



**American
Stroke
Association.**

*A division of the
American Heart Association.*



STROKE HERO

What's Your Super Power?

Stroke Hero Toolkit

A simple guide for educators, mentors, advocates, youth leaders and parents. Become a Stroke Hero Trainer!



***Your Instruction Manual to Become a
STROKE HERO TRAINER!***

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WELCOME LETTER

Dear Stroke Hero (Yep! That's YOU!),

It's official. You're part of the Stroke Hero Squad. Congratulations!

Our mission is to empower the next generation to help save lives, because anyone — including our kids — can be a stroke hero. Stroke is the No. 5 cause of death and a leading cause of long-term disability and we want everyone to understand that stroke is preventable, treatable and beatable.

This kit is an easy-to-use resource for adults to work with youth and empower them to become stroke heroes. Don't worry, you won't need a medical degree (or a mask and cape!). In the next few pages, you'll find everything you need to explain the following:

- **What is a stroke?**
- **How do I recognize a stroke?**
- **What should I do if someone is having a stroke?**
- **How can we prevent stroke?**

The good news is that quick treatment for a stroke can save lives. Unfortunately, many patients aren't eligible for the latest therapies because their symptoms aren't recognized in time. Without treatment, the results of stroke can be devastating — life-altering deficits or even death.

But we can change those grim outcomes -- and it's not going to take a superpower like leaping tall buildings in a single bound. By spending time with our kids, you're using the superpower of teaching to create Stroke Heroes who recognize stroke symptoms and take action F.A.S.T.

With your help, we can replace fear with knowledge and action that will save lives.

Thank you for supporting our mission ... and welcome to the Stroke Hero Squad.



GETTING STARTED / STROKE FACTS

You are officially part of the Stroke Hero Squad. Now what?

No worries—we got you covered and no snazzy costume required. We get how talking about stroke might make you feel uncomfortable or uneasy. But you won't feel that way for long. We want the conversation around stroke to be one of understanding, empowerment and most importantly, hope.

Can stroke be scary? Of course. But we know that we can remove fear from a scary situation and replace it with action (think of STOP! DROP! ROLL! which we teach our kids to do if they are ever on fire—and that's a pretty scary situation!). Children absolutely can learn that even during a scary time, they can do something to help. And that's the same principle to apply when it comes to teaching our kids about stroke.

So what's first in becoming a Stroke Hero? So glad you asked! First, you need to understand what a stroke is and why it's important that we are teaching our youth.

What is a stroke?

A stroke occurs when a blood vessel that carries oxygen and nutrients to the brain is either blocked by a clot or bursts. When that happens, part of the brain cannot get the blood and oxygen it needs, so brain cells die.

Is stroke a real issue?

Unfortunately, stroke can happen to anyone at any time. It's the No. 5 leading cause of death and a leading cause of long-term disability. Someone suffers a stroke every 40 seconds and someone dies from a stroke every 3-4 minutes.

But there is good news. Stroke is preventable. In fact, an estimated 80% of strokes may be prevented through making healthy choices. Stroke is treatable. If treated quickly, the most common type of stroke can be treated with no or limited lasting deficits. Finally, stroke is beatable. Stroke rehabilitation can help many patients return to independent living.

Why teach kids about stroke?

Because kids can save lives. When we teach children what to do during a stroke emergency, they are more likely to call for help. A study published in *Stroke*, showed that children were able to retain stroke recognition symptoms (F.A.S.T.) and call for help during a real-life stroke emergency.*

*O. Williams et al. (2018). Improving Community Stroke Preparedness in the HHS (Hip-Hop Stroke) Randomized Clinical Trial. *Stroke*, 49, 972-979.

What's next?

Take a few minutes to review the following pages for lessons appropriate for ages 6-12 (although feel free to adapt to any age group!) on pages 5-7. We've split the talking points for younger and older kids to help guide your conversation. We also have several resources and fun activities to engage your kids and get the lesson across from pages 8-13. You can also visit www.stroke.org for additional resources and information at any time.

