<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Library Jurisdiction</th>
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<tr>
<td>Project Title</td>
<td>Sensory Storytime</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grant Award #</td>
<td>40-83229</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grant Period</td>
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<tr>
<td>Amount of Grant Award</td>
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<td>Amount of Grant Expended</td>
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<td>Local Match</td>
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<tr>
<td>In-Kind</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total Amount of Project</td>
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<td>Number of Persons Served</td>
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**Project Director**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Marie Plug/Tara Smith</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Title</td>
<td>Technical Specialist/Librarian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Library Address</td>
<td>285 E Walnut Pasadena CA 91101</td>
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<tr>
<td>Phone Number</td>
<td>626-744-4066</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fax Number</td>
<td>626-585-6396</td>
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<tr>
<td>E-mail Address</td>
<td><a href="mailto:mplug@cityofpasadena.net">mplug@cityofpasadena.net</a>, <a href="mailto:tarasmith@cityofpasadena.net">tarasmith@cityofpasadena.net</a></td>
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This report is due on the date listed in the LSTA Grant Guide for this project. Follow this link to view the Grant Guide: [http://www.library.ca.gov/grants/lsta/manage.html](http://www.library.ca.gov/grants/lsta/manage.html)

Email this report in “word format” to lsta@library.ca.gov then mail ORIGINAL and 2 copies to:

California State Library  
P.O. Box 942837  
Sacramento, CA  94237-0001  
Attention: Fiscal Office - LSTA

**SIGNATURE:** _______________________________  **DATE:** _______________________________  
(Please sign in blue ink)
Project Final Report

A final narrative report is required on the use of federal Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) funds following the completion of a project during each project year. The information you report will be used to complete the California State Library report of how funds were expended. Excerpts from this report may be submitted to the Federal government in their evaluation, or may be published by the State Library or shared with other institutions. Please answer all of the questions thoroughly. Please attach any reproduction copies of photographs of project activities or media produced for the project.

Project Purpose

Include your program purpose statement here

Traditional storytimes offered through our libraries were not meeting the needs of Pasadena's current population of approximately 500 preschool age children with autism and their families. We wanted to close this gap in services by offering a free, inclusive Sensory Storytime program that addressed the specific needs of children with autism and or sensory integration disorder. Studies show that attendance at Sensory Storytime can improve social behaviors, build on cognitive strengths, remediate areas of weakness, provide a social network for parents and caregivers, and provide information and resources to navigate the public and private school systems prior to Kindergarten. Additionally, a free program offers low-income families a chance to benefit from early intervention strategies, which are offered by other organizations but are often cost prohibitive.

Project Activities and Methods

How did you accomplish the project? What were the steps involved? How did you engage the target audience?

Engaging the target audience involved a two-tiered approach:

1. It was essential that we build solid relationships with autism specialists in our community BEFORE we reached out to our target audience. Staying engaged with the organizations and people who provide services to our target audience was crucial to the program's sustainability and success.

2. Once we engaged with our target audience (our first batch of interested families), we maintained close contact through weekly reminder phone calls and/or emails. For those families who expressed interest but were unable to attend our weekly sessions, we sent periodic updates to keep them informed of new program developments. We also asked for continual feedback from parents who participated in our first session - we saw them as co-creators of our pilot project.

We took the following steps to accomplish the project:

--We met with two professionals from Pasadena Public Health Department's (PPH) Child Health and Disability Prevention Program to prepare a letter to healthcare providers about the Sensory Storytime program and to discuss the distribution of flyers within the pediatric and family practice clinics with PPH's purview.

--We conducted outreach at Center for Developing Kids, LAUP Preschool, Pasadena Unified School District's monthly Special Education Parent Meeting and Pasadena Child Development Associates.

--We determined the start and end dates for our first 6 week storytime session (March 1 to April 5); the maximum number of registrants we'd accept (10); the registration dates & times; the length and structure of the storytime and the range of therapeutic activities we would incorporate during our six-week session.

--We publicized the program in the following ways:
  --Promotional flyers at our libraries
  --Sensory Storytime article in LA Parent Magazine
  --Community Outreach
  --Talking to people over the Children's Reference Desk
  --Sending email blasts to organizations who serve children with special needs
  --Pasadena Public Health Dept. Online Newsletter
  --Dropped off flyers at Center for Developing Kids
  --Presented information sessions for families at LAUP & at Pasadena Unified School District's "Special Education" parent meeting.

