# Transcript of the webinar “Summer reading for everyone! Make your library’s club accessible for kids with disabilities”

Webinar date: March 25, 2025

## Introduction and land acknowledgement

00:00:15

**Rachel Breau:** So, I'd like to read a brief land acknowledgment. We live and work in Toronto, the traditional territory of many nations, including the Mississaugas of the Credit, Anishinabeg, the Chippewa, the Haudenosaunee, and the Wendat peoples. This territory is now home to many diverse First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples. This land is covered by Treaty 13 with the Mississaugas of the Credit.

Wherever we find ourselves today across Turtle Island, we can be grateful to the First Nations for their careful stewardship of this land.

So today we want to talk about summer reading clubs right from the planning phases through to actually giving the programs and also the evaluation stages so that you're including accessibility at all parts of the program. We also want to tell you why you should include accessible formats in your reading activities, and then give you lots of accessibility considerations for your clubs. So that includes things like tracking reading, giveaways, and we'll give you lots more information. And we also are going to give you many craft and activity ideas that are accessible.

## What is CELA?

00:01:32

So I'll tell you a little bit about CELA. So CELA is a comprehensive accessible library service, and we provide over a million books, magazines and newspapers to people with print disabilities living in Canada. CELA is a national not-for-profit organization that provides accessible reading services to the approximately three million Canadians with print disabilities, and our services ensure that people with print disabilities across the country are more able to fully participate in learning, work and community life, and contribute to the social, cultural and economic development and success of their local and broader communities.

Our mission is to support public libraries in the provision of accessible library services and collections, and to champion the fundamental rights of Canadians with print disabilities to access media and reading materials in the format of their choice.

I’ll just give you a very quick overview of CELA’s collection. So, our collection includes books for all ages in English and in French, and we also offer another collection called Bookshare, which is a US online library of accessible formats. So one point about Bookshare: while registering for CELA does not require any medical certification or validation of someone's disability, somebody who wants Bookshare access does have to fill out a proof of disability form. For CELA, we also allow educators and professionals to have accounts to support people with print disabilities, and educators can also access Bookshare titles.

## Types of disabilities

00:03:14

I'll turn it over to Denise to talk about types of disabilities.

**Denise Scott:** So Rachel mentioned that CELA supports people with print disabilities. So I want to touch a little on what that means and on types of disabilities more broadly.

So a print disability is any disability that impacts someone's ability to read a regular print physical book. So certainly that's vision-related disabilities, but it's also learning and developmental disabilities, types of neurodivergence like dyslexia, and certain types of physical disabilities that can impact whether or not someone can hold a physical book or turn the pages.

But disability, of course, is a much broader category. It can also include other types of physical disabilities, things like limb difference, for example. It can include less immediately obvious disabilities, mental health issues, chronic illnesses, and it can include hearing related disabilities.

So I do want to just add a quick little caveat here that many deaf folks do not consider themselves disabled. Some do, some don't. Both viewpoints are completely valid, but it is important to recognize that distinction. This is why you'll sometimes see, instead of phrases like “disabled people” or “people with disabilities”, you might see the phrase “people who are deaf or disabled”. And the reason for this is because deaf and hard-of-hearing folks may still require accessibility accommodations, but they don't necessarily consider themselves disabled. So we just like to make that distinction.

And if I can have the next slide, please.

## Story

00:05:11

So I'll let Rachel tell you a little bit about this story.

**Rachel:** We wanted to share a story with you from a public library. In this case, it's actually the user of a public library. And describe and really emphasize why it's important to make your summer reading programs accessible. So in this story-- this is from a parent, and she says, “My little girl has diverse abilities and is embarrassed to read because she is in grade four with a grade one reading level. Summer Reading Club has changed all of that to ‘proud of reading!’ She even started reading in bed at night on her own with a flashlight. I cried tears of joy.”

So, that's a very moving story. That's a parent from town Hespeler, which is near Cambridge, Ontario, about just two hours west of Toronto, roughly. So anyway, if nothing else will convince you to consider making some changes to your own summer reading clubs to make them more accessible, I hope this story does, just because it really shows the difference it can make.

## SRC Planning

00:06:23

**Denise:** Let's get into planning an accessible summer reading club. We've planned out this presentation as a kind of a chronology, dividing our topics up into really the time of year when you would be dealing with them. So winter and spring for things to think about during the early planning stages, summer, for things to be aware of while you're running the program, and then a little bit of after summer for a bit of post-SRC debrief.

## Winter and Spring

00:06:58

So we're starting, of course, with winter and spring. And since we're already at the end of March, many of you have probably already started planning your summer reading clubs. Now is also the time to start thinking about accessibility so that your summer reading club can be what's referred to as born accessible.

