

Story Time

The Perfect Time to Volunteer

by Molly Moore, NLLIC Librarian

Reading to children is a wonderful way to volunteer and connect with the community. It is also a subtle form of outreach, because while you're having fun, you can also educate kids about being an amputee, about accepting people with differences and different abilities, or about diseases such as cancer or diabetes. And you already have the perfect audio/visual aid – your prosthesis, wheelchair or other mobility device!

Libraries and schools usually have structured story times, and are happy to have guest readers. If you are not sure where to start, call your local children's librarian or elementary school.

Tips for reading aloud to kids:

- Do a practice read-through before going in front of a group.

- Hold the book so that the pictures can be seen.
- Ask the children what they see happening in the illustrations.
- Ask the children: "What do you think will happen next?"
- Make the story come alive by using props and changing your voice when speaking for different characters. Kids can help with repetitive phrases and sounds.
- Don't be nervous, and have fun!

Kids are curious!

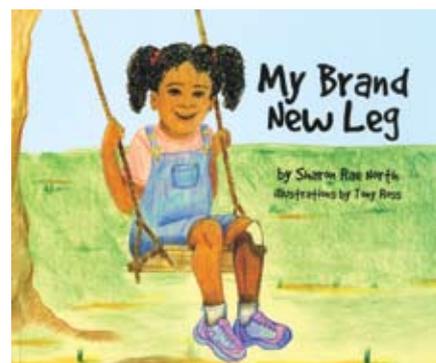
Have the kids ask you questions about you when you're finished.

Some children might be shy and need some prompting. Break the ice by showing them a neat trick with your mobility device.

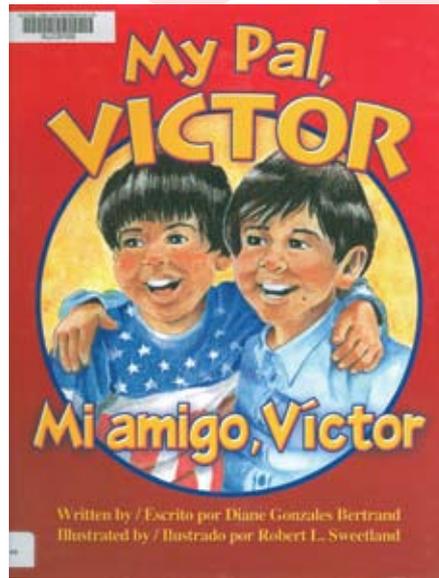
Be prepared for, "What happened?" Be honest and simple. Focus on the positive and the present.

The librarian's picks for reading aloud to 3-6-year-olds:

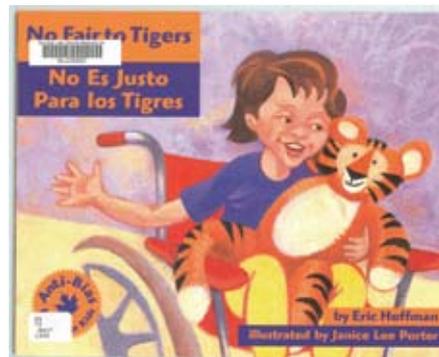
My Brand New Leg, by Sharon Rae North. Lithonia, GA: Northstar Entertainment Group, LLC, 2003. ISBN: 0-9741544-0-7. Summary: A young girl with a prosthetic leg meets a new friend. She shows her new friend all of the activities that she can still do with a prosthesis, such as running, riding a bike and hiking. Use this story to talk about amputation, prostheses and how "different" doesn't mean "limited."



My Pal, Victor/Mi Amigo, Víctor, by Diane Gonzales. Green Bay, WI: Raven Tree Press, 2004. Read in English and/or Spanish. Summary: Two boys are the best of friends and do everything together. Only at the end do you learn that Victor is a wheelchair user. Use this book to discuss preconceptions about disability.

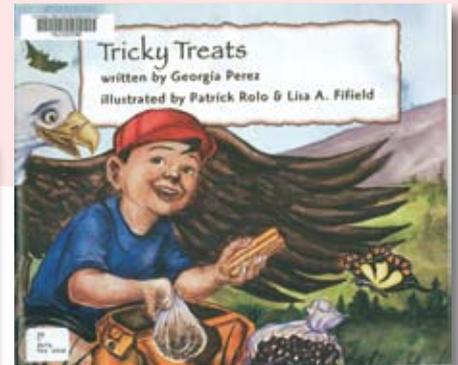


No Fair to Tigers/No Es Justo Para los Tigres, by Eric Hoffman. St. Paul, MN: Redleaf Press; Beltsville, MD: Distributed by Gryphon House, 1999. Read in English and/or Spanish. Summary: After she fixes up her ragged, stuffed toy Old Tiger with the help of all her family members, Mandy takes him to the pet store, but finds that she cannot get her wheelchair inside because of the steps out front. Use this story to talk about accessibility and fairness.



Tricky Treats, by Georgia Perez. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, [2006]. Summary: This is from the series, the “Eagle Books: Stories About Growing Strong and Preventing Diabetes.” These books are

educational tools for children to learn about diabetes and healthy, preventive life choices in a traditional Native American narrative. Use this story to discuss choosing healthy snacks.



Check with your local children’s librarian for more appropriate titles or contact the National Limb Loss Information Center at 888/AMP-KNOW (267-5669) for a complete list of children’s books related to limb loss.

Further reading on talking to children about amputation:

Amputeddy (series), by Katie Policani and Jean Boelter

Burgess Bear, by Josie Horvath and Mary Hovancsek

Henry’s World: A Three-Legged Cat’s View of Human Absurdity, by Cathy Conheim

Jungleville Tails: The Adventures of Bennett Bengal (series), by Ben Herosian

The Making of My Special Hand: Madison’s Story, by Jamee Riggio Heelan

Molly the Pony: A True Story, by Pam Kaster

That’s My Hope, by Marlene Lee and Lil Ingram

The Tree With No Limbs, by Christine Marie Johnson

“What Happened to Your Leg, Grandma?” / Christina DiMartino. Knoxville, TN: Amputee Coalition of America, 2003.

Article from *inMotion*, November/December 2003. This article discusses how to talk to a child when a grandparent or other loved one needs to have an amputation or has had an amputation.

amputee-coalition.org/inmotion/nov_dec_03/grandma.html

A Simple Gift

Wayne Buckner, who lost his left leg and part of his ring finger in a farming accident in November 2007, visited kindergarten students at the Centerview School in Bybee, Tennessee, this May.

While Buckner was in the hospital for 35 days recovering from his accident, the kindergarten students made get-well cards for him, and he wanted to do something for them in return, reported *The Newport Plain Talk* (May 27, 2008).

Buckner talked to the students about limb loss, prosthetic devices and farm safety.

He even removed his computerized prosthetic leg and allowed them to touch it. Naturally curious, the students were full of questions.

Before Buckner's visit to the school, he contacted Molly Moore, the Amputee Coalition of America's librarian, and she sent him

a list of recommended books to use. He also donated three books about limb loss to the school.

Buckner's accident and visit to the school generated some valuable publicity in the area regarding limb loss, he says.

"I want to raise awareness to help other

amputees in my home area. I know that there are many around the area who do not know where to turn for help. I hope that when they see me, it will show them that there is still life after a limb loss."

Wayne Buckner can be reached at 423/625-1509.



Photo courtesy of Kathy Hemswoth/The Newport Plain Talk