

Sarah: Welcome to the SLP Happy Hour Podcast. I'm Sarah an SLP in private practice in Oregon. I'm materials designer as SLP. Happy hour on teachers pay teachers and a speaker on Burnout. You can find me at slphappyhour.com or on Instagram at SLP Happy Hour.

Megan: And I'm Megan. I'm a school based SLP and I am very passionate about AAC and literacy. And you can find me at [Sensible Literacy.com](http://SensibleLiteracy.com) and on social media as Sensible Literacy as well.

Sarah: Okay, I'm so glad to have Megan as guest co host today. Just a few housekeeping things before we begin. If you're a regular listener, please take a moment to rate and review this podcast. Wherever you're listening, it helps other SLPs, SLPAs and students find the podcast. You can also connect with what's happening with SLP Happy Hour as well as give some easy lesson ideas by signing up for our monthly or so updates: www.slphappyhour.com/newsletter. So let's get to it. Remember, you can go to the show notes tab of our website, www.slphappyhour.com/show-notes for a list of the books we talk about and even more details on the episode on that website. You can also find a transcript of this episode there. Up first, we have a self care fail. We share those because we're human and we like to be honest on this podcast. So what is yours today, Megan?

Megan: Well, my self care fail is trying to rest and relax on the couch and clear my mind. But unfortunately, my mind won't stop going. Or sometimes it tries to trick me into thinking that I'm not doing enough and that I just don't have time to rest and relax. So to help with this and something I'm continually working on is to do some self talk and to remind myself that even though it doesn't look outwardly like I'm doing anything, I am in fact doing something. And that is something that is very important. Rest. Because if I don't rest and relax when my body tells me it's needed, I'm not going to be able to do the things that I need to do later. And I also remind myself that "doing," doesn't have to involve movement or checking something off of my ever growing to do list. Now, this self talk doesn't always work, but it's something I am continually working through

Sarah: That's so relatable I do it too. And I'm wondering - and you may not relate to this at all, Megan, but what comes to mind when you talk about that is people who like to garden or go to the forest, how as a seedling starts to grow, it'll create these really deep and really big roots. And it may look like nothing's happening on the surface or like there's teeny green thing happening on the surface. And maybe our relaxation time is this time where we're getting grounded, going down beneath the dirt, going deep, doing some growing that it's not easy to see outwardly, but it's still growth.

Megan: I absolutely love that analogy and I'm going to keep that in my back pocket and use that in my brain and try and tell myself those exact things. Because you're exactly right. We can't grow and we can't go from something small to something big without that growth period. So I love that.

Sarah: And I also can relate to getting on the couch to rest. And if I have my phone in my hand, I find myself scrolling Instagram which is not actually restful in the end. So my self-care fail today has to do with my idealized self versus my real self. My idealized self can drink a cup of coffee in the morning when I wake up and then maybe once a week go to a coffee shop and slowly drink a coffee. But my real self can't get out of the house without making one cup at home and that second cup is just too much. Both because I have acid reflux. So I actually feel bad after drinking two coffees and because I'm caffeine sensitive. So even if it's early in the morning, if I drink that second cup of coffee, I'll have poor sleep that night. So I keep making the same mistake twice this month. Both times I felt worse after the experience and didn't sleep that night. So here's what I'm going to try, which is the win-then strategy, which is stringing two things together. So for me, when I go to the coffee shop and I've already had a cup of coffee for the day, then I order a green tea or a chai. That way I'm planning ahead with my win-then statement and trying something new. That said, having a latte or special coffee, it's like the idea of it is so alluring to me that I do it even though I don't actually enjoy the second coffee and it's such an easy thought pattern to fall into. So I'm not that confident I will actually do this, but I will let you know how it goes.

Megan: Man I completely understand this because I'm a person that drinks two cups of coffee every morning and definitely one before I can even function and start my day. And going to coffee shops is always a relaxing time, but it is also that temptation with all those fun and delicious drinks. So, interested to know how this goes for you. It might be something that I have to try too.

Sarah: Yeah, I think the allure of the latte, the idea that idealized allure of the latte will always win out in the end, even when I get it and drink it, I feel disappointed. But I will keep you posted.

