

Serving Up Outreach with a Side of Information Literacy

Liz Hartnett



Liz Hartnett is a Program Coordinator at the South Carolina Center for Community Literacy, part of the University of South Carolina's School of Information Science, and a co-chair of the ALSC Intellectual Freedom Committee.

Information literacy can add new dimension to outreach programs. Just like sneaking healthy food into a kid's meal, these techniques will enrich the work you already do as a librarian. Here we'll focus on tips for incorporating information literacy into outreach programming for kids.

Consider these tips to build information literacy skills at any age.

- Create opportunities for kids to brainstorm and come up with good questions about things they'd like to know (identifying the information need).
- Help kids become aware of tools they can use to answer their questions—library materials, community groups, and individual experts (planning how to find information).
- Provide practice in using keyword searches, taking notes, and designing things like simple surveys or interview questions (gathering information)
- Show how to look critically at sources, identify high-quality information, and investigate questionable claims (evaluating sources).
- Have your participants put their information to some use, help them with strategies for presenting it effectively (organizing and communicating information).

Outreach is critical for extending service to non-users or underserved groups. Effective outreach for children often involves community partnerships -childcare providers, schools, shelters, hospitals, summer camps, or local festivals, for example.

Here are two sample programs to try. Adapt them to fit your community!

Sample Program #1

THEME: Nutrition

SKILLS: Collect and use data

Am I eating a nutritious lunch?

Following a shared lunch (perhaps through outreach programs such as Summer Food Service), read and share books relating to the elements of good nutrition, like *How Did That Get in My Lunchbox?* by Chris Butterworth or *The Monster Health Book* by Edward Miller.

- Which food groups are represented in today's lunch? Are the meals balanced? *Search for nutrition information*, using related nonfiction titles or materials from sites like Nutrition for Kids (Mayo Clinic) or the USDA's Choose My Plate site.



- Which foods are most popular? How can we find out? *Create a survey, gather and organize results, produce a visual representation.*

For older kids: Provide nutrition labels for a variety of food products. Using these, challenge kids to assemble a healthy menu for a meal or a day. EatRight, from the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, has some accessible information on reading nutrition labels.

Sample Program #2

THEME: Weather forecasting

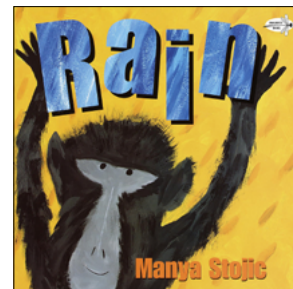
SKILLS: Identifying information need; locating information

Why are weather forecasts important, and how do we find out about the weather?

This topic could be of particular interest to kids taking part in outdoor programs, such as those provided through local parks departments.

- Get the conversation started by appearing in clothes that are inappropriate for the weather that day (a big coat in summer, flip-flops in winter, etc.). How do you know what to wear for the day?

- Share the book *Rain* by Manya Stojic and discuss ways to tell when the weather is changing.



- Talk about the value of weather forecasts.

- How do we know what the weather will be (what are some sources)?

- What's the forecast for tomorrow?

Close the session by reading about the completely outlandish weather conditions in Judi Barrett's *Cloudy with a Chance of Meatballs*. &

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