

Caitlin: Hey, we're Caitlin and Katie coming to you from our library living room. We are here not just as children's librarians, but as people who are parenting our own children.

Katie: Each week, we'll bring a new conversation about parenting with helpful resources from our library and beyond. This is "Your Family, Your Library," and we're your librarians.

Caitlin: Before we jump into this month's topic, we want to remind our listeners that though we're pretty good at finding resources, and we have experience parenting our own children, we are not child development experts. Our choices don't need to be your choices. There is no judgment here. We are all just doing our best with the health and well-being of our families in mind.

Katie: That's right. And this month we're talking about bedtime.

Caitlin: I don't know why we're talking about this, because I feel like both of us are really good at bedtime. Like we've already figured it out. Maybe we're experts in the field about bedtime.

Katie: Umm...I don't know. I don't know if I agree with that.

Caitlin: I'll tell you, there's never been an issue in my house. My kids are perfect sleepers. I myself am a perfect sleeper. So I think as far as I understand, you just tell your child that it's late and that they look tired and give them a tidy pat on the head and send them off to bed. And that's it, right?

Katie: Yeah. Turn the light out, close the door and they'll never come out.

Caitlin: Perhaps sing a gentle lullaby or something soothing.

Katie: Yeah, if only.

Caitlin: To cement the moment that they will remember and probably pass on the excellent sleep vibes to their own children.

Katie: I wish it was that easy.

Caitlin: It's not that easy.

Katie: That's what always made me kind of furious, like watching TV or movies. When parents or people acting as caregivers do that.

Caitlin: Yeah.

Katie: And it's like, what? Like on what planet is that how it actually goes down?

Caitlin: I don't know. I am given to understand that there are some people that can inform their child that it's bedtime and they go into their rooms and the parent, like, lovingly turns off the light and closes the door. And that's it.

Katie: That's amazing.

Caitlin: If this is you, please let us know what your secret is. And if you are made of magic. And if that is a fact, can you please give us some of your magic? Because that is not how bedtime is at my house, it turns out.

Katie: No.

Now, what about you, Katie? Are you a good sleeper?

Katie: I am now, but around very strict parameters. Like I have a whole routine. And if I deviate from that, then I won't have a good sleep.

Caitlin: Is it like a window that you have to be in bed by?

Katie: Well, I often try to go to bed like once my kids are in bed, I'm like done for the day and I'm ready to go to bed. For me, a lot of it, I mean, I used, believe it or not, I used to be a night owl. And stay up till all hours of the morning, but I just can't do that anymore. And especially after having Edwin, I've had a lot of health stuff pop up, and a few of those are going to be with me for my life. And so for me it's been learning how to adapt to those things and knowing what I need to do for myself to make sure that I can be the best I can be the next day.

Caitlin: Are your family members respectful of your needs?

Katie: Yes.

Caitlin: That's awesome.

Katie: Yeah. My, my husband is amazing. I mean, he's really taken on a lot of that role that I think would generally fall on a mom.

Caitlin: Yeah.

Katie: Like, he sleeps with Edwin a lot if he's having trouble sleeping. I mean, oftentimes I don't even hear him. And which for me is kind of it's kind of weird because I'm like, I'm the mom. I should I should be there for him. But like, I know I am when I need to be. Especially like if Mike's traveling for work, you know, obviously then it's me and it's fine and we get through it, but there is no way that I can be my full self without Mike.

Caitlin: That's a good partnership. Were you a good sleeper when you were growing up?

Katie: No. I remember being in my parents' room a lot, and I'd be like sleeping on the floor next to my mom, or they had this, like, little tiny couch in their room, and I would, like, kind of curl up on that. But. I just remember being awake and having nightmares sometimes. And, yeah, I just. I feel like I'm getting back Edwin, probably what I put my mom through.

Caitlin: I was the same. I came home from the hospital with colic, whatever that is like. I think it's a real thing. Maybe, But this was 1977 and it's like this nebulous diagnosis. Like, what's colic? I cried a lot, and I didn't sleep very well. So my parents, like, put me in the back, probably unbuckled. Who knows? Put me in the back of, like, some danger mobile and like, drove me around country roads until I fell asleep and like, it carried over into my childhood. I, I also remember ending up in my parents room a lot. I had lots of, like, nightmares and a big imagination. And also, like, I'm just prone to not sleeping. I remember lying in bed and trying and trying and trying and then hearing the birds singing in the morning and being like, "oh, this is going to be so bad." So I think that when Desi was born, that was my expectation of what having a kid was like. Like they just are never going to sleep because I'm an adult and I still am not a very good sleeper. I'm still awake multiple times during the night and sometimes I still hear the birds singing in the morning and I have that same reaction. So I thought, you know, that, that was just what being a person is. And it was very surprising to me to learn that that's actually not how everybody sleeps. My husband, in fact, is not one of those people at all. He's the kind of guy that can sleep, like standing up on the subway, holding a pole, like, you know, he's like sleeping while the train is jerking around. It's dumbfounding. He can sleep through all my nighttime shenanigans.

