



Talking Tip 35

Resource

Children as storytellers

In their socio-dramatic play, children relive experiences and make up stories about things that are familiar to them. They organise themselves and use language to both direct the play and to provide the dialogue.

Children will also tell stories about events that have happened to them - a trip to the park or a visit to the fair. Take photos of a baking activity or planting seeds and then show them to the children. This will prompt them into describing what they did in these activities.

They will also retell stories that they have heard either to a group of dolls, teddy bears or children.

Storytelling is important for children because it enables them to take ownership of a story. They can adapt it to their own style. It can help them make sense of issues and problems.

Adults need to facilitate children telling their own stories by:

- actively listening (face-to-face)
- repeating and recasting what the child says (this is more effective in encouraging talking than asking lots of questions – remember the traffic lights!)
- talking to parents to find out what the children have done outside the setting which may be a 'story' to tell others

Remember: stories can be about anything – a child's story may be really simple (for example 'I've got red shoes') or more complex and imaginative. Let the child lead you and match their level of language when you respond.

How do you provide space for children to tell their own stories?

Do you have a storytelling table where children can tell stories to an adult who can scribe them and then use as stories people can read and share in the story corner?

Children can also be encouraged to act out these stories with other children.

Do you organise story telling groups or have some or all of the following?

- Storytelling chair
- Storytelling robes
- Storytelling cards
- Storytelling box

2011 is the National Year of Communication for more information visit www.hello.org.uk

November 2011: Enabling Environments
Adults are the best resource – adult:child interaction supports speech, language and communication development

