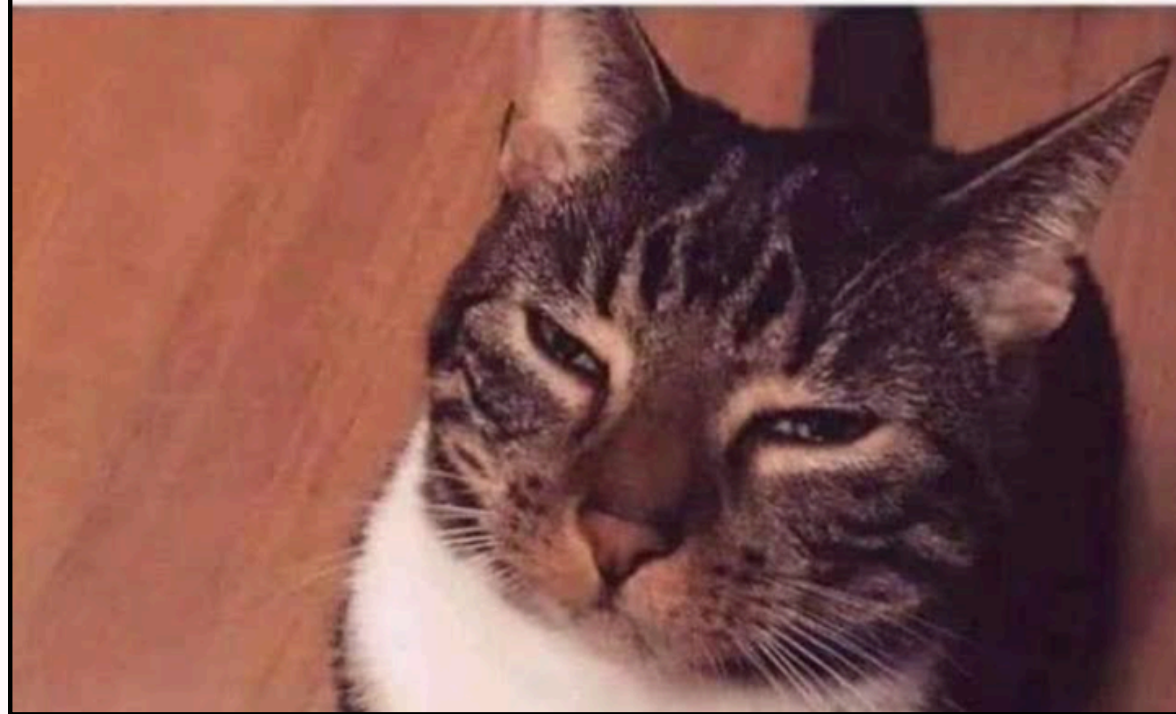


Pictorial Signs

- Clearly indicates a public restroom (single toilet)
- Learning to read, ELL, & trans/nonbinary, blind or low vision
- Retrofitted to wheelchair dimensions

Explicitly Welcoming Spaces

Friend: "Does your cat bite?"
Me: "Worse. He judges you."



The Hurdles

- **Poll: Are you a fine-detail, sequential, thinker?**
- Forms
- Stacks & Call Numbers
- Barcodes
- Print books myth
- Logins & Passwords
- Librar-ese
- In-person programing (no online option)
- Late/damaged materials
- Generational non-use

Library Workers = Greatest Asset

- Dyslexia knowledge
- ACES requiring a trauma-informed approach
- RSD



Automate the Kindness

AUTOMATIC OPAC MESSAGE

Dear Sir or Madam:

Your library materials are **extremely overdue**
and you **owe \$500**

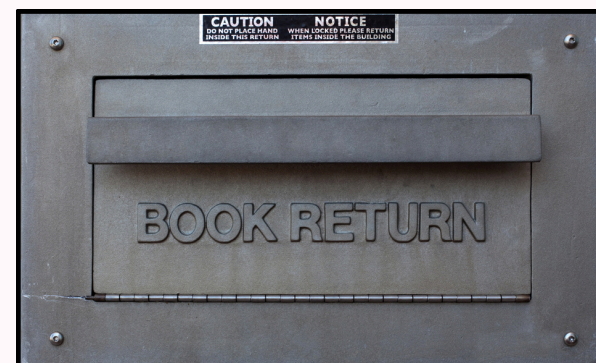
PS. Your account is **BLOCKED**.