Katie: With Mike, does the same thing. Like he every night he puts Edwin to bed, he falls asleep next to him and I have to go in and wake him up. Like without fail. Without fail.

Caitlin: t's so weird. I was trying to watch TV last night and Devin's lying on the couch, just like snoring so loud, like the walls are shaking. I'm like, "man, you got to wake up." He's like, "What?" Like, can't you hear yourself snoring? No, he cannot. Anyway, Desi is also a very bad sleeper. He came home from the hospital sleeping like a nightmare, and I was not surprised whatsoever. I think Devin was a little jarred, but he's also used to me, so he slept poorly until he was nine. Just never wanted to take a nap a day in his life. There was no putting him down in the bed. It was just like constant maintenance. He would sleep if he was being held by an adult, preferably me, but he would sleep for Devin if he had to. That was just how it was. And Haven is the exact opposite.

Katie: Orson now is good sleeper. He'll go into his room, and Edwin and Orson share room. So Edwin goes to sleep first and he's usually asleep for a little while before Orson goes in there and he reads with his book light and then Light goes to bed on his own. And once he's asleep, he's asleep. But when he was a baby, he never wanted to nap unless he was in the carrier. And I was walking like four miles outside. He was too aware of everything happening around him or, I don't know, it's just really hard to get him to nap and also really hard to get him to sleep at night. But once he was finally asleep, that would usually be it. And he'd be asleep all night. And then with Edwin it was

opposite because he was a really good napper and he would generally fall asleep pretty well. And I feel like we must have not heard him at night, like when he was still in his crib because I don't know how it went from like, him being in his crib and he was like sleeping pretty well till like now where, you know, he's up at like 2 am. And some nights he'll go back to sleep pretty quickly. But something had to literally be out for hours waiting for the morning to come so he can play.

Caitlin: What is he doing?

Katie: Just like disco in his bed.

Caitlin: For real? He's just like... It's like he's just like when they.

Katie: He's just like, when's it going to be morning? I'm ready to play, I'm ready to play. Is it still nighttime? And it's like, by the time it is morning, you're going to be asleep. And like, sleeping through the morning that you're waiting for. I don't know. I feel like we're still in a place where I mean, we've literally tried everything and we've talked to his doctor. It's like, I don't. I mean, I just don't feel like there's anything else that we can do that we're not already doing. We have a routine that we always do every night. You know, it's like he sleeps. We go to sleep around the same time every night. Our life is pretty tame, so it's like nothing really changes. Nothing is out of the ordinary very often. So I don't know. It's very perplexing. It's just very frustrating.

Caitlin: It's the kid you have. Yeah. Desi, his main memory of going to daycare is they, they had a mandatory nap time, which I totally understand because that was like the time that the caregivers were able to, like, eat their lunch and check their email. So like, I'm certainly not going to be like, "my child has needs that are not being met." But he couldn't sleep. He just laid there in the cot. He hated it, he ate it, he was miserable. And like every once in a while they'd give him some like toy cars or a book. But like he remembers one day at daycare, his dad picked him up early, like right at the beginning of nap time. And it was like the best day he ever out there. It's like that's his one memory. It was it's really sad because it was an amazing facility. Like he had awesome teachers and was learning a whole lot and having a lot of fun. But that's the one thing you remember is like, I got to skip nap one day. Haven loves a nap. She loves. She's just like her dad. She just loves a nap. And in fact, like right before the lockdown happened in 2020, she was in this like, pre-K program, and they were trying to phase out naps, knowing that in Skokie, most of the public kindergartens are full day. So they obviously don't have a time for kids to take a nap and Haven was like, "well, this blows," like that. They're like, well, you know, she's having a really hard time, not, you know, sleeping in the middle of the day. Yeah. Which I don't know, totally foreign to me.

Katie: Yeah, that's funny because Edwin's preschool, they had a naptime or like quiet time after lunch and they would say that he wouldn't sleep, but I don't believe it because he would, like the days he was in school there. He would literally it would take hours to get out and to go to sleep at night, because if he takes a nap, like he won't go to bed until like 11 or something like that. So and they kept being like, "no, no, no, he doesn't nap. He doesn't nap." And it's like, "you come to my house and you see this little crazy

nut until 11 pm" And it's like that feeling of like, I love my kids so much, but like, I really need to not be here with you right now.

