

"Tell Your Story"

The oral telling of stories is the easiest, most natural way for kids to practice and strengthen their creative language skills, and to "use their words," so – take a story break!



Ingredients:

A jar of "story starter" ideas (such as the ones listed below)

Two people to listen to and tell stories

A watch or clock with a second hand

Imagination!

Some Suggested Story Starters:

Talk about a musical instrument you play or wish you could play. Why?

Talk about one of your favorite colors. Why?

Describe one of your favorite subjects in school. Why?

Describe one of your favorite TV programs. Why?

Explain whether or not you think there is life on another planet. Why?

Talk about what you want to be when you grow up. Why?

Tell about something unusual that happened in your neighborhood.

Tell about an incident that had something to do with water.

Tell a story about a pet or animal (maybe a tiger or a water buffalo!).

Talk about the person who awakens first in your house. How are you awakened?

Tell about an incident when you couldn't stop laughing.

Describe one of the most unusual meals you ever ate.

Tell about a time when you surprised someone.

Tell a story about something you lost or forgot. What happened?

Describe something that happened while riding a bicycle.

Describe the worst weather conditions which you have been in.

Tell about a dream you have remembered.

Describe something you like to do when it's incredibly hot outside.

Describe what a perfect day be like for you.

Describe what would a perfect weekend be like for you.

Tell about something you really like about where you live.

Describe how you got a scar or scab.



What to do:

1. Adult chooses a topic and tells a two-minute story, modeling for the child how to use words that help the listener "see" the story in his/her imagination. Try to include lots of sensory information and to act out the story as much as possible. (Hint: choose a topic that has lots of emotional connections for you - these emotional ties will supply the vivid details that bring the story to life.) After the story, ask the child to talk about what they "saw" and experienced in your story and what you did to create those images (words, gestures, tone of voice, etc.)



2. Each person chooses a topic.

3. Explain that each person will be telling to their partner for 2 minutes or less about one of these topics. (Two minutes is long enough to start - you may want to expand as skills increase.)

4. Give kids time to think about the story they are going to tell, and visualize exactly what happened in their imagination. Ask them to think about the way things looked, smelled, tasted, sounded and felt. The teller's job is to make the listener feel as if he/she was really there, so these details will be important!

5. Sit facing each other and decide who will tell first. Remind the child that the teller will have 2 minutes to tell, starting when you say go and ending when you say stop - or blow a whistle, clap your hands, etc. The other teller will have his/her turn afterwards.



6. Immediately after the story is told, talk about what details helped the listener really "see" the story in their imagination. Were there lots of sensory details - sight, sound, feel, smell and taste - that created a sense of reality? Did the storyteller act out the characters and actions, use special voices or make sound effects? (Effective human communication is one part verbal and nine parts non-verbal - tone of voice, gesture, facial expression, body language. Encourage children to use all of these tools for effective communication.)

7. Discuss the elements of the story - who were the characters, what was the setting, was there a problem and solution?

8. Do it again! With practice, stories will become clearer, include more sensory details, and take on voices, sounds and gestures. They'll come alive!

9. Write down or record your favorite stories.

10. Add your own "story starter" ideas to the jar! Include family outings, pets, school field trips - anything that has strong emotional connections will create vivid images to be translated into stories.

