# Webinar transcript: CELA and accessible library services for kids and teens!  Books, programming tips and welcoming families at your library

Slide 1: CELA and accessible library services for kids and teens!

Welcome to CELA’s webinar about library services for children and teens with print disabilities. The Centre for Equitable Library Access, or CELA, is Canada’s most comprehensive accessible reading service, providing books and other materials to Canadians with print disabilities in the formats of their choice. A national not-for-profit organization, CELA serves 97% of the estimated 3 million Canadians with print disabilities in partnership with member libraries and has users in nearly every province and territory. CELA provides access to 700,000 professionally produced titles, 150 magazines and 30 newspapers in accessible formats through a fully bilingual accessible web site and catalogue.

Today we’ll review why libraries should learn about and implement resources to support their young patrons with disabilities. Then, we’ll cover disability types, how to sign up for CELA, our collection with a focus on kids and teen materials, adapting your programming, and will end with some ideas on how to promote your services in the community.

Slide 2 Accessibility: why it matters

Library staff no doubt understand the importance of reading and early literacy skills in a young person’s life.  In Canada, there are \*more than 1 in 10 youth who have a disability.  If you think of this number, and take into consideration that only an estimated 10% of all material published is available in accessible formats, you realize how vital libraries are to providing reading materials for kids and teens who can’t read regular print. Canada is making steps forward to improve the lives of Canadians with disabilities through legislation in Ontario, Manitoba and Nova Scotia, as well as implementing the federal Accessible Canada Act.

Participating in CELA allows your library to increase the choices available for your community members who don’t read regular print. In addition to your library’s already existing accessible format collection, which might include books in larger print, commercially-produced audio CDs, book kits containing the book and CD, Wonderbooks and online audio (services like Overdrive, RBdigital, hoopla, cloudLibrary and tumblebooks – although these platforms are not accessible enough to meet the needs of many people with print disabilities). Children and teens with print disabilities benefit from access to books in accessible formats such as audio, accessible text and braille, to develop literacy skills so that they can learn to read and fully participate in school and in their community.

\*Source; <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/181128/dq181128a-eng.htm>

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## Slide 3 Welcoming families of all abilities

We have had numerous discussions with users and libraries who tell us that staff knowledge and a caring attitude are the first steps to creating a welcoming space for families of children and teens with print and other types of disabilities.  In addition to having the accessible spaces often mandated through provincial legislation such as AODA, libraries can be prepared by having information about their own accessible services, including CELA, on hand for all staff, including for part-time staff and volunteers.  We also encourage libraries to visit CELA’s Kids and Teens page for book suggestions.

Slide 4 Types of print disabilities

A print disability is defined in the Canadian Copyright Act as a visual, physical or learning disability which prevents or inhibits someone from reading regular print.  The Copyright Act also states that non-profit organizations like CELA may produce materials in accessible formats for people with perceptual or print disabilities. This exception defines how CELA acquires its collection of accessible reading formats.

For kids and teens, print disabilities are often represented by kids who were born blind or have eye defects causing significant vision loss, or other conditions such as cerebral palsy, brain injuries and learning disabilities such as dyslexia.  At the library, you may identify some of these children and youth if they have limited movement of their hands, may or may not use a mobility device like a wheelchair or use a white cane. Other disabilities like dyslexia are invisible, so having flyers or other signs indicating your library offers accessible collections will tell families of your services and preserves patron dignity by not necessarily having to disclose they need to read in accessible formats. Some parents may not be aware that their child is eligible for CELA, particularly in the case of children with learning disabilities, so making them aware of the options available is a great first step to meeting their needs.

When someone registers for CELA they do not require documentation to validate their disability, but if a person wants access to Bookshare titles, they need to complete a Proof of Disability Form.

## Slide 5 Reading with Dyslexia

I wanted to take a moment and focus on how dyslexia can impact students with learning disabilities. For youth in Canada, learning disabilities are the 2nd most common type of disability, falling just short of mental-health related disabilities.  Dyslexia, which affects how someone sees and comprehends written letters or letters in relation to each other, can benefit from reading text as well as hearing the words at the same time.  In the slide I’m showing is an example of what text might look like for someone with dyslexia.  Not everyone will have this experience, but if you take a moment to try and read the text which contains parts of words put together and misspellings, you can understand how difficult it would be to read regular print.

E-text includes highlighting that tracks the words on the screen as they are read aloud, and can help students with dyslexia.  CELA’s access to Bookshare which contains over 600,000 e-text titles in either DAISY text, epub or as a Word file, in addition to your e-collections, can significantly benefit dyslexic readers.

Some people with dyslexia find it helpful if the text is written in a special style called OpenDyslexic font.  This font is available in the Libby app.

