Tips for Virtual Storytime

Reading aloud to young children stimulates language and cognitive skills while building motivation, memory, and curiosity. It builds vocabulary, develops comprehension, and expanded responses. Reading aloud in a child's home language allows the child to develop a sense of belonging and identity, and encourages cognitive development by introducing new concepts. Reading to children in a language they know and understand helps support their home language while letting families know they are a valuable part of the community.

Early Edge California has outlined some tips for success in recording a virtual storytime.

Before You Read a Story

- Choose an age appropriate book in both length and content, and that you are comfortable reading.
- Practice once by doing a reading by yourself so you can get used to being on video and reading on video.
- Make sure your technology is charged and/or plugged in! You do not want to lose power while you are reading virtually.

During a Story

- Start by showing the cover and introduce the title, author, and illustrator.
- Suggest things the children can look at or listen for during the story.
  - Sample questions to ask the children:
    - What do you think this book is about?
    - Where do you think the story takes place?
    - Have you ever read anything like this book before?
- Speak slowly and don't forget to breathe.
- Point to pictures on the pages.
- Ask open-ended questions to engage the children at home, such as: How do you think the character felt?
- If the story involves repetition, encourage children to repeat with you.
- Ask children to make predictions about the plot, the characters, and the setting.
- Share your own thoughts about the story.

After You Read the Story

- Ask questions about the story, for example:
  - What was your favorite part? Why?
  - How did the story make you feel?

For more tips and information on reading aloud, visit our resource pages for parents and teachers at earlyedgecalifornia.org.

A Guide to Filming at Home: For Teachers/Providers

EARLY EDGE CALIFORNIA

Are you planning to film a virtual storytime or a lesson for students from your home? We know the prospect can be daunting. That's why Early Edge California has gathered a few tips and strategies to help you get started and feel comfortable in front of the camera. We encourage you to utilize it as your checklist before you start filming.

There are three key elements to shooting a good video: **Composition, Lighting**, and **Sound**. If you can do these three things well, the quality of your camera--whether it's a smartphone or a computer camera--matters a lot less in the process.

☑ Composition

This is what is in your frame or 'shot'. Pay attention to your camera placement and your background.

Camera placement:
- Place the camera far enough away to fit yourself, as well as any additional props, into the shot.
- Position the camera at eye level.
- Always orient your camera in landscape mode, so if you are using a smartphone camera, remember to shoot horizontally.
- Ideally your camera should be on a different surface from the one you may be working from to avoid camera movement.

Give some thought to your background:
- Are there any items you do not want on camera?
- Is it interesting to the eye?
- If possible, do not shoot against a blank wall, especially a white one. It is boring to look at!

☑ Lighting

Lighting can make a huge difference on the perceived quality of your video. It makes everything clearer, cleaner, and more professional looking.

Natural light:
- Set up for filming in an area that is well-lit with the most even lighting possible. Usually, filming outdoors or facing a window will give you this effect for free.

Artificial light:
- If these options are not available, try using a lamp without the lampshade.
- Place the light source by the camera, not by you, because it will blast light on you from the side.
- Ideally, your light source should be coming from the same direction as your camera.

☑ Sound

Capturing clean audio is just as important, if not more important than having good lighting. Generally, the built-in microphone on your laptop or smartphone is decent quality.

- Set up in a relatively quiet place without a lot of noise interference.
- To improve sound quality, you can use your regular cellular headset or airpods.
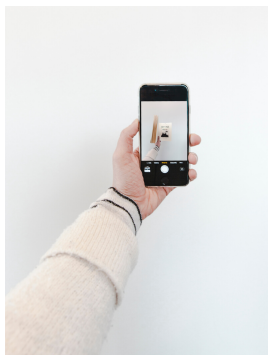
A few more tips for being on camera:

Many of us are "camera shy" and that is okay! Speaking to a camera is awkward at first and will take some getting used to. However, like anything else, you will get better with practice.
- Remember, the camera is an inanimate object. It has no judgement and all the time in the world to wait for you to get it right. Take your time, but try not to overthink what you want to say.
- Remember to make "eye contact" with the camera. It is tempting to watch the monitor or the screen to see yourself, but it minimizes the connection between you film the viewer.
- What to wear? Ideally, wear bright, solid colors for filming -- avoid busy patterns.
- Keep your audience in mind, and speak to them as you would if they were in front of you.
- Don't be afraid to be yourself, make it fun!

For more teacher resources, visit our website at _earlyedgecalifornia.org_.