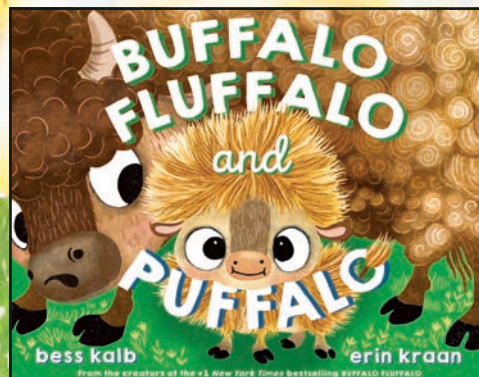
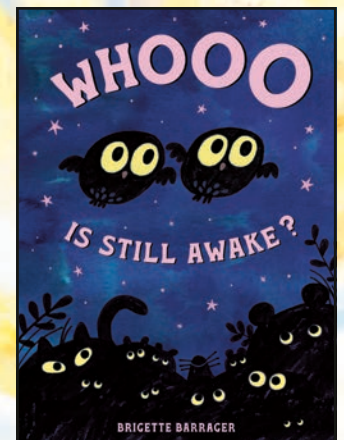
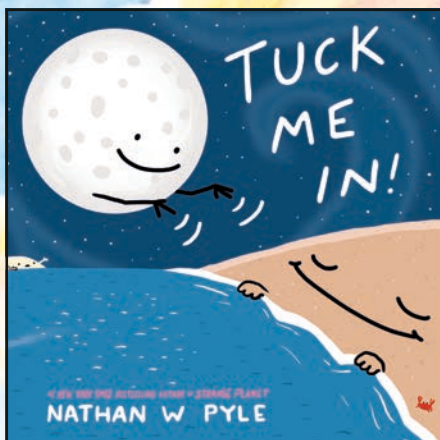


Let **RANDOM HOUSE** **CHILDREN'S BOOKS** Inspire Your Next **STORYTIME!**

Storytime is an amazing community connector—a chance to give the children in your community a place and space to belong and thrive as they develop early literacy skills and bond with the adults in their lives.



THINGS TO THINK ABOUT as you plan YOUR STORYTIME

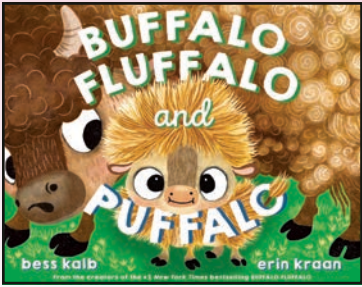
- You should gear storytimes to different ages and demographics, but remember that you can use books with multiple age groups. You can adjust the level of conversation with each crowd or find elements that enrich titles for any age. Consider, beyond ages, what elements of books you will spotlight.
- Not all storytimes need themes, but it can be a good way to unite books, activities, and crafts, as well as a way to plan and promote. However, even when you are thinking of themes, don't feel limited. Larger themes can unite books conceptually and creatively. Using titles featured in this guide, you might work to create a storytime with the books *Family Feast* and *Buffalo Fluffalo Puffalo*, centering family connections like found family and extended families, or you could pair *Tuck Me In!* and *Whooo Is Still Awake?* for a bedtime-themed program.
- Before you share a book with a crowd, you should preview it yourself and even practice reading it aloud if you can. Think of the natural pauses in the story or words and phrases that you can highlight while sharing with a crowd. Additionally, never be afraid to STOP reading a book if it is not working in a program. You can add in a movement break, abridge a story, or return to it at another time.
- Many of these books contain fun rhyme schemes. Remember that rhyming helps develop **phonological awareness**, a key skill for reading readiness. When children begin to understand rhymes, it is easier for them to break down words into smaller parts and hear syllables. So don't be afraid to lean into rhymes and encourage children to do the same.
- Play is a fundamental part of childhood and helps build and develop reading readiness, so most of the books featured in this guide come with ideas for how to connect them to play. Whenever you are selecting titles for storytime, keep play in mind! Not only does it make the books more fun and appealing, but it also helps make your programs more engaging and enriching.

These books are ideal titles to build a storytime around for a variety of ages and audiences. Take a look at some of these tips and try them out today!

Angie Manfredi is a librarian, writer, and editor. Angie is currently a middle school librarian in the Southwest, serving grades 7–8. Previously, Angie was the Youth Services Consultant for the State Library of Iowa and she worked as the Head of Youth Services at the Los Alamos County library system in Los Alamos, New Mexico.

TODDLER STORYTIME

(Ages 3–6)



1. This is a good book to use to talk about the concepts of big and small. Before you begin reading, ask children to show you what big looks like and what small looks like. You can demonstrate using your hands. A good accompanying rhyme to reinforce the concept is “This Is Big, Big, Big” by Melissa Depper. Many versions exist online—find one that matches your style.
2. Rhyming is an important early literacy skill and helps children get ready to read. *Fluffalo* and *Puffalo* are fun made-up rhyming words. Have children practice making up their own rhymes using some fun words from the book like *gloomy*, *smelly*, *snuggle*, or *chatter*.