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Stroke Facts

- Stroke occurs when a blood vessel in the brain becomes blocked or bursts. This prevents the brain from getting blood and oxygen, causing brain cells to die.
- Stroke is the #5 cause of death in the U.S. and a leading cause of disability.
- Stroke can happen at any age.
- F.A.S.T. stands for F: Face Drooping, A: Arm Weakness, S: Speech Difficulty, T: Time to Call 9-1-1.
- Smoking increases your risk for a stroke by 2 to 4 times.
- Eighty percent of strokes may be prevented by making healthy choices.
- Getting plenty of exercise can reduce your risk for stroke by 25%.
- Most strokes are treatable but calling 9-1-1 right away is important. The quicker a stroke patient gets help, the better the chance that they can recover with little or no disability.





20-MINUTE STROKE HERO LESSON PLAN

Create a Squad of Stroke Heroes (in 20 minutes!)

Short on time, but looking to create a squad of stroke heroes? These activities can help kids learn the warning signs of stroke in just 20 minutes.

OPTION 1

Learning Expectations

Children will learn the basics of stroke and how to recognize its warning signs through a fun, physical activity.

Equipment/Preparation

- Crayons/markers.
- F.A.S.T. letter murals. Place each letter on a different wall.
- Stroke Hero stickers.
- “Be a Stroke Hero” one-pager.

Directions/Talking Points

- Start off by sharing that we’re all going to become heroes today — stroke heroes. (Consider dressing up or having dress-up options for the kids like capes, masks, etc.)
- Ask the children to describe what the brain does for the body (controls how we move, think, talk, etc.).
- Briefly explain what a stroke is. (Stroke happens when blood and oxygen can’t get to the brain, which means that the brain can’t work the way it should.)
- Share that when someone has a stroke, they may have a droopy face or weak arm. They may sound funny when they talk. If any of that happens, tell an adult and call 9-1-1 right away for help.
- An easy way to remember what happens during a stroke is to think of F.A.S.T. **F** stands for face drooping, **A** stands for arm weakness, **S** stands for speech difficulty and **T** stands for time to call 911. Have the children repeat F-Face, A-Arm, S-Speech, T-Time several times. (Try to engage them in active ways to help them remember the letters and words. They can whisper them, shout them, stand up, sit down, etc.).
- Divide the class into four groups: Group 1 - **FACE**; Group 2 - **ARM**; Group 3 - **SPEECH**; and Group 4 - **TIME**. Have each group sit along the wall that corresponds to their letter mural. The groups should rotate to each station, practice the symptom and color on each mural.
- **FACE** – Talk about a droopy-looking face. Try to make one.
- **ARM** – Discuss what arm weakness might look like. Hold out both arms at different heights to demonstrate one arm being weaker.
- **SPEECH** – Explain that someone’s words might be jumbled or slurred. Practice saying phrases that make no sense.
- **TIME** – Tell them how important it is to call 9-1-1 right away. Point out that quick treatment can be a lifesaver.
- Pass out the Stroke Hero stickers and the “Be a Stroke Hero” one-pager.
- Post the finished murals in a central area. Refer back to them, as appropriate, to review the warning signs.

OPTION 2

Learning Expectations

Children will use tools and resources to learn what a stroke is and how to recognize its warning signs.

Equipment/Preparation

- Online access and/or Stroke Hero Mad Lib printout for each child.
- Stroke Hero stickers
- “Be a Stroke Hero” one-pager

Directions/Talking Points

- Start off sharing that today we are all going to become heroes — stroke heroes (consider dressing up or having dress-up options for the kids like capes, masks, etc.).
- Ask the children to describe what the brain does for the body (controls how we move, think, talk, etc.).
- Briefly explain what a stroke is. (Stroke happens when blood and oxygen can’t get to the brain, which means that the brain can’t work the way it should.)
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- Have the children take the online Stroke Hero Quiz (www.strokeheroquiz.org) or complete the Stroke Hero Mad Lib activity. If time allows, pick a few kids to share their mad lib with the group.
- Pass out Stroke Hero stickers and the “Be a Stroke Hero” one-pager.