Caitlin: Oh yeah.

Katie: And it's like, if you leave, like, then he's up and roaming around and it's like, might as well just stay here until he falls asleep. I mean, it is like some days I like, the low-key rage that would be happening, is, like, not even funny.

Caitlin: I don't think I've ever felt that like lava hot rage like I have at like 10:00 after, like a long day at work where, like, I'm laying down with Desi and thinking, like, "finally, finally I think he's asleep." And I look over and he's staring at me with his eyes wide open. It's like I'm incandescent.

Katie: "Where you going, mom?"

Caitlin: Yeah, like "I'm not sleeping yet." Like, "I know." I'm so, so, like, that's, very rarely do I have to, like, actually physically tap myself out of a situation. But those are the times when it's like, I'm going to. I'm going to explode. Like if I don't get some alone time right now, I'm going to like, my skin's going to peel off and it's going to be nothing but like a rage skeleton.

Katie: Exactly.

Caitlin: And we don't have to that's, that's over. And I still have some, like, residual, like, anxiety, you know, I'm just, like, waiting for Haven to do this to us. And she's she won't she's never going to. She's had like three bad nights of sleep in her life, you know, once notably when she was about three and Devin and I thought she was asleep. It was like 11:30. She had been asleep. And we went in her room and it was like a total disco party, like she was in full costume. And she had like a light up, like some strobey-light light up toy. And that was going like, Oh my gosh. Oh, yeah, yeah.

Katie: Oh my gosh.

Caitlin: Yeah, it's wild. So when you were a new parent and you were learning how to do all the things that new parents learn how to do with sleep, something that you studied up on, or was it something that like you sort of went by instinct with?

Katie: I think I, I did do some reading, like a fair amount of reading around it, but I really try to do it by instinct, I think, because, you know, it's like when they're really little, it's like that cycle of like, you know, feeding, playing, sleeping, feed, playing, sleep. But that never seemed to work with him unless he was like in motion, he would fall asleep. But then with Edwin, I forget the name of the book, I'll try to find it. But I did read about like finding the cycles, like the sleep cycle. So it was like every 90 minutes or every one, like 180 minutes or something like that. Like your brain goes into another cycle. And so that's when you can, like, get them to go to sleep.

Caitlin: Yes.

Katie: And it did work. It did work. But at that point, it was also hard because it's like I was in the bedroom trying to get Edwin down for a nap in this like cycle time. And then like Orson's by himself out. So it felt very stressful and like, honestly, so often, like, Edwin would just fall asleep in the stroller. Like, I just be like, you know, we're just going to go to the park and, like, end up falling asleep and or in the car or something like that.

Caitlin: Yeah, it's like a whole new ballgame with the second kid. It's like, I don't know, we're just going to do whatever it is that we're just gonna do whatever works. We didn't. I think I did a lot of instinctual stuff too, until we figured out that it wasn't it wasn't everybody's experience to have a kid that just was like a never-sleeper. And, and then I started reading all the books. We co-slept with Desi. My parents co-slept with me and my two sisters. So that was sort of baked into my hippie existence. And honestly, like based on what you were just saying with like the eat, play, sleep cycle thing, that was the only way that I was able to get any kind of sleep when Desi was a newborn, was having him sleep in the bed with us, and I think it just is what it is like. It, it worked really well for our family. I know it doesn't work well for other families, and I know I did it very carefully. I, I read a lot of information on how to co-sleep safely, so I felt like it was an informed decision based on some my own experiences with my parents. And it did work with our family. I don't know if that contributed to his reluctance to sleep later in life. We tried, I felt like once we figured out that the never-sleeping thing was not normal, especially not like napping, I felt like I read every book. I totally read that 90-minute cycle book too, and it was good. And the "No Cry Sleep Solution" was really good too. And we tried to do that. Apparently the No sleep solution, there's like a dance that you do to like, get your child to sleep like you're, you're holding them and you're rocking them and everything gets good. You're not supposed to put them down until they're almost asleep. But if you put them down while they are asleep, then you're totally hosed. But like, lowering, lowering, lowering. Like we would get to the mattress and then the eyes would just fly open. And it was like, I don't know. It's like one of those moments where you just your heart just sinks down into your feet. We tried all the things. We did try "Cry it Out." I don't know if maybe if we had kept going, it would have worked. But it felt so bad in our situation that we couldn't keep it up. He basically cried until he threw up. And then I was like, I'm. I can't do it. It won't work for me personally. But I know other people, good friends of mine for whom that has worked like a charm and their kids are like champion sleepers. So yeah, whatever works, right? Whatever works.