### Born accessible

00:07:21

“Born accessible” means that something is designed to be accessible from the outset, rather than having to be adapted after the fact. So certainly a brand-new building that has ramp access and braille signage and accessible washrooms, that's a born-accessible building. But so is a brand-new book that's published right from the beginning in multiple formats, with accessibility features built in.

And your summer reading clubs? They should be this way, too. So I like to say that accessibility is proactive. And what that means in this case is that you're incorporating accessibility into your planning right from the beginning. And the great thing about doing this is that it reduces the chances that you're going to need to scramble on the fly to adapt to something you weren't prepared for. And yes, there are still going to be times where you have to adapt quickly. It is not possible to anticipate everyone's accessibility needs ahead of time, but if you've already kind of laid that foundation, you're comfortable thinking about and making adaptations, it's going to be a whole lot easier for you when other things do pop up.

And the other really important benefit of planning for accessibility in advance is that it fosters a sense of inclusion and belonging for those kids that benefit from the adaptations that you've made. Because now there is a good chance that that child and their caregivers, they might not have to ask for accommodations in advance. They can just show up and participate in the program. The child doesn't have to worry about being singled out for needing something special or different and the parent doesn't have to worry that they're making a fuss or they're going to get told no. It really does make a difference when someone is offered a seat at the table, rather than having to ask for one, so to speak.

### Nothing about us without us!

00:09:26  
So planning for accessibility matters, but it also matters how you do that planning and where you get your information from. And my point here is talk to disabled people. The disability rights movement uses the phrase, “Nothing about us without us,” because too often we are left out of the conversations about things that directly affect us. And yeah, that's often really big things like laws and government policies, but it can also just be small, everyday things like a library program. If library staff are making assumptions about what they think disabled people need, there's a chance that they might be wrong, and that can actually be even more alienating. So try not to make those assumptions.

And maybe you've already got lots of experience working with disabled folks, or maybe you're disabled yourself, but if that's not you, then remember that disabled people know their needs best, so consult them when you're making your plans.

Reach out to local disability organizations in your area. It's really okay and actually even encouraged to reach out to them, contact them and ask what they need from their library. What would make it easier for them to come into your buildings and into your programs? Again, be proactive about it. Go to them, don't wait for them to come to you. And a lot of the same basic principle goes for online resources, too. So, as library professionals, we know the importance of vetting our resources, we talk about digital literacy all the time, and we need to be doing that here as well.

So if you're reading a blog post or browsing Pinterest for program ideas, think about, you know, is the author disabled? Or do they at least have experience working with disabled people? Do they have that knowledge and experience to be able to give this type of advice? And also look at things like, does the site use outdated terminology like “special needs” or “differently abled”? Are they using outdated and even offensive symbols like the puzzle piece in reference to autistic folks? Know where you're getting your information from, get it from the source, and respect what disabled people tell you, even if it's something that contradicts what you previously thought.

### SRC examples: BC and New Brunswick

00:12:03

Now, before we get into giving you lots of tips for specific aspects about your reading clubs, I want to do a quick little overview of what the three main clubs in Canada are already doing to make their programs accessible. But first, I'm curious, to see which clubs you all participate in. So if you want to throw a comment in the chat, tell us, you know, do you do TDSRC? Do you do British Columbia? New Brunswick? You run one of your own?

We'd love to hear what kind of program that you're doing. And alongside the CNIB, CELA is the main accessibility consultant for the TD Summer Reading Club, and I'm already seeing in the chat we've got folks from all three clubs represented, which is really exciting. We're going to get to talking about TDSRC in a moment, but first I want to highlight what BC and New Brunswick do.

So all three clubs create recommended reading lists for their participants with books from their particular theme for the year. And CELA supports those clubs by creating supplementary reading lists that are available both on our website and on the club's website. And what we do is we include the titles that were from that original recommended reading list but that are also available in our collection. And last year, we were really excited because the New Brunswick Summer Reading Club actually chose all of their books from our collection. So every single title that New Brunswick SRC recommended last year was available in at least one type of accessible format, which was fantastic.

The BC Summer Reading Club has a really great inclusion and accessibility page on their website. And they outline a whole bunch of things that they're doing to make their program accessible. Things like adaptations for suggested programs, being able to track your reading records both online or in print, dyslexia considerations, lots of things. But my very, very favourite is that right on the website's homepage is a welcome video in American Sign Language. And I love this for a couple reasons.

