**StoryTime Theater...Starring You!**

**2007**

Amy Friedman, Indianapolis Marion County Public Library

**Indianapolis Marion County Public Library**

afriedman@imcpl.org

1. **Description of Primary Learners:**
   - Pre-school and early elementary age children and parents or other caregivers

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>X Early Learners</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X Primary Schools</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper Elementary</td>
<td>High Schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle Schools</td>
<td>Young Adults</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Adult Learners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Intergenerational</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. **Subject/Topical Areas of Inquiry:**
   - Reading readiness & comprehension

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science/Technology</td>
<td>Daily Life Skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Sciences</td>
<td>Business/Economics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X Arts/Humanities</td>
<td>Local Community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Home, Garden, Auto</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Personal Development</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. **Library Resources/Media Formats Used:**
   - Picture books, props, costumes

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Reference Books</td>
<td>Databases</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Periodicals</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Web Sites</td>
<td>X Collections</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Production Tools</td>
<td>Videos, Art Forms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Production Equipment</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
StoryTime Theater…Starring You!

Program Description: This is a 45-60 minute experience for pre school or early elementary age children with their and parents or other caregivers. The learning context is set by displaying costumes and props, and the activity begins with an explanation to the children that they are going to be read a story and then they will get to be in the story as they re-tell the story by acting it out for the audience of parents and caregivers.

The experience includes a lively reading aloud of a brief, familiar story from a picture book, such as The Three Little Pigs, followed by assigning roles and handing out the props and costumes to the participants.

The experience concludes with the children performing the story which gives them the opportunity to practice early literacy skills and develop proficiency in these areas. They all receive a “playbill” that includes a picture of themselves in costume and literacy tips for parents so that the fun can continue at home.

Program Benefits: This program provides learners with a fun literacy activity that helps develop enthusiasm for reading and builds reading comprehension skills.

Past participants have valued the program because it helped parents and caregivers to become familiar with a method to engage children in a literacy experience and to combine reading aloud with dramatic play.

The Roles the Librarian Plays
Information Specialist
Instructor in Information Literacy/Inquiry Skills
Advocate and Administrator
**LEARNING OBJECTIVES FOR PRIMARY LEARNERS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learning Dimension</th>
<th>Content Objectives</th>
<th>Information Literacy Objectives</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Concepts</td>
<td>Organize ideas from a story into a narrative. Parents will understand the importance of reading aloud to children and extending read aloud with conversation and imaginative play. Take advantage of children’s natural impulse for dramatic play by combining with read aloud.</td>
<td>Reading/listening comprehension – develop synthesis and inference Narrative skills Vocabulary Recognize connection between printed word and reading</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practices</td>
<td>Children will be able to re-tell a story using costumes and props. They will re-tell a story using their own words and movements in a simple dramatic performance.</td>
<td>Children will be able to organize a story into a narrative using elements such as plot, character, and setting. They will be able to express themselves verbally.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>States of Being</td>
<td>The children will be eager to use the props and the costumes. Kinesthetic learners will be motivated to participate. They will have positive associations with reading aloud and story telling. They will be inspired to use their imaginations and make up stories of their own.</td>
<td>The children will feel comfortable re-telling a story incorporating elements such as plot, character and setting. Parents will be more light hearted about literacy, understanding that fun and learning are not mutually exclusive for early readers.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
INSTRUCTIONAL GUIDE

This is a guide for the librarian, teacher, and/or subject expert to follow when replicating the program.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

This Instructional Guide contains these components, in order of use:

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Preparation: Setting the Stage</td>
<td>4.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Welcome and Introduction</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Read Aloud</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Distribution of Roles, Costumes &amp; Props</td>
<td>4.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. The Performance</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Conclusion: Take a Bow</td>
<td>4.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.1

Preparation: Setting the Stage

- Select and area for the activity that either has an actual stage area or the feel of one. This could involve simply taping an outline on the floor with masking tape, or using a couple of chairs to demarcate the “stage” area. Make sure there is enough room for lots of action!