Hi PattyPatron,

Thank you for using the Springfield Library.

[Clear instructions for renewing and returning
materials. Get help by email, text, or phone.]

Thank you again for using the library and
being part of the Springfield Library
Community.



Neurodiverse patron returning
books in the dead of night

Summer Reading Programs

How are you making your library fun and welcoming for young people in the Summer?

Summertime is a great opportunity to relax and get away from rigorous routines, but it is also a time when young people can build their reading muscles and their relationship with the public library and its resources.

Consider the dog-days of August a time to welcome youth patrons, their caregivers and make connections that will support successful back-to-school transitions come September.

Their most important relationship is the one with ---

YOU!



Offer alternatives to “Reading Logs”

Let’s face it- there are kids who thrill at documenting the books that they read all summer and there are kids who....do not.

From feeling like it’s a chore to record books to losing a piece of paper with a summer’s worth of progress, there are so many ways to take what could be exciting and fulfilling and turn it the opposite



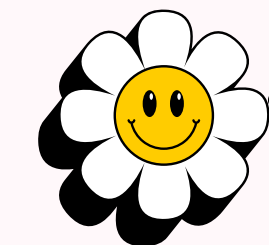
Alternative:



- Bingo cards for using library resources-- Did you teach yourself to play a game? Did you use a museum pass to explore a local historical site? Bring a picture book home and read it to a family member or pet? Recommend a book to a friend?



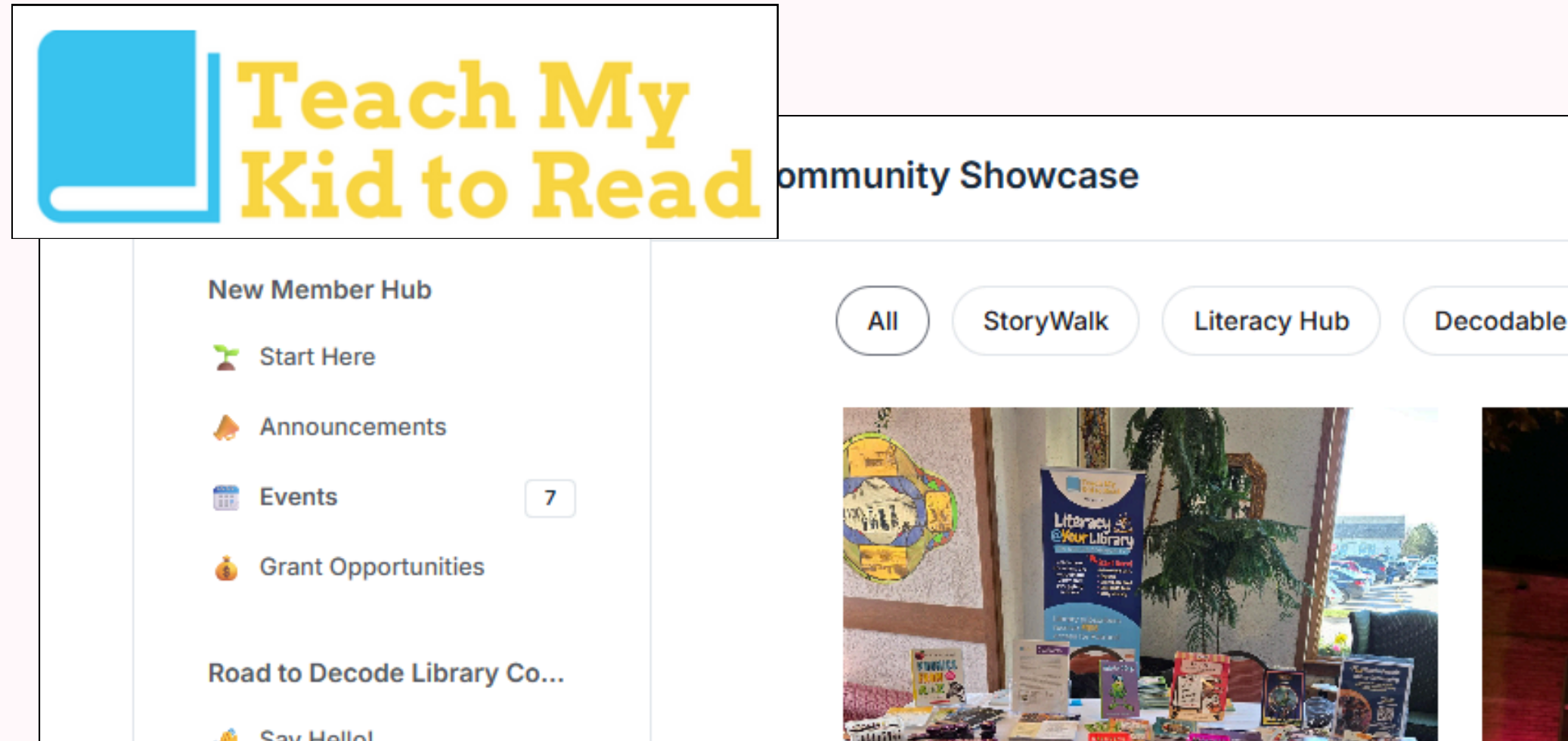
- Incentivizing library visits rather than bulk number of books read. – We want to see their faces, make connections, build relationships and trust. When young people see your library as their home, seeing themselves as readers comes so much more naturally.



