



Cymru
National Day Nurseries Association

Factsheet

A young boy with dark skin and short hair, wearing a red shirt, is looking intently at a book being read to him. The book has a colorful, abstract pattern. In the background, another child with blonde hair is visible, also looking towards the book. The setting appears to be a nursery or classroom with wooden furniture.

Foundation Phase - Fairytale and Stories

Wales

Foundation Phase – Fairytales and Stories

Fairytales, myths and legends offer a plethora of stories that can be used again and again with young children. They can include a range of characters that represent all readers and support with exploring emotions – from fear and sadness to relief and excitement – and think about the actions of cause and effect. These stories enable practitioners to assist learners in drawing comparisons from real life to support their understanding about the world and people around them.

It can be a challenge to know how best to approach certain topics, however as their longevity has demonstrated, fairy tales can often be the answer. The familiar structures and language used in fairy tales can really support practitioners, transporting learners to a safe environment where universal themes such as good versus bad can be explored creatively; e.g. opening a story with “Once upon a time...” immediately transports children and adults alike out of reality and into a safe story world. When using a fairytale context, even the shyest child can begin to engage with the characters, plot and events within the story.

Fairytales, myths and legends have the power to not only explore complex emotions in children but also build a foundation of story language, develop creativity and act as a springboard for children’s own story telling and a precursor for writing.

“If you want your children to be intelligent, read them fairy tales. If you want them to be more intelligent, read them more fairy tales.” Albert Einstein

Learning objectives

- To join in with storytelling
- To join in with retelling a story, through sequencing, talking or role play.

Areas of learning (skills and range)

Language, literacy and communication

Range:

- Express themselves creatively and imaginatively
- Access and share a variety of non-fiction texts, stories and traditional tales from Wales and around the world, including those written by significant authors

- Communicate in a range of contexts for a variety of purposes and audiences.

Skills:

- ORACY - use newly learned vocabulary in and through play activities; imitate real-life and make believe experiences within role play
- READING - recall and talk about visual images and objects; talk about 'what might happen next'
- WRITING - realise that the spoken word can be written down; imitate act of writing within role-play activities.

Literacy - e.g. using specific vocabulary, listen and respond to instructions, listen and join in with stories, retell a story.

Numeracy - e.g. counting, sequencing, matching pairs and pictures, use the terms first, second and third.

Resources

Essential:

- Copies of the book
- Large laminated pictures of the story to form a story board.
- (Differentiated for learners e.g. two/three pictures for lower ability, six or more for higher ability)
- Blank story board line
- Story props
- Word banks
- Pictures of characters

Desirable:

- Sometimes there are larger copies of the book available for you to use whilst the children can follow the story in the usual sized book
- Puppets, story stones, masks or toys representing the characters in the story
- Cardboard boxes and other loose parts resources
- Masks, role play outfits.

Activity outline

All learning opportunities should be planned with the children's individual communication needs, interests and learning characteristics in mind. Think about what topics they will respond to best before you chose your story. E.g. A child may have visited the zoo with family and loved the giraffes, so you could decide to read a fable on 'why do giraffes have long necks?'. If you are creative, you could write your own fairytales, myths and legends and make them personal to your setting. That would be sure to excite the children! However, remember to always start small. Stick to simple, enjoyable tales that mix humour and adventure. If the story is too big, consider focusing on one element.

Once you have chosen your story, ensure that the children are familiar with it; they should know the story by heart. This is achieved through constant repetition. Repetition within stories allows children the time to engage with and learn the story. It allows them to become more familiar with narrative patterns. It can be great fun and provides children with a genuine sense of accomplishment.

Make the story memorable – use props, voices, characters and masks. The more a story is recreated and represented in different forms, the more memorable it will be and the more likely children are to try and recreate it. E.g. If reading the story 'Goldilocks and the Three Bears', use different sized bowls, chairs and pillow if possible, along with bear masks and deep voices for the bears. You want to bring stories alive for the children, for them to be an experience. This will lay the foundations for children to recreate and retell the story more independently and creatively.

You will need to think carefully about how to best support your learners with the re-creation stage to support development. Consider your groupings for this activity carefully to ensure all children take part and avoid overwhelming those that struggle creatively. Use prompts to spark imagination.

Continuous and enhanced provision

Children should have every opportunity within the setting to experience a language-rich environment that immerses them in the spoken and written word. They should be able to access provision and communicate at their own developmental stage.