Katie: Yeah. Yeah. I think it's just a matter of trying different things out and seeing what, you know, your child's responding to. That also makes what's going to make you feel the best in a, in a stressful situation. Because I think no matter how you go about it, it's stressful.

Caitlin: Oh, 100%. And like you said, I mean, like if you can't function when you're awake, you know, during your waking hours because you haven't gotten any sleep, then nothing that you do works. Like, you have to just you have to find something that does. It's really hard. And I do think this is a thing that is hard for a lot of people. I do not think this is exclusive to us.

Katie: No, not at all. I do have a funny little anecdote, though. I have mentioned that Orson did not enjoy napping and one of his first sentences was, "Me no nap."

Caitlin: What?

Katie: Yeah, like a little jokester. He's like "me no nap, me no nap."

Caitlin: Were you like, "I'm aware. Thank you."

Katie: Oh, yeah. It said a lot about his personality.

Caitlin: That's really funny. We had enforced quiet time because I knew that he wasn't going to, especially once Haven was in our family, like, I knew that he was never going to sleep, but he had to go be in his room because Haven was going to nap and I was going to nurse her. And then I. I really wanted to get to a place where I could put her down in a, in her own, you know, like her bassinet. And she would sleep like a normal baby. And so I put that little goblin in his room and like, he would usually stay in for about 10 minutes and play, and then he'd be like "is nap time over?" Like, "no." "How about now?" "Like no!" So we're in there. I've got a little timer going for him. I finally get Haven to sleep and I'm doing that little dance over to the bassinet and I've got her cradled in my arms and I'm lowering her down and it frickin' works. She's lying there and she looks like a little angel. And Desi comes out of his room. He's like, "is nap time over?" And I'm like, "yeah, you can come out. We can, like, build with blocks or something." And he goes over and he goes, "is she's sleeping?" And I was like, "yeah, you can go look at her, but you have to be really quiet." And he kind of slides over to the bassinet and he's looking up, peeking at her. And then he goes, "choo!" And I was so mad, I swear to you, I thought I was going to explode like a volcano. Like I thought the top of my head was going to come.

Katie: She wake up?

Caitlin: Yeah, she woke up. He screamed a train noise in her face. And I was like, "Desmond!" And. And he was like, "it wasn't me, mom. It was a train." I am so mad, but also, that's really funny. But also, I'm so mad. He's lucky he's adorable.

Katie: Yeah.

Caitlin: I guess we should point out that as we're talking about all these sleep problems, sleep regressions, which is very real, because sometimes even when you get into like, a good rhythm, like I had with Haven, it sounds like you had with Edwin, there are always setbacks. It's like just when you think you have it down, something will happen and it tears it all up again. But one of the things that as always we have here in the library is resources. We know that we're not the only people with these problems and people that are smarter than us have written about these things. Like you were talking and I was talking about books that help, you know, for whatever sleep issue that you're dealing with. There is almost certainly a book that will help you find the answers. You know, like

I was talking about the no cry sleep solution and we found the 90-minute cycle book, which we will find the title and put it in our list. We also have books for parents who are wanting to learn how to co-sleep. We have books for parents who are wanting to use cry it out or modified cry it out. There is no shortage of parenting books in our collection that will help you get through whatever sleep issue you're dealing with. And we have a whole section in our picture book collections that is just about bedtime. And if you're looking for one of these books, you can find it in our list of resources or our book list, or you can come in and talk to one of us at the desk. We love helping people deal with these issues. It makes us feel less alone.

Katie: And we can show you our favorites.

Caitlin: Yes, we can show you our favorites. And we will commiserate with, I swear, whatever it is you're dealing with. One of us has probably gone through it, too. Did you do co-sleeping?

Katie: I mean, not officially. We kind of did it sometimes. Like Mike would go get him from the crib and like, bring them in. And I would nurse him in bed. And like, sometimes we would fall asleep that way, but we didn't set out to do it, you know? And also, like, we, we sort of did cry it out, but not really because or and at that time Orson and Edwin were sharing a bedroom as well. So it was kind of hard not wanting to wake up Orson you know, going through that. So what we ended up doing, which we did when Orson was a baby too, is we had this really ugly, foamy rocking chair, nursing chair that we got...

Caitlin: A glider?

Katie: Yeah.

Caitlin: Oh my gosh, I love a glider.

Katie: That we got from my brother and we have both kids and we would end up just like holding one two who are whomever. It was like Edwin or Orson, and getting them to go to sleep and often like we would end up falling asleep in the chair with them. So yeah.