USE THE
LETTERS **F-A-S-T**

to **SPOT THE SUDDEN
SIGNS OF STROKE** and
know when to **CALL 911.**





40-MINUTE STROKE HERO LESSON PLAN

Create a Squad of Stroke Heroes (in 40 minutes!)

Want to build your stroke hero squad in under an hour? Check out these fun activities to engage your kids. Help them understand stroke and its warning signs and how healthy lifestyle choices can help save the day!

Learning Expectations

Children will learn what a stroke is, what its warning signs are and how stroke may be prevented by making healthy lifestyle choices.

Equipment/Preparation

- Internet access
- Book about the brain
- Spot a Stroke F.A.S.T. or Rainbow Diet coloring pages
- Stroke Hero stickers
- “Be a Stroke Hero” one-pager

Directions/Talking Points

- Ask the children to describe what the brain does for the body (controls how we move, think, talk, etc.).
- Read a book about how the brain functions (visit your local library for options/ideas).
- Briefly explain what a stroke is. (Stroke happens when blood and oxygen can't get to the brain, which means that the brain can't work the way it should.)
- Engage the children by asking if anyone knows someone who has had a stroke.
- Share that when someone has a stroke, they may have a droopy face or weak arm. They may sound funny when they talk. If any of that is happening, tell an adult and call 9-1-1 right away for help.
- An easy way to remember what happens during a stroke is to think of F.A.S.T. — **F** stands for face drooping; **A** stands for arm weakness; **S** stands for speech difficulty; and **T** stands for time to call 911. Have the children repeat **F**-Face, **A**-Arm, **S**-Speech, **T**-Time several times. (Try to engage them in active ways to help them remember the letters and words. They can whisper them, shout them, stand up, sit down, etc.).
- Share that we can reduce our risk and even prevent a stroke by making healthy choices in our lives. Up to 80% of strokes can be prevented by eating right and getting regular exercise. Discuss healthy habits (examples: eating lots of fruits and veggies; less screen time/more active time; playing sports; getting enough sleep, etc.).

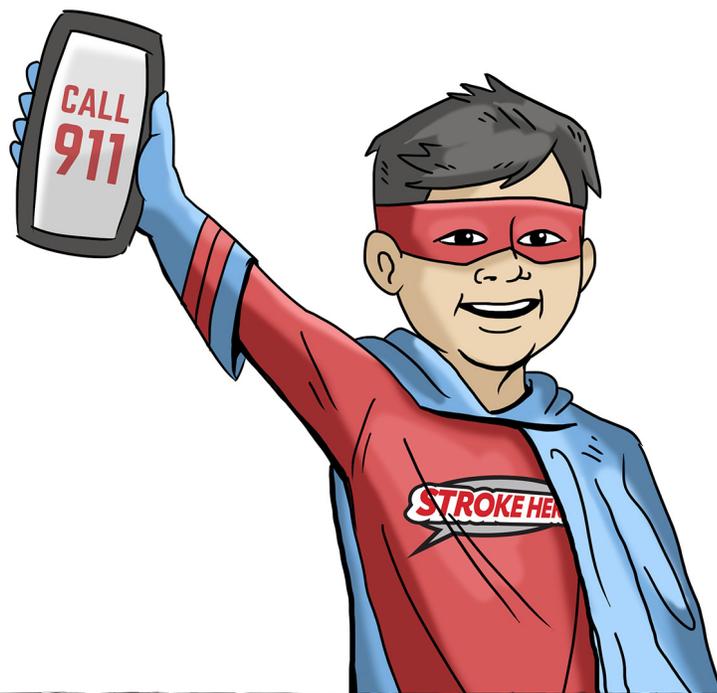
Activities (20 Minutes)

- Have the children work on the “Spot a Stroke F.A.S.T.” OR “Rainbow Diet” coloring page. (5 minutes)
- Watch the “F.A.S.T. Song - Stroke Signs: featuring Dee-1 & Tha Hip Hop Doc” (5 minutes) OR “The Hero in All of Us.” (6 minutes) Please note that the second video is more appropriate for older elementary children.