First, is the fact that it is so front and centre. It's not hidden on a subpage that's hard to find, it brings accessibility right to the front. And the other thing I love about it is specifically the inclusion of ASL and the emphasis on inclusion for deaf and hard-of-hearing kids. This is so important because it's actually quite common for deaf kids, particularly those with severe to profound hearing loss, to have lower reading levels than their age peers. So having a video that so clearly states that this program is for them, too, is fantastic. And, of course, it's got both captions and a voiceover built in. So other excellent accessibility features already built in. And I'm going to have Rachel go to the next slide and we're going to show a clip from that video.

### BC Summer Reading Club video

00:15:20

I just want to give a quick little disclaimer first that we know the audio is really quiet. Our apologies for that. We have not been able to get PowerPoint and Zoom to talk nicely to each other. But it does have captions built in. You will also have access to these slides after the fact, so you can always come back and rewatch the video, or you can find it on BC's website as well. So, if Rachel can hit play for me...

**Video voiceover:** Hello! I’m here to tell you about the BC Summer Reading Club. It’s fun, it’s free and all kids are welcome. To join, just visit your local library, and when you sign up, you’ll receive a reading record to track your summer reading. And then all you need to do is just read, read, read! Reading counts in any language, including American Sign Language. You can watch a story in ASL, and then add the title to your reading record! You can read any time, in any place.

**Rachel:** Sorry.

**Denise:** No, that's perfect.

**Rachel:** Yeah, I think that was just the right place. Okay, there we go.

**Denise:** So what a great reminder there right at the end that there really are many different ways to participate in the programs and many ways to read, including in ASL.

### SRC example: TDSRC

00:16:52

So lastly, our last main reading club is, of course, the TD Summer Reading Club. And I first want to take note of the notebooks that are used for reading tracking. So the print version are very intentionally designed with larger fonts and simpler layouts, with more whitespace and more open space on the page. They are all assessed and evaluated by us at CELA as well. And the downloadable versions of the notebooks are made in partnership with the CNIB, and they're available in large print, audio, braille and the OpenDyslexic font. The TDSRC website also has a ton of great accessibility stuff on there. There are pages for both parents and caregivers, as well as staff, about how the program is accessible. And the one on the staff site, the plan for accessibility page, it is newly updated this year with a whole different layout and lots and lots of practical tips. So I highly recommend going and checking that out. Even if your library doesn't participate in TDSRC, the page is publicly available and it's a really great aggregated source of lots of accessibility tips.

TDSRC also creates an audio version of the webcomic they do every year, as well as their StoryWalk, and they make a point to include disability representation in their artwork, including the adorable little image that's on the screen here, which shows a group of children and animals all sitting together and reading. One child is using a tablet and headphones, and another is sitting in a wheelchair.

And I'll turn it over to Rachel. She's going to talk about outreach.

### Outreach

00:18:43

**Rachel:** Thanks, Denise. So I just wanted to follow up with what Denise said about asking people with disabilities about how they'd like to use your programs and your library. So leading from that, when you're thinking of outreach and telling your community about what you're going to be doing that summer, remember to talk about accessibility. So include things like if there's any mention of how your building is accessible, for example, or if you offer maybe sensory storytimes as part of your programming to help, to support kids with sensory needs or autism, that's great. Remember to mention it. Quite often, when we're doing outreach, we think of things like how you sign up, how you get a library card. So mentioning accessibility can be also very valuable.

Also in your outreach, remember to include a description of all the reading formats at your library. So not just print books, but if you offer audiobooks, for example, and your e-collection. And then when you're designing your outreach materials like fliers, and use social media, do consider and definitely implement accessible techniques to make things accessible. So social media tips, making-- so tips that would include alt text if you're doing images, that kind of thing. And when you're doing any kind of paper flier, consider clear print guidelines like making the font big enough, lots of white space, and really just following web accessibility guidelines with any of your promotion. So those are just a few tips about what to include.

When we think about the actual outreach and who you want to connect with in your community, you probably do some outreach with your schools already, but it's well worth taking that extra step to find out who is the contact at your school who deals and supports special education in your schools. So it's great to do that and then let them know about all your great programs. And then, obviously, tell them about the accessibility and your programs.

Likewise, it's great to find out in your community if there are any disability specific summer camps that are around and reach out to them as well. You can also contact your local community centres, and they often have adapted activities. And then you can ask them and promote your programs there. And then the last tip we have in terms of outreach is think about day programs that might be in your area. So, sometimes these are for kids, sometimes they're for adults, but it's well worth reaching out to the day programs and letting them know what you're offering and that the participants are welcome at your library as well.

## Summer

Okay, so now we've moved into summer. We're ready to deliver our programs, and so we'll focus on that part, of how to deliver the programs and make them accessible.

