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## The Benefits of Storytelling

"Please, can you tell me a story?" That is a question that children often ask their parents. There's something about stories that captivate us. Even when we've heard a story many times, we look forward to another re-telling, and adding our own comments or interpretations. Adults and children alike enjoy a good story no matter how many times they hear it.

Storytelling is the oldest form of teaching and offers many benefits for both the teller and the listener. While many parents worry about how to "teach" their children in this time of at-home learning, by engaging in simple storytelling, they are doing just that!

Storytelling helps children with communication skills and develops their ability to listen, which are important when they are in a classroom environment. Listening to stories develops children's imaginations as they create pictures in their minds about what is happening in the story. Storytelling encourages curiosity in children, by helping them form questions like, "What is going to happen next?" and "Will this story have a good ending?" These types of questions open up conversation and promote discussion with the storyteller.

### Tips for STORYTELLING

- Plan your story well
- Use language that kids can understand
- Maintain eye contact
- Modulate your voice
- Plan your pause at critical moments
- Narrate the story like a movie
- Encourage interaction while narrating
- Create sound effects



A simple way to spark interest in storytelling is to share stories about your family events and traditions, and your own childhood experiences. You will be surprised by how much interest your children show and how willing they are to tell and re-tell their own stories. The attention and personal interaction during storytelling will strengthen bonding with your children and also help them express themselves better.

It may not seem like it, but this extra time at home won't last forever. Use some of the time to talk and tell stories with your children. Doing so will help your family build new stories that you will enjoy telling and hearing together for many years.

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## Storytelling & Conversation

Storytelling and conversation are very much connected and one supports the other. Telling and talking about family stories help children learn about their past and give insight into their culture and traditions.

Parents of older children often lament the fact that their children don't talk to them, or share details about their lives. Engaging children in conversation early helps support that habit, as children need conversation for many reasons. Conversations help children express their thoughts and feelings, resolve conflicts, ask for help, and learn from others in their lives. They need many opportunities to engage in conversation with peers, adults, individually, and in groups.

Parents can support the development of language and conversation skills in young children by asking them to re-tell stories they have already heard, and make sure they contribute to the story. Offer them an opportunity to create a new ending, or change the role of some of the characters. Continue the story after it ends or invent a new story, using the same characters.

Everyday activities can be opportunities for rich conversation with your children. Here are some ways to make conversation a natural part of your family life:

- **Use meal time, car rides, and bed time to catch up on your children's day** and learn about what they did, what they are thinking about, how they feel, etc.
- **Ask open-ended questions** which challenge your children to think a bit more as they express ideas. Use "why" questions rather than questions that can be answered with one word answers such as "yes" or "no." Adults can.
- **Use pretend play to tell stories** and to show your children how to express their feelings and solve problems. Toy dolls and action figures can have some interesting conversations!
- **Use photos, videos, heirlooms, and souvenirs to relive** events and experiences that you have enjoyed together as a family.



## Helpful Websites

<https://www.kumon.co.uk/blog/the-benefits-of-storytelling/>

<https://www.naeyc.org/our-work/families/everyone-can-be-storyteller>

<https://aptparenting.com/importance-of-storytelling-for-child-development>

<https://www.parent.com/how-to-make-storytelling-a-fun-and-engaging-family-affair/>