

BY MELODY PALMER, YOUTH LIBRARIAN, SOUTH BROKEN ARROW LIBRARY

hearing is reading!

HOW AUDIOBOOKS SUPPORT YOUNG READERS WITH DYSLEXIA AND OTHER LANGUAGE DISORDERS

Imagine with me, if you will, that you are in elementary school, learning to read, but struggling. You see all your friends breeze right through reading class. While they're reading the latest *Diary of a Wimpy Kid* or *Goosebumps*, every time you look at the pages, all you see are the letters jumbled up and sometimes even falling off the page.

It takes you so much longer to read than your friends that you just don't want to bother with it anymore. You end up failing all the reading quizzes at school because it takes you so long. You know you are smart in other things, but reading becomes harder every day.

Then one day, you go to the library to find a really easy book to read and the librarian suggests audiobooks. You and your parents look at each other as if she must be crazy because no way did that just happen. Isn't listening to audiobooks cheating?

I am here to tell you: Listening to audiobooks is NOT cheating! It's reading!

As a Youth Librarian with an undergraduate degree in Speech Language Pathology, I can assure you that audiobooks can actually help, especially when paired with the print version of the book. It will allow children to see and hear the book at the same time, which can help them gain reading fluency and comprehension.



Similar scenarios happen nearly every week at my branch. Many times, it's the parents who approach me without the child because the child is so frustrated with reading she doesn't even want to go to the library. They tell me they know their child is smart and they want her to succeed, but nothing is working. They know reading is important, but have been told all their lives that listening to audiobooks isn't really reading. Another concern voiced by parents is that print reading will suffer if their child listens instead of reading printed material.

Let me put your mind at ease and say it again: Listening to

books helps your child stay current on oral language skills, specifically word knowledge and vocabulary, which can, in turn, aid your child in print (eye) reading fluency and comprehension.

Ear Reading vs Eye Reading

The International Dyslexia Association defines ear reading as reading using audiobooks or similar text-to-speech software; the verbal words are processed through the ears and eyes simultaneously and then processed in the brain. They go on to define eye reading as the more recent traditional learning letters and sounds to form words and sentences. Eye reading is processed

solely through the eyes and then the brain. Studies show that when a child with a language processing disorder reads with his ears and eyes at the same time, his comprehension dramatically increases.

Side note: Reading as we know it today is a fairly recent language development. Learning, for much of history, took place when listening to others. Oral storytelling was the entertainment of choice until the past few hundred years for many cultures. I say all that to say we're kind of hard-wired to enjoy hearing stories and to learn by hearing.

Fluency and Comprehension

Emerging readers and people with language processing disorders often read one word at a time. Listening assists them in forming coherent sentences as they read, which leads to improved comprehension. When children listen to books and see the printed words in front of them at the same time, they develop fluency in reading, and comprehension is greatly enhanced. Audiobooks provide another tool that parents have at their disposal to promote their child's education.

Enjoyment

Listening to audiobooks is an immersive experience that can help people with language processing disorders to develop their

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imagination and promote a love of books; it allows them to do other things while they read, like put away their laundry. Audiobooks can also help while the time away on long trips, because, let's face it, you can only play so much car tag Bingo before you are bored out of your mind.

Even people without a language processing disorder can take great pleasure in listening to audiobooks. This format helps pass the time while exercising, cleaning, or even when just sitting on the couch with a favorite animal. They also can help you breeze through your reading list while you drive to work, are on a road trip or running errands.

Where to get (FREE!) Audiobooks:

Your Library! We have Audiobooks on CD, Play-a-ways and digital audiobooks. We have several apps for downloading audiobooks to your device: CloudLibrary, Hoopla, Libby (Overdrive) and RBDigital. Please visit your local branch if you need assistance setting up these apps. We're happy to help.

Bookshare (www.bookshare.org/cms): It's a service that provides audiobooks with the read-along aspect for free to qualifying U.S. students. It's also available for adults for a nominal weekly fee.

There are also text-to-speech programs and apps to go along with Project Gutenberg (free out-of-copyright ebooks). These text-to-speech apps can also assist with transcribing written notes to an audio version of lectures.

If you or someone you know struggles with reading because of dyslexia, audiobooks might be at least a partial solution to the problem and worth considering. Who knows, you might discover you really prefer consuming books for fun by listening. I know I do!



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event is included with regular admission and there is no pre-registration required. Discovery Lab, 560 N. Maybelle Ave., 10:30-11 a.m. discoverylab.org

DARK, DRAMATIC, DANGEROUS: THE COMPLEX HEROINES OF MINDY MCGINNIS [FREE]

Get to know best-selling young adult author (and Sequoyah Book Award winner) Mindy McGinnis as she discusses her nuanced exploration of morally complex female characters. McGinnis is an Edgar Award-winning novelist who writes across multiple genres, including post-apocalyptic, historical, thriller, contemporary, mystery and fantasy. While her settings may change, you always can count on her books to deliver grit, truth and an unflinching look at humanity and the world around us. Whether living in a future world ravaged by disease and climate change, or a 19th century insane asylum, or a claustrophobic small town, McGinnis' female protagonists are complex and nuanced in their responses to difficult situations. Learn how the author creates worlds in crisis and characters who must respond to those crises when no choice is morally clean or simple. Ask McGinnis questions about your favorite book of hers or about how to write morally complex characters in a variety of settings. Light refreshments will be provided; books will be available for purchase. For teens and adults. Central Library, 400 Civic Center, 7-9 p.m. tulsalibrary.org

