

Storytelling at Our Day Nursery



Storytelling is more than just reading books. It is facilitating stories to come alive through the use of props, facial expressions, gestures and physicality.

Everyone! We want to inspire all of our children to have a love of stories and storytelling.

Because storytelling develops a whole wealth of skills and a love for learning within our children. Children become absorbed in an imaginative world



Everywhere, there are no limits to where storytelling can take place! It may be on the carpet as a group, or 1:1 with an adult in an area of the room or garden, using props from the home corner or dressing up stations.

Whenever an opportunity arises for storytelling we should encourage and utilise it.



Bringing stories to life

Elements to consider:

- **Expression** – adds meaning to the words we are saying
- **Props**
- **Visuals**- could include photographs
- **Repeated refrains** – opportunities to chorally join in, this tends to give it a go rather than being singled out
- **Tone of voice** – vary your tone to maintain interest
- **Volume**
- **Eye contact** – know your children do they like or want to avoid eye contact
- **Gesture** – can be used to emphasise, incorporate sign where appropriate
- **Rhythm** – introduce rhythm, repetition and rhyme
- **Dressing up** – become the character

Research shows that the number of words a child hears has a positive impact on their overall language development. Exposure to a wide range of words is key.

Incorporate vocabulary into planning – think of some key words you want to focus on modelling within activities

Bringing stories to life

- Introducing new language as early as possible is key
- Incorporate as many opportunities for them to copy or echo the language back to you
- Providing opportunities to then explore the text through play builds on understanding of the language
- Build on the language you already know they have, if they know some foods, try a story that focuses on a new food group
- Adapt your telling of the story if children are losing interest – it's okay to ad lib you don't have to tell it word for word as it is on the page
- Link stories to seasonal experiences where you can
- Opportunities for children to re visit and practice words they are learning

Interactive Reading

- A great way to develop children's early literacy skills – it benefits all children!
- A low cost approach that can accelerate progress in early communication skills
- Adult engagement makes more impact than the choice of book, it's a great basis for to and fro interactions
- Roleplay encourages opportunities to experiment with language in a low pressure environment
- Echo reading encourages children to rehearse language
- Give actions and chants for children to join in with
- Ask questions or use 'I wonder..' statements

Language development strategies

- **Commenting** – providing a sentence
- **Extending** – adding another word
- **Expanding** – building on what a child has said
- **Repetition** – revisit the same book/ repeat refrains/repeat words
- **Explaining** – providing information to support understanding
- **Fill the gap** – leaving a silence for the child to fill one newly introduced word

We aim for the balance to shift over time so that the child does more talking

Making your environment language rich

- Use props within small world scenarios to retell stories
- Act out the story
- Provide visuals linked to stories
- Model making up stories
- Model language within popular play scenarios with the children and ensure adults participate as play partners

Story boxes

At Our Day Nursery we have created story boxes for the children to create their own stories. The boxes contain authentic, open-ended props such as fabrics and character spoons to inspire children to create their own tales. A story box can help children to learn the art of story telling as they can retell familiar stories using the resources available as well as developing their imaginations by making up new stories of their own. Children will often act out their favourite parts of a story, taking on a role and becoming the character helps them to develop a much deeper understanding of the story itself and this is what story boxes facilitate.

Story boxes usually contain items such as:

- **Setting** – materials to create landscapes, shells and sand, stones and mud, natural resources such as flowers, leaves and pine cones
- **Characters** – wooden spoon characters, peg dolls characters, teddies, puppets
- **Props** – cloaks, magic wands, hats, masks, cape, crown



How to deliver a sensory story:

- Read through your story using the props that support each page (use prompt sheet in bag to guide you with this if unsure)
- Use repetition - at the age our children are repetition of language and actions helps their cognitive development hugely as well as their communication skills and language acquisition.
- Engage all of the senses as much as you can, make sounds, move around, explore props fully tasting or smelling where appropriate.
- Invite children to actively participate by using the props themselves or allow them to take the lead for example by saying lines from the story.
- Pause and allow processing time, there is no need to rush so take time exploring.
- Use your imagination and be expressive, use your facial expression, body language and voice to exaggerate the story and engage children. If you seem interested they will be too, you are the best prop available to them!



Helicopter stories

Helicopter stories is an interactive approach to storytelling that aims to get every child involved. The idea behind helicopter stories are that a practitioner sits with a child and listens to them telling a story and then writes it down word for word. Once the story is written the group of children gather round and mark out a stage, then work together to act the story out. Helicopter stories value children's creativity and imaginations whilst also supporting language development and other emergent literacy skills.

1. Scribe a Story
Sit with a child and write down their story word for word. Read it back to the child and ask which character they would like to play.

2. Mark out the Stage
Create a stage out of masking tape and gather the children around the outside ready to act out their stories.

3. Act out the Story
The children take it in turns to act out the other characters in the story from their place around the stage.