Caitlin: Did you find yourself going through phases where you felt like you had everything down and then like they would regress?

Katie: Oh yeah, yeah. And it still feels like that sometimes. I mean, Edwin, like we have like a couple weeks where, you know, he's sleeping really, really well, and then we'll be back in the cycle of, you know, he's up in the middle of the night a lot or he wakes up really early. So yeah. And it feels like we've really tried to narrow down like, rhyme and reason for it all and that just there just isn't. But I have to say, like the one sleep miracle, that is all I have in our house is the fact that Orson and Edwin on a whole do not interrupt each other's sleep. I don't know how we would all be functioning if that wasn't the case. It's like Edwin's already asleep before Orson falls asleep. And then when Orson's asleep, Edwin will wake up in the middle of the night. But he never wakes up,



Orson. I mean, because Orson's like, out.

Caitlin: I will say, I actually do feel lucky that we had our kids in the order that we had them. If I had to have a kid who is, like, absolutely abysmal at sleeping, I am glad that we had that kid first because when Haven came along, I was prepared for like, whatever, you know, I was prepared for whatever I had to do. And it was like a beautiful gift that I had a kid that was that's so easy going, Yeah, yeah.

Katie: That's awesome.

Caitlin: Like, I, I knew how to adapt to Desi, and it did feel hard. It definitely felt hard, but it never felt burdensome. Yeah, in a way that I think I might have felt like sort of shocked if I had had them in opposite order. Yeah.

Katie: Silver Linings.

Caitlin: Silver Linings.

Caitlin: We know that bedtime is not the only challenge you deal with. Browse our picture books section at the library or search our online catalog. Our issues category includes books on health and safety, behaviors, moving, and more. Find more information in our show notes.

Katie: So speaking of things that are at the forefront of our minds, we've been thinking and talking a lot about literacy in Skokie. There's been a big buzz around the reading instruction and education landscape and a particularly kind of bubbled to the surface with the podcast, "Sold a Story, which was released last spring and really ruffled some feathers for some people and then spurred a lot of other people into action. And the main gist of the podcast is a kind of throws the proprietary instruction methods which are used widely like Fountas and Pinnell throughout a spell like schools in the US in favor of phonics, space, science of reading. So on July 20th, we held a viewing of the movie the to read. And so Caitlin, I wanted to see if you could give us an idea of what "The Right to Read" is about and also the discussion that you had after the showing.

Caitlin: Yeah, absolutely. I mean, I think you're exactly right. We've been talking about this a lot, especially I know I listen to the podcast and definitely like had a lot of thoughts about it. And we both have kids that are sort of just coming out of that, like "learning to read" phase and now they're going into like the "reading to learn" phase. And it's been really interesting to see what methods Haven has come home with, working on her own reading skills and how school has been fostering that education. It's been it's been interesting. It's been really good. I learned how to read by watching my parents read and by reading read to a lot. So one of the things that I thought was really interesting in the podcast was they were talking to one of the parents and she said that I thought that if I just read to my kid all the time that they would pick it up. And honestly, that is what I thought too. I thought that if I just, you know, I'm a librarian, Devin is a librarian also. I love books. I love children's books. I'm steeped in this culture. I thought if I bring home beautiful books and read them to my kids, that they'll just pick it up, you know, like

osmosis. Like the same way that I did. I was really young when I learned and it turns out that there's more to it than that. For most kids, it really doesn't work that way and there needs to be some foundation of education. So what we've been talking about vis-a-vis that podcast and, you know, literacy in our community and in the country at large is what's our role in that landscape. Like, where do children's librarians fit in? Because we're not directly involved with the education of Skokie youth. We're adjacent. It's like we help teachers, we provide materials to them, but we're not directly involved with the day-to-day learning of kids. We help facilitate. But we are not the sole provider of that education. So we hosted a viewing of the movie, like you said, back in July. And then after the movie we had, this was actually brought to us by a community member who asked the library to host this event. But I got to be on the panel as one of the speakers. So we had some leaders in the community, and some parents, and then some people from the neighboring school district who are talking about basically how do we support the community and how do we help, you know, instead of just sort of tearing everything apart, like what are the things that the library can do to help? And this is vital because this is all in the movie by the way, and we will we've linked in our show notes, the website that you can look at these statistics for yourself in case you're a visual learner. Like I tend to need to read things instead of just hearing them. But according to a study that was done by the National Assessment of Educational Progress, 37% of fourth graders in the United States are reading below a basic reading level. And I had to look up what a basic reading level meant. And basically it means you functionally cannot read like a basic reading level means that you can like read enough to get you from one place to the next place. If you cannot read at a basic level, you are not functioning. And according to a 2020 Gallup poll, 54% of Americans who are older than 16 are reading below a sixth grade level. I found that like very shocking.