Megan: So let's start talking about books. It's hard to talk about what I love about books because it's like, what do I not love about using books in my sessions? Because I just feel like they're the ultimate therapy tool because you can target so many things with them. I love the fact that they're versatile and how you can use them because you can talk about the text, you can read the book as it's written, you could even just talk about the illustrations and you can even just not talk about anything inside the book. And you could just use core vocabulary because I'm big on AAC and that's the main part of my caseload. And you can use that core vocabulary to talk about what the learner is doing with the book. For example, using the word "turn" while they're turning the page, you could use words like look like more again for commenting and requesting. And I also love that you can talk about the letters and the sounds that they represent, which can expose them to those emergent literacy topics and early phonological awareness and alphabetic knowledge. So the reason that I was talking about AAC a lot and then emergent literacy is because that is mainly what is part of my caseload with preschoolers and working with them as emergent communicators and emergent literacy learners.

Sarah: So Megan, I also work with preschoolers and emergent learners and a lot of them don't want to have anything to do with books. Maybe they've been in other therapies and books have been a really structured task where it's know, point to the car and then you get an M M or something like that, right? So what do you do for kids with short attention spans? Kids who are moving a lot, or kids whose parents will come in and just say, you know what, they're not interested in books.

Megan: That is a very common question and a very common thing that I see. So I have seen some success with a lot of different ways of implementing a book or the concept of a book, whether it's actually the physical copy or not. A lot of books have read alouds on YouTube that are available, so you could combine the book, the actual physical book, with the read aloud on YouTube. I've done that in some sessions where I have the read aloud playing, where in essence, they are reading the book with the person that's doing the read aloud. But then I also have the physical copy. So whether it's an individual session or a group session, I'm able to have the read aloud playing and then also be able to be moving through the physical book as I would if we were actually reading that without the read aloud. I've also gotten my students into creating their own book. So especially in our preschool classrooms at the school that I work at, we use the Tell Me curriculum. And part of that includes some predictable chart writing and things like that within each book that is focused upon during that lesson, that two week lesson time frame, but within that predictable chart writing they take what they've written and create a class book. So it's not a trade book that you could go to Barnes and Noble or Amazon and get it off the shelf, but it's a book that they've created as a class. Every student has their own page with their own sentence and then a picture of them writing the sentence. So students get much more invested in that when they can see themselves in it and see their classmates in it and then they can read through that book as well. Those were so many good ideas.

Sarah: So I'm just going to repeat what I heard just because I think they were great. One is to use a YouTube read aloud of the book. I've also found that very successful. I have a current student who it almost seems sometimes like he has a book phobia and I think it's because as educators we can bring out a book and expect the child to do something so that then they can start to feel really anxious when a book comes out. Have you ever seen that?

Megan: Yeah, absolutely. Because they kind of unfortunately they see the books as work and so they don't see that engagement piece. They haven't been exposed to that engagement piece. So yes, I have seen that where they see the book more as work rather than recreation or fun or a leisure activity.

Sarah: Right. And so seeing that physical book might almost make them go into fight or flight. So I have also found YouTube extremely helpful. I'm also hearing you talk about using both personalized books that are about the child but also about the class and then taking photos of the child making the book and putting it in the book. Did I get that right?

Megan: Yeah. So what the teacher would do is the big predictable chart when they are actually part of that process is writing the chart. And so each student gets a turn to go up to the chart

paper and write out, for instance, like when I'm happy and I know it I stomp my feet or something like that, they would write that out. And so one of the paraprofessionals in the classroom would be taking a picture of the student finishing that part of the sentence for themselves and then that would go on their page of the book with their sentence and each student would have a page.

Sarah: Yes. And just to go back to this. Almost book phobia. And of course, I'm not a psychiatrist, I'm not diagnosing anxiety. But when I see kids who I bring out a book and they go into this fight or flight mode, I think that it's because like you said, Megan, the book isn't fun. The book is work, not knowing what will come next, but also this low confidence, this worry that I'm going to be asked to do task that I won't be able to do.

Megan: So what I love about having a picture of the child doing this predictable chart writing and writing this big thing in front of the class is that that really builds their confidence and shows them, yes, I can do this because this is me doing it. Yeah, definitely. It does bring that confidence out. And that ownership of being an author and being able to contribute to that is so important.