Source; https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/181128/dq181128a-eng.htm

https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/181128/dq181128a-fra.htm

## Slide 6 Supporting access in your community

CELA offers two programs for those who support people with print disabilities. Teachers, school librarians and other teaching staff in elementary, secondary and post-secondary institutions may register for the **Educator Access Program.** This will allow themto support the reading needs of their students by being able to download books on their behalf. We encourage educators to complete the Terms of Use form, so they may also use Bookshare titles in CELA’s collection.

Other professionals such as Vision Rehabilitation Specialists, Occupational Therapists, private tutors or Speech and Language Pathologists may sign up for the Client Access Support Program to assist their clients. Those registered for this program may only download or borrow CELA titles.

In order to register, applicants need a library card from a **CELA** member library and they must complete either the Educator Access or Client Access Support Program registration form.

## Slide 7 Signing up for CELA

Patrons or students may register for CELA either through their library or through our online registration form. We recommend adding a parent, guardian or teacher as the person’s designate so they can assist with downloading or ordering materials. CELA also e-mails out a monthly newsletter called Open Book which always contains title recommendations for children and teens, as well as service announcements which occasionally effect the person’s service so an adult should read them.

## Slide 8 Accessible formats

CELA provides access to over 700,000 items, including books, magazines (e-text, braille and Direct to Player) and newspapers.

CELA offers a bilingual collection and service. It’s also a collection for all ages & interests, with fiction and non-fiction titles for kids and young adults, in addition to our collection for adult readers. For patrons and educators, Bookshare offers a wide selection of books in languages other than English and French.  Bookshare offers a small collection of textbooks, but does not follow Canadian curricula. It’s best to contact your local school who will be able to access textbooks in accessible formats through the provincial educational resource centre in their province.

CELA and Bookshare titles are available through the online library to stream or download.  Patrons can stream the audio or download it as DAISY in a .zip file. They can listen to these files using a DAISY app, such as the Dolphin EasyReader or Voice Dream Reader on a mobile device. There is an easier and faster way to get DAISY audio books called Direct to player. Patrons can get DAISY audiobooks directly on their player, without having to wait for a CD in the mail or using a computer, through Direct to Player. All that is required is a current model DAISY player and a wifi connection to the Internet.  Patrons should get in touch with the CELA Contact Centre if they wish to use this service.

For those who prefer physical books, CELA’s collection offers braille and printbraille books and DAISY audio CDs, all of which are distributred via mail. DAISY CDs may be human narrated or recorded using synthetic speech.  Usually a DAISY book fits on 1 CD.  Readers can navigate a DAISY book like a print book, by page, chapter, and section. DAISY CDs can be played on DAISY players, MP3 compatible CD players or on a computer. Patrons can download free software to make use of the navigation features of DAISY, or listen to it like a regular CD in a program such as Windows Media Player.

## Slide 9 Making reading programs more accessible

We are pleased to partner with many of Canada’s reading and awards programs for children and teens to ensure everyone is included and can participate by having accessible formats of the nominated titles.   Nationally, we have often offered titles from the TD Canadian Children’s Literature Awards and offer accessible materials and books as part of the TD Summer Reading Club.  As of 2020, we have established a partnership with the Canadian Children’s Book Centre to have accessible versions of shortlisted titles for 4 of their awards: Amy Mathers Teen Book Award, Marilyn Baillie Picture Book Award, Prix TD de littérature canadienne pour l’enfance et la jeunesse, and TD Canadian Children’s Literature Award.  For regional and provincial reading programs, we include books in our collection from the Forest of Reading, First Nation Communities Read, Hackmatack, New Brunswick Summer Reading Club and BC Summer Reading Club.

I wanted to mention that for libraries participating in the TD Summer Reading Club, CELA offers an award to honour libraries that made an exceptional effort to provide an accessible program.  Applications are submitted online and are usually due in the fall.  The prize includes an accessible reading prize pack to provide the library with tools and books to enhance their accessible services for kids.

## Slide 10 For preschoolers and early readers

You can find books for babies, toddlers and young children in CELA’s collection, either to listen to together, or feel the braille dots to begin early literacy skills.  Some of the books are available as printbraille, which is a child’s picture book where the text has been transcribed into braille and embossed on clear plastic sheets which are inserted into the book. They can be used by a child with a print disability, or by an adult with a print disability who wishes to read to a child. In the future, we’ll add back our full printbraille collection, but for now, you may order specific titles using our Printbraille Request form available on our Kids and Teens page. We also have audiobooks and e-text which can be read on a tablet or phone using DAISY book reading app such as EasyReader.