- Display the costumes and props so that the children can see them during the read aloud time.

- Place person who will read the story aloud “in” the theater space.

- Have the playbills printed out and ready for distribution.

- Have caregiver resource sheet printed out and ready for distribution.

- These printed items could be displayed in a decorative basket to other container that would enhance the setting and seem part of the story.
4.2

**Welcome and introduction**  *(5 minutes)*

- Greet the participants and accompanying adults.
- Put name tags on children.
- Have the children sit in the “audience” facing the stage area.
- Explain clearly to the children that they are going to hear a story that they might know already, and that after the story is read they are going to get to put on costumes or use props to act out the story themselves.
- If there are more children than roles, explain that there will be a second performance and everyone will get a turn to act out the story.
- Tell them that they will pick a little picture out of the hat (or whatever you use) that will tell them who they will be in the story.
4.3

**Read Aloud** *(10-15 minutes)*

- Read selected story aloud
  
  o Hint: Story Selection
    Select stories that are short, simple, and have distinct plot and character elements, and ideally have large, colorful illustrations. If necessary, shorten the story by not reading every word. Familiar stories like The Three Little Pigs or Little Red Riding Hood are one approach, but trying this activity with an unfamiliar story would be fun and challenging, especially for early elementary ages. Note that there are many different versions of familiar tales, some more appropriate for young children than others. Some suggestions:
    Caps for Sale
    Where the Wild Things Are

- Repeat explanation of activity
4.4

**Assign roles, costume and props** *(10 minutes)*

- Have children pick their role out of hat (or whatever you choose to hold the role pictures)
  
  - Hint: There will inevitably be requests or complaints about the assigned role. If it is a small group let them trade roles, but if it is a large group you will have to explain that this is what happens to real actors – they have to take the role they get and the fun is really acting like that person or animal!

- Give children their respective costumes/props

- Take a Polaroid picture of each child in costume
  
  - Hint: To keep this process from taking too much time, have an assistant to help with this or ask one of the adults to take the pictures so you can hand out the costumes.
4.5

The Performance (*10-15 minutes*)

- Direct the Three Little Pigs and Mother Pig to the stage.

- Direct the Wolf and Persons With Straw, Sticks and Bricks to wait offstage until it is their turn to go on.

- Prompt children to begin the story.
  - Hint: Prompting Techniques
    - There will be wide variations in the ability of children to initiate acting out the story on their own. Pre-school age children require more direction than early elementary age.
    - Try to make the prompts and directions open ended enough so that the children will still express their own ideas about the story.

  - Examples of prompts for the Three Little Pigs:
    - What did the Mommy pig say at the beginning of the story?
    - OK Little Piggies, walk down the road!
    - Oh, here comes a man with some hay! (sticks, bricks)
LEARNERS’ MATERIALS

This is the collection of materials that may be reprinted for distribution to the learners in your program.

TABLE OF CONTENTS
The Learners’ Materials are listed, in order of use:

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Role assignment slips</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Props and Costumes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Playbill Handout</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Program Evaluation Handout for Adults</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5.1

Role Assignment Slips

- Print from web or photocopy from book images of characters from the story.
- Laminate the sheet of images
- Cut out each image and place in receptacle from which children will draw a slip that corresponds to a role
5.2

Costumes and Props

- Hint: Keep costumes, props and setting elements simple. The objective is to encourage children to think about the story and use their imaginations to re-tell it. Elaborate costumes and props could actually be a distraction from the story telling process. The performance as a “show” is not the focus of the activity. Also, simple costumes and props will make it easy to use this technique for a variety of stories. Some props and costumes might be used for more than one story.

- Pigs costumes
- Apron for mother pig costume
- Wolf costume
- Hay prop
- Stick prop
- Bricks prop
- Suggested sources for costumes – see 6.5 Supplies outside collection
5.3

Playbill Handout

- A playbill can be adapted to accompany any story. This handout is a personalized memento of the experience for the children. It also functions as an information handout for the adults.

