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INSC 573

October 4, 2020

Duck, Duck, Crocoduck! A Bilingual English and Mandarin Preschool Storytime

This duck themed bilingual storytime targets preschool-aged children who are being raised in bilingual or primarily Mandarin-speaking households, and their caregivers. The concept of bilingual storytimes is sometimes thought to be too confusing for young children, but in actuality, they are a positive experience for children, especially those who speak a language other than English at home. Bilingual storytimes give children an opportunity to hear and use their home language outside of the home and develop literacy skills in both of their languages, while also welcoming caregivers who are not native English speakers into the library and giving them an opportunity to practice their English (Rogers, 2018).

This storytime program is designed as one session in a weekly series. The aims of this particular session include supporting the early literacy development of children between the ages of three and five by practicing numbers and counting, strengthening fine and gross motor skills, and building both English and Mandarin vocabulary, with a focus on descriptive words. The bilingual nature of the program also serves to make caregivers with limited English proficiency feel welcome and comfortable participating in library programming, and gives them an opportunity to learn how to support their children's early literacy without the language barrier they might face in a monolingual English storytime.

This program was created with Fairfax County Public Libraries and the Northern Virginia community in mind, but could be used in any community with a substantial population of

Mandarin speaking families, ideally at a public library with a Chinese language children’s collection and an outdoor space suitable for storytime, though the program could be moved indoors with minor adjustments. It could also easily be adapted to fit the needs of communities with families that do not speak Mandarin at home, but are interested in raising their children bilingually or exposing them to new languages. It is important that this program be led by someone who is fluent in both written and spoken English and Mandarin, so this program should be led either by a single fully bilingual librarian, or by two librarians, one native English speaker and one native Mandarin speaker.

Program Outline

Opening Ritual	<p>Opening message: In both English and Mandarin, greet everyone and go over storytime expectations: caregivers are encouraged to participate, and if anyone is having a tough day, caregivers are welcome to take their child(ren) outside and come back in whenever they’re ready, or try again next week! Hand out bilingual lyric sheets (see Appendix).</p> <p>Opening song: “Hi, Hello, and How Are You” / “嗨你好你好嗎 (Hāi nǐ hǎo nǐ hǎo ma)” repeated in English and Mandarin</p>
Book #1	<i>Guji Guji</i> by Chih-Yuan Chen, read in Mandarin
Action Song	<p>“Can You Shake Your Egg” / “跟我一起搖小蛋 (gēn wǒ yīqǐ yáo xiǎo dàn)” sung in Mandarin</p>
Fingerplay	<p>“Five Little Ducks” / “五只小鴨子 (wǔ zhī xiǎo yāzi)” sung in English with counting in Mandarin</p>

	Early literacy tip: Songs and rhymes that involve separating fingers, like this one does when counting the ducks, help children build the muscles they need to write (Krabbenhof, 2015)
Book #2	<i>One Duck Stuck: A Mucky Ducky Counting Book</i> by Phyllis Root and Jane Chapman, read in English with numbers and animals repeated in Mandarin
Movement Song	“Little Duckling” / “小鴨子 (xiǎo yāzi)” sung in Mandarin
Finger puppet song	“Who’s in the Barnyard” sung in English with hints for the next animal given in both English and Mandarin
Book #3	<i>Farmer Duck</i> by Martin Waddell and Helen Oxenbury, read in English
Closing Ritual	<p>Closing song: “Bye Goodbye” / “再見再見 (Zàijiàn zàijiàn)” repeated in English and Mandarin</p> <p>Closing message: Point everyone towards the duck pond sensory bin. Thank everyone for coming, remind everyone when the next storytime is, and announce the theme for next week. Also announce any other upcoming programs that may be of interest for the children or their caregivers. The closing should be repeated in English and Mandarin.</p>
Sensory Bin	Unstructured time after the closing ritual for the children to explore and play (with guidance from the librarian and their caregivers) with a duck pond sensory bin with water, rubber ducks, sticks, stones, and lily pads. Ask

	questions to guide their play.
Backups	<p>Fingerplay: “The Ducks in the Pond”</p> <p>Craft: Handprint ducks</p> <p>Activity: Duck, Duck, Goose</p> <p>Extra book: <i>I Wish That I Had Duck Feet</i> by Dr. Seuss</p>

Details and Rationale

Opening Ritual. The opening ritual is an opportunity to greet attendees, make everyone feel welcome, establish expectations, and signal that storytime is beginning. The opening ritual will be consistent from week to week, and will consist of a few words of greeting and an opening song. As part of the greeting, caregivers will be encouraged to participate by singing along, sitting with them during the stories, and helping them with action rhymes and songs. This type of active participation helps build strong relationships and makes the child feel safe and supported, which makes their brains more prepared for learning (Krabbenhof, 2015). This brief greeting message will be done in both English and Mandarin to ensure that everyone understands and feels comfortable and included.