For budding and early readers, CELA offers popular chapter book series, such as “I can Read” levelled series in e-text and audio, as well as novels in braille, without pictures.  We offer a range of titles, but are particularly committed to offer titles by many Canadian authors.

## Slide 11 For older kids, middle school and high school readers

For kids who enjoy listening to or reading novels and who need more advanced books to help with homework, we have numerous fiction and non-fiction titles. At this age, kids can learn how to search our catalogue, download items for themselves and use reading apps. CELA offers videos and step-by-step tutorials on our Help page on how to access our books.

Our collection for teens includes popular novels, books for English class such as Shakespeare classics, and advanced non-fiction books for assignments. We also include books on social skills as well as preparing to go into the workforce such as interview and job finding titles.

As students go on to college and university, CELA can supplement their academic reading needs with novels, magazines, and books on financial management, self-help, and other life skills.

## Slide 12 CELA’s website and how to access books

I have logged in to CELA’s site to show you how to download a book. This says “logout” but when you first go on to CELA’s site at celalibrary.ca it will say log in.

There are many ways to find books. You can use our Browse by Categories page, new titles link to find new books or you can do a search. We’ll do a search using a popular kids theme, so I've picked dinosaurs. When you have the search results page you will find a list of titles, and the titles that first come up will be a combination of books from both from CELA's and Bookshare's collections. We have many filters that you can choose, such as by collection, by type, so the options by type, are book or magazine, there aren't any magazines with dinosaurs so that's why it hasn't shown up, language, formats, so this shows you the drop-down menu of our audio braille, text, Word and epub formats, and as well as fiction and nonfiction categories. For example you can choose Canadian fiction if you like as a filter, you can choose the audience you can choose the narration so many people just want human narrated titles you can choose the Braille transcription and if you want a list of the most recently acquired books you can pick by date added or year published.

In this case I'm going to pick books for a child. So the very first option is "Dinosaurs Before Dark" by Mary Pope Osborne which is part of the "Magic Treehouse" series. So let's pretend we want to get this book. I would choose the format, and in this case, let's pretend your patron has an iPad and they want to download the book onto the iPad using the EasyReader app. I would pick 'DAISY audio - Direct to Player’ and then select "get it". A message will come up saying that the book has been added to my bookshelf and will be available shortly. To view the title, I can go to “My account”. For my account and go to the top of the page and click on “My account” and you'll have different options. The first is the “Available zip files for download” so if you wanted a zip file a word file, epub or ebraille, these would appear here. For Direct to Player, like the one I just picked, the file would be there the title of the book, and if you pick CD or Braille it would be in holds you can also find out what you've borrowed in the past through history, and if you'd like to add Bookshare to your account, and this is for patrons, you would get the form there and then upload and complete it. So I chose a Direct to Player book, and now when I check “My account” it might be there. It does take a bit of time for the book to appear but this is where all the books would be then the direct to player bookshelf.

## Slide 14 Inclusive Library Programming

We’ll now talk about how to make your library programs inclusive. When planning story-times and other activities, be prepared for a child of any ability to come into the room by considering inclusivity at the start of your preparation. By doing so, you’ll make the activity easier to understand, anyone in the room will be able to follow along with the story (even if they’re sitting in the back), and if you’re willing to adapt activities, your patrons will appreciate the effort you’ve made to make their experience enjoyable. Remember, you may not always be able to tell whether kids in your program have a print disability.

When you are ready to promote your programing calendar to your patrons, make sure your schedule is available electronically, this way families who may have someone using assistive technology will know about your events. In all your communications, follow Clear Print Guidelines such s using font sizes no lower than 12, as well as sans serif fonts.

You may also wish to consider giving staff some training on serving people with different disabilities. At the end of this presentation is a list of resources which will list some useful sites.

## Slide 15 Delivering storytimes

It’s very easy to rely solely on visual cues for storytimes, but you can easily adapt them for everyone to enjoy by describing images that are necessary for understanding the story if they’re not conveyed in the text and avoid pointing to the page and saying “What’s this?” which kids with vision loss could not participate in, but also the audience at the back of the room may have difficulty seeing as well.

For action songs and fingerplays, try and describe movements when possible, for example, if you’re singing “The itsy, witsy spider”, describe that you start by touching your thumb on your left hand and third finger of your right hand to show the action of the spider climbing up their web.

In some cases, kids may need to sit closer to the presenter, or prefer to be further away. If possible, try and leave room for these accommodations, and consider the spacing needs for moving wheelchairs or not crowding kids, especially if they like to move around.