- Shown here is playbill layout for Three Little Pigs performance. When folded, the page with suggestions for parents is on the back.
Have fun with the
"Storytime Theater Starring You!"
at home!

Parents play a very important role in helping children learn to read and to make reading a joyful part of their lives. Reading aloud to children can include activities in which your child retells the story or parts of the story. Re-telling stories helps children understand what they are reading. They will think about how the story is put together - the beginning, middle and end, the characters, and the setting. This is not memorizing the story, rather it is telling the story in their own words. Children may create their own stories instead of re-telling the one they heard - they are using their imaginations and ideas they have heard to create a new story - this is a true success story!

A fun way to re-tell stories is to use costumes and props and act out the story. Props help children organize their thoughts and make the experience with reading active and playful. You can use costumes, felt boards, finger puppets, cut out puppets, items from the kitchen cupboard or the coat closet to dramatize a story. Encourage your child to be the star of their own special Storytime Theater!

You can ask questions to help your child tell the story, keeping in mind "who, what, where, and when" to greatly prompt them to continue with their tale. For example, "What happened next?" or "When did the first little pig build his house?" or "Who blew down the house of sticks?" After the "performance" you can interview your child using questions such as those printed on this The Three Little Pigs playbill to encourage your child to be the star of their own special Storytime Theater at home.

CAST OF THE THREE LITTLE PIGS

PIG WITH STRAW HOUSE:

PIG WITH STICK HOUSE:

PIG WITH BRICK HOUSE:

BIG, BAD WOLF:

MOTHER PIG:

PERSON WITH STRAW:

PERSON WITH STICKS:

PERSON WITH BRICKS:

OUR STORY TODAY CAME FROM:

The Kingfisher Book of Nursery Tales

By

Vivian French and Stephen Landau

SPECIAL INTERVIEW WITH A "THREE LITTLE PIGS" STAR!

Congratulations! That was a great performance!
You all made this story seem like it was really happening right here in this room!

Mother pig can you tell me why did you make me a little pig to leave your house?
Did you want me so you could get something? Are you going to visit your little pigs?

Person with straw, that was nice of you to give the straw to the little pig. Did you think the straw would make a strong house?

Person with sticks, that was nice of you to give the sticks to the little pig. Did you think the sticks would make a strong house?

Person with bricks, that was nice of you to give the bricks to the little pig. Did you think the bricks would make a strong house?

Little Pig, what kind of a house did you build? What happened to your house? Oh my goodness! What did you do after that? You ran pretty fast on those little piggy feet of yours! Do you think that wolf was going for good?

So Wolf, what was all that running and yelling about? Some people in the audience looked scared when they saw you. When did you go in the pig houses? What happened to you at the pig's house made of bricks? How's your tail doing?
5.4 Program Evaluation for Adults

Storytime Theater….Starring You!

Please let us know about the experience you and your child had with Storytime Theater….Starring You! by answering the questions below. Thank you for joining in the fun and helping your child build strong literacy skills - to say nothing of becoming a great actor!

☐ How did you hear about “Storytime Theater…Starring You!”?
☐ Library calendar of events
☐ Friend
☐ School
☐ Indianapolis Star
☐ Local newspaper (name) __________________________
☐ TV or radio advertisement (name of program/channel) ______________________
☐ Other__________________________________________

Have you been to a library children’s program before?
Yes______   No________

Did you child enjoy “Storytime Theater…Starring You”?
Loved it!______   Had an OK time_______   Did not like the activity_______

Did your child get a chance to act out a part of the story?
Yes______   No______   Chose to observe only_______

Did your child use a costume or prop?
Yes_______   No________   Preferred not to use one_______

Are you planning to come back for more drama and action with “Storytime Theater…Starring You!”?
Yes________   No________   Maybe________

Comments:

Thank you for answering these questions! We look forward to seeing you and your children again.
**LIBRARY RESOURCES**

This is a guide for the librarian who is taking responsibility for initiating the program and acting on behalf of the library as a resource.