--We held three trainings for library staff; two were hour-long workshops conducted by autism professionals from Center for Developing Kids and Villa Esperanza Services, Inc., respectively. The third training was an
online webinar conducted by librarian Barbara Klipper through the Association of Library Services to Children (ALSC).
--Four staff members attended a special conference sponsored by Professional Child Development Associates.
--We observed one Circle Time & one Sensory Playtime session at Center for Developing Kids.
--We met with Dr. Diane Cullinane, Executive Director of Pasadena Child Development Associates, to establish content for future parenting workshops and to discuss future collaborations.
--We purchased all of the materials needed for the actual storytimes (books, fidgets, other sensory materials, Boardmaker, etc.)
--We created pre- and post-surveys for parents to complete.
--We created a laminated booklet about our library for children and their families to review & keep.
--We chose the themes & content for the first session and we prepared/collectioned the necessary materials such as schedule buttons, name tags, flannel boards & rosters.
--In February we registered 10 families for our first storytime session and wait listed 20 families.
--In March/April we conducted a six-week storytime session with 10 registered families; we provided a pre-survey and met with families during our last meeting to get feedback on the program (this involved a post-survey and opportunities to talk one-on-one with the parents).
--To maintain the momentum of the first session's success, we scheduled a 6-week session for May.
  **Since we were still in the "pilot" stage, most of the participants were repeats from the previous session. In many ways this second session was a test as it allowed us to implement much of the feedback we received from parents after our first session.**
--We assembled 45 Sensory Storytime kits for checkout.
--We purchased Staff Reference books and circulating books for the public; these included nonfiction books for parents, pictures books for storytime use, themed picture books for Sensory Storytime kits and books about library programming for children & teens with special needs.
--We worked with database management to catalog our kits.
--We hired Professional Child Development Associates to conduct two Parent Education workshops, one in Spanish and one in English (attendance = 10).
--We began seeking ways to sustain the program and solicited help from other branches; Lamanda Park Branch was able and willing to hold Sensory Storytime sessions on a quarterly rotation with Central Library.
--We scheduled Lamanda's Sensory Storytime session for September, advertised through flyers & word of mouth and conducted focused training with the staff members.
--We held the first Sensory Storytime collaboration with Center for Developing Kid's Good to Grow program at Lamanda Park Library; two storytimes were conducted by Lamanda staff. There were 30 children in attendance with a parent/caregiver. Six occupational therapists were also assisting the group.
--We've scheduled inclusive sensory play programs to be held on a monthly basis at a number of sites (Lamanda Park, Central Library and Hill Avenue branch libraries).
--We asked parents from Central Library's very first session if they would be willing to talk about their experiences with Sensory Storytime on video; 5 parents agreed.
  **We are currently collaborating with our Virtual Services librarian to create an educational video about Sensory Storytime and other types of programming for children with special needs.**
**Project Outputs**
What was created for the project and how much? (For instance three promotional brochures were created and 75 copies distributed; or three training classes were designed; two sessions of each were held, and 80 people were trained)

*Created 45 Sensory Storytime Kits, which include 45 canvas bags imprinted with Sensory Storytime, 45 CDs, 180 books (3-4 for each bag), and 45 fidget toys.

*Conducted two Sensory Storytime sessions (6 week duration) for a total attendance of 36.
  - A third session scheduled for September at our Lamanda Park branch location. This storytime currently has 16 registered participants. 10 for storytime; 6 waitlisted.
  - Formally partnered with the Good to Grow program at Center for Developing Kids to provide a monthly Sensory Storytime program for two groups of 15 preschool age children with special needs (total attendance = 60).

*Offered two Parent Education Workshops in July (one English; one Spanish), total attendance = 10 - these were conducted by professionals from Professional Child Development Associates.

*23 books added to the J Parent Collection in the Children's Wing

*8 Staff LRC books added to the Reference Collection

*120 picture books added to the Staff Storytime collection

*Three training sessions and one conference attended:
  - One ALSC online webinar (attendance = 15);
  - One DIR Floortime Conference (attendance = 4)
  - Two in-house workshops (attendance for both workshops = 100 staff members).


