

Narrative (story telling)

Telling stories is an age old tradition and is a skill unique to human beings. It enables us to retell events, for example what happened at school. Through storytelling we can share our own life experiences with friends and families.

To tell a story children need to be able put events in the order they happened, use sentences containing a range of actions and to use tenses (i.e. past, present and future).

Awareness of narratives begins to develop at an early age when adults read books and recite nursery rhymes with children. By the age of 7 children should be able to tell stories with a beginning, a middle and an end, as well as identifying the characters within the story. As children get older their stories get longer and more complex.

How to spot children with storytelling difficulties

They may find it hard to:

- ⇒ Know what information to give
- ⇒ Sequence their ideas into a connected story
- ⇒ Use the right words
- ⇒ Create the right sentences
- ⇒ Change the way they tell the story to suit different audiences
- ⇒ Identify and solve problems

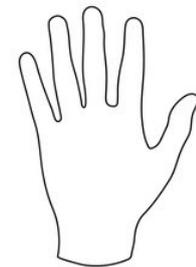


How can I help my child with storytelling difficulties?

Everyday Activities

- ⇒ Read and sing nursery rhymes together. Some ideas can be found on this website, in the 'play' section.
- ⇒ Sharing Books: Share a book with your child everyday. Talk about the pictures. As your child gets older encourage them to tell you about the pictures in the books, drawing their attention to any parts of the picture they've not mentioned.
- ⇒ Once your child shows an interest in reading for themselves let them read a bit and then you read some. This helps your child to hear the models of your story telling.
- ⇒ Join the library: Your child can select their own books and are much more likely to enjoy reading if they choose books they are interested in.

- ⇒ Comics and newspapers: These are also useful to encourage and develop storytelling. It is important that children experience a wide range of story telling styles to develop their own story telling styles in talking and writing.
- ⇒ Listening to stories: Listening to rhyme or story podcasts or audio books at home and in the car is a useful activity. Allow your child to choose the story.
- ⇒ Meal Times: As often as possible, eat meals together so that everyone has a chance to talk about what they have done that day. Make sure everyone takes a turn while the others listen. Group conversations with a focus on sharing personal events and stories are great for children learning to develop their literacy skills.
- ⇒ Try tying in time concepts to your story telling e.g. 'first', 'next', 'last', 'finally' as well as conjunctions e.g. 'however' and 'meanwhile'. More information on these aspects can be found on our website under the 'talking' tab.
- ⇒ Meal Planning: Ask your child to help you plan what to have for a meal and create a shopping list. Your child will have to think about the sequence of the meal and you can talk about the order of cooking it. You can talk about what meals/foods you all like, when you last had it, where you were etc.



Activities

- ⇒ Try the 'five finger retell' to help children to include all of the main parts within their story telling. Draw a hand on the board and within each finger write 'who' (characters) 'where' (setting) and 'beginning', 'middle', 'end'. In the palm you can write 'main details'. Support the children to use this template to create their own story, starting with the first finger of the characters. You could ask the students to draw around their own hands and fill in their own diagrams and use this as their prompt in their literacy lessons.