- Invite preteens to be Youth Volunteers. Short shifts, doing tasks according to their interests and strengths. This strengthens a connection with the library and creates a sense of ownership.

Examples-- Picking up in-house library circs, craft prep, putting carts of reshelves in order, creating displays, writing book recommendations,,

Turn your Library into a Literacy Hub!



Teach My Kid to Read (TMKTR)
Road to Decode Guide
Literacy @ Your Library Online
Community. **Coupon Code: VT2025**



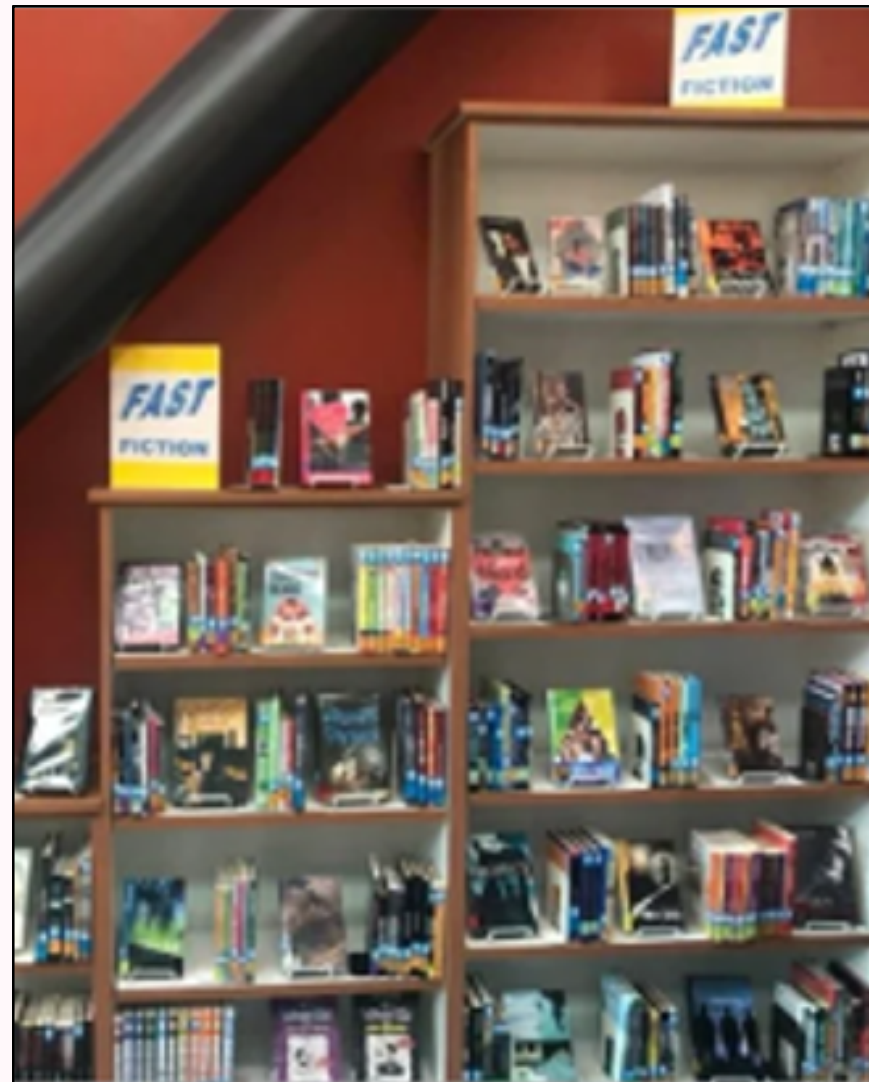
Skaneateles Library Literacy Hub
Mary Beth Schwartzwalder and her
literacy hub with TMKTR's Road to
Decode resources.

