



We are ALSC Chat - Notes from Monday, November 8, 2021

Hosted by School Aged Programs and Services Committee

Title: Combating the Summer Slide and COVID Slide

This chat will focus on sharing ideas and strategies for how school and public library workers have helped/are helping children catch up and combat Summer Slide and COVID Slide.

Have you noticed a difference (behavioral, academic, etc.) in school-aged children visiting the library or attending programs? If you are a school librarian, are you seeing changes in your students?

- Waiting for more children to come into the library. In person programming is not happening inside. Outdoors as staff are comfortable.
- A lot of libraries in PA are not having indoor programs at this time, but are doing outdoor and virtual programs. It is difficult to keep school kids focused, especially on early literacy pieces in the younger grades.
- Keeping kids focused is a challenge in her public library. Meltdowns seem to be more common. Programs are for a wider age range due to Covid, and she's noticed challenges with following directions and following simple tasks.
- They are seeing fewer children overall. The return of programs has been on a trial month by month basis.
- Has been doing book groups in person since August and virtually before that. She's noticed the ability to stay on topic has been shattered since about April. She feels like in person she loses her ability to get them to focus because of her mask because kids can't read those clues.
- Mentioned using shields rather than masks so that children can see your face.
- Children aren't having the same interactions anymore because when enrolled in virtual courses.
- Even older students are having trouble focusing. Her online adult students are having difficulty finding instructions on their online learning platform. She isn't surprised that this is affecting all ages.
- Has noticed the need for more "hand holding" with her undergraduate students as well.
- Attended her state library conference in person and participants wore green, yellow, and red ribbons on their name tags. Green = contact with me is ok. Yellow = please keep your distance a bit Red = stay away please
- Empathizes with students: registered for AASL but did not attend because she still felt nervous about meeting in person. The political fighting affects everyone, children included.



Have you or has your library developed strategies for addressing learning loss that has occurred due to the summer slide or the pandemic?

- We have uncertainty and feelings of helplessness. How can we make sure no more reading loss takes place? It's a tough time for everyone.
- We lost so much in 2020 with children, the summer reading program was very different. In 2021 they tried to pull together more active things to draw kids in. Go York (?) which was quests, interactions, directions to find locations around the community, a family program. Also used Beanstack. Participating in the physical activity seemed to help engage children and parents and get them more involved.
- At a conference in DC today, and a speaker mentioned the inequitable situations of children. We've been serving children who are experiencing homelessness, but that is more urgent now. These problems are not new, but we need to recommit to solutions. This fall they dropped a new after school tutoring program in 20 city branches from 3-6pm. Teens also provide homework help or do a stem activity or read with younger children. That is one of the first programs they've had since closure.

If you are doing in-person classes or programs, are you finding that students are having challenges with returning to the in-person format? What strategies are you using to help them be successful?

- Just as teachers have to figure out how to differentiate instruction when everyone is on a different level, librarians are experiencing the same. How do we act in a group? Who is comfortable with what?
- Repeats herself a lot. Gives lots of reminders.
- Do we try to "fix" what was lost in the past year, or forge ahead with what we do and know now?
- Have brought back reading with therapy dogs programs and kids are excited about that.

If you are doing virtual classes or programs, are you finding that students are having challenges maintaining focus or engagement? What strategies are you using to help them be successful?

- The work around virtual storytime has been extremely instructive.
- One of our branches has had an amazing response to their virtual story times. Small attendance pre Covid in person but large crowd via Zoom.
- Thinks of the topics of access to and awareness of program services and collection. Parking, transportation, safety into the building, broadband. Densely populated area of Los Angeles. LAPL's online presence has become very robust, but her community didn't seem to engage in her online storytime though people from around the county did.



Do you have other ideas or suggestions for how to help school-aged children be successful academically?

- One of the things we can do is adhere to our values. As children's librarians we are welcoming. If we put that front and center, and be super flexible, and try to pay more attention to individual kids and make them feel welcome.
- We should look at what we've done and the lessons we've learned in the last year and a half and go from there. For example, we've learned how to improve storytime. We've used our new knowledge to figure out how to reach people that we have never reached before. Our library has taken a different approach to serving special needs children. Zoom has lessened sensory overload.
- Some people jump on program sign ups, while others didn't realize the library has been open for months. Had a conversation with a patron who told her she started ignoring the library emails as all of the programs were virtual and she was not interested in those.
- Make and take, grab and go was really big at the beginning of Covid. That seemed to keep people invested in what was going on. There was a huge surge of people who came in for those and were invested in them. Wondering if others experienced similar.
- Interlibrary loan was huge.
- Pick up crafts have been popular. Regarding reaching people outside of the library, it would be easy to drop off grab and go in other areas as an outreach program. There's something attractive about the kits being all-inclusive, easy. Parents are still looking for ways to keep their kids engaged and off of devices.
- Trunk or Treat gave out 500 books in 30 minutes.