*C Created 20 visual guides to prepare children for storytime visits (10 for Central & 10 for Lamanda Park)

*Distributed over 300 Sensory Storytime flyers to the community - this includes Sessions 1, 2 & 3

*Purchased all of the materials necessary to create and sustain a Sensory Storytime program at two sites (Pasadena Central Library & Lamanda Park Branch Library). These include: 50 fidget toys, 3 complete sets of sensory play materials, Boardmaker software, 10 weighted vests, 30 balance beam pods, 16 educube chairs, a parachute, a comfort tent, a sensory tunnel and a variety of other tools used for sensory awareness & play.

**Project Outcomes (if applicable)**
Please state the outcomes and the results of your evaluation.

Based on responses from our post-survey, we collected the following data; of the 10 families who attended the initial storytime session in March/April:

100% felt more accepted and welcomed in the library.
20% experienced an increase in their child's ability to carry a conversation.
70% observed an improvement in peer interaction.
80% observed an improvement in paying attention and reacting to stories.
20% observed an increase of knowledge in letter recognition.
20% observed an increase of knowledge of print concepts
10% stated their child gained experience in sharing toys.
None of the families were made aware of any additional Autism resources in the community
100% stated their child had fun and enjoyed coming to storytime.
100 % agreed that storytime was a great bonding experience.
100% stated they would continue to bring their children to storytime.
100% stated interest in additional library programming.
Additional Project Outcomes
Please state any additional intended or unintended outcomes and what data sources you used.

We had a number of additional intended and unintended outcomes with our project. The most important outcome which stems from all of these additional "intended" and "unintended" results is an expansion of services to families who have children with special needs.

Additional intended outcomes include:

1. Establishing a sustainable Sensory Storytime program at Central Library.
   **This was always something we hoped to accomplish but we knew it would depend upon the success of our pilot project. Due to the positive response and feedback we received after our first session, we were able to immediately follow with another "full" 6-week session.

Unintended outcomes include:

1. Establishing a sustainable Sensory Storytime program at MULTIPLE sites.
   **Building on the momentum of our success at Central Library, we were able to approach staff at Lamanda Park with a good track record and a reasonable plan for holding sessions at their site. In addition, we received approval to use some funds from our Youth Services budget to equip Lamanda Park with a set of materials for Sensory Storytime. Most importantly, we had two staff members from that site who had expressed interest in the program at the very beginning.
   **Once the word got out that Lamanda Park was willing to offer Sensory Storytime sessions, some of the other branches began contacting us to get more information about offering either a 6-week session or a monthly Sensory Play program.

2. Expanding the number of circulating Sensory Storytime kits from 30 to 45.
   **We were able to purchase an additional 106 picture books through an allocation of funds from our Youth Services budget - this allowed us to expand the Sensory Storytime Kit collection.

3. Being recognized as a valuable resource among organizations that serve children with special needs.
   **After hearing about our success from their clients, many of the organizations we’d partnered with for training asked us for guidance in the areas of outreach, programming and library resources:
   - Susan Kanegawa from the East Los Angeles Regional Center asked for advice on how to bring families in for programs; apparently the center offers numerous free programs but they tend to get very low attendance.
   - The Executive Director of Professional Child Development Associates, Dr. Diane Cullinane, asked to meet with us to discuss ways in which her organization could partner with the library. As a result, we started a series of Parent Education workshops in both Spanish and English.
   -- The pediatric occupational therapist who runs the Good to Grow program at Center for Developing Kid’s (CDK) wanted to see some of the sensory toys and library materials we were using during our storytimes; she also asked for help in finding library resources she could use for Circle Times at CDK; resources include board books, children's music CDs and fingerplays/action rhymes.

4. Unintended positive press/publicity for the program:
   **When we first starting publicizing our intent to hold Sensory Storytime for children with autism, one of our library patrons approached the desk and asked if she could write an article about Sensory Storytime for the Special Needs section of LA Parent Magazine. We had no idea that one of our patrons was a regular contributor to the magazine. As a result, we received "unplanned" publicity for the program.
   **Our Director, Jan Sanders, was so pleased with the success of Sensory Storytime that she nominated our program for the Urban Libraries Council Innovator Award; although we didn't win, we were honored to be listed on their website with other innovative projects: http://www.urbanlibraries.org/positioning-the-library-pages-282.php
   **City Manager, Michael Beck, wrote a personal note thanking us for creating a program for an underserved group in our community.

5. In-house collaborations with other library departments:
   **In an effort to capture feedback from parents who attended our first sessions, we asked our Virtual
Services Librarian if we could work with her to create simple video clips of Sensory Storytime parents giving feedback about the program. She supported our request and suggested we expand the video clips to a full educational video for in-house staff and staff from different library systems. (We included three brief video clips with our submission).

