

StoryWalk-Style Trail Extension

Library Program Guide

Outdoor Story Extension and Early Literacy Walk

Program Overview

The StoryWalk-Style Trail Extension helps libraries connect picture books with movement, outdoor observation, and family conversation. It can be used as a full StoryWalk-style experience, a storytime extension, or a book-based nature walk. Families read or listen to a story, then move through an outdoor space using prompts connected to the book.

PROGRAM TYPE	Outdoor story extension, early literacy walk, or book-and-trail activity
BEST FOR	Families with young children, preschool groups, storytime families, and early elementary students
PROGRAM LENGTH	30-60 minutes
LOCATION	Library grounds, park, garden, schoolyard, paved path, short trail, or indoor/outdoor story stations

Program Goals

This program supports:

- Early literacy
- Family engagement
- Movement and play
- Outdoor observation
- Story comprehension
- Vocabulary development
- Place-based learning
- Library outreach

Important Note for Libraries

If displaying actual book pages outdoors, libraries should check publisher permissions and copyright guidelines. A simple alternative is to read the book aloud first, then place original activity prompts along the trail instead of reproducing book pages.

Supplies & Book Selection

Supplies

- Selected picture book
- Printed prompt cards
- Laminator or plastic sleeves
- Stakes, cones, stands, or sign holders
- Clipboards
- Crayons or pencils
- Reflection sheets
- Optional: book display
- Optional: take-home activity page

Book Selection Tips

- Are short enough for group reading.
- Have strong illustrations.
- Connect to nature or outdoor exploration.
- Encourage movement, curiosity, or observation.
- Work well with young children.
- Include themes of wonder, care, seasons, animals, water, trails, or belonging.

Suggested Books

- The Hike by Alison Farrell
- Finding Wild by Megan Wagner Lloyd
- A Stone Sat Still by Brendan Wenzel
- Outside In by Deborah Underwood
- Over and Under the Pond by Kate Messner
- Over and Under the Snow by Kate Messner
- Goodbye Summer, Hello Autumn by Kenard Pak
- We Are Water Protectors by Carole Lindstrom

Before the Program

Library Staff Checklist

- Select the book.
- Choose an outdoor route.
- Create 5-8 activity stations.
- Place signs at child-friendly height.
- Walk the route to check safety.
- Prepare reflection pages.
- Set up a related book display.
- Share program information with families.

Program Schedule

TIME	ACTIVITY
5 minutes	Welcome
10-15 minutes	Read-aloud
20-30 minutes	Outdoor prompt walk
10 minutes	Drawing or reflection
5 minutes	Closing and book checkout invitation

Activity Plan

1. Welcome

Introduce the program.

Suggested script: "Today we are going to read a story and then take the story outside. As we walk, we will look for things that connect to the book."

2. Read-Aloud

Read the selected book aloud.

Before reading, ask:

- What do you notice on the cover?
- Where do you think this story takes place?
- What do you think we might see outside after this story?

After reading, ask:

- What did the character notice?
- What was your favorite page?
- What should we look for on our walk?

Story Stations

Set up simple activity stations along the route. These original prompts can be used instead of reproducing book pages.

Station 1: Look Closely

Find something small. What do you notice about it?

Station 2: Move Like Nature

Can you move like wind, water, a bird, or a crawling bug?

Station 3: Story Connection

What do you see that reminds you of the book?

Station 4: Color Hunt

Find three colors from the story in the world around you.

Station 5: Sound Stop

Stand quietly. What sounds do you hear?

Station 6: Wonder Walk

What is one thing you wonder about this place?

Station 7: Care for Nature

How can we be kind to this trail, park, or garden?

Station 8: Tell a New Story

What could happen next if this place became part of the book?

Printable Reflection Page

My StoryWalk Reflection

Reflection Page

Book we read: _____

Outdoor place: _____

My favorite part of the story was: _____

Something I saw outside that reminded me of the book: _____

I wonder: _____

Draw your favorite part of the walk:

Activity Ideas

Libraries can add:

- Nature movement games
- Story stones
- Leaf rubbing
- Sound mapping
- Draw-a-page activity
- Character walk
- Animal movement cards
- "What happens next?" storytelling
- Family conversation cards

Age Adaptations & Take-Home Extension

AGE GROUP	ADAPTATION
Toddlers	Use fewer stations. Include movement and pointing. Keep prompts short.
Preschool	Add color, shape, and sound prompts. Encourage oral responses.
Early Elementary	Include drawing and simple writing. Ask children to compare the book and trail.
Mixed-Age Families	Let older children help read prompts. Invite siblings to create new prompts.

Take-Home Extension

Families can repeat the experience with any library book. Send home a card that says: Read. Walk. Notice. Talk.

After reading a book, ask:

- What did we see in the book?
- Can we find something like that outside?
- What does this place make us wonder?
- What story could we tell about this place?