**Incorporating Accessibility into StoryWalksR, for your Legal Pickle Tickler File**

Mandy Easter, Law Librarian/Consultant, State Law Library of Iowa, November 2021

The federal Americans with Disabilities Act (known as “the ADA”) and the Iowa Civil Rights Act require that public entities such as libraries provide services to people with disabilities that are equal to services provided to people without disabilities. Additionally, librarians have a professional duty to subscribe to the American Library Association’s written policy entitled [Library Services for People with Disabilities](https://www.ala.org/aboutala/governance/policymanual/updatedpolicymanual/section2/54libpersonnel#B.9.3.2), as well as ALA’s professional ethics principle promoting equitable service policies and equitable access. ALA has [many print and online resources](https://libguides.ala.org/libservice-disability) to help libraries comply with the tenets of the ADA.

Now that public library-sponsored StoryWalksR have become so popular and ubiquitous, we’ve been getting questions from both librarians and the public about their accessibility (or lack thereof). Several professional publications have addressed the topic, including the July 2021 issue of Noah Lenstra’s *Let’s Move in Libraries*. In April 2020, the State Library hosted the webinar entitled [Teachable Tips for Storytimes, StoryWalks and More](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gAu7zmAbTvE), featuring Denise Bean, the Youth Services Librarian for the Iowa Department for the Blind and Print Disabled, who spoke about making StoryWalksR more inclusive. **This Thursday, November 18th, at 1:00**, Denise will be the guest on the State Library’s *PopYS* webinar to talk more about accessible youth programming (register in Iowa Learns).

The Chafee Amendment to U.S. Copyright law, affecting 17 USC 121 and 121A, and signed into law by President Clinton on September 16, 1996, removed the requirement for copyright permission when *authorized entities* convert printed materials into formats accessible to blind and print-disabled people. The law defines an *authorized entity* as “*a nonprofit organization or governmental agency that has a primary mission to provide specialized services relating to training, education or adaptive reading or information access needs of blind or other persons with disabilities.*” The law requires only that two statements appear on any converted materials: (1) All works which are reproduced or distributed in a specialized format, including Braille, audio, or digital reproductions, must contain a statement that "*Further reproduction or distribution in a format other than a specialized format is prohibited*." According to the Library of Congress, this notice must appear both in print (for example, on the label of a recorded disk or cassette) and in the audio, Braille, or digital text itself. (2) Every reproduction must provide identifying copyright information by saying: "*Copyright, (holder's name), (date*)."

The Iowa Department for the Blind and Print Disabled is an authorized entity able to help librarians make their StoryWalksR accessible to visually-impaired patrons. Denise and her staff can create the Braille translations of StoryWalkR books on plastic that temporarily adheres to the plexiglass displays and is easily removable when books are switched out. Pictures in the books can be outlined with puffy paint, which allows visually-impaired children to feel and “see” them. Some library directors prefer an audio component to their book displays and the Department staff can record those with prompts, too. The Department can convert thousands of books into a variety of formats **at no cost** to libraries: Braille, large print, digital audio recordings, print/Braille, and electronic text mail. Contact Denise at 515-452-1338 or denise.bean@blind.state.ia.us to consult with her about what would be best for your particular StoryWalkR.

You might also consider creating bilingual StoryWalkR displays using the same title published in two different languages. And because StoryWalksR should be places inclusive of all abilities and ages—not just for able-bodied children—evaluate the accessibility of the space in which your StoryWalkR is situated. Is the display easily accessible to older people unsteady on their feet; people using wheelchairs, motorized scooters and other mobility devices; people pushing strollers or walkers; and people getting around on rollerblades, skateboards and bicycles? A paved walkway helps make the display accessible to all people. Keep thinking about how to make every library program truly inclusive.