

# Learning Links' Tip Sheet

## Story Telling



Telling stories is not always easy.

### To tell a story you need to:

- ~ tell who the story is about, where and when it happened;
- ~ put the story in the right order - beginning → middle → end;
- ~ give details about what happened first, next, at the end;
- ~ suggest why the events happened;
- ~ tell how the characters felt and why (more difficult for young children);
- ~ use joining words such as and, then, when, so, because, but and if; and
- ~ give the listener enough information so that he or she doesn't need to ask lots of questions to understand the story.

### Why are story telling skills so important?

Story telling skills are needed for:

- ~ telling and later writing stories at school;
- ~ reading (reading can be easier if children have heard a lot of stories and are familiar with how stories are set out and include a beginning, middle & end, character descriptions and a problem that is eventually solved);
- ~ good communication (conversation involves telling stories such as telling someone about a movie, holiday or soccer game);
- ~ organising yourself, your ideas and actions;
- ~ expanding and exploring different ways to play; and
- ~ working through problems and negotiating conflict with others.

### Some difficulties children may experience:

Most children can tell stories but some may have more difficulty than others. Some difficulties a child may experience are:

- ~ starting a story, for example, if you ask a child what they did at school today they might answer "nothing" or "just played";
- ~ getting started but having difficulty sequencing/ordering events; and
- ~ assuming listeners know as much about the story as the story teller.



One way of helping us recognise our children's difficulties with story telling is to take note of how many questions you need to ask them to see if they understand the story. Questions to test understanding of a story told to them can include the following.

- ~ Who is the story about?
- ~ Why did something happen?
- ~ What happened next?
- ~ What happened at the end?

### Things you can do to help:

- ~ Read lots of books, magazines and tell stories, talk about them and ask questions about them.
  - ~ During or after the story, try asking some of the following questions.
    - What was the story about?
    - What happened first?
    - Why did something happen?\*
    - How do the characters feel?\*
    - What happened at the end?
    - What else could have happened?
    - What would you have done and why?\*
- \*How and why questions are more complex for children.*
- ~ Sometimes questions are tricky for children to answer. If they are hard to answer, try making comments about what the child is already saying "Oh, you're telling me about playing with Johnny from preschool, that's who you're telling me about".
  - ~ Sing lots of songs and repetitive rhymes.
  - ~ Take photos of simple routines that the child knows well. Present these as simple stories or as a sequence of pictures. Encourage him/her to put them in order.
  - ~ Use familiar story starters and finishers, e.g. Once upon a time .....The End.



*The information in Learning Links' Tip Sheets is prepared by experienced early childhood professionals. Each child is unique and this material is not necessarily suitable for every child, parent or carer. We recommend you discuss this information with your child's therapist or education professional prior to using these tips.*