Lyric sheets will also be passed out during the opening ritual. See Appendix for a copy of the lyric sheet handout. The handout is meant to make it easier for caregivers to participate, since even if they are not familiar with a song, they will at least have a copy of lyrics in front of them. The handout is also intended to be taken home, so that caregivers can refer back to it when they practice singing or reading with their children at home. To that end, a booklist including titles

from storytime as well as a few other age-appropriate selections matching the day's theme are included on the sheet as well. To further improve the utility of the handout, it could be augmented with early literacy tips from the program written out in both English and Chinese.

The opening song was chosen because it is short, repetitive, and translates well. This makes it easy for attendees to remember, which makes it easier for them to sing along, particularly if they attend multiple sessions. The same opening song will be used each week both to encourage participation, and to establish a sense of routine and ritual that lets the children know storytime is starting and helps them prepare for the rest of the program.

Book #1: *Guji Guji*. This Taiwanese picture book is about a crocodile named Guji Guji who is raised alongside ducks. The book includes descriptions of each of the characters. The crocodiles in the story, for example, describe Guji Guji's appearance to try to explain to him that he is a crocodile, not a duck, and Guji Guji's duck siblings all have unique appearances—one is yellow, one has blue spots, and one is striped. The descriptions throughout the book make this book a useful tool for building the descriptor vocabulary of preschoolers, who, around ages three to five, are starting to use words to describe and categorize objects (KidCentralTN, 2018a). The detailed illustrations also create opportunities for asking questions such as, "What other animals do you see here?" or "How many crocodiles are there?" which can be used to encourage children to practice answering questions, counting, and describing the things they see.

Action Song. "Can You Shake Your Egg" will be sung primarily in Mandarin, with English clarifications given on body parts as necessary. This song was chosen because, through the lyrics that direct children to place their egg shaker on different body parts, it has children practice following directions, which is a skill developed around age three (KidCentralTN,

2018d). It also helps cement and grow the body part vocabulary the children started developing as infants and toddlers (KidCentralTN, 2018d), and strengthens their motor skills. If the children are particularly energetic or restless, this song can also provide a fun opportunity to let them get up and move in between books.

Fingerplay. “Five Little Ducks” was selected to practice counting and fine motor skills. It also provides an opportunity to share an early literacy message with the caregivers: songs and rhymes that involve separating fingers, like this one does when counting the ducks, help children build the muscles they need to write (Krabbenhof, 2015). This is a particularly appropriate exercise for the preschool age group, as children typically begin copying simple letters and writing out their names around age four or five (KidCentralTN, 2018c).

The counting aspect of the song provides good practice for preschoolers, particularly young preschoolers who are just beginning to be able to count objects (KidCentralTN, 2018a). Older preschoolers are also continuing to develop their counting skills, and are able to answer “how many” questions (KidCentralTN, 2018a). To maximize the benefits of this fingerplay for the entire preschool age range, the number of ducks remaining will be counted out on fingers before each verse, as in King County Library’s version (KCLS, 2010b), and the children will be asked a couple times throughout the song how many ducks are coming back (e.g. asking “When Mama Duck said, ‘Quack quack quack...’ How many ducks came back this time?” while holding up fingers for the number of ducks). The counting and “how many” questions can be done in Mandarin or in both English and Mandarin, depending on the fluency levels of attendees. Alternatively, based on the librarian’s assessment of the group’s interest, energy, and focus

levels, the entire song has been translated into Mandarin (Miss Donna, 2017) and could be repeated in its entirety rather than only counting and asking questions in Chinese.

Book #2: *One Duck Stuck: A Mucky, Ducky Counting Book*. This book was selected for its relatively short length, descriptive language, repetitive, rhyming text, and use of numbers. Preschool-aged children are beginning to use words to describe objects (KidCentralTN, 2018a), and this story uses a variety of descriptive words to describe different animals and the marsh where the book takes place. Combined with the repetitiveness of the text, the descriptive language makes this book an excellent tool for building preschoolers' vocabularies (Krabbenhoft, 2019a). As a counting book, this book is also useful for continuing to develop counting skills and practice numbers in both English and Mandarin. The illustrations provide another opportunity for the librarian to ask "how many" questions of the children; for example, "How many moose do you see trying to help the duck?" In addition to the book's value as an early literacy tool, the story, though simple, has a positive message of working together to solve a problem and help someone else.