### Displays and decorating spaces

00:21:48

So the first thing we're going to talk about are displays and decorating your spaces, which is so much fun to do, especially for summer reading clubs. So the first consideration is when you’re setting up tables and bookshelves that are displays, make sure that at least some of the materials are at wheelchair height. That way someone can reach and grab the book or whatever it is that you're featuring. We also suggest that you post the CELA child services poster. We have a link to it in our resources. But this is something you can keep up year-round, obviously, it just lets visitors to your library know that CELA does offer books in accessible formats for kids.

The next point is, don't put braille books behind glass. Now, that might seem like a strange thing to say, but I have heard of libraries putting braille books or signage that has braille behind glass. It looks very pretty, but it's useless, basically, if it's behind glass. So, braille is there as a tactile reading system, so definitely let someone touch the books so they can either read it for themselves, if they can read braille, or just learn what braille is.

The other tip is to mention multiple formats. And we mentioned this in the outreach piece as well, but also make sure that you feature, any, let's say, Wonderbooks that you might have, even graphic novels. And definitely if you want to borrow a printbraille book from CELA as part of your display, feel free to. To borrow printbraille material, every library has a CELA account if you're a CELA member library, and you can just place an order for a book and we’ll send it to your library.

And then the last tip about decorating is really keep it simple. Sometimes if it's very busy, it can be-- just it's not very pleasant for someone to look at. It might be just too much for them. So keep it simple, and that way someone can focus on all the different parts of your decoration and enjoy them.

### Registration

00:23:55

Okay, the next step in terms of running a summer reading program is registrations. And in this context, we're thinking more about registering for a specific program, let's say, rather than the whole club. So, we definitely recommend that you have a sign-up form online and maybe a paper one as well for someone walking in. Regardless of the format that the registration form is in, keep it simple and ask fewer questions. And the reason we're saying that is that actually reading a form and just comprehending what you're supposed to do with that form does require some level of executive functioning that actually can be somewhat difficult for some people. So really just keep it simple, basically.

We also suggest that you put a line to ask if someone needs an accommodation on the registration form, or make it very open and welcoming so that parents can ask about accommodations. And then, depending on the accommodation, then you would-- hopefully, you can implement it, but if you can't, then explain it to the library as well-- or, sorry, to the patron as well.

So, the next way to register is to invite in-person registrations, but also consider accessibility for those. So, for example, you might want to have a chair at the registration desk so that someone can sit down if they like. Somebody might not be able to write or fill in a form, so offer to help them and you can fill in the form for them. And just little tips, too, like speak clearly, just make it easy for someone to do.

And then the other piece in terms of registration, is to have a visual schedule of what the steps are to register. So we've got an example on the slide where we've got the words of what they're supposed to do and an image in case reading words is difficult for that person. Not only someone with disabilities, but someone who may not speak English very well. They may appreciate having that, too. But it also gives the person a sense of the flow of what they'll do next. And that can certainly make people feel more comfortable.

### Book reporting

00:26:12

So the next part of how you run your summer reading club and make it accessible is book reporting. So, I'm pretty lucky in my job that I get to read the applications that come in for the TD Summer Reading Club Accessibility Award, and I can tell you from reading many of those applications that libraries come up with some really creative ways that enable kids to report on what they've read, either by counting the number of titles or time spent reading. And it's helpful to make kids feel pleased about reading rather than the quantity of titles that they've read. So being creative and thinking about different ways to do reporting really can help them. And also for kids that are struggling readers or reluctant readers, the quantity or how many books they've read might be daunting for them, so counting time is another way to do it.

We also encourage other ways to report reading, which is to allow them to report books in different formats, not just print books. So if someone read the audiobook of a book, make sure you count that. And then, also be flexible how they report as well. So they might want to write it down, but they might not. They might want to draw a picture describing if they liked the book or not, for example. And also verbally they can tell you as well, instead of writing it down. They'd be really pleased to receive a sticker or other reward you offer for kids that have read lots of books or any book, really. And that will make them feel encouraged to do more reading if they can participate in the way that's comfortable for them.

Okay, so, we've given you some ideas in terms of book reporting, but we would love to hear from you if you have other creative ways at your library that you've asked kids to report on the books they've read. So we'll just stop for a minute, and if you want to type your answers in the chat if you've done anything that's time counting, for example, or other creative ways.

Just going to look at the chat here. Storytelling. Yeah, that's great. Counting days. Yeah. So that they can read pretty much anything they want and it counts. That's a fantastic idea. I like that one. Stamping passports with different stamps. Yep. Giving aim for 15 minutes of reading a day and anything they like.

So audiobooks again, back of the cereal box, magazines. That's great. I like the fact that you're allowing reporting of any reading item. It doesn't have to be a book or even worse, a novel. That can be daunting. That's great. Oh, I like that idea. I like counting days. I'm going to take that one back with me. That's great.

Okay, so, we'll move on then. If you have other ideas, though, pop them in the chat, we can read them through afterwards.

