

Healthy Body, Happy Me 2024

Tell stories with me





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Early years practitioners have the fantastic privilege of being able to share a passion and excitement for reading with children, inspiring them to develop a love of books and reading and giving them the skills they will need for their future reading and writing journey.

Children need adults who enjoy telling stories, adults who can bring the story to life and make it exciting. Adults should be committed to planning great story telling adventures in new and exciting ways/places and with stories that spark and develop children's imagination and creativity, for example, outdoors under a blanket with a torch.

Stories are exciting when adults use their voice and tone to set the scene and create an atmosphere, build anticipation and develop characters and story plots, and vary the pace, speed and volume as appropriate to the story. When telling a story, ensure that you use your whole body, including facial expressions to help children recognise a range of emotions. Stories can offer children a safe space to explore challenging topics and recognise their feelings and provide time for children to process what they see, hear and feel and talk about story events.

Use children's interests, fascinations and experiences to plan your storytelling experiences and regularly audit your resources to ensure that the stories you provide enable children to see themselves, their families and their own experiences in stories.

Today's activities will offer multi-sensory storytelling experiences for adults and children to enjoy together.



Read together



Activity 1 Washing hands

social story



Make everyday actions fun!

Social stories help children develop understanding of contexts, skills or achievements by visually structuring the process and providing opportunities to learn the rules in social situations. They are particularly useful for children with social communication difficulties or those who find transitions challenging. We have provided one example, but you can create a social story for a range of situations, including sharing toys, going to the toilet, what happens during circle time, snack and mealtimes. Use your knowledge of the children to identify where a social story may be helpful for individual or group needs.

Activity outline

We are using 'washing your hands' for our social story.

Keeping the goal in mind, begin to structure your story by taking real life photographs to sequence the process, e.g. images of your bathroom or handwashing space, each stage of a child washing their hands, e.g.

1. Pulling up their sleeves
2. Turning on the tap
3. Rinsing their hands
4. Adding soap
5. Cleaning their hands
6. Rinsing the soap off their hands
7. Turning taps off
8. Drying their hands
9. Going back to play.

Include children in your social story images where possible.

Now add descriptive and coaching sentences with key details of the goal – what, how, who and why, e.g. 'rub your hands together to spread the soap across your hands'.

Construct your social story book with the narrative alongside the images you have taken, then:

- Read your social story daily to support children to learn the process
- Regularly review them to ensure they continue to meet the children's needs.



Scub scrub



Activity 2 Oral traditional tales

There are lots of different ways to share traditional stories with children aside from story books. Oral stories with props are a wonderful way for children to develop narrative skills, vocabulary, listening and attention.

Activity outline

Locate a quiet, comfortable outdoor space for your story. Show the children your story bag, explaining that you are going to tell the children a story using the objects in your bag to help you.

Build anticipation about what could be in the bag, e.g. "What do you think might be inside? Let's see if you are right...let's have a look." Ask children if they can guess which story you might be about to tell.

Create a story using your story props, using typical vocabulary such as 'once upon a time', 'and suddenly...', 'the end' etc. Once ended, recap the characters, events and sequence – what happened at the beginning, in the middle and how it ended.

Discuss the story, for example, "Goldilocks was scared when she woke up, can anyone remember why she was scared?", "What do you think might have happened if Goldilocks stayed in the cottage and said sorry to the bears?"



Fancy dress



Resources

- Story bag
- Story objects, for example, animal figures, small world people or house, different sized spoons or bowls.

Extension

Invite children to volunteer to take a turn telling the story with the props, supporting the storytelling and sequence of the story, where appropriate.

Create traditional story prop baskets so children can retell familiar stories independently.



Get the children involved



Activity 3 Story theatre

Role play stories are a physically active way for children to take part in stories. Use children's favourite stories to encourage dramatic play and storytelling, developing children's vocabulary, imagination and confidence.

Activity outline

Choose the children's favourite story book and ask them who would like to act out the story. Talk to children about the story and the individual characters. Ask children which character they would like to be and agree story roles. For children who choose not to take part, find other tasks so they are still included, for example, ringing bells, holding the story book etc.

Decide on a suitable space and gather any props or costumes you may need. Run through the key elements of the story plot and the sequencing of events.

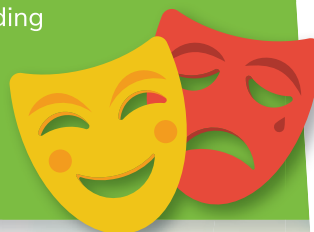
Narrate the story while the children role play the characters and events. Use your tone, pitch and intonation to bring the story to life, building anticipation and excitement.

Celebrate children's achievements as the story ends. Offer them the opportunity to take on new character roles as you re-tell the story. Invite children to take the role of the narrator and sit beside them to support their role.



Resources

- Children's favourite story books
- Props or costumes, e.g. hats, fabric, small world resources to represent items in the stories.



Dress up and act it out

Extension

Create an outdoor stage space (you can use string or tape to map out a stage area on the ground) and add a dressing up box and story box for children to role play their favourite stories and events. Encourage children to make tickets, invite audiences and perform for their friends.



Take your performance outside



Activity 4 Storytelling using loose parts

Develop children's imagination, creativity, curiosity and interaction by using loose parts to tell stories.

Activity outline

Sit the children together and select some loose parts resources to tell a story. Get creative and make characters from pebbles, pegs or pinecones and then introduce objects for the scenery, such as a block of wood for a train, fabric for a pond or some bark as a bridge.

Make up a story using the items to 'act out' the characters and events, modelling how to use story language, e.g. "Little did she know there was a..." or "Finally he was able to..."

Encourage children to join in the storytelling by choosing their own loose parts characters or events and weaving them into your story. Support their creative choices, giving them the time they need for story development. Alternatively, provide a story narrative as children play, support with sequencing events and introduce 'problems' for characters which the children (or their characters) can solve. Most of all, have imaginative and creative fun!



Create a scene



Resources

- You will need access to a range of loose parts, e.g. pebbles, pegs, pine cones, blocks, fabric, bark etc.

Extension

Encourage children to create their own loose parts characters and story scenes and invite them to share their story. Create a story display by asking children to take photos of their characters and scenes while adults scribe the narrative. Adults can read the story back to the child so they can hear their story being retold. Make the display available at child height so children can revisit their stories and share them with their friends.



3D storytelling

Further resources, links and stories:

Creative Storytelling in the Early Years - NDNA training

www.ndna.org.uk/storytelling

Championing SEND

www.ndna.org.uk/ChampioningSEND

Everything your setting needs

www.hope-education.co.uk



Reading is fun!



Put on a show



National Day Nurseries Association

At NDNA, we don't just provide nursery membership, lobby government and offer training, we are dedicated to making a difference. We are a charity that believes in quality and sustainability so we put our members' businesses at the very heart of ours. We enhance, support, nurture, cherish and challenge.

Every year we run an annual Healthy Body, Happy Me campaign to encourage better health and happiness by giving nurseries FREE resources for play, learning and fun.

Get involved with our 2024 campaign and help keep your children happy and healthy.

Important: Activities with children must always be risk assessed, including for allergies or choking. Children must always have adequate supervision. Resources and materials must always be appropriate for children's age and stage of development.



National Day Nurseries Association

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#HealthyBodyHappyMe

www.ndna.org.uk

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