Movement Song. "小鸭子 (Xiǎo yāzi)" is a Chinese children's song about a little duck (KCLS, 2020). It will be sung in Mandarin, and the children will be encouraged to waddle around like ducks, giving them an opportunity to move around and strengthen their gross motor skills. This song was selected to give children an opportunity to move around, and because a Chinese song may be more familiar to Chinese caregivers, and may help increase enthusiasm, comfort, and participation. Direction words can also be added to the song to instruct the children to waddle forward, to the side, to their right, or to their left, which is excellent practice for preschoolers, as that is the approximate age children start learning directional words

(KidCentralTN, 2018a). A loose English translation that fits the rhythm and rhyming of the original Mandarin song is included on the lyric sheet as well, and serves both as a backup song and a resource for caregivers interested in practicing more English songs with their children at home.

Finger Puppet Song. “Who’s in the Barnyard” is an interactive finger puppet song which invites children to guess which finger puppet will come out next based on descriptive words given as hints (Horrocks & Krabbenhoft, 2014), further developing their descriptive language vocabulary. This song also contributes to the flow of the storytime by providing a segue into the next book: *Farmer Duck*.

Book #3: *Farmer Duck*. This book will be read in English, but children can participate with either English or Mandarin animal noises; for example, when the farmer asks “How goes the work?” program attendees will be encouraged to respond with either “quack” or “呱呱 (guāguā).” This encourages engagement and active participation, and helps teach animal sounds in both languages. This book has also been translated into Mandarin, so if any of the families want to revisit the story at home, they will have the option of reading it in English or Chinese.

Closing Ritual. The same closing song will be used each week to establish a routine and signal that the structured portion of storytime is over. “Bye, Goodbye” was chosen because it matches the opening song’s format and tune. This makes the songs easier for families to learn and gives the storytime a sense of symmetry (Krabbenhoft, 2019b). Repetition is also particularly beneficial for young children; while repetition may seem boring to older audiences, young children experience things differently and gain more understanding with every repetition, so repetitive songs are enjoyable and developmentally useful for them (Arnerich, 2018).

Duck Pond Sensory Bin. The sensory bin is included in the program as a way to encourage families to stick around after the official end of storytime to socialize and continue learning. The duck pond sensory bin consists of a container filled with water, rubber ducks, and various other items that might be found in a pond such as stones, plants, and sticks, and it gives preschool-aged children a chance to learn by touching things with their hands (Levin, n.d.). To guide the children's play and model early literacy promotion for the caregivers, the librarian will ask children questions, such as how the different objects feel. Questions can be used to encourage the children to practice using descriptive words and practice counting. Children can also be provided with tongs to use to pick up objects, which helps them develop fine motor skills (Levin, n.d.).

Backup Selections. Storytimes often need to be adjusted on the fly based on the number of families attending a particular session, the energy or focus level of participants, or any number of unexpected situations that may arise with young children and their families (Newberry, 2013). It is easier to drop some of the planned songs or books from the schedule than to come up with extras in the moment, so it is useful to over prepare with a full schedule and a few backup options in case the planned activities go more quickly than expected or the energy or mood of the room calls for a different type of activity than what was planned.

Because this program is bilingual, the translated version of each song serves as a backup; if the group is enjoying a song and is not quite ready to read another book or move on to the next activity, the song can be repeated in the other language. In addition to these built-in backup songs, an extra fingerplay, craft, and book were selected in case more options are needed during the storytime.

Backup Fingerplay. “The Ducks in the Pond” will be sung in English to the tune of “The Wheels on the Bus,” and can have as many verses as time and participant interest and energy levels allow. A sample verse is:

The ducks in the pond go quack, quack, quack.

Quack, quack, quack. Quack, quack, quack.

The ducks in the pond go quack, quack, quack,

All day long.

Additional verses would replace quacking with splashing, waddling, and flapping, as well as Mandarin translations for each of those. Each verse would have an accompanying hand motion. The song and movements help the preschool-aged participants build vocabulary and fine motor skills.