### Giveaways and prizes

00:29:45

Okay, so speaking of giveaways and prizes, you might want to consider offering a prize that's actually more tactile or another type of sensory item, which could be fun really for all kids. Last summer, Denise and I met with the librarian and teacher at the W. Ross MacDonald School for the Blind in Brantford, Ontario. And they gave us lots of ideas in terms of tactile items that their kids like. And just to give a bit of reference for the school, it goes from-- I think it's from kindergarten all the way through to high school. So some of the ideas that they shared with us include tactile stickers, mini fidget toys, and they really loved keychains that have stuffed animals on them. And what they would do is clip them to their canes, which is a very unique idea, but it was a lot of fun. They also enjoyed things like T-shirts and water bottles, which are very common giveaways.

So what we want to emphasize is that these items are not very different, right? I mean, you can get these items at Dollar Store. If you order them in bulk, they can be a bit cheaper. So there are ways to make giveaways and prizes accessible without having to spend too much money.

### Evaluations

00:31:09

And then, just wrapping up sort of all the bits of pieces in terms of making your summer reading club accessible, and then next we'll move on to programming, but I just want to conclude sort of the planning part of it by talking about evaluations and really encourage everyone to submit their feedback, whether it's online or in print. And we can't emphasize enough, really ask someone with a disability about the program. You don't want to leave them out. Again, going back to what Denise was saying earlier.

So, in terms of really online evaluations, it’s better not to include matrix style questions, which are like tables or sliding scales, because someone with a screen reader can't really use those. If you Google “accessible evaluations”, you'll find lots of information there.

Also, make the questions short so they don't have to spend too long on it, so we're suggesting about five to seven questions, and always include an explanation about what the person is being asked to do in the evaluation. So, for example, say how many questions are part of the evaluation, is it anonymous or not, how long does it approximately take, just to give a sense of what they're getting into. There are many ways to ask for feedback, so you might want to consider doing both some text-based evaluations, like the ones that are online, but you might want to have visual ones as well. So, for example, you might want to put a happy face and someone circles that if they liked the program or a sad face if they didn't.

And definitely invite and record verbal feedback as well. That's great if you can get some, you know, just talking with parents after the program. What did they want to do? And that's actually a really good way to get it back from people with disabilities. And also, ask accessibility-specific questions. Maybe something general like, “Was the room accessible?”, “Could you hear the speaker?” That kind of thing. Just again, using that inclusive mindset to just think about accessibility along with everything else you do.

### Programming: Crafts

00:33:28

Okay, so I'm going to turn it over to Denise, and she's going to do the fun part of this program, all about the programming crafts and activities.

**Denise:** Yeah, I got the good stuff. Okay, so we're going to start off by... We're going to talk about a bunch of different types of programs that you can do for your SRCs. Crafts, storytimes, external presenters and STEM programs. And my goal here is to give you some general tips for the each different type of program and then wherever possible, to give you some specific program ideas as well. And so we're starting with crafts.

So CELA's got an accessible craft resource guide available on our website, and it's a fantastic resource full of a ton of different types of tips from everything from instructions, to setting up the rooms, to different types of materials. And we are going to link to that at the end of the presentation. But for the moment, the biggest thing to remember is that hands-on, tactile activities are best. Engage the kids’ senses.

So crafts that are solely paper-based, for example, are not that accessible to a variety of types of disabilities, often. But if you incorporate things that-- different materials that are different sizes, shapes, textures, you're going to make that activity much more accessible, certainly to kids with vision loss, but also to kids with certain mobility disabilities that if holding or manipulating paper is difficult, and as well as the sort of sensory-seeking neurodivergent kids, folks like me that just like to stick our hands on all the materials and see how everything feels.

And my first craft suggestion here is what I'm simply calling tactile images. And they're pretty much exactly what they sound like. You offer the participants some kind of a backing, whether it's felt or paper, and then a wide variety of craft materials and encourage them to make some kind of a design or an image based on a particular theme, or maybe a book that you've read. So one possible example is to read Doctor Seuss's The Lorax and then use pompoms and pipe cleaners like the ones on the screen here, to make the little pompom fuzzy trees and even make a little Lorax itself.

The second image on the screen here is from a program I did for kids from a CNIB camp, so they all had some form of vision loss, and we made tactile under-the-sea pictures. So they had a felt backing, and then we gave them all kinds of things: sandpaper for the ocean floor, sequin fabric for fish scales, and a bunch of random craft materials, and they just went to it. And that's the great thing about these particular kinds of crafts, is they're really open-ended. And this can make it much more accessible to a lot of kids, because what it does is it lets them choose how to participate in a way that works best for them. So they can pick the materials that are easy for them to hold or manipulate, the things they like the feel of, whatever works for them. And of course, there's lots of ways that you can tailor this and adapt it to whatever your theme is this year or whatever book that you're reading. So it's got a lot of options with it.