**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

Library Resources contains these components, in order of use:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. The Librarian’s Role in the Program</td>
<td>6.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. The Materials from the Library’s Collection</td>
<td>6.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Library Space</td>
<td>6.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Library Equipment</td>
<td>6.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Supplies Outside of the Collection</td>
<td>6.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
6.1

The Librarian’s role in the program

Information Specialist
The librarian is responsible for selecting appropriate stories, creating the supporting materials such as the playbill and props.

Instructor in Information Literacy/Inquiry Skills
The librarian carries out the program and functions as a teacher or role model for replication by adults bringing children to the program.

Advocate and Administrator
The librarian is responsible for creating the program, gathering the resources and supplies, scheduling the program(s), publicizing the program, finding the location, and setting up the location with the materials required to do the activity.
6.2

Materials from the library’s collection

Books used for program.

Materials for props and costumes, if available
6.3

Library space

- Use a space in the library that can be set up to feel like a “theater” area.
- The “stage” does not have to be raised, just outlined with tape, chairs, anything to set it apart from the audience.
- Set up seating area so the audience to faces the children on “stage”
- Have enough room for children to wait in the “wings” to come on for their part of the story.
- If noise is an issue, use a meeting room or storytelling room,
- If noise is not an issue, better to hold program in children’s area to attract attention – this is will promote the program and draw participants.
6.4

Library Equipment

- Polaroid or digital camera
6.5

Supplies outside the collection

- Costumes:
  Suggested sources –
  Discount School Supply [www.discountshoolsupply.com](http://www.discountshoolsupply.com)
  Aeromax, Inc. [www.aeromaxtoys.com](http://www.aeromaxtoys.com)
  Childcraft [https://www.childcrafteducation.com](https://www.childcrafteducation.com)

- Craft supplies for props from Michaels arts and crafts store
PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION

This is a guide for the librarian or primary partner who is taking responsibility for initiating the program, coordinating the efforts of all partners, and tabulating and reporting the evidence-based program measures

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Program Administration contains these components, in order of use:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Project Timeline and Logistics</td>
<td>7.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Partners Roles/Profiles</td>
<td>7.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Advocacy Tools</td>
<td>7.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Measurement Guidelines</td>
<td>7.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Project Resources with Budget</td>
<td>7.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
7.1

Project Timeline and Logistics

*Storytime Theater...Starring You!* is an approach to early literacy as much as it is a project or an activity, therefore the timeline and the logistics are relatively simple. Below is a “to do” list for carrying out this type of activity that can be modified to fit the lead times required for purchasing and publicity at your organization.

- Locate books and select stories.
- Order supplies and materials
- Schedule space in library or visit to other organization
- Produce and distribute/post promotional materials
7.2

Partners Roles/Profile

(Does not apply to this project)
7.3

Advocacy Tools

Early literacy is already recognized as being critical to future success in school and in the workplace.

To make early literacy efforts effective, educators also focus active learning methods, variations in learning styles, and the importance of free choice or informal learning institutions such as libraries.

The following web sites provide information or supporting material that can be used to advocate for programs such as Storytime Theater…Starring You!

http://www.ala.org/ala/alsc/ECRR/ECRRHomePage.htm
http://www.aplaceofourown.org/activity.php?id=316
http://pbskids.org/zoom/activities/playhouse/
www.storyquest.org.uk/schools/activity
www.nwrel.org/comm/monthly/retelling.html
http://www.dropoutprevention.org/effstrat/active_learning/overview.htm
http://www.dropoutprevention.org/effstrat/early_literacy_devel/overview.htm
http://www.movingandlearning.com/
7.4

Measurement Guidelines

- Observation checklist (see sample below)
- Comments made by children during “interview” at end of performance
- Results of adult evaluation (see sample below)
Storytime Theater...Starring You!
Learner Outcomes
*Observation Checklist*