Backup Craft. Handprint ducks provide an easy backup, as they make use of materials that the library likely already has on hand—the only essential materials are paper and something to color with—and require no advanced preparation beyond gathering the materials and making an example. Children place their hand on the sheet of paper with their fingers together and thumb at a right angle, then trace their hand. Their thumb becomes the duck’s head and the rest of their hand and fingers become the body. Children can then color in their ducks and draw on beaks, eyes, and feet. Optionally, additional craft supplies such as feathers or tissue paper can be used to decorate the ducks with glue or glue dots. Scissors could also be provided so the children can cut their ducks out, with help from their caregivers as needed, which would give the children a developmentally appropriate opportunity to practice fine motor skills, as children begin developing the ability to use scissors as toddlers or early preschoolers (KidCentralTN, 2018b).

This craft could be a substitute for the sensory bin if weather conditions or space restrictions prevent the use of the sensory bin.

Backup Activity. If, based on the energy of the room, the librarian decides a more active, physical activity is needed, Duck, Duck, Goose will be a backup option. Preschoolers, particularly four and five year olds, are increasingly interested in active games that engage their gross motor skills (KidCentralTN, 2018c). Depending on the number of attendees, Duck, Duck, Goose can provide a fun outlet for this, and is easy to play in English or Mandarin.

Backup Book. *I Wish That I Had Duck Feet*, along with many of Dr. Seuss's other books, has been translated into an English/Mandarin bilingual version that has both English and Mandarin text on each page. This makes it a particularly useful backup, as it could be read in English, Mandarin, or both depending on participant needs and preferences. Like *One Duck Stuck*, this book has rhythmic, rhyming, and repetitive text that can be used to help develop phonological awareness and strengthen vocabulary. The story also lends itself well to asking the children questions about themselves, such as whether or not they would like to have duck feet, a tail, or horns, and why.

Materials

- Books
 - *Guji Guji* by Chih-Yuan Chen (Mandarin or bilingual Mandarin/English edition)
 - *One Duck Stuck: A Mucky Ducky Counting Book* by Phyllis Root and Jane Chapman
 - *Farmer Duck* by Martin Waddell and Helen Oxenbury, read in English (English or bilingual Mandarin/English edition)

- Egg shakers
- Finger puppets (a duck and other farm animals)
- Sensory bin
 - Kiddie pool, filled with water
 - Sensory items: rubber ducks, lily pads (cut from green craft foam), sticks, stones
 - tongs
- Backup materials
 - Backup craft supplies
 - Paper (printer paper or white construction paper)
 - Coloring supplies (crayons, markers, etc.)
 - Optional: scissors, glue, feathers, tissue paper, googly eyes
 - Backup book
 - *I Wish That I Had Duck Feet* by Dr. Seuss (bilingual edition)

Marketing

Because this program has a specific primary target audience of bilingual or primarily Mandarin speaking families, this program will be marketed in spaces where those families are most likely to go. This would include local Chinese schools, churches that offer services in Chinese, and community centers and senior centers that offer Chinese language programs and events. In addition to posting flyers at these locations, the library would reach out to organization leaders or event coordinators at these locations and ask that they share information about the bilingual storytime with anyone they think might be interested. Flyers would also be posted at local Asian grocery stores, as well as at any other stores or restaurants with substantial Chinese

customer bases. The program will also be advertised on the library's website, social media accounts, and with signage within the library buildings.

Budget

The library would likely already have all or most of the materials necessary for this program. The estimated budget for this program is \$15, including \$5 for a kiddie pool, \$5 for craft foam to make lily pads, and a \$5 budget for the ink and paper used for flyers posted as part of the marketing and storytime song lyric sheets to be passed out during storytime.

If the library does not have rubber ducks or a reasonable substitute for the sensory bin, that would add about \$10 to the budget, and if the library does not have egg shakers, that would add an additional \$15. If this program were conducted at a library without a Chinese language children's collection, the books would also need to be purchased, adding an estimated \$45 to the budget.

Evaluation

The success of this program will be informally evaluated through observation and attendance counts. Informal observations will be used to note whether families are lingering after the program either to use other library services or resources, to ask the librarian or library staff questions, or to socialize with other families that attended the storytime. All of these are indicators that the caregivers are enjoying the storytime and feel comfortable using the library. If any families are lingering to chat or ask questions, there may be opportunities to ask caregivers questions to gather feedback on the program. Asking caregivers how they found out about the program, for example, would provide useful information about what marketing strategies are most effective.