F.A.S.T. Play Activity (10 minutes)

1. Break your children into groups of four.
2. Assign one of the following roles to a child in each group:
3. **Stroke patient** (the person having a stroke)
4. **Bystander** (someone who knows something is wrong with the patient, but isn't sure what to do)
5. **Stroke hero** (recognizes the F.A.S.T. signs of stroke and call 9-1-1 right away)
6. **Ambulance** (arrives on the scene to take the patient to the hospital)
7. If there is an extra child in the group, they can play the role of an additional bystander. Encourage the children to work together to brainstorm a skit that uses all their roles to create a stroke situation. Remind them that it's important to use the F.A.S.T. symptoms to support their skit.
8. Give each group time to perform their skit.
9. Have the kids vote on which team's skit was the most accurate and creative.

- Pass out Stroke Hero stickers and the “Be a Stroke Hero” one-pager.





60-MINUTE STROKE HERO LESSON PLAN

Create a Squad of Stroke Heroes (in 60 minutes!)

Got an hour to build your Stroke Hero Squad? Then sit tight for 60 minutes of fun, empowerment and learning!

Learning Expectations

Children will learn what a stroke is, what its warning signs are and how stroke may be prevented by healthy lifestyle choices.

Equipment/Preparation

- Internet access
- Book about the brain
- Stroke Hero Mad Lib game
- Stroke Hero stickers
- “Be a Stroke Hero” one-pager

Directions/Talking Points (20 Minutes)

- Ask the children to describe what the brain does for the body (controls how we move, think, talk, etc.).
- Read a book about how the brain functions (visit your local library for options/ideas).
- Briefly explain what a stroke is. (Stroke happens when blood and oxygen can't get to the brain, which means that the brain can't work the way it should.)
- Engage the children by asking if anyone knows someone who has had a stroke.
- Share that when someone has a stroke, they may have a droopy face or weak arm. They may sound funny when they talk. If any of that is happening, tell an adult and call 911 right away for help.
- An easy way to remember what happens during a stroke is to think of F.A.S.T. — **F** stands for face drooping; **A** stands for arm weakness; **S** stands for speech difficulty; and **T** stands for time to call 911. Have the children repeat **F**-Face, **A**-Arm, **S**-Speech, **T**-Time several times. (Try to engage them in active ways to help them remember the letters and words. They can whisper them, shout them, stand up, sit down, etc.).
- Share that we can reduce our risk and even prevent a stroke by making healthy choices in our lives. Up to 80% of strokes can be prevented by eating right and getting regular exercise. Discuss healthy habits (examples: eating lots of fruits and veggies; less screen time/more active time; playing sports; getting enough sleep, etc.).

Activities: (40 Minutes)

- Watch “The Hero in All of Us.” (6 minutes) Please note that this video is appropriate for older elementary children.

F.A.S.T. Chain of Survival Relay Race (25 minutes)

1. Divide the children into teams of 4-6.
2. Put two teams up against each other in a timed relay race that reinforces the F.A.S.T. warning signs. Use the activities on page 13-14 (or other activities you come up with!).
3. The team that finishes first moves on to the next bracket to face a winning team from another set. Continue this bracket-style elimination until only one team is left. They’re the winners.

- Have the children fill out the Stroke Hero Mad Lib game. Share with the group. (5 minutes)
- Have the children take the Stroke Quiz to see how much they remember. (5 minutes)
- Pass out Stroke Hero stickers and the “Be a Stroke Hero” one-pager.