Sarah: Let's talk more about younger learners, maybe preschool age or so kids who are emerging communicators as well, where they're just getting started interacting with books, maybe looking at the pictures. What are some books you would recommend or types of books that you like to use for younger learners, emergent learners, kids who are just starting to get used to having books around.

Okay, so I could talk about books for hours, but you know that so I guess instead of looking at some specific titles, I kind of group books into some categories in my mind. So one of the ones that I love to use with emergent communicators are books with some sensory elements, so some things that they can feel or do. So for those early, early emergent communicators now, obviously those can happen across a variety of ages, but I'm thinking of like preschoolers and ages like that. The that's not my books are a very big favorite of mine. They're board books. And then they also have those different sensory elements. So they could be fluffy or bumpy or scratchy or anything like that that tends to bring them in a lot. And then books with interactive elements. So the ones that come to mind immediately are kind of like they're a book and a toy together. So an example of that is the busy Car book or the Busy Train book. And those books, when you open them up, they have tracks on each like two page spread. So the book kind of lays flat on a table and then the car or the train or whatever vehicle can be pulled back. And then when you release it, it travels along that track. They've got that motion piece where they're watching it. But then there's also text. And the book does read like a traditional book and it has a story and everything that goes with it, but then you've got that component of the movement along with it. And then kind of along that same vein are books that incorporate opportunities for imitation of some motor movements. So two that I'm loving right now are this is Owl and then the Escargot series. And in these books, why I'm loving them is because the characters in this story actually encourage the readers to perform a motor action to help the character through the story. So flapping your wings, tapping on something, imitating a dance move, something like

that. And my learners that I work with always love these types of activities and like to have that ability to break up the reading and to get their bodies moving, too. So they think that's pretty fun.

Sarah: Yeah, I like that novelty and fun. My three favorites are categories: touch and feel books. I like topics like dinosaurs and farm animals, and I don't have any specific favorites, books with movement and simple actions. There's a book called High Five Animals by Ross Barack. On each page, the student gives a high five to a different animal, like an alligator, and they love it because it's a predictable it's the same action. So it's really good for active kids with short attention spans. Also from head to toe by Eric Carl. On each page there's a different action, like, can you bend your neck like a giraffe? When there's action on each page, kids are participating and engaged. And then there's also a brand, I believe it is books called poke a dot. Like the three words poke a dot. And they're like the fidget poppers, but the bubbles are clear and you can pop them down on each page.

Megan: Those polka dot books are also a favorite of mine. I'm glad that you mentioned those. They're great for so many reasons. Like you said, they can imitate like a fidget, but then also they can promote that finger isolation when they're doing that, which can be helpful for AAC and communication use.

Sarah: That is a good point. I hadn't thought to mention that. So, moving up the age span, what are some favorite elementary level books to use in sessions for language? I love. I say OOH, you say AAW. This is a very funny book and it has kind of a call and response format, so it encourages the readers to do or say certain things when they see or hear something. So just like the title says, I say OOH, you say awe. So the readers have so much fun when they're performing the actions and remembering what to do in response to the different prompts. And it includes an opportunity for students to say the word underwear multiple times, which all kids think is hilarious. I also love the two different books. One is called not a Box and one is called not a Stick. They're both by the same author. But these books are great to promote imagination and creativity because the characters in each of these books are using their imagination to make the box or the stick, depending on which book you're reading, into different things. So it's a great book to use as a pre lesson or anytime to really talk about emergent writing or drawing. And you can encourage your readers to write or draw a picture about what they would create if they just had a box or a stick. And then a third one is a book called You Choose. And it is a great book to use with this age group, but I really think you could use it with any age group. The illustrations are beautiful, they're colorful, they're engaging, and then each book at the top also, or I'm sorry, each page at the top also has a prompt or a question to get students thinking, and then they can use the illustration to get ideas for how they would answer that question or prompt. So this could be another one to do verbally, or you could use it for writing or drawing a picture as well.