We Are Literacy Change Makers



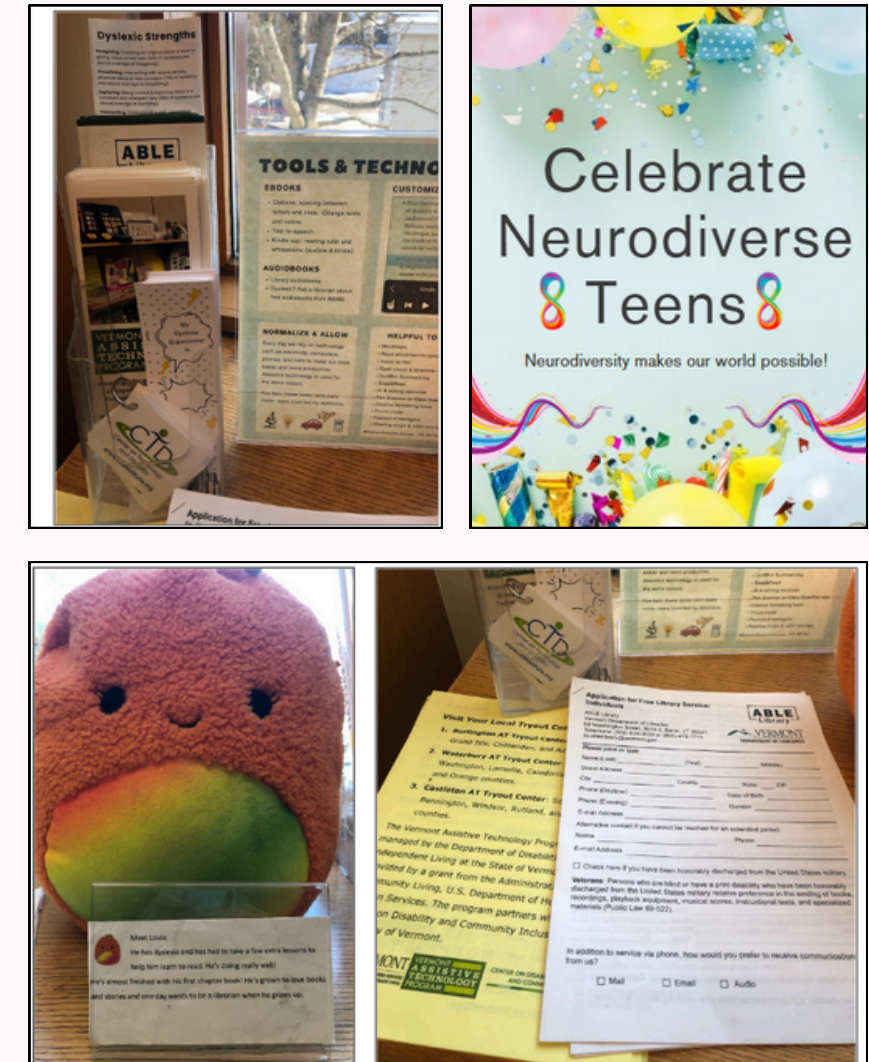
Literacy Hub Launch, May 2025

Amy Jensen & Gretta Kersher,
Dallas Public Library System



Fast Fiction Shelves

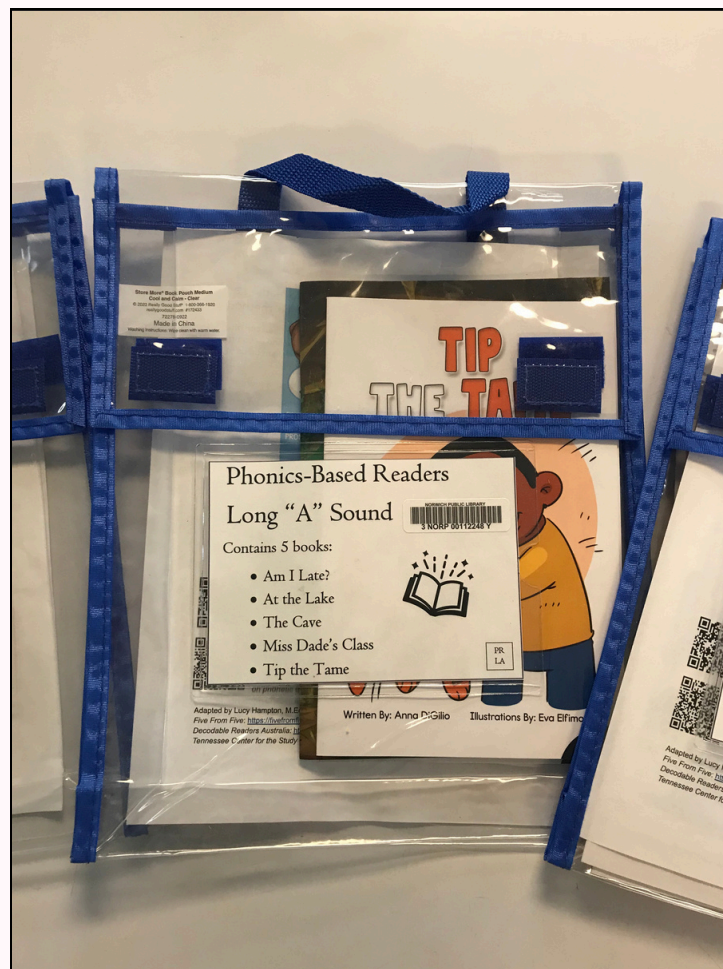
Carolyn MarRo, Middle School Librarian
Hi-lo books mixed with popular series
Books shame & segregation avoided



Celebrate Dyslexia Display

Nicole Westbom, Kellogg-
Hubbard Library

Turn your Library into a Literacy Hub!



New resources for the community

Norwich Public Library (NPL) Youth Services Librarian Erin Davison and Marion Cross School (MCS) Literacy Specialist Lucy Hampton selected the decodable books and separated them into groups of about five based on the phonics pattern and skill in a developmental progression. Each group of books contains an insert that gives parents tips and resources about how to use a decodable book and how to help their child learn to read. Winnie Belle \$2,500 grant, 300 decodables

Outside Literacy Hubs



Teach My Kid to Read, Earth Day Outreach, The Radix Ecological Center, Albany, NY.

- Free Early Literacy Kits
- Decodable Storywalk
- Little Free Library (LFL)
- Tabling at community events

Dyslexic Shine

LFL's invented by gay dyslexic Todd Bol in honor of his late mother, a teacher and book lover.



Storytime with Explicit Phonics

Preparing Pre-Readers for Reading and Spelling

Literacy Spark
guides coming
around!

Librarians can plan and initiate activities that prime pre-schooler brains to develop life-long literacy skills. An updated 60-minute story hour can engage the youngest patrons and their caregivers in high value skills.

letter sounds and manipulation (aka. phonemic awareness)

- **Say and Clap:** an oral language word game to hear the syllables in words.

Say and clap each part of the word elephant: *El-e-phant*, then use arm like an elephant trunk and move like that animal

read-aloud story

- **Sheep in a Jeep** by Nancy E. Shaw

Act out each action after reading it aloud throughout the story, request the children add the words: show getting into the Jeep, pressing the horn and the children say, *beep-beep*!

song

- **Shake My Sillies Out** by Raffi (McKay)

Get everyone up and moving! Prepare large word cards of repeated movement words in the song. When the lyrics repeat: *shake* or *yawn*, et. hold up the card. Gather the group following the song and retell the song in order showing the movement words as you say and act each out.

letter play (focus on lowercase)