My second craft suggestion here is for folks who want to be a little more environmentally friendly in their activities. We do know that lots of libraries are trying to move away from producing kind of as much garbage as possible. So this activity I'm calling Compostable Creations, and basically you start with something like a homemade play dough or salt dough, and you can use it for, like, the body of a little monster or a little creature, and then you get twigs and stones and other kind of nature bits-- Excuse me. --to be all the different body parts and little accents for the creatures. And because the dough does dry hard, kids can take them home if they want to. They can keep their creations. But the beauty of it is that, the end of the day, the whole thing can go in the compost rather than the garbage.

You can also use this kind of dough to make fossils. So grab some rubber dinosaurs or insects, use them to make impressions in the dough, and again, nature bits as accents. Very hands on, very tactile, and again, at the end of the day, it can all go in the compost.

### Programming: Storytime

00:38:16

Next up is storytime, of course, another kids’ program staple. And so I've got a few quick and easy tips to implement, tips that are easy to implement. The first is to always offer fidgets, fidget toys, headphones and sunglasses. This is such a really simple thing to do, but it can make a huge difference for kids with sensory issues.

The next thing is to choose shorter stories, and ones with big, bold illustrations. So remember that some kids are going to have to work harder to listen, so a shorter story will allow them to have a break sooner, be less to kind of cope with. And having those big, bold illustrations, bright colours, solid outlines, not a lot of little tiny details or background clutter, this is not only going to make the images less visually overwhelming, but it also makes it easier for kids with low vision to be able to see the parts of the illustrations.

The third thing to remember is that not everyone listens by sitting still. So some kids are going to want to wiggle, stim, walk around. That's okay. But it is also okay to politely redirect a child if they're becoming a significant disruption. So you can say something like, “This spot here is for sitting, and that spot here is for walking. Where would you like to be?” So you've given the child a clear expectation, but you have given them some choice as well.

The last tip here is to use a visual schedule. And Rachel mentioned this a little bit with registration. The same kind of thing goes for your programs. These are particularly helpful for neurodivergent kids, but certainly also folks who are deaf or hard of hearing, developmental disabilities, lots of types of disabilities this is great for. And a visual schedule uses a short or simple word or phrase alongside an image to represent each part of the program.

And on the screen, we've got a couple examples of the common types of symbols that are used. And these ones are for library, story time, quiet and play. But also don't just rely on that visual. Make sure you're talking about your schedule throughout your program. And this is really just as simple as saying something like, “I’m going to read a story about fish, and then we'll sing a couple songs.” Just lets people know what to expect. And you should actually also be doing this kind of verbal scheduling during any program, especially if you're getting towards the end of an activity or a transition moment, you can say something like, “There's five minutes left in the craft, so start thinking about being finished.” This lets kids who have things like time blindness or difficulty adapting to change. It gives them that chance to process the upcoming change rather than it being an abrupt surprise.

### Programming: Authors and presenters

00:41:43

So my third type of program is external presenters. So this is author visits, magicians, puppet shows, Mad Science, etc. And I've got four quick tips here. The first is always use microphones. The second is book your ASL interpreters, if you need them, as far in advance as possible. They are in very high demand and can be hard to get on short notice, especially if you live in a smaller community or a rural area.

My third tip is to offer different types of seating for both kids and adults. So you might have carpet squares on the floor, but also put out kid-sized chairs and adult chairs, too. Remember that not everyone can stand comfortably for long periods of time, and not everyone can comfortably sit on the floor.

And my last tip is, make sure you've got ramp access to any stage or other elevated area, if your library has one. Because the kid who uses a wheelchair or a walker probably wants to be the magician's assistant just as much as any other kid does, and they should have that opportunity, too.

### Programming: STEM

00:43:02

And finally, we've got STEM programs. Because STEM programs tend to be so hands-on, a lot of them are great and already accessible, or can be easily adapted. Anything that involves measuring, pouring or mixing is a great option. So things like slime, salt dough, certain science experiments, it's a great way for kids with vision loss to practice pouring and measuring the height in a cup. Kids with limited mobility and dexterity may still be able to hold a large spoon to stir as long as somebody else holds the bowl steady for them. And kids with a lots of different types of disabilities will certainly be able to squish things with their hands.

Bonus tip, though, for activities that might involve getting your hands messy, is to consider offering disposable rubber gloves. And the gloves themselves may be a complete no-go for some kids, that themselves could be a sensory issue, but for others, having gloves is going to allow them to participate in a messy program without the yuck factor of getting stuff on their skin.