RESOURCE PAGE

Heroes commence! Check out these resources to help with your discussion of stroke.

Media

- “F.A.S.T. Song - Stroke Signs: featuring Dee-1 & Tha Hip Hop Doc”
- “The Hero in All of Us”
- The F.A.S.T. Sing Along
- “3 Things to Know About Stroke”
- “Stroke Heroes Act FAST”

Stroke Handouts

- F.A.S.T. One-pager
- F.A.S.T. Mural Coloring Page
- F.A.S.T. Warning Signs Coloring Page
- The Rainbow Diet Coloring Page
- F.A.S.T. Comic Strip

Healthy Living Handouts

- Love Your Heart and Help Your Brain
- The Salty 6 for Kids
- Color Your Plate
- Truth about e-cigarettes and vaping

Games/Word Searches

- Word Search
- Stroke Quiz





STROKE HERO ACTIVITIES

Learning about stroke and the F.A.S.T. warning signs can be fun and engaging! Check out these activities to get your kids involved.

F.A.S.T. Chain of Survival Relay

Learning Expectations:

Children will learn about the F.A.S.T. chain of survival through a variety of relays and activities.

Equipment/Preparation

- Stopwatch
- Blindfold or ribbon
- Plastic spoons
- Ping-pong balls
- Oven mitt
- Loaf of bread
- Plastic knives
- Peanut butter
- Jelly
- Plates
- Basketball
- Small, 10-piece puzzle

Directions

1. Divide the children into teams of 4-6.
2. Put two teams up against each other in a timed relay race that reinforces the F.A.S.T. warning signs. Use the activities on this page and page 14 (or other activities you come up with!).
3. The team that finishes first moves on to the next bracket to face a winning team from another set. Continue this bracket-style elimination until only one team is left. They're the winners.

Relay Leg #1 - Face Drooping

Activity: Move around while somewhat impaired in their head/face area.

Ideas

- Walk through a simple obstacle course while blindfolded and being led by another child.
- Put a plastic spoon, which holds a ping-pong ball, in their mouth and walk across the room.

Relay Leg #2 - Arm Weakness

Activity: Perform a task with one arm behind their back or wearing an oven mitt on one hand.

Ideas

- Make a peanut butter-and-jelly sandwich.
- Bounce a basketball 10 times.
- Tie their shoe.
- Put together the puzzle.

Relay Leg #3 - Speech Difficulty

Activity: Use their voice.

Ideas

- Say a tongue twister three times fast, such as “Sally sells seashells by the seashore.”
- Recite the F.A.S.T. warning signs while pulling the sides of their mouths apart or without using their tongue.

Relay Leg #4 - Time to Call 911

Activity: Work together as a team to reinforce the urgency of calling 911 when they spot the F.A.S.T. warning signs of stroke.

Ideas

1. One child runs from one side of the room to the other, dials their “hand phone” and then tags the next person.
2. That person gets into their imaginary ambulance and drives (runs) back across the room to the rest of the team.
3. Then, the full team must carry one team member back across the room to complete the activity.
4. The team that finishes first goes on to compete against the next winning team, until there is only one team left (the winners).

Freeze F.A.S.T

Learning Expectations

Children will remember the F.A.S.T. warning signs by practicing them.

Directions

1. The leader and children will run in place (fast) until the leader says “freeze.”
2. When the leader says freeze, the leader and children should freeze in a pose that’s representative of a F.A.S.T. warning sign (see suggested poses below).
3. Children who freeze in the same pose as the leader can move onto the next round. If they’re in a different pose, they’re out and should move to the side.
4. Continue Freeze F.A.S.T. until there is only one child left — the winner.

Poses

Face drooping: Tilt head to the right.

Arm weakness: Hold the right arm.

Speech difficulty: Cover mouth with hand.

Time to call 911: Put “hand phone” up to the ear.