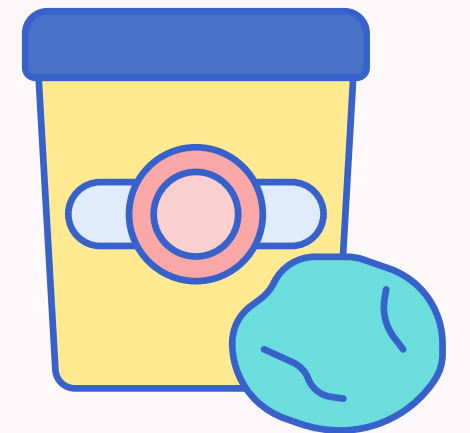
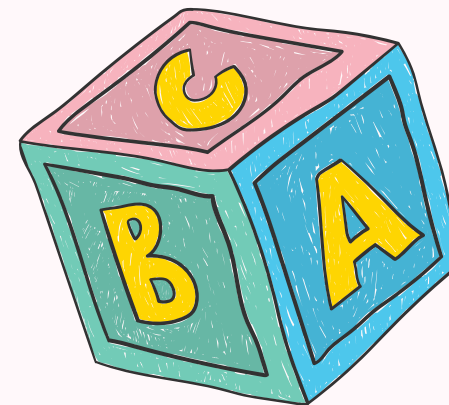
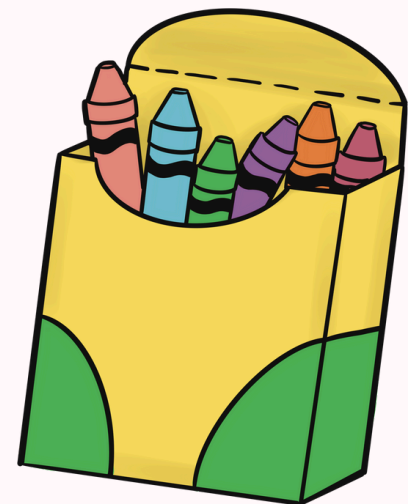
letter books, tactile letters, letter weaving, make the letter shapes, find the letters of your name (provide uppercase here)

A B C

Group Creativity Time

How can you creatively turn these everyday materials into literacy tools that engage young people in learning:

- Letter sounds / Rhyme
- Letter names
- Reading & spelling words
- Vocabulary
- Developing reading fluency & reading comprehension