## Slide 16 Sensory storytimes

For kids with autism or sensory disorders who are affected by loud noises, bright lights and tactile elements, sensory storytimes offer a comforting space for them to listen to stories and experience activities in a low sensory environment. More and more libraries are offering sensory storytimes to meet their community’s needs and are finding their efforts to are beneficial for kids and families. As the quote on the slide reads, it’s well worth investing the time into offering these programs as “what special needs programming lacks in numbers, it more than makes up for in heart and impact”.

While there are many tips for offering sensory storytimes, some key elements include restricting participant numbers, use a storyboard so kids know what’s happening next, repeat instructions and types of activities, use tactile elements, keep lights low, include fidget toys and add music, art or yoga. Libraries can benefit from connecting with local occupational therapists to offer best practice suggestions and can consider adding special guests such as a visit from a therapy dog.

Picture: St. Louis Public Library https://d4804za1f1gw.cloudfront.net/wp-content/uploads/sites/26/2019/01/05094912/49864113\_10156754645330516\_3615585851540504576\_n.jpg

## Slide 17 Preparing crafts and games

As part of your preparation, if you’re planning to include written instructions, include pictures and break down instructions so each step only include one action, for example step 1. fold paper, step 2. cut paper, as kids with some learning disabilities will find them easier to follow rather than combining instructions. When planning crafts, try adding tactile and sound elements so kids can feel or hear the object they made in addition to seeing it if they can.

You could also help prepare your activities by asking parents to indicate if their child needs any accommodation in the registration form.  Also consider if your workspace is large enough kids in wheelchairs so they can sit comfortably at a table.  You may also wish to place some craft items on a tray so items do not roll off and fall on the floor.

Kids who struggle with fine motor skills may have difficulty picking up small craft objects like beads and stickers. It’s helpful to have large craft objects like bigger pompoms, chunky crayons and 3-D stickers which are easier to hold.

## Slide 18 Craft and game ideas

The secret to make crafts accessible is to include as many of the five senses as possible. We have presented a few craft ideas on this slide to help you get started, all of which include elements which you can feel or hear. Some of these ideas include:

* Recording sounds such as from animals and ask kids to guess which animal it is
* Reading “The Lorax” then ask kids to create their own truffala trees by using popsicle sticks and tactile objects like tissue paper, pompoms or feathers for the leaves
* Creating raised-line drawings such as using fabric paint that puffs up when it dries or create a maze our of yarn glued onto paper

We also encourage you to take favourite crafts that you’ve used in the past and consider ways they could be adapted so kids with disabilities could participate.

## Slide 19 Bringing kids with disabilities into the library

As I mentioned earlier, make sure staff have been trained to interact with kids and teens with disabilities so families will feel welcome in the library.

The last step to improve your library’s accessible services for kids and teens is to let your community know what your library offers. When promoting your library programs, ensure you mention the library’s inclusive library programs by connecting with local organizations for people with print disabilities such as with a local learning disability association office, to Adaptive Program staff at community centres, schools, connect with therapists if your city offers a rehabilitation centre or hospital for children and find out if there are camps for youth with disabilities. CELA has an outreach toolkit that contains templates you may use, including one to send a letter to school boards.

## Slide 20 How to get started with CELA

Here is a checklist for some ways you can get started with CELA. We encourage you to follow us on social media, subscribe to our newsletter, include information about accessibility in your staff training and in the library and use CELA’s Outreach Toolkit to enhance your library’s outreach activities. Also, CELA will be starting an interest group comprised of public librarians, library staff in rehabilitation centres for children and other professionals to discuss library services for kids and teens with disabilities. If you are interested in learning more about this group or wish to participate, email [members@celalibrary.ca](mailto:members@celalibrary.ca).

* Follow CELA on social media ​
* Subscribe to [Open Book for Libraries](https://celalibrary.ca/open-book-for-libraries), CELA’s monthly e-newsletter​
* Include info about CELA in staff training ​
* [Share info about CELA](https://celalibrary.ca/public-libraries/outreach-toolkit) on your library website, social media, print publications, in-branch​
* Include CELA service when doing outreach in the community​

## Slide 21 Questions?

If you’re wondering how to direct questions from CELA library patrons (who have already been registered for CELA service) you can let them know to get in touch with the Contact Centre at their toll-free number 1-855-655-2273 or by email at help@celalibrary.ca This could include things like questions about how to change the kinds of books they’re getting, how to set up a new service like Direct to Player or if they have any questions about the reading technology they’re using.

For CELA member libraries you can contact the team at CELA Member Services with questions about your CELA service, to order free promotional materials or for any kind of question relating to your CELA membership: 1-855-655-2273, press 2 / members@celalibrary.ca

CELA Member Services staff are available from 8:30am-4:30pm EST, but of course you can also send an email or leave a voice mail message. In general Member Services staff try to get back to libraries within 24 hours.