F.A.S.T. Square

Learning Expectations

Children will remember the F.A.S.T. warning signs by practicing them.

Equipment/Preparation

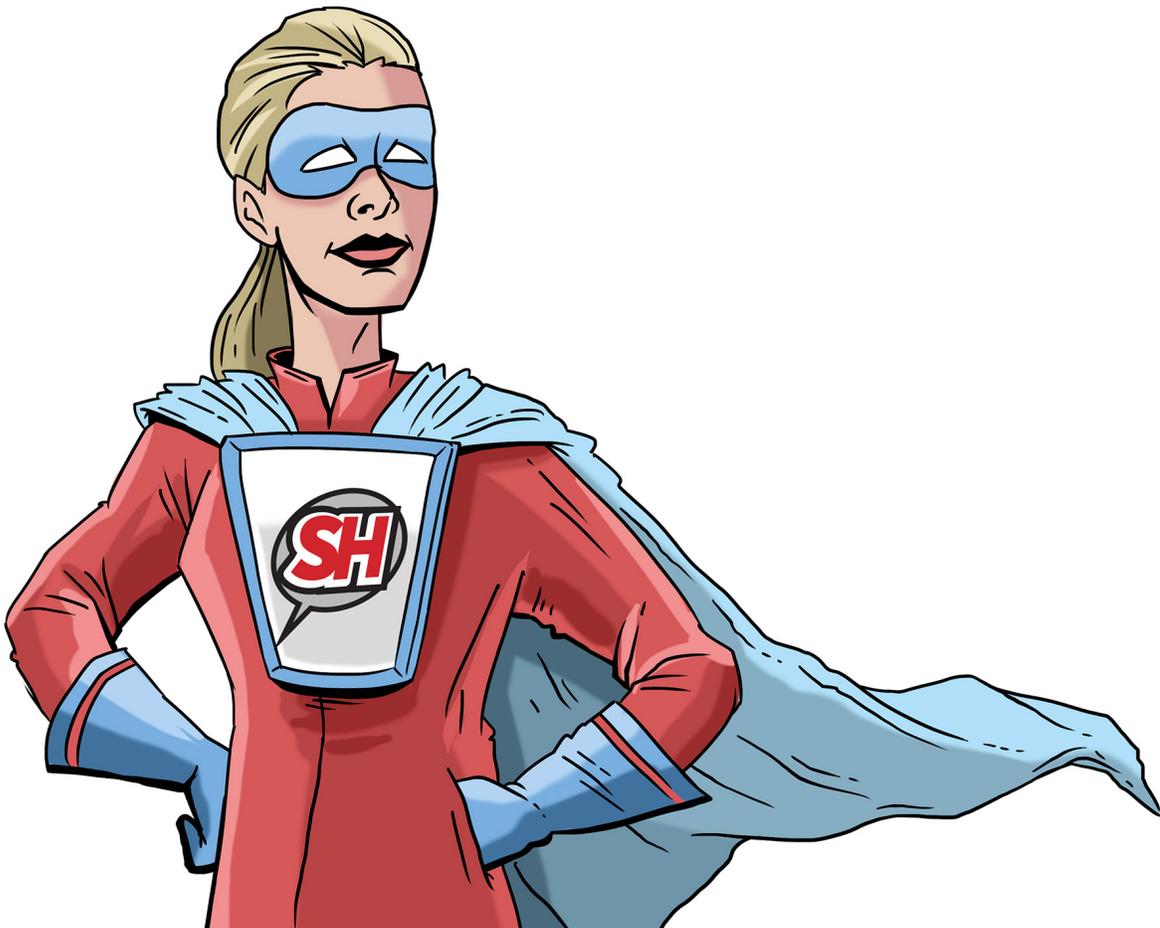
- Sidewalk chalk (for outdoor play) or masking tape (for indoor play)
- Bouncy ball

Directions

1. Using your chalk (outdoor) or masking tape (indoors), create a large square on the ground. Divide the large square into four equal squares.
2. Write or tape the letter F in one square, A in one square, S in one square and T in one square (to represent the F.A.S.T. warning signs).
3. The player in the F square will start by bouncing the ball into another player's square.
4. Using the same rules as Four Square, the ball will be hit quickly from player to player. The ball can bounce only once in each square. However, before a player can hit the ball, they must say what the letter of their square stands for. They must speak fast so the ball can move rapidly from square to square.
5. If a player fails to say the meaning of their letter or doesn't say it fast enough, they're out.
6. The last player remaining is the winner.

