

Once Upon a Time.....



We all like to tell or listen to a good story, but have you ever thought about *how* you actually tell a story? It's one of those things that we just *know* how to do, but often don't actually think about.

Some children can find it difficult to know *how* to tell a story. They might be able to tell you a list of different facts or a few key ideas, but they don't know how to combine these together to explain what actually happened.

Story-telling involves sequencing multiple different ideas into a coherent and logical chain of events including:

- *Who* the story is about
- *Where* and *when* the events took place
- *What happened* at various points in time
- Often a problem arises which then needs to be fixed
- Having a beginning, middle and end to the story
- Using joining words (eg. *and then, because, but, before/after*)

The skills used to tell a story are also used when we talk about what we did at a certain point in time (eg. holidays or at Christmas), when we explain how to do a task (eg. make a sandwich, play a game, build a tower), give a talk (show and tell) or tell a series of events (eg. what happened at kindy today).

Some pointers to look out for to see if your child is still learning how to tell stories and might need some help includes:

- Their story doesn't make sense
- Events are not in the 'correct' order that you'd expect
- They miss out key pieces of information (eg. *who was there*)
- They just list off events rather than ideas flowing on from one another
- They are not yet using 'joining words' or only use '*and*'

Children should begin to tell simple stories by 3- 4 years of age, then they will continue to increase in complexity at 5 years and as they get older.

If you're concerned about your child's speech and language development or any of the above areas, contact a speech pathologist to discuss whether assessment for your child is indicated.

What can I do to help?

- Read books with your child every day. This helps to model how a story should be structured.
- Then after you've finished reading the story, talk about it and retell the story together.
- Help your child to start off the story by asking:
 - o Who was in the story?
 - o Where did the story happen?
 - o When do you think it happened?
- Give your child prompts such as:
 - o What happened first?
 - o What happened next?
 - o And then what happened?
 - o How did they fix it?
 - o What happened at the end?
 - o How did the characters feel?
 - o Why did they.....?

If your child isn't sure of the answers, that's okay! They can still learn by you telling them what the correct answer is.



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