Katie: That's astonishing.

Caitlin: That's a big number. So the movie follows Kareem Weaver. He's an NAACP activist, and Sabrina Causey, who's a teacher. They both are out of Oakland, California. And then two families, one in Mississippi and one is in Virginia Beach. And they're all advocating for this science-based reading instruction, which has a basis in phonics. So all of the participants in the movie reached the conclusion that whatever is happening in reading instruction in the United States is not working and kids are getting left behind in droves, especially kids who have some sort of learning difference or don't have family support in place that can maybe afford to get a reading tutor or to get assistance when it's needed. So kids are really getting left behind. And we know that illiteracy has real world consequences. We know that if you can't read in life, it is really hard to get a job. So most adults who can't read have trouble working, and that costs the economy \$2.2 trillion per year, according to a Gallup poll, which was made on behalf of the Barbara Bush Foundation for Family Literacy. That's a lot of money. \$2.2 trillion. You think that that money could be invested back into the educational landscape. We also know that there are structural issues in place that impact how kids learn, how to read and learn anything really, as much as, if not more than traditional schooling. So issues like food insecurity or housing insecurity or, you know, undiagnosed learning disabilities, or mental health issues. So we know that it's a bigger problem than just what is the curriculum that your school is using and how are they implementing it in the classroom?

We know as librarians and people that work with the community that there are a lot of things going on.

Katie: Or even, you know, kids just being able to show up at school in the first place.

Caitlin: Exactly. Yeah. I mean, you can't learn at school if you can't get to school.

Katie: If you don't have that consistency in place in life. And I mean, it's kind of impossible. Everything feels impossible.

Caitlin: Yeah. So we know that it's really important for us as librarians to have some awareness of child development concepts and milestones and also like sort of general understanding. None of us are reading or literacy coaches or experts, but it's it behooves us to have some sort of foundation of understanding when it comes to reading and literacy and what that fluency looks like. But because we are librarians and we're not tied to a classroom or a specific curriculum, we have a lot of flexibility about what that looks like, which actually is is kind of amazing and kind of great. So like, I can imagine that being a teacher right now, especially a teacher that's dealing with reading in the wake of this podcast and this information coming to light has got to be really challenging because, you know, it's really hard being a teacher all the time. And right now I think especially. And we know that everybody is out there just trying to do their, their best.

Katie: Yeah.

Caitlin: One of the things that I care the most about is and I think you feel the same, like providing a place for people to come that is free, where information is free and that people are welcome. And we've talked about that a little bit in our previous episodes, like, you know, learning how to be social and learning how to use our material. This place is for the public. We are here to help facilitate these meaningful experiences so that people know that this building and our resources are for them.

Katie: And I think that's something that, you know, because we don't have like a classroom situation where we see the same kids every day, like this is something that we have to reinforce each time we're at the desk, each time we have a program, because we're going to see new people, hopefully new faces. And it's like making sure that everybody knows that this is a safe place to come to you and that we can kind of be a bridge for them between their school and their home and just be a place, like you said, where they feel welcome and accepted. And then I think from there all the fun and magic can happen.

Caitlin: Yeah. And part of that fun in magic is we have access to really high-quality materials, and we have a really creative and dynamic programming team here in the library. And I can say with authority that I believe that like all of the programming that we do is based in some sort of literacy here at the library. So everything that we offer is going to help foster that lifelong love of learning and reading and if you come into the library, you're going to find something here that is meaningful.

Katie: Yeah.

Caitlin: We have a wide variety of programming options that are designed for pre-readers and then emerging-readers from age specific storytimes that feature dialogic reading, dialogic reading is my favorite. And that's when you're reading a book out loud to a kid and you show them the pictures as you're reading and you talk about not just what the words that you're reading off the page are saying, but also what's happening in the picture. You invite the child into the story with you. You talk about sequencing. Oh, yeah. And then this happened, Right? And do you remember that time that we went to the park? You see how this girl at the park. We were at the park. Do you remember that? So pulling them into the story and giving them that sort of connection with it is really important.

Katie: Yeah.