Sarah: Here are some of my favorites. Snowmen at Night by Carolyn Booner in this book, the snowman so many fun things at night when we don't see them. So ice skate, play hockey, drink hot cocoa. I like this book because it allows so many opportunities to model and practice past

tense. And kids can practice the same in the story retell. There's just so many verb options. Number two is *Dragons Love Tacos* by Adam Rubin. In this book, a boy works to plan a party for dragons who love tacos but can't eat spicy salsa. This book is also a great one to work on sequencing, as well as negation words like can't, don't, won't, etc. I also personally enjoy using Japanese, Chinese, and other Asian folktales in my sessions, so it's something that's a personal interest of mine. And of course, we can do things with our kids that we enjoy learning about, too. So one example is a book called *The Stonecutter a Japanese Folktale* by Gerald McDermot. In this book, a diligent and hard worker gets three wishes to find out what would happen if he really got a life that would be different from his current life and that he thinks would be easier, and what actually happens with those wishes? Spoiler things get harder, and I like to use this book for sequencing. Story Retell and inferencing what are your favorite books again? We're going older and older for maybe upper elementary or even middle school to target language in sessions.

Megan: This is an age group that I don't work with often, so recommendations might be a little bit more difficult for this one. But I can say that I believe that you can use books that may seem like they are intended for younger ages with older students too, because I see it more about how you present the book and how you talk about it that makes the difference. Here's an example. So I just had a middle school teacher that I work with use the book if you give a mouse a cookie, which is typically used for younger ages, but she used it to introduce a lesson about goods and services. So she used the book and then they broke it down and talked about that higher level topic of goods and services. I've also used books with older ages that can be used to introduce opportunities for writing their own version of the story. They could predict what would happen next and things like that. Wordless picture books could also be a great option for older students because they could write their own text that could go with the story. But the big thing that I think it's very important to keep in mind with students of any age is what their interests are. Because if we focus on their interests, they're going to be more likely to be engaged in the session.

Sarah: Yeah, and for me, I would say using things like Epic for educators. It's a website where you can get books and look them up by topic. Like, I have one student who's a middle schooler who really loves sled dogs, right? We can do that and read works that's kind of better for shorter passages instead of full stories or books. It's also free for educators and you can get reading passages about a specific topic, but they're usually more arranged by curriculum. But those are really great. And I use ReadWorks a lot for older students working on articulation who are at the reading know question answer, structured conversation level. So those are good resources as well. And now Megan, I am just going to utilize you for expertise for my own caseload and really talk about kids with special interests. So how do we find books for kids with specific interests? So I'm going to tell you about some of my learners. These are pretty common interests, so people who are listening might have a student that falls into these categories as well. Do you have any book recommendations for a child who loves outer space?

Megan: Yes, absolutely. I have a couple I'm loving lift the flap book called *What is the Moon?* So it has interactive elements with it, with flaps that you can lift up, but inside those flaps, it's filled

with facts about the moon and space travel. So you could really go deep. It's kind of a nonfiction book, but it presents as very interactive and fiction based, so it would engage them. Another is the Book of the Moon, which is also a great one that's filled with facts about moon space. There's also stories in there about the moon from different cultures and countries, and there's information about how we have moved towards space travel throughout our history. And then the third one is a twofer, but it is one that I think will get anyone that loves space and probably Star Wars very intrigued. It is OB O-B-I one, two, three, and then ABC three PO. So it kind of does a little play on words with those characters, but they're picture books, but they feature the characters from Star Wars, and then they incorporate the alphabet and the numbers. So depending on that, elementary age might be more the early elementary. But I think there's lots of things you could do, even older elementary students with that.

Sarah: Those are great. And how about for a student who loves trains?

Megan: Oh, jeez. Trains is a hard one to narrow down, but I do have some favorites. The Busy Train book is one of my favorites. It's a book and a toy all in one. It's one that I mentioned earlier that you have the Pullback train on the track. That is a great one. Might be too young for an elementary student, but the simplicity of the board book Trains by Brian Barton has lots of different kinds of trains. I could see know extension activities with writing or talking about different kinds of trains with that one. And then there's also a book called I Love Trains by Philemon Sturges, I think is how you would say that. And that's a great one that I like, too.

Sarah: Okay, those are really good. I will definitely check those out. And what about any recommendations for a student who loves to feed animals and monsters?

