

How Public Libraries Can Promote Learning With Audiobooks

Literacy isn't only taught in schools and audiobooks are a powerful literacy tool in public libraries, too! Public librarians can use these tips and tools to promote literacy with audiobooks.

- Share your audiobook resources.
 - Public libraries often have larger audiobook collections than schools. Resource sharing enhances literacy development for students, boosts circulation, and encourages better understanding and closer working relationships between schools and public libraries.
- Host a joint workshop for parents on the values of audiobooks.
 - Teachers and librarians can offer suggestions for family listening as well as highlight the literacy benefits of listening, such as increased fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension.
- Incorporate audiobooks into story time so parents get exposure and see their literacy value.
- Point out the enjoyment of family listening.
 - Advise families of the benefits of listening to and discussing a good book together, especially while traveling. Active listening and family conversation about the book increases literacy development and stimulates critical thinking skills; watching a DVD in the car is a passive activity that does not promote learning.
 - Set up displays of family friendly audiobooks for on-the-go listening before holiday breaks or before parent-teacher open houses, as well as posting lists on the library website.
- Help your patrons find listening recommendations by grade level through soundlearningapa.org and Kids on the Go: www.audiofilemagazine.com/kids-teens
- Make audiobooks a regular part of your Reader's Advisory, especially for reluctant readers.
 - Help parents understand that listening *is* reading and share the benefits of "reading with your ears." The infographic and overview sheet available from www.soundlearningapa.org are great resources for helping to teach parents about the benefits of audiobooks.
 - Offer audiobook editions of classics to hesitant teen readers.
- Include audiobooks in your reading clubs.
 - When selecting titles for library book clubs, be sure that you select titles that are also available as audiobooks. This allows struggling readers, English Language Learners, and overbooked teens equal opportunity to participate in lively discussion.

- Host “Gadget Petting Zoo” events, demonstrating how to download audiobooks onto a variety of digital devices and Playaway.
- Tie audiobooks to youth services programming such as Teen Read Week and Tech Week. Encourage teens to host “Gadget Petting Zoo” events for their community i.e., after school programs, senior citizens, nursing homes, scouts and festivals.
- Encourage listening to audiobooks as part of your summer reading programs.
 - When creating summer reading lists, be sure to include audiobook titles. Remember that June is Audiobook Month, so feature audiobooks in your summer displays.
 - Incorporate listening minutes in summer reading requirements and lobby for audiobooks fulfilling reading assignments by teachers.
 - Include the popular SYNC program that gives away two complete audiobook downloads—a current Young Adult title paired thematically with a Classic or Required Summer Reading title (audiobooksync.com).
- Host a Narrator Event. Hundreds of popular narrators are located throughout the country who share the common desire to reach out to public libraries, whether in person or via Skype, opening another avenue for library programmers to book narrator events, similar to author events. The Audio Publishers Association (APA) web site audiopub.org lists narrator members, along with e-mail addresses and websites, for libraries interested in direct contact. Librarians can contact the APA directly at info@audiopub.org to help connect them with a local narrator or the right publisher contact.
- Highlight your audiobook collection in newsletters, web site, and social media including audio clips and friending audiobook publishers offering giveaways. Include link to soundlearningapa.org and #soundlearning
- Piggyback with Audio Publishers Association audiopub.org events and promotions and APA’s consumer faced community, facebook.com/audiobookcommunity

For more great ideas and information, check out *Listening to Learn: Audiobooks Supporting Literacy* by Sharon Grover and Lizette D. Hannegan and *Audiobooks for Youth: A Practical Guide to Sound Literature* by Mary Burkey.