3. Feel the Fluff and Puff: Allow children to experience a wide range of textures. With a bag of cotton balls, you can have children describe what they feel like, do a simple gluing activity, or have some fun tossing them around. You can gather other items that are fluffy or puffy (or mix it up with other textures) and give children a chance to touch and describe them as well.

Storytime Tip: Considering pairing this sequel with the first book, *Buffalo Fluffalo*, for a fun double storytime.

1. Before you begin the story, start with a discussion about fast and slow. There are lots of fun rhymes about these opposites: “Fast and Slow,” “Zoom, Zoom, Zoom, We’re Going to the Moon,” and “Roly-Poly” are a few examples.
2. This is a book built on imagination, so in a storytime with older children, talk about what the baby sees versus what they are really encountering in their household. Talk about imagination and play as you do this. **Example:** Baby sees a lake, but what is it? (Cat tipped over a water bowl.)
3. This book is meant to be played. After storytime, you can set up a variety of imaginative play opportunities. Let children draw roadways on cardboard to use with cars, set up a small obstacle course for children to zip and zoom through, put out blocks or other building toys and let children build bridges, and more. Encourage caregivers to ask children questions about what they are making or engage with them in their narratives.



1. Tell caregivers at the beginning of the storytime that you will need their help to say the refrain: “Tastes like home when family meet; a bond so warm, so strong, so sweet.” Encourage them to hug their children at the end. After you say the verse, pause and prompt caregivers to repeat it with you a second time. If you can, have it displayed.
2. We follow a young girl in a pink tutu throughout the book. She is seen on almost every page. You can encourage participation and help children begin to understand point of view in a story by asking them to look for her and even pausing to discuss what she is doing and how she might be feeling in each scene.
3. **Serve Up Some Yum:** This is an ideal story to use a flannel or magnetic board. Print pictures of some of the food featured prominently in the story: sweet potato pie, collard greens, cornbread muffins, and candied yams, to name a few. Add them to your “dinner” board when they are

mentioned in the story. After reading, encourage children to take turns playing with the board, and encourage caregivers to use it as a chance to discuss their favorite family foods. You can make multiple sets of the images so many children can interact with the boards.

BIG-KID STORYTIME

(Ages 4-7)



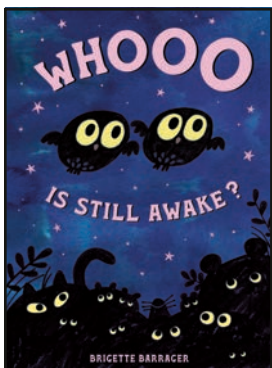
1. You can begin by displaying a graphic with the phases of the moon. Find one that includes Earth at the center. Have a conversation with the children about the moon cycle, pointing out all the changes, and then ask them to talk about how they might impact Earth.
2. This book has the word *moon* in many languages. Before the storytime, research how to say *moon* in additional languages. Consider languages that are popular in your community and Indigenous languages. When you get to that page of the story, stop and ask the children if they know other ways to say *moon*. Share some of the ways you have learned.
3. **Moon Play:** Beaches find out they love making sandcastles in this book, which is the perfect opportunity to add building play into a storytime. After you've read the book, share blocks or other building material and give children a chance to build their own castles. See how high they can stack them. Show them examples of the designs from the book. What will their beautiful creations look like? (If you have outside space, consider building with real wet sand.)

Storytime Tip: This is an engaging science picture book that would fit right in with a STEM or maker storytime event. Consider using it with elementary-age students, too.

1. The classic rhyme “Patty Cake” is a natural fit for this book. You can demonstrate the rhyme before the storytime begins, and you can repeat it after with some fun variations. Encourage children to do the rhyme, in pairs or with their caregivers. Suggest some fun ways they can be creative and modify it as they play, like Ember decorates his cakes: “Pat it and prick it and add sugar / Pat it and prick it and mark it with flowers.”
2. This is a good chance to spotlight the cookbooks in your library collection. Bring them to storytime to share and encourage caregivers to check them out. Tie this to the story, showing how Ember uses a library cookbook. Remind caregivers that following recipes is a great way to demonstrate literacy skills and even practice math skills.
3. **Bake It Fun:** This book, as well as the first book in the series, *The Bakery Dragon*, are natural fits for special-event storytimes or to be used with elementary students. Ideas for crafts that can be part of the celebration: cupcake decorating (real or using craft supplies and templates); imaginative play using spoons, cookie sheets, and other baking supplies; or sensory play with cookie cutters and shaving cream, foam, or sensory sand.



ALL-AGES STORYTIME



1. The gentle rhythm and rhyme of this book is perfect for a baby storytime. As you read, you can encourage caregivers to rock, embrace, and shush their babies, as well as echo the “whooo” refrain of the story.
2. In a storytime for older children (ages 3–6), books with animals make for great interactive play. You can stop on each page and ask what sounds each animal makes or discuss where these animals live or what they might feel like.
3. If you work in a public library, consider using this book as the centerpiece for an evening/pajama storytime. Pajama storytimes can be a great way to connect with patrons who can't make it to the library during the daytime, and this book can develop a soothing and fun evening experience.