

Storytime Skills Workshop
November 5, 2009

Closet Organization - Tackle the Clutter!

Closet Organization Tips:

- Try to keep on top of the clutter! Once a program is over, try to put all materials used (flannel board figures and scripts, craft supplies, etc.) away in their appropriate storage places. Or, try to be on a schedule. For example, commit to storing away all program materials at the end of each week.
- Don't allow the clutter to overwhelm you. If you see that piles of extraneous items are gathering or that items are not being stored away, take the time to do a quick "sweep" by putting away materials in storage and throwing away anything else that is not needed.
- Try to thoroughly clean out the closet at least once per year, preferably twice per year. A good time to commit to cleaning the clutter and throwing out anything that is not needed is after the Summer Reading Program. This will allow you to begin anew with a fresh start to the school year in September.
- Enlist the volunteer services of responsible tweens/teens and have a closet cleaning session. Make sure to provide snacks!
- I understand that as library professionals who work with children ANYTHING can be seen as useful for a future craft or programming idea. Isn't it curious how staff members seem to know that we'll take anything that they want to throw away! Yes, recycling is fantastic and we can often use many of the items, yet sometimes you MUST throw things away! Ask yourself: "Have I used this item in the last year? Will I use it in the near future?" If the answer is "NO," then it is time to discard. Close your eyes and do it!
- Label! Label! Label! Label supplies in closet with a permanent marker, preferably in clear bins and/or containers with lids so that you can easily view what is inside them.
- Stack bins so that the labels are facing outward for quick and easy viewing.
- Big books and bulletin board materials can be stored in large stand-up cardboard portfolio containers.
- **Very Important:** Keep in the front of the closet all the regular supplies that you use for storytime programs (e.g., glue sticks, markers, crayons, scissors, hand wipes, etc.) You do not want to be rummaging around in the back of the closet before storytime. A rollaway cart with two or more shelves works well for this.

Big Book Inventory:

- Create an alphabetized list of big book titles to post on the closet door.
- Store big books alphabetically in large stand-up cardboard portfolio containers.

Bulletin Board Items: Create a dated inventory list that can be posted on the closet door

- Store bulletin board and display items in large stand-up cardboard portfolio containers.
- Place thematically similar bulletin board items in marked envelopes (e.g., Fall, Christmas, Thanksgiving, Halloween, etc.).

Craft Inventory:

- Organize individual craft supplies in clear bins with lids (e.g., googly eyes, stickers, feathers, foam pieces). If you cannot afford to buy storage bins, try to get donations of plastic containers (e.g., grocery stores, fish markets).
- Crafts are one of the most important parts of storytime that **MUST** be organized in some logical manner! Pick your organizational strategy and stick to it!
- Organize your craft ideas and samples according to theme or topic (e.g., paper bag puppets, things to wear, animal crafts, holiday crafts, etc.) – Some of the topics may overlap and can be placed in several of the categories; you decide where it is best to place each craft item.
- Keep left-over cut-out crafts in large boxes or bins in the closet (labeled and organized).
- Keep craft samples in large three-ring binders labeled with numbers that correspond to the bin number where left-over craft supplies will be stored in the closet (e.g. Bin/Binder #1)
- The first page of the binder should hold a “Table of Contents” of the craft samples/patterns, which includes each section and a description of what “theme” crafts are in that section (e.g., Craft Samples and Patterns, Binder #1; Section A: Paper Bag Crafts & Other Puppets; Section B: Cut & Glue Crafts)
- Keep a sample of a completed craft in a binder sleeve for future reference on how the completed craft looks along with the templates needed for the craft.
- Craft Item Bins: These are bins that will undoubtedly be stored in the closet for future use. Large bins are an excellent way to store crafts.
 - Label each bin with a number. The number will correspond to the same numbered 3-ring-binder from which the crafts are organized (e.g. Craft Samples & Patterns Box/Binder #1 – Section A: Paper Bag Crafts, Puppets; Section B: Cut & Glue Crafts)

Flannel Board Inventory: Create a dated inventory list that can be posted on the closet door

- Organize flannel board pieces and scripts in large envelopes or gallon-size plastic bags.
- Clearly label the envelope or bag with the title of the flannel board.
- Alphabetize and store the flannel board envelopes/bags in large cardboard boxes (large boxes with lids from copy paper work well).
- Mark on the outside of the box (e.g., Flannel Board A-M; Flannel Board P-Z).

Poster Inventory: Create a dated inventory list that can be posted on the closet door

- Store posters in large art portfolios to prevent creasing and create an inventory list of owned posters.
- Poster inventory lists should be posted on the door and placed inside the portfolios.
- Store portfolios on upper shelves in closet.

Puppet Inventory: Create a dated inventory list that can be posted on the closet door

- Organize puppets alphabetically by type (e.g., African animals, Bugs, Dinosaurs, etc.)
- Include possible program themes that an individual puppet can be used for (e.g., chipmunk – chipmunks, nuts, fall, hibernation, forest animals)
- Store and label puppets in a large bin in an easily accessible area where they can be retrieved with little difficulty.



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