Other good STEM options include tactile maps. So if you're doing geography or around-the-world type activities, you can grab some old roadmaps, or just even a blank piece of paper and then get lots of three-dimensional objects, things like monopoly houses, artificial leaves, to represent the different locations on the map, and then use either yarn, string or pipe cleaners to create a tactile representation of the routes between the different locations. Again, certainly great for kids with low vision, but also kids with different sort of visual and spatial awareness processing, for kids who, just a piece of paper is difficult to them to interact with. So it's a great option.

And lastly, one more environmentally-friendly option is to use recyclable materials, to create structures, build cities, even sort of inventions. Really, all you’ve got to do is round up cardboard boxes, tubes, anything that is clean and safe to handle, and let the kids go to it with glue and tape and build whatever's based on your theme. It's great for engineering, it's great for practicing cooperation, imagination. And at the end of the program, it all goes back in the recycling.

## After summer

00:45:40

And I'm going to turn it over to Rachel. She's going to talk a little bit about some after summer stuff.

**Rachel:** Great. So we're coming to the end. We'll be able to take your questions very soon. But before we do, we just wanted to say that as the fall approaches, you're not done yet. There are a few more things to do. But also, this is a way-- everything you've done so far in the summer is great, but we want you to keep up the spirit of accessibility really throughout the year. So we have some ideas for you for that.

### TDSRC Accessibility Award

00:46:13

So the first is something that you should do right after the summer. If you're from a library that participates in the TDSRC, then I certainly would encourage you to apply for the TDSRC Accessibility Award.

So, this award is coordinated by CELA. And there is one prize, and it's either an English or a French-speaking library that would win it. And really it's to emphasize and highlight a library that made their program particularly accessible.

So in terms of the criteria, we look at how a library made their activities, events and programs inclusive. How did you promote other accessible materials and formats? How did you promote the activity or the program to different community groups, especially those that are serving kids with disabilities? And also, how did you make your own staff aware of what you’ve done to make your programs accessible as well?

So the prize is $2,000. It's a cash prize. The deadline hasn't been set yet, but the Library Awards and the Accessibility Award always have the same deadline and it's usually in early fall. So I hope you'll put that in your calendars, and we'd love to see some applications from some of you.

Okay. So, Denise, take it away.

## How CELA can help

00:47:50

**Denise:** Yeah, so we're almost done, but I do want to touch on a couple more things of how CELA can help beyond today's presentation. And there is actually more training and more webinars on our website as well. But in addition to that, one of the biggest things that we can do for you is provide access to books in accessible formats. So this is certainly our digital collection. And we encourage you to go and explore that, learn about it, and promote it to your patrons, but it's also access to physical material. And Rachel’s mentioned this a little bit, that you can you can order braille and printbraille books to have on hand in your library, which is great if someone comes in that needs them, but they're also great to incorporate in your programs and promote accessibility and teach other kids, teach sighted kids about braille and accessible reading. We have a ton more resources on CELA’s website, and we're going to have links to a few of them on the next two slides.

And then lastly, we are the folks behind TDSRC’s Plan for Accessibility page. That's all written by us. And so, again, I encourage you to go check that one out.

## Resources

00:49:00

And so, yeah, we've just got a few-- two pages of resources. This one has the downloadable resource guides, including the craft resource guide that I mentioned and the CELA poster that Rachel previously mentioned. And then the next slide has several other resources, some on our website, some of BC's website is there, the TDSRC Plan for Accessibility website is there as well.

So that's it for us today. Our very last slide has our contact information on it. You are absolutely welcome and encouraged to reach out to either Rachel or I. The main CELA website and contact number is there as well. But for the moment, we'll open it up to some questions.

I see that some folks are already starting to write some things into the chat. So if you've got any questions or you want to share a story about anything accessibility-wise you did at your library, add those to the chat.

## Questions and answers

00:50:06

**Rachel:** Great. So, thank you. Let's go to the questions. Okay. “So if a library orders, for example, a braille book from CELA, can patrons borrow it, or is it only for use at the branch?”

So definitely patrons can borrow it, but they must have a print disability. We know braille is a cool thing, right? So sometimes libraries will order a braille book from us just for demonstration purposes. But actually, the book-- It's fine if any kid comes and touches the book, but really, it should be loaned out to somebody who has vision loss, or who can read braille, I guess. Has a print disability.

Okay. Next. “Has anyone found a method for providing subtitles at live programs?” That's an excellent question.

**Denise:** I've got some, and actually a few that I just learned relatively recently. I've got some answers to that. Yes. There are a few ways that you can do it. All of which involves having a microphone. There are live captioning services that you can hire, where someone has access to the audio, they're typically off-site, and they will, in real time, type in and create live captioning. So that's certainly an option. But also both PowerPoint and Google-- So if you're doing anything that involves slides, Google Slides and PowerPoint has live captioning built into it as well.