Caitlin: We also have letter recognition in our storytimes a lot. We do a lot of repetition and rhythm and rhyme and we also focus on other skills that help build contextual understanding and comprehension that goes back to some of that dialogic reading. I run a Family Book Club for newer readers and caregivers to come in, and we do some of that in the book club where we talk about exactly what we're reading in real time as we're reading it. And then to further cement that foundation, we work on a project or we play a game around the around the book that we've just read so that they build on those skills and also have like a muscle memory for them. We have programs in the summer like Booking with a Buddy, which is run by our colleague Mandy, who is an amazing she's like a superstar. One of the best things about working on the desk with Mandy is that she's been working at the library for over 20 years and she has seen kids from infancy all the way up like they're grown-ups now that come in that are like "I was in your two-year-old storytime." It's the most beautiful thing. But she does a great job of pairing new readers with older readers because everybody knows that little kids love to be paired up with big kids. Big kids are the coolest, and Mandy really has tapped into that, and she's built a whole program around creating and scaffolding literacy and making it super fun.

Katie: We also have a program called Grow a Reader, which encourages children five and under to read with their caregivers year round.

Caitlin: My favorite thing about Grow a Reader is when people sign up for it, the instructions are just read. Yeah, and I love telling people that like, here's your instruction card. It literally just says, Read with your kid and you can read the same book a thousand times and that counts. You've read a thousand books before kindergarten, or you can read a thousand different books. It doesn't matter. It's just the act of you sitting and reading with your kid.

Katie: Yeah, totally. And I love to, on the card that people get with each hundred books that they read, there are prompts for different ideas for talking with their child and singing, some ideas for stories to read or things to write and play together. So I just

think that, you know, obviously those things are just as important for the foundation of a child eventually learning how to read.

Caitlin: Yeah, we use a program called "Every Child Ready to Read" here in the library and the tenets are talk, sing, read, write and play. Those are the five skills that you need for pre and emerging literacy. Also with Grow a Reader, it's the one time in the library where you are encouraged to put stickers on the wall.

Katie: They're really cute too.

Caitlin: We also have a really robust collection of books and, and physical resources in the building, and they're in a wide variety of formats that are designed to meet readers wherever they are. So we have phonics readers and short chapter books for kids that are just like actually learning to read the words on the page. We also have electronic resources like TumbleBooks and audio read-aloud, which is really fun. We got a new collection of Wonderbooks and.

Katie: I love the Wonderbooks.

Caitlin: My gosh, me too. You just push a button and it reads the story to you. It's so cool. And kids can read the words along with hearing the words as.

Katie: They read also. It gives page turning prompts.

Caitlin: Do you remember those we had? Like, I can't remember what ours were called, but they were like little records. I had a little record player when I was a kid and it made this like pretty sound when it was time to turn the page. That was so cool.

Katie: Yeah.

Caitlin: I could sit and we can have a TV when I was growing up and as I listened to 5 billion of those, I love them. But we also have a world languages collection, which I think is pretty unique and awesome. It's, it's robust like it is not a small collection.

Katie: It's a big collection, yeah.

Caitlin: So you can come in and find books in all and, how many languages we have, do you know?

Katie: Think it might be like 20 or 25. Yeah. Spanish or Urdu. Russian.

Caitlin: Chinese.

Katie: Polish, Hebrew, French.

Caitlin: Yeah.

Katie: Japanese. Yeah, we have. We've got a lot of.

Caitlin: Quite a few. And then finally, what's our number one resource?

Katie: Us.

Caitlin: Us. We're here for you. Youth librarians are excellent supports. We have a vested interest in creating lifelong learners. I mean, these kids are what make the library what it is. And you know, they're going to grow up and continue to be supporters of the library and hopefully bring their kids here.

Katie: And come back and see us.

Caitlin: That's right. We take a great deal of pride in matching kids with books and materials that we think are going to keep them coming back for more. I feel really strongly about that. Katie and I both are on the Cool Summer Reads book team, where we choose books for third through fifth graders and we read a lot. We love finding the perfect book for the perfect kid.

Katie: Yes, we do. Also, some upcoming opportunities for families to engage in with the library Book Babies and Wonderful Ones, which are on Wednesdays, Wednesday mornings. Those are for kids ages 0 to 24 months. It's just a great time to come and read some stories. Sing and play. Caitlin does our family fun Storytime on Wednesday evening.

Caitlin: With Melissa We toggle it. So you're either going to get my brand of sass or you're going to get Melissa's dulcet singing voice. So it's either going to be really loud with me or it's going to be really beautiful with Meleesa. Depending on what week you're here.

Katie: Oh that's cool. Terrific Twos with Mandy on Thursday mornings, and then we have a Weekend Storytime with Meleesa, and then our newest librarian, Amanda, I believe, will be doing two Saturdays a month starting in November.

