

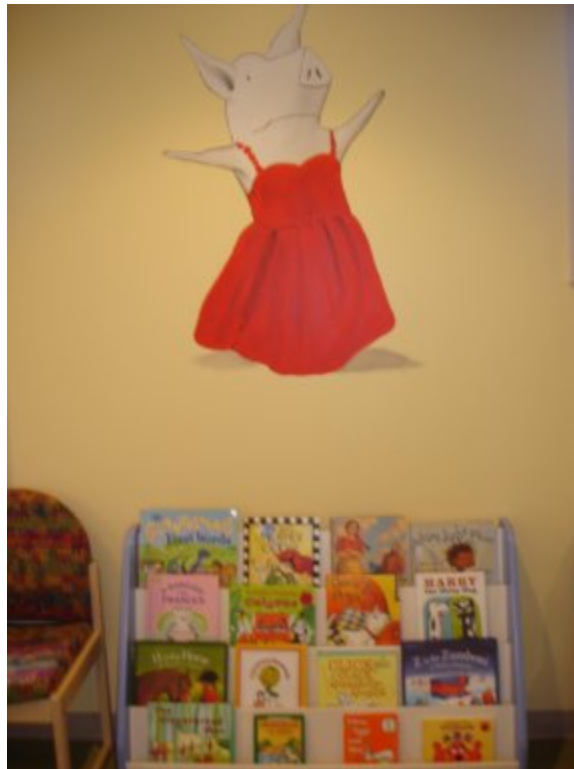
The task of creating a literacy-rich waiting room can be daunting! In fact, that is often one the first questions we are asked as sites start up – where and how to start! The following advice is provided by Linda Eastman, ROR-MI Advisory Board member and Program Coordinator (Birmingham and Chesterfield Township, MI). Her contribution is greatly appreciated!

Literacy While-U-Wait: We're Wild About Books from Start to Finish!

Our practice promotes literacy from the time a patient comes into our office until the time he/she leaves.

Reception Desk — Front desk staff members wear polo shirts with the ROR logo on them. The first thing you see when you come into the office, right below where the receptionist sits, is a big Reach Out and Read banner, complete with logo (available at the National Center – log into myror to access the ordering information).

Waiting Room — We have two bulletin boards with reading themes. These are changed to reflect the current holiday or season, Back-to-School, or popular children's literature characters (Clifford, Max from **Where the Wild Things Are**, Curious George, etc.). Our bulletin boards are three-dimensional and very kid-friendly. Many times I will post a question or challenge on the bulletin board for the kids to work out while they wait. For example, one time I put the question, "What is YOUR favorite book?" You might also make a worksheet that challenges the kids to find certain things in the waiting room such as a book character, a certain magazine, a poster, or whatever you have.



We also have two book displays with front-facing books, which are always well stocked with inviting picture books. **Highlights** and **Wonder Time** are two good magazines to have there. There are small chairs as well as beanbag chairs that invite the kids to make themselves comfortable with a good book. We prefer to have books rather than toys or TVs in our waiting

room. On the end tables, there are handouts of nursery rhymes and fingerplays for parents with small children, and they are invited to take one home.

We have a puppet stand with washable, multicultural community-helper puppets. We hope to include children's literary character puppets soon. We are also planning to get a rug with a reading theme and make a reading corner in the waiting room. I have seen some cute Eric Carle area rugs in one of the library supply catalogues. A bright idea I got from the national conference is to take a photo of each member of your staff reading to a child and showcase the photos in the waiting room.



There are ABC murals and posters on the walls in the waiting room. In addition, there is a dedicated Spanish-language bulletin board and a display of Spanish-language books.

Volunteers — We are fortunate to have waiting-room volunteer readers who make a huge difference! They are full of enthusiasm and really serve to get the kids interested in hearing stories. Also, they demonstrate to the parents how much kids like to be read to. They are trained and very dependable, and they exemplify a love of reading. We have three volunteers at present - a kindergarten teacher, a retired engineer, and a pre-med student. Each brings something unique and wonderful to our practice.

Literacy-rich corridors —Reading-themed posters are mounted on wood in a medium called "Plak-It." I had these done at a local framing store. The posters were purchased online at AllPosters.com. You can buy them mounted already, if you want. We bought some of the posters from the American Library Association, The Library Store, and Demco. We have some cute growth charts with Clifford, Curious George, and Eric Carle characters. You can get some of these things at Borders as well as through Scholastic Teacher's Store online.

Exam Rooms — Each of our exam rooms has a book bin that has three books, at least one of which corresponds to the theme of the room. We have the following themed rooms: Clifford,

Curious George, **Where the Wild Things Are**, Eric Carle, Thomas the Tank Engine, Madeline, Miss Spider, Elmer, Olivia, Harry the Dirty Dog, **Guess How Much I Love You**, Mother Goose Nursery Rhymes, Jan Brett, Beatrix Potter, **Goodnight Moon**, **The Runaway Bunny**, and others. I try to stock the bins with different reading levels that would include a board book, a picture book, and an easy reader. I change the books periodically, or when they get worn.

We are experimenting with some in-room activities that won't require much effort to put together. Also, there is no mess for the nurses to clean up! I was thinking of making a set of six questions that would apply to any storybook. They would be colorful with fun fonts and graphics. I would put each question on a playing card-sized piece of paper, laminating them and punching a hole in the corner of each. I would bind them together with a ring. This would encourage the parents and kids to read the story in the bin and then talk about it. The questions would be something like, "Who was the main character in the story?" "Where did the story take place?" "What was the problem in the story?" "How was the problem solved?" "If you wrote the story, how would you make it end?" You get the idea. [Lakeshore Learning](#) has story wands that I place in the exam room that are a huge hit. The story wands are basically the same thing as the cards, but they look more like toys and are really inviting.

Check-out Desk — Each child is encouraged to take home a gently-used book from our well-stocked book cart. We get our books for this cart from a variety of sources. Also, the staff person at the check-out desk asks the kids to show their book that they received from the doctor and asks something about it, like "Wow, did you get a book about trucks? Do you like reading about trucks?"

If you have any other questions, please don't hesitate to write. I love this stuff, as you can tell! I am a former primary school teacher, and I am in my element.

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