Attendance will be monitored both for the total number of attendees each week, as well as the number of returning attendees. This will help gauge the amount of community interest in the program—if a large number of different families are attending, that demonstrates a strong interest in bilingual storytime—as well provide a sense of attendees’ enjoyment or perceived value of the program—if most families find the program enjoyable and useful, presumably many will return. If attendance counts remain stable or increase, attendees return week after week, the youth appear to be enjoying the storytime, and caregivers are engaged and actively participating, and are comfortable enough to interact with each other and library staff, the program would be deemed a success.

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Appendix

鸭子，鸭子，鱼鸭 (yāzi, yāzi, èyúyā)! / Duck, Duck, Crocoduck!



Storytime Songs

<p>嗨你好你好嗎 嗨你好你好嗎 你好嗎你好嗎 嗨你好你好嗎 你今天好不好</p>	<p>Hāi nǐ hǎo nǐ hǎo ma Hāi, nǐ hǎo, nǐ hǎo ma? Nǐ hǎo ma? Nǐ hǎo ma? Hāi, nǐ hǎo, nǐ hǎo ma? Nǐ jīntiān hǎobù hǎo?</p>	<p>Hi, Hello, and How Are You Hi, hello and how are you? How are you? How are you? Hi, hello and how are you? How are you today?</p>
<p>跟我一起搖小蛋 跟我一起搖小蛋 搖小蛋搖小蛋 非常簡單你來看 現在放在____上</p>	<p>Gēn wǒ yīqǐ yáo xiǎo dàn Gēn wǒ yīqǐ yáo xiǎo dàn Yáo xiǎo dàn yáo xiǎo dàn Fēicháng jiǎndān nǐ lái kàn Xiànzài fàng zài ____shàng</p>	<p>Can You Shake Your Egg Can you shake your egg with me shake your egg along with me It's as easy as can be Now put it on your ____</p>
<p>五只小鸭子 五只小鸭出去玩 过了一山又一山 鸭妈妈叫：呱呱呱呱 只有四只小鸭过家门檻</p>	<p>Wǔ zhǐ xiǎo yāzi Wǔ zhǐ xiǎo yā chū qù wán Guò liǎo yī shān yòu yī shān Yā māma jiào guā guā guā guā Zhǐ yǒu sì zhǐ xiǎo yā guò jiā mén kǎn</p>	<p>Five Little Ducks 5 little ducks went out one day Over the hills and far away When mama duck called, “Quack quack quack quack” 4 little ducks came running back</p>
<p>小鸭子 小 小 鸭 子 嘎 嘎 嘎 叫 走 起 路 来 真 好 笑 摇 摇 摆 ， 摆 摆 摇 走 到 水 里 去 洗 澡</p>	<p>Xiǎo yāzi xiǎo xiǎo yā zi gā gā gā jiào zǒu qǐ lù lái zhēn hǎo xiào yáo yáo bǎi , bǎi bǎi yáo zǒu dào shuǐ lǐ qù xǐ zǎo</p>	<p>Little Duckling Little duckling, quacking quacking duck His waddling is cute in the marshy muck Wobbling left, wobbling right, He splashes in the water ‘til he’s clean and bright</p>
<p>再見再見 再見再見待會兒見 待會兒見待會兒見 再見再見待會兒見 改天再見</p>	<p>Zàijiàn zàijiàn Zàijiàn zàijiàn, dài huì er jiàn Dài huì er jiàn, dài huì er jiàn Zàijiàn zàijiàn, dài huì er jiàn Gǎitiān zàijiàn</p>	<p>Bye Goodbye Bye, goodbye, we’ll see you soon See you soon, see you soon Bye, goodbye, we’ll see you soon, On another day!</p>

Duck Books!

- 咕叽咕叽 (陈致元) / *Guji Guji* by Chih-Yuan Chen
- *One Duck Stuck: A Mucky Ducky Counting Book* by Phyllis Root
- 鸭子农夫 (韦德尔) / *Farmer Duck* by Martin Waddell
- 我想长一双鸭子脚 (苏斯博士) / *I Wish That I Had Duck Feet* by Dr. Seuss
- 十只橡皮鸭 (艾瑞·卡尔) / *10 Little Rubber Ducks* by Eric Carle
- 鸭子? 兔子? (罗森塔尔) / *Duck! Rabbit!* by Amy Krouse Rosenthal
- 安格斯和鸭子 (玛乔丽·弗拉克) / *Angus and the Ducks* by Marjorie Flack