



Extension

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON

Parenting the
Preschooler



Storytelling

Why tell stories?

Children who hear storytelling are better storytellers themselves. This sparks curiosity, improves language skills, and has a positive impact on school success. Storytelling is fun for everyone no matter what age (and no batteries required!).

Tips for Starting the Story

- Ask children to draw a map, and talk about what it would be like to live there.
- Describe the setting by adding details about the time of day, weather, and moment in history.
- Use open-ended questions, like “What kind of pretend playing does Ming do with her friends?” to encourage children to share their thoughts.
- Build the story’s characters – who are they; what do they look like; what is their personality? Help children visualize the characters.
- Tell favorite stories more than once. After children hear the same story multiple times, they can help you tell it or even add their own twist!
- Stories are like mirrors and windows that allow children to reflect their own experience as well as the experiences of others. Share stories where children, their families, and their communities are valued and also share stories that celebrate differences.

Anytime... anywhere

Telling stories and reading books to children is an activity with low to no cost that is available any time of day. Have fun together by creating a story with a clear beginning, middle, and end. Add some suspense and surprises to keep children’s attention.



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Family Storytelling Matters!



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Telling family stories helps children develop a sense of belonging in their family. Benefits are best when stories are personal and meaningful to the storyteller. What stories do you remember from your childhood? What makes them special? What makes you remember them?

Sharing family stories is a great way to connect parents and other adults with children. Tell stories that relate to children's lives right now. For example, if a child just got a pet, tell them about your first pet.

Looking through old family photos is a great way to start a family storytelling tradition. Talk about what the picture captures and take turns telling stories about what you see. If children do not recall what is happening or if the photo is of an event before they were born, ask them to make up a story by providing clues found in the photo.

Written by Yia Lor. Reviewed by Sandy Liang
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