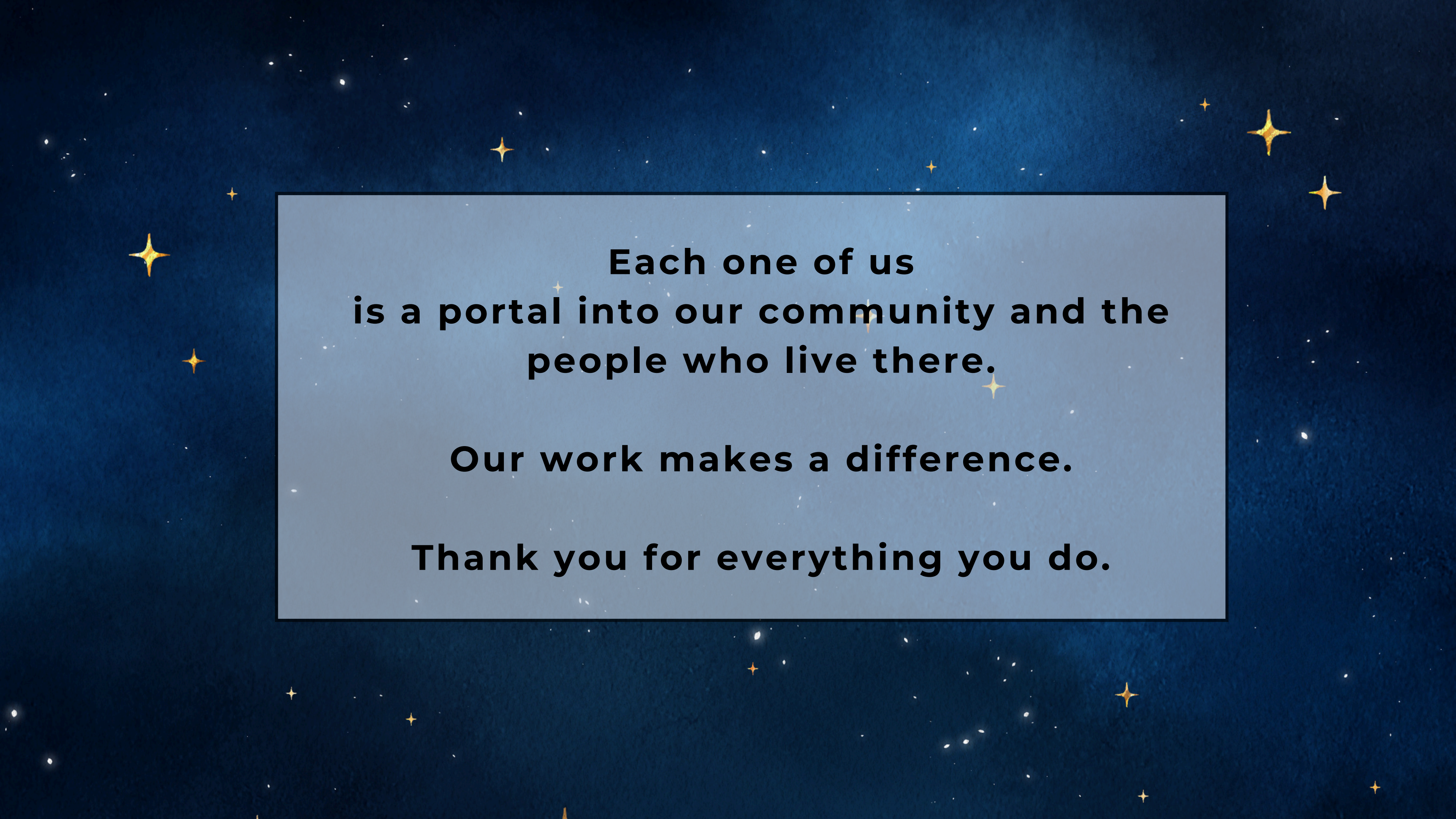


The Year Ahead

We will be here to support you in the year ahead.

- Listserv, google survey, email communications (sign-up for our awesome resources and support)
- Teach My Kid to Read's Literacy @ Your Library Online Community **Coupon Code: VT2025**
- ALA Annual Conference, Philadelphia, June 2025
- Fingers-crossed International Dyslexia Conference, Atlanta October 2025
- DPLI Vermont Libraries tour - let us help you get started!
- Follow Emily Carley, MEd. and the Literacy Spark on Instagram and Facebook
- Hopefully submitting proposals for ALA webinars (stay tuned!)
- Find DPLI at Kellogg-Hubbard Library or Teach My Kid to Read to access our toolkit pieces (coming soon!)





**Each one of us
is a portal into our community and the
people who live there.**

Our work makes a difference.

Thank you for everything you do.

Acknowledgements

A debt of gratitude is owed to the following people and organizations for generously allowing use of their images and content.

- Brock Eide & Fernette Eide. Dyslexia WOW Poster. Ceiling of the Sagrada Família by Dyslexic Architect Gaudi
- Brock Eide Fernette & Eide. Strengths of Dyslexia
- Carolyn MarRo. Fast Fiction Shelves
- Jennifer Berman. You Rock, You Rule
- Kate Griggs. Strengths of Dyslexia
- Ira Socol. Dyslexic Kids are Not the Problem
- Ira Socol. Tools & Technology
- Marion Waldman & Beth Bevars. Indoor and Outdoor Literacy Hubs. Teach my Kid to Read.
- Peter Blenski. Professional Development Cart Races Meme legolibrarian.com
- Sally Shaywitz. Signs of Dyslexia
- Women of Rubies. Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock photograph
- White Flower Farms. Bulb Bloom Chart`

References

The dyslexic positive libraries initiative uses an accessible, simplified citation style. The citations include the information necessary to 1) credit the author/creator, 2) locate the source, and 3) evaluate source quality. Additional citation information is excluded, including: page numbers, volume, number, issue, month, day, database, DOI, URL, accession date, and publisher location. That information is readily available online and library workers are happy to provide. Footnotes and parenthetical citations are options for in-text citations. The Simplified Citation Style (SCS) emphasizes the qualities of simplicity, consistency, clarity, adaptability, brevity, and accessibility. It is suitable for all academic disciplines.

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08 Philip Schultz: Theplatypusmaster. Photograph in back yard. CC BY-SA 4.0*

10 Mad Libs: Mad Libs original is a word game created by Leonard Stern and Roger Price

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Literacy @Your Library Online Community. Used with permission.

18 Library Workers Rock: Teach MyLiteracy Hub Launch, May 2025 Amy Jensen & Gretta Kersher, Dallas Public Library System (photograph). Literacy @Your Library Online Community. Used with permission.

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