March 12 Tuesday

BUILD A READER STORYTIME: BILINGUAL/CUENTOS BILINGÜES [FREE, W]

Enjoy stories, songs and activities in English and Spanish. / Cuentos, canciones y actividades en inglés y español. Martin Regional Library, 2601 S. Garnett Rd., 11-11:30 a.m. tulsalibrary.org

March 13 Wednesday

ELEPHANT AND PIGGIE GO TO THE LIBRARY! [FREE]

Come and hear about the adventures

of your favorite duo, Elephant and Piggie! Enjoy storytime, drawing activities, snacks and more! Sponsored by the Friends of the Helmerich Library. For toddlers to elementary schoolers. Helmerich Library, 5131 E. 91st St., 3:30-4:30 p.m. tulsalibrary.org

March 14 Thursday

AHHA TULSA STROLLER TOUR

Head to ahha on the second Thursday of each month for an adult-focused, child-friendly tour of exhibitions in THE GALLERY. Juice, snacks, and the occasional toddler tantrum won't bother ahha's expert educators, who'll engage you in deep conversation, close looking at works of art, and gallery activities. Drop-in stroller tours are included with admission and always FREE for members. ahha Tulsa, 101 E. Archer St., 1 p.m. ahhatusa.org

KIDS CONNECTION [FREE]

Kids Connection is a social group designed for children, grades K-5, with high-functioning autism. For more information, contact Sheryllyn Walton or Steve Pitts at 918.582.8272. Tulsa ARC, 2516 E. 71st St. A, 4:30-5:30 p.m. ddadvocacy.net

TULIP TOUR

Join Tulsa Botanic Garden CEO Dr. Todd Lasseigne for a walk and talk to see what spring bulbs are blooming. Free with admission. Additional date March 21. Tulsa Botanic Garden, 3900 Tulsa Botanic Dr., 6 p.m. tulsabotanic.org

March 15 Friday

TULSA IRISH FESTIVAL [FREE]

Tulsa IrishFest kicks off with Opening Ceremonies on Friday, March 15th at 3 p.m. Throughout the weekend there will be live performances from Cranua (Ireland), Skerwyore (Scotland), Cassie & Maggie (Nova Scotia), Cleghorn (Dallas) and special performances from the Goode Academy of Irish Dance. The festival at Guthrie Green will also include food trucks, Celtic vendors for shopping, a kid's zone, tra-



FESTIVAL OF WORDS

Laura Tohe (Diné, Tsa'nahalinii, Sleepy Rock People clan, and born for the Tódiich'inií, Bitter Water clan) will receive the Tulsa Library Trust's "Festival of Words Writers Award" March 2, 10:30 a.m. Her award presentation will be followed by a book signing and a day of educational American Indian family events from 11:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m. Hardesty Library, 8316 E. 93rd St., 10:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m. tulsalibrary.org

Photo Credit: J. Morgan Edwards

Searching for more Storytimes? Find them at tulsakids.com/storytime

ditional Irish games and an exclusive Irish landscape video produced for the festival by AirCam Ireland. Guthrie Green, 111 E. M.B. Brady St., 3-8 p.m. and Saturday March 16, 12-8 p.m. tulsairishfest.org

SHAMROCK THE ROSE!

The Rose District's 5th Annual St. Patrick's Day Block Party features live music, vendors, food trucks and more! This event raises funds for Soldier's Wish, which grants wishes to veterans. The Rose District, Broken Arrow, 5-10 p.m. thebabuzz.com

FREE MOVIE NIGHT AT BOSTON AVENUE UMC [FREE]

Enjoy a free movie night inside the Jubilee Gym! Doors open at 6 p.m. and the movie starts around 6:30 p.m. There will be free popcorn, drinks and snacks for \$0.50 and a door prize. Feel free to bring your own dinner food, chairs, pillows, sleeping bags - whatever makes it comfortable for you to watch a fun movie! All ages are invited and welcomed to this event. The featured movie is "Coco"—show up at 6 to

get your face painted! Boston Avenue UMC, 1301 S. Boston Ave., 6 p.m. bostonavenue.org

March 16 Saturday

ST. PATRICK'S DAY RUN

March 16, 2019 is the 37th Annual St. Patrick's 5K Run presented by RunnersWorld Tulsa. All proceeds benefit Special Olympics Oklahoma and Tulsa Running Club. In addition to the 5K and 1-mile fun run, prizes will be awarded for the runners, door prizes at the event and prize money for participating schools. RunnersWorld Tulsa, 3920 S. Peoria Ave., 8:30 a.m.-2 p.m. runner-worldtulsa.com

CHANDLER PARK

JUST FOR TOTTS

This promises to be a fun-filled afternoon for the little tykes! There will be books, balls, blocks, games, crafts, goodie bags and door prizes. Lunch is provided. \$5/child, parents are free. Chandler Park, 4500 W. 21st St., 10 a.m.-2 p.m. parks.tulsacounty.org