Example:

F is the king square and will start off the game. Before that player bounces the ball to another square, they must say "face drooping" because they're standing in the F Square. Then, the player receiving the ball must say what their letter stands for as they hit the ball to another player. So, the player in the F square says "face drooping." The player in the A square says "arm weakness." The player in the S square says "speech difficulty" and the player in the T square says "time to call 911."



Stroke Empathy Activity

We want everyone to know that stroke is preventable, treatable and beatable. It's also important that children empathize with stroke survivors. Set up different stations around the room. Encourage children to put themselves in someone else's shoes to help them relate to the struggles that a stroke survivor might experience.

Buttoning a Shirt

Learning Expectations

Children will learn what physical impairment, weakness or loss of arm movement can be like for a stroke survivor.

Equipment/Preparation

An oversized shirt that buttons down the front.

Directions

1. Using only one hand, put on the shirt and button all the buttons.
2. See how long it takes you to complete this task with just one hand.

Tennis Ball Toss

Learning Expectations

Children will learn what physical impairment, weakness or loss of arm movement can be like for a stroke survivor.

Equipment/Preparation

Tennis ball

Directions

1. Pair up the children.
2. Have them stand about 5 feet apart.
3. Ask them to toss the ball to each other and catch it using their non-dominant hand.

Unscramble the Sentences

Learning Expectations

Children will learn that stroke survivors can have a difficult time with reading words, writing, understanding what others are saying, finding the right words to say and using words to make sentences that others can understand. (This is called aphasia.)

Equipment/Preparation

Pieces of poster board (as many as you need for the number of scrambled sentences).

Directions

1. In advance, create a series of scrambled sentences. Print one each on pieces of poster board. Place the posters around the room. Some examples of scrambled sentences include:
 - States is stroke the United killer in the No. 5
 - the beaches love of Jersey I the Shore
 - disability of cause a leading long-term is stroke
 - a Living prevent healthy can stroke lifestyle
2. Using a timer, have the children unscramble the sentences as quickly as possible.



Out-of-Focus Reading

Learning Expectations

Children will learn that some stroke survivors must cope with visual challenges.

Equipment/Preparation

- A simple paragraph from a book
- Out-of-focus glasses or goggles

Directions

1. Have each child put on the out-of-focus glasses or goggles.
2. Ask them to try and read through the paragraph in the book as quickly as possible.
3. You could also have each child cover one eye, take five steps away from the book (that's propped up) and read the paragraph as quickly as possible. They can then cover the other eye and repeat.

F.A.S.T. Dance Party

Learning Expectations

Children will learn the F.A.S.T. warning signs of stroke by dancing and enacting the letters

Equipment/Preparation

Internet access (to play a song from YouTube).

Directions

1. Tell the children they're going to dance and act out the letters in the F.A.S.T. warning signs to learn them better.
2. Demonstrate the movements that go with the letters:
 - F** – Put your hands on each side of your face and tilt your head.
 - A** – Grab your arm.
 - S** – Cover your mouth with your hand.
 - T** – Tap on your wrist to indicate a watch.
3. Or, the children can form the letters with their arms while they're dancing.
4. Play the "F.A.S.T. Song - Stroke Signs: featuring Dee-1 & Tha Hip Hop Doc."

**CONGRATULATIONS
ON BECOMING A
STROKE HERO**



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stroke.org
1-800-4-STROKE