

Disclaimer: 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.

Activity: Imagination generation

Develop vocabulary and storytelling skills through creativity and playfulness by using engaging books to spark imagination and open a world of possibilities.

Learning aims:

- Pre-reading skills
- Listening
- Vocabulary development
- Comprehension
- Creativity
- Narrative development.

Resources

- Books which inspire imagination, e.g. *Use your imagination* by Nicola O'Byrne, *Whatever next!* by Jill Murphy, *Not a box* by Antoinette Portis, *What do you do with an idea?* by Kobi Yamada
- Access to video or audio versions of the book (optional)
- Cosy space



Activity outline

1. Spend time in your cosy areas with children individually, in pairs and in larger groups, sharing the range of books which inspire imagination
2. Ask thoughtful questions as you read the books, keeping them open and allowing the children to value your genuine curiosity in what they are thinking. "I wonder..." is great to use but be careful not to bombard the children with questions. Let them lead the thinking and ideas
3. As with other areas of learning, children benefit from adults modelling skills, language and behaviours. Show your own playful and imaginative side by demonstrating your imagination, curiosity and creative thinking, e.g. "As I walked through the forest I heard a rustle in the trees. I thought it was a scampering squirrel, but to my surprise I found a tiny forest fairy looking at me! What do you think happened next?"
4. By using the stories as starting points, encourage the children to use their imagination in play and talk. Remember that there is no right or wrong with imaginative play and thinking – the more creative the better

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5. In the *Use your imagination* book, Rabbit asks how to start creating a story and Wolf replies, "Use your imagination! It's making up words and pictures in your head." Encourage the children to tell their own stories – it can be easier to start by revisiting and remembering real life experiences (such as a day at the beach) and then reimagining what happens (a pirate adventure)
6. Encourage children to discuss each others' ideas – when bouncing ideas off each other (both children and adults) the possibilities for exploration and imagination increase
7. Like all areas of learning and development, imagination and creativity are enriched through practise and experience so return to the stories, remember together previous versions of imagined adventures and provide support for those children who need a little more help to develop their creative thinking skills.

Extension ideas:

- Record the children verbalising their imaginary stories and provide these in the cosy area for them to revisit
- Encourage children to recreate their imaginary worlds through a variety of media, e.g. painting, modelling, clay, online drawing tools etc.

NDNA products to support you with this activity:

- Online course – [Creative Storytelling in the Early Years](#)