- Traditional tale story boxes – book and props e.g. The Three Little Pigs and access to straw, sticks and stones
- Provide dress up clothes relating to your story/stories in the role play area and outdoors if possible. E.g. Little Red Riding Hood - red hooded cloak, Grandma nightie and cap, wolf mask
- Resources for children to recreate a place in the story for use in their role play. E.g. cardboard boxes and other resources for the children to make houses, dens, tunnels, caves
- Ensure there are further resources within the creative area to recreate other things from the story, e.g. story about the night sky - include shiny materials, dark cloth etc.
- Put suggestions within a larger space (ideally outdoors) to challenge the children to move like the character in the story, e.g. 'giant footsteps'
- Place visual aids with your musical resources if there are any songs or rhymes connected with the story – if not, challenge the children to make one up
- Maintain a good range of story books for children to use
- Share vocabulary being used in the setting around the stories with parents and families to further support its use and understanding.
- Are there any seasons, animals, foods or job roles that you could explore further in your story? Remember to include these in your areas of provision.

Focused task

Story repetition is a very inclusive activity as it allows children to hear the same story and follow the same patterns again and again, until they feel confident enough to join in. As children develop confidence in joining in with stories, they will start to develop their competency in story making of their own and become familiar with narrative patterns. Stories do not have to be learnt word for word but children will need to retell the story a number of times to refine the tale and gain fluency.

- Read the story to the group
- Explain to the children, that today, they are going to be the story tellers!
- Begin by laying the story board pictures on the table (ground if you are outside) in front of them. What can they see?
- Discuss the scenes from the story. What is happening in this picture?
- Ask the children if they think they can place the pictures in the right order. Ask one child at a time to pick a picture and place it on the storyboard line
- Are they happy with the final order? Yes/No? Why?
- Discuss parts that they remembered really well
- Tell the children it is their turn to take part in retelling the story. Ask for volunteers to go first. This can be individuals or pairs
- Allow the children a couple of minutes to choose their props
- Once ready, support the children with the differentiated pictures for the order of the story. Tell them they can look at the pictures to help them remember
- Allow them to embellish and add to the story, or miss parts out; these skills will develop with practice. Competent story makers will launch straight into independent retelling with their own innovations
- Ask children in the group to share what they liked most about each child's retelling and support them with this, e.g. 'I liked your clear voice', 'I liked the fight scene!', 'I liked the squeaky voice you used for the mouse'.
- Tell the children that we will come back to this story again and see if their memories are still as good
- Consider finishing the activity with a question connected to the story for them to think about and hopefully promote independent play, e.g. what do you think would happen if the dragon turned up for snack time here?

Welsh language development

stori - story

distaw - quiet

canol – middle

eisteddwch i lawr – sit down

straeon tylwyth teg - Fairytale

(yn) y diwedd - (at) the end

gwrandewch – listen

cymeriad(au) - character(s)

Beth sy'n digwydd nesa? - What happens next?

tawelwch - silence/calm

Yn y dechrau – at the beginning

Beth ti'n neud? What would you do?

Assessment opportunities

- Oracy – Listening and understanding
- Oracy – Collaboration and presenting information and ideas
- Oracy – Expressive language
- Oracy – Talking and play
- Reading – Understanding reading materials.

Extension activities

- Consider giving each individual child their own storyboard and pictures to order
- Challenge children to go home and retell the story to family and friends
- Send books home with the children to read with parents and families, and to learn before coming back into the setting and retelling the story to their friends
- Consider video recording the story retellings and watching them back in a 'cinema style' with the children. You could even invite parents and families too.

It is important to note that some fairy tales can receive criticism due to the common occurrence of a 'happily ever after', this is something that is definitely worth investigating with children who are developmentally ready.

Further support and NDNA resources.

- Storytelling activities for nurseries: <https://bit.ly/2GHJaVS>
- Storytelling tips for early years: <https://bit.ly/2GjOH5b>
- Makaton in early years: <https://bit.ly/3I8LUKC>
- Developing Literacy Superheroes - NDNA Publication: <https://bit.ly/3d0lg2v>
- The FPEN Zone on Hwb-Link to Pori Drwy Stori Nursery <https://www.booktrust.org.uk/what-we-do/programmes-and-campaigns/poridrwystori/nursery/>.
Pori Drwy Stori inspires a love of books, stories and rhymes and supports children to develop speaking, listening and numeracy skills.
- Early Years Ideas - Story book activities. <https://www.worldbookday.com/resources/schools/early-years-ideas/>
Activity ideas for you to build upon, based on 20 popular books for nursery and pre-school, including classics such as Elmer and The Very Hungry Caterpillar, and newer titles such as The Pirates Next Door and Oi Frog!

Published October 2020



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★Brighter thinking
for early years

Factsheet

Our factsheets are written by early years experts for the early years workforce. Most NDNA factsheets are free to our members.

NDNA is the national charity and membership association representing children's nurseries across the UK. We are a charity that believes in quality and sustainability, so we put our members' businesses at the very heart of ours.

We are the voice of the 21,000-strong nursery sector, an integral part of the lives of more than a million young children and their families. We provide information, training and advice to support nurseries and the 250,000 people who work in them to deliver world-class early learning and childcare.

See the full range of NDNA factsheets at www.ndna.org.uk/factsheets

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