Megan: Okay, so one of my new favorites for this one is called Feed the Animals. And again, it's an interactive book, and it has different little food pieces that are disc shaped, so they're circles, but you can actually drop them in from the top of the book to feed the different animals within the book. And then you can see them because the animal's stomach area is a little clear. So when you drop in the little token, you can see it going into their stomach. So that's a fun activity in and of itself. But the different options for the food can also lead you to discussions about which food each animal might like, which one they want to feed the animal. And then the text also has repetitive and predictable patterns so that can help promote your independence with reading for your students, their familiarity with the text. And added bonus is that the food pieces can be stored within the book, so you don't lose them. Unless that's just me. That would lose something. 1s I also think as far as feeding and things like that, if you give whatever series of books, like if you give a mouse, a cookie, a pig, a pancake, a mouse, a muffin, et cetera, I think those would be a lot of fun with reading and or with extension activities afterwards.

Sarah: And last one, what about a student who loves dinosaurs?

Megan: Okay, I have a lot of students that love dinosaurs, too. So the ones that they're loving and that I'm loving right now, I'm a Hungry Dinosaur, I'm a Dirty Dinosaur. So those are both about a dinosaur. One, the Hungry Dinosaur, he goes through the book and makes a cake. And

the illustrations are actually done with some frosting. So obviously you can't feel it and you can't smell the frosting anymore, but that's the look of the illustrations on there. And it talks about how he makes the cake. And then, I'm a Dirty Dinosaur is about a dinosaur going through the mud and so his little muddy footprints get all over and everything like that. The How Do Dinosaurs collection is often a favorite, so those ones might be familiar to you if you know about how do dinosaurs say goodnight, how do dinosaurs say I love you. I think there's over 20 different kinds or titles in that collection. And then the other two are one, two, Three, do the Dinosaur, which is great for your younger learners. It's got motor movements in it as well, so they're stomping like the dinosaurs and doing fun things. And then life size dinosaurs is a really fun one. It's a bigger book, but it allows you to see what an actual dinosaur's foot, the size of it would have been, is actually represented pretty close to scale on the book page. And I've seen pictures of people put the book in front of a student's foot to kind of emulate that so they can see what it would look like if their foot was a dinosaur or the beak of a bird dinosaur and things like that. And then I do have one more. There is a book called Are Dinosaurs Real? Which is another lift. The flat book. And it's a great book to open up discussions and discover facts about dinosaurs.

Sarah: These were really helpful and it's always so fun to talk about books. And just a reminder if you're listening, we will write all of these out in the show notes. So as we talk about books, which we love to talk about, before we wrap up, Megan and I wanted to take a moment to talk about three good things. This is a segment where we reflect on what's going well since pausing and taking in the good can be helpful as we deal with life's ups and downs and process the bad you?

Megan: One is definitely reading because this is my me time and it's my absolute favorite way to relax. I also love taking a good walk around my neighborhood often while listening to podcasts. I find that being outside really helps me clear my head and get creative. And then the third being that I am in Florida is going to the beach. It's not that far away from me and I don't make it often enough, but when I'm there, I am so relaxed. I'm grateful and I'm awe of its beauty and power of the ocean, and I feel like I could stay there all day.

Sarah: Yeah, mine are similar. Here are my three good things. First, it's winter here. It's been snowing in the mountains around my valley, and I love seeing snow covering the mountains. It's so beautiful. The second one is I've been traveling a lot lately, and after you've been gone for a while, it feels really cozy to be home. I feel really grateful to be home in my own space with my own belongings, and it really feels like a fresh start and a renewed appreciation of my own home and space. Another thing I'm grateful for is podcasts. Of course I make a podcast, the one you're listening to, but I love listening to podcasts, especially when going for a walk or cleaning the house. Some that I've been listening to lately are Talking with Tech. It's all about AAC. For SLPs, we Can Do Hard Things, which is mostly on mental health topics by Glennon Doyle and Friends and Work Appropriate, which is about navigating workplace decisions and communications with topics such as my coworker is bugging me or Doing what I Love is grinding me into a fine pulp. And it's hosted by Anne Helen Peterson. So that's it for this episode of the SLP Happy Hour Podcast, where we discussed books you can use in your speech sessions. As always, the show notes are at SLP, and we'll list everything out for you. And that's

it for this episode of the SLP Happy Hour podcast. We hope you enjoyed listening in as much as we enjoyed recording it. Until next time.