**Creation of a Subject Guide (LibGuide) of Special Needs Resources for families with children/teens who have special needs. We thought it would be a good idea to create a virtual resource center for our Special Needs families so we worked with our Virtual Services Librarian to create a subject guide. View guide here: [http://cityofpasadena.libguides.com/autism](http://cityofpasadena.libguides.com/autism)

6. Positioned the library as an advocate for inclusivity.

**Anecdotal Information**

Tell us a story. Give two or more examples of how the project has helped an individual or group in your community.

We included open-ended questions in our post-surveys so that parents could provide comments about their experience with Sensory Storytime. Some responses are listed below:

"I believe this program will be beneficial for my daughter in the long run. It introduces the idea of reading as fun; regardless of what setbacks my child has cognitively or physically, she can still learn to enjoy books and stories. Also, I felt that I was part of a community of parents who understood where I was coming from. I didn't have to worry that my child wasn't fitting in or being disruptive. The librarians met all of the children at their level which made things so much easier for all of us to enjoy the experience."

"Was able to get my child to stay in the room without crying or pulling me to leave...at first it was hard because my son kept wanting to go and he was screaming. He was able to stay for an entire storytime by the third meeting."

"I loved this program and I believe storytimes like this should be available in every library. It's the first time I could participate in a family activity with my daughter that didn't involve an occupational therapist or a speech therapist - we looked forward to it every week. It makes such a difference to attend a storytime just like any other family."

"We want to copy and reinforce what you do at the library at home."

"...parents would roll their eyes and become very irritated with her...now we feel comfortable attending a library storytime."

"...just coming to the library. We've never done that."

"...Now I feel there is a place for my child in the library."

We also asked our Sensory Storytime parents if they would be willing to tell us their stories on video. To really understand the impact of Sensory Storytime, we encourage you to view the three short video clips we've included with this narrative. They can be found here: [http://youtu.be/3ilu_NA__fU?list=PL_OyORhTKKsMPWBLgNBQ-UhCB1a1EB29jaSTILL WORKING ON THIS SECTION!](http://youtu.be/3ilu_NA__fU?list=PL_OyORhTKKsMPWBLgNBQ-UhCB1a1EB29jaSTILL WORKING ON THIS SECTION!)
Exemplary Project
If you feel your project was exemplary and others could learn from it and replicate it, please tell us why.

We feel our project is exemplary because of the deep and lasting impact it had on the families who participated. We always believed in the program, we knew it would address an unmet need in our community, but we were not prepared for the heartfelt reactions we encountered. Sensory Storytime really mattered to our parents, not just because it helped with literacy & social skills development or because it was fun; it mattered because the library took the time to figure out a way to adapt a program to meet the needs of their children.

As we stated in our original grant application, parents with children who have special needs typically don't feel welcome in a library or any public setting. While other families are visiting places - the library, the playground, the grocery store - these parents refrain from normal outings because of the enormous effort this requires. Seeing the difference the storytime made in the lives of our families, we believe that this type of program could and should be replicated in other library systems. We believe other libraries could learn from our experiences and adapt the program to fit the needs of families in their communities.

First and foremost, it would take dedication and continuous hard work, but the payoff to the community and library staff would be immeasurable. Potential outcomes could be any or all of the following:

* Participating parents/caregivers would begin to see the library as a wonderful place for a child with special needs to learn, develop and grow in a safe and caring environment.
* Creating a more inclusive environment in children's services would contribute to developing a new group of life-long learners and users who benefit from the programming and resources the library offers.
* Families in the special needs community would start to access the library's information and resources on a more frequent basis.
* Developing strong community collaborations with special needs organizations would increase programming opportunities for families with children who have special needs. Furthermore, these organizations would begin to see the library as a viable option for their information needs.

FEEDBACK FOR THE CALIFORNIA STATE LIBRARY ON THE GRANT PROCESS
We want to learn and improve our grant processes. Please let us know what worked and what we could do differently to make it a better experience. Thank you!

We received wonderful support from our mentor, Jane Cook. It makes a difference when you know you can ask for guidance from someone who backs you 100%. She was instrumental in encouraging us to go beyond our original outcomes.

My only suggestion involves the actual grant forms; they can be difficult to navigate. It is nearly impossible to cut and paste text, making the process of entering information cumbersome.