So if it's connected to a microphone, you probably even could do it even if you don't actually need the PowerPoint slides. You just create a blank slide and then turn the captioning on. And as long as it's hooked up to the mic, and it can pick up your audio, it will create live captions. They're not perfect. Any AI generated live captioning is never going to be 100% perfect, but it is significantly better than having no captioning at all.

**Rachel:** And it's better than it was a few years ago as well.

**Denise:** Yes.

**Rachel:** Actually, the one through PowerPoint, that's what we used to use for CELA webinars, and it was excellent, actually. Zoom’s caught up to it, but, yeah, it’s made a big step forward, definitely, in terms of accuracy.

Okay. All right, next question. “Is CELA able to provide printed versions of TDSRC notebook supplies in braille? Any tips where those might be accessed if there is not a braille printer in your area?”

So we don't braille the notebooks ourselves. You'd have to find a printer. I would suggest maybe calling or contacting your local CNIB or vision loss rehabilitation centre. They might have a printer available. It's hard to say. Not many do, but they might know of one.

And the other thing, just to note, if somebody asks for the braille notebook, ask if they have, something called a braille display. That way they can download the file, and then open it up in a computer program, and then it's connected to something called a braille display, where the braille dots basically appear on this kind of panel type thing, and then they've got pins that pop up to represent the dots. That really would be the ideal way to share that file with somebody.

**Denise:** So the next question is: “Do you have any brands of sunglasses you would recommend or anything I should be looking for?” The short answer to that is no, it doesn't really matter, in the sense that they're not being used for UV protection. They don't have to have any sort of real sun protection. They're really just meant to kind of dampen the harshness of fluorescent lights. So cheap sunglasses from the dollar store will certainly help.

The same goes for headphones. The headphones themselves don't actually have to work. They're there to muffle ambient noise, not to produce audio themselves. So if you've got old over-the-ear headphones, from your computer stations and they don't work anymore, just cut the cords off and you can use those. Yeah, they don't have to be anything fancy or expensive, and you don't have to make a big production about having them either. Toss a whole bunch of them in the bin. You can point them out to people on the way in, and they can self-select whether or not they want to use anything.

**Rachel:** That's a really good tip, to use old ones, right? Because it's not actually listening to something. It's just muffling the noise. Yeah, that's great.

**Denise:** Yeah. And I see Winona's added a comment here about how their library system has used third-party providers before, and that live captioning in the room is available, but is more costly. So, yes, having someone offsite tends to be cheaper, but there is the option to have them there in the room if that would be valuable for whatever reason.

**Rachel:** Good. And are there any more questions or any other ways you want to share that you've made your summer reading club accessible? Just give it a minute.

So, while we're waiting, I’ll just thank everybody. It was great talking with you about making your summer reading clubs accessible. It's a topic both Denise and I love to talk about, so it's great to share many tips that we've learned actually from libraries like yourselves, and from the research we've done as well.

**Denise:** Just notice--

**Rachel:** Yeah.

**Denise:** Yeah, sorry, I was just going to say, I’ve just noticed somebody’s added to the chat that they created a tactile map of their Children's department. That is very cool.

**Rachel:** That is cool.

**Denise:** And if you still have it, or have photos of it, we would love to see a photo of it, especially if you don't mind us sharing it and using it as an example for other trainings like this, because that's a really cool idea.

**Rachel:** Yeah, that's really good. That's the first time I've heard of that before. That's excellent.

**Denise:** Yeah, wow.

**Rachel:** Yeah.

**Denise:** Yeah, so Jessica, if you want to reach out to us, but certainly anybody else, if you've got pictures, if you've got anecdotes just like the one we shared at the beginning, we're always happy to hear about what you're doing, and we're happy to answer questions as well.

**Rachel:** Yeah, absolutely. So, I'll also wrap up by saying that there is an email list, if you're interested in learning more about this topic. It's called The Child and Teen Library Accessibility Interest Group. There's a link to it in the resources page. Basically, it's just an email list. You can post questions. We share information as well. And as I mentioned at the beginning, when you're doing your outreach, tell them about CELA’s Educator Access program. So this is where that connection to teachers in special education comes in, because a teacher or a resource teacher who’s supporting someone with a disability can have a CELA account to get books for their students. And just a reminder that I will follow up with an email that will include the PowerPoint slides that we've shared with you today and a brief survey as well. So, again, I want to thank everybody for joining us today, and we hope you have a good afternoon.

**Denise:** Thanks, everyone.

**End of webinar transcript**