Person implementing program or extra assistant observes children’s participation based on the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OBSERVATION</th>
<th>NUMBER OBSERVED (1 tick mark per person)</th>
<th>OBSERVATION BEHAVIORS (What does the observation look/sound like?)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pays attention</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>☐ entire story</td>
<td></td>
<td>- Watches storyteller</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Makes periodic relevant comments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Asks relevant questions throughout</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Remains in area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ part of story</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ none of story</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Participates in acting out story</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ eager participation</td>
<td></td>
<td>- Speaks lines of story</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Pantomimes action from story</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ no participation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Accepts assigned role</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ happy with role</td>
<td></td>
<td>- Puts on costume or holds prop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Smiles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Speaks lines and pantomimes action of role without force</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ unhappy with role</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Uses some words and/or names from the story</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Awareness of events in the story</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ demonstrates awareness</td>
<td></td>
<td>- Describes an event in the story</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ does not</td>
<td></td>
<td>- Comments on an event</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Asks a question about an event</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Pantomimes an event</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>demonstrate awareness</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>-----------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>Expresses action in story</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ uses pantomime, movement and gesture</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ does not use pantomime, movement and gesture</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Sequence of story: beginning, middle, end</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ demonstrates some understanding</td>
<td>-Comments on story sequence using words like first, second, and then, after that, and finally. -Correctly answers sequence questions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ does not demonstrate understanding</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Creates own features of story</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ask to “do it again”</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>“Interview” questions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ responds</td>
<td>-Answers questions -Asks questions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ does not respond</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asks to take books home</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Adult participant evaluation

Storytime Theater....Starring You!

Please let us know about the experience you and your child had with Storytime Theater....Starring You! by answering the questions below. Thank you for joining in the fun and helping your child build strong literacy skills - to say nothing of becoming a great actor!

☐ How did you hear about “Storytime Theater...Starring You!”?
☐ Library calendar of events
☐ Friend
☐ School
☐ Indianapolis Star
☐ Local newspaper (name) _________________________
☐ TV or radio advertisement (name of program/channel)______________________
☐ Other__________________________________________________________

Have you been to a library children’s program before?
Yes______     No________

Did you child enjoy “Storytime Theater...Starring You”?
Loved it!______     Had an OK time_______     Did not like the activity_______

Did your child get a chance to act out a part of the story?
Yes_____    No______   Chose to observe only_______

Did your child use a costume or prop?
Yes_______    No________   Preferred not to use one_______

Are you planning to come back for more drama and action with “Storytime Theater...Starring You!”?
Yes________    No________   Maybe________

Comments:

Thank you for answering these questions! We look forward to seeing you and your children again.
7.5

Project Resources with Budget

Raffia ......................... $3.99
Grapevine swag ................ 5.99
Styrofoam for bricks ........... 8.00
Felt for bricks ................ 3.00
Wolf costume ................... 29.95
Pig costume .................... 18.95
Pig costume .................... 18.95
Pig costume .................... 18.95
Toy wheel barrow ............. 30.00
Polaroid film .................. 20.00

Total .......................... $157.78
PROMOTION TO AUDIENCES

This is a guide for the librarian and the project partner who jointly take responsibility for attracting a capacity audience for the program. It is important that all participants are a good match for the program’s information literacy and content objectives.

1. Sample Advertisements 8.1

2. Distribution Plans 8.2
STORYTIME THEATER

Presents:

The Three Little Pigs

Bring your pre-school age (3-5 years) child to the library to hear a story, and to re-tell it themselves by acting out the story using costumes and props. Have fun and develop pre-reading skills at the same time!

All the excitement of the classic suspense drama involving pigs, a wolf, and some houses...

GLENDALE BRANCH

THURSDAY, JUNE 7

11:00AM & 7:00PM
8.2

Distribution ideas for promotional materials:

Preschools
Kindergartens
Community bulletin boards
Church bulletin boards.
School newsletters
Neighborhood newsletters
Coffee shops