Caitlin: So if you cannot come to the library to attend one of our amazing storytimes in person, we also have a suite of storytimes that are recorded that you can check out. Ms. Mary does a regular rise and shine storytime that you could find on our YouTube page, and there are some legacy storytimes hosted by me and you can find some from Katie on there as as many of our other librarians who have hosted them. Ms. Meleesa of course, it's a staple. She's so good. Yeah. We encourage you to check out the events page on the Skokie Public Library website for a full slate of all of the wonderful programming that's available to you. And I will say, too, if there is something that you would like to see offered at the library that you don't see, reach out to us. We are very interested in hearing what people want and we're pretty responsive to it. So if there's a program or idea that you have, please reach out to us. We would love to hear about it.

Katie: Absolutely.

Caitlin: Trick or treat! show off your costumes on October 31st at the library for an hour of spooky fun. Learn more in the show notes.

Caitlin: So what kept you going this month, Katie?

Katie: So I found this new word game on the New York Times app called Connections. Have you seen this?

Caitlin: Yes, I love Connections.

Katie: Oh, my gosh. I like I was listening to a podcast and they had mentioned it as something like to check out. And I did. And I'm like, oh, my goodness, where, where have I been how have I missed this?

Caitlin: How did you not make that connection?

Katie: Oh, but you know what? I. I really like the challenge of it. So basically you're supposed to put all the words and this cube in like four different categories.

Caitlin: There's 16 words in a grid.

Katie: And it kind of takes me back to a not-so happy-time of, like, SATs. It feels a little bit like that. And I was terrible at test-taking, I don't know. So it feels it's like kind of pressure and you only get like four on this particular game Connections. You only get four chances or something before you're done and it tells you, you know which ones you master. Yeah, all of them. If like, like today I didn't get any of them was so bad but I'm like each day I've been going back and trying again.

Caitlin: It's fun.

Katie: It's really fun.

Caitlin: But you're right, I made the same, so I started playing connections this month too. And I made I had the exact same feeling that you did, which was like the thing that I'm worst at on test-taking, like the SATs. I am not a good test taker at all. I did not do well on the SATs and a lot of it had to do with like being able to see those connections in a lot of different places.

Like, I don't know, I mean, I feel like that could go a lot of different ways. Like really, I read I read something somewhere once that said that people that have trouble with those as that connection things were just like on a higher plane of intelligence.

Katie: I'm above this.

Caitlin: It's not that I scored very poorly on the SATs, it's that I'm actually smarter than the SAT that's what it turns out.

Katie: Okay, I'll go with that.

Caitlin: Go with it, man. It made me feel better in the moment. I also love that puzzle. Yeah, it's.

Katie: It's challenging. And I think that's why I like it.

Caitlin: So that one. And then Amy Koester, who works here in the library with us, turned me on to the Waffle. Have you played the waffle? No. It's another app. And it is. It's a game where.

Katie: Is it its own app?

Caitlin: Yeah, the Waffle app. But you have it's another sort of created word game where you have to shuffle letters around to figure out what order they go in. And it's fun. It's kept me going this month. You know, I was thinking about this on my way to work today because it's actually been kind of a tough month and that's okay. Maybe, maybe Connections is keeping me going as well. You know what? Devin found a bag of Halloween candy on sale at Aldi this week, and that's been keeping me going. I've been chewing my way through that candy bag like it was going out of style.

Katie: I've been enjoying the pumpkin cookies from Panera. Like too many of them.

Caitlin: I haven't tried those.

Katie: I have one waiting for me downstairs.

Caitlin: Really?

Katie: Yeah.

Caitlin: Can I have a bite?

Katie: Of course.

Caitlin: I helped a family find a book about pumpkins this morning. And she wanted a general pumpkin book for a two year old, and I thought that would be a no brainer. I thought it would be so easy, but like, every flippin' pumpkin book that I pulled was like, it's like "War and Peace." It's like "War and Pumpkins." Like, it was 500 pages long. I was like, All right, this is too many words to read for a two year old about pumpkins. Like, how much can you say about that squashy gourd?

Katie: I hate that when you can't find what you're looking for.

Caitlin: Keep t tight, children's authors, Can you please?

Katie: Keep it tight.



Caitlin: Keep it tight.

Caitlin: Well, that's all we've got this month. Thank you for hanging out with us once again in our library living room. Remember to keep in touch with us. We would love to hear from you. You can email us all of your thoughts about pumpkins. Pumpkin cookies, literacy, all of the things bedtime. We like games. Tell us what time you go to bed. What's a normal bedtime, people, please reach out to us at Podcast at Skokie Library Dot Info.

Katie: This has been Katie and Caitlin with "Your Family, Your Library," produced by Amber Hayes and sound engineered by Paul Knutson. See you next month.

Caitlin: Sweet Dreams.