



Series editor
ALISTAIR
BRYCE-CLEGG

fantastic ideas for storytelling



JUDIT HORVATH

Featherstone



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Introduction

The main aim of the book

Amongst many popular activities in early years, listening to and telling stories remains one of the most popular things to do. Apart from being fun and exciting, storytelling has many functions for a child's growing mind and plays an important part in language and communication. Storytelling is one of the most powerful ways for developing human thinking and to help children make sense of the world around them. Children often retell their adventures as stories, from a simple account of having dinner to major life events. Stories organise moments from the past and as they happen, and both the story and its telling convey important information about the self, relationships, and thoughts and feelings in the children's personal life.

The main aim of this book is to introduce simple but creative ideas to prompt and aid storytelling for and with the children. A growing number of research studies have shown that, in some cultures at least, parents and their babies talk about the past and future much more frequently and in greater depth than we had ever expected (Nelson 1989, Engel 1995). Studies have also shown that social interaction is not only the site of emerging abilities such as conversation and storytelling, but that the input of conversational partners can have a strong influence on what a child learns (Snow and Ferguson 1977, Miller and Sperry 1988).



Learning through storytelling

Storytelling has many benefits, and not just for the children: telling and listening to stories in a variety of ways will strengthen the relationship between storytellers and listeners. It instills virtues in the children: by telling children stories that come with a meaningful message, qualities like integrity, courage, honesty and so on will be inculcated from an early age.

Stories will make children aware of their own culture and roots. Recounting stories from their own childhood and about various activities and celebrations from their own lives will make children more aware of the different customs and traditions prevalent in their families. Sharing stories about various family members will help them learn about their lineage. At the same time, stories also broaden the children's world, exposing them to different cultures and countries.

Storytelling enhances verbal proficiency, helps acquaint children with language as well as helping them to learn new words and phrases, whilst also improving listening skills and strengthening attention span.

Storytelling encourages creativity and imagination, so children become open to ideas and free thinking. Storytelling sharpens memory and increases concentration. Storytelling, as a regular activity, can help children to enjoy and better understand what they are reading. It also encourages children to be confident when asking questions, learning the art of following their own curiosity. Ultimately, storytelling teaches children a really important life-skill: it helps them to face difficult situations and aids the process of getting to know and control their own feelings.





The structure of the book

The pages are all organised in the same way. Before you start any activity, read through everything on the page so you are familiar with the whole activity and what you might need to plan in advance.

What you need lists the resources required for the activity. These are likely to be readily available in most settings or can be bought/made easily.

What to do tells you step-by-step what you need to do to complete the activity.

Observation questions prompt the practitioner to evaluate how the children are engaging with one another and the activity itself, with links to the EYFS Statutory Framework.

The **Health & Safety** tips are often obvious, but safety can't be overstressed. In many cases there are no specific hazards involved in completing the activity, and your usual health and safety measures should be enough. In others there are particular issues to be noted and addressed.

Taking it forward gives ideas for additional activities on the same theme, or for developing the activity further. These will be particularly useful for things that have gone especially well or where children show a real interest. In many cases they use the same resources, and in every case they have been designed to extend learning and broaden the children's experiences.

Finally, **What's in it for the children?** tells you (and others) briefly how the suggested activities contribute to learning.