

Narrative Skills

Narrative Skills is one of the early literacy skills that researchers say are important for children to have in order to learn to read. Narrative skills help children understand what they hear and read. Narrative Skills is expressive language, including being able to describe things, to tell events in order, and to retell stories.

Babies...

Naming things (real objects and pictures in books) as you go through the day will help Baby learn to talk. Here is a poem that names body parts:

(Lay Baby in front of you and touch each of her body parts as you sing or say the words)

Good morning toes,
Good morning toes,
And how are you today?
I trust you had a good night's sleep,
And now you're ready to play!

Additional verses:

Good morning knees
Good morning tummy
Good morning hands
Good morning cheeks

Preschoolers...

Using words to describe things:

Being able to describe stories, pictures, or events in lots of detail is a pre-reading skill that will help your child to better understand what she reads later on.

Activity: You and your child can each draw a picture of a favorite story, using the materials provided. As you both work, talk to your child about what he is drawing:

"Tell me about what you drew here? Why did you choose that colour?, Where will your dog go next?, What should I put in this garden?"

School-Agers...

Talking about a story Prediction, or guessing what happens next, can help a child better understand what she reads.

Activity: Choose one of the stories and ask your child questions such as:

Before reading: *(Study the book cover with your child.)*

"What do you think this story will be about? Why do you think that?"

As you read: *(Stop occasionally before turning the page.)*

"What do you think will happen next? What clues make you think that?"

After reading:

"What would you have done if you were the character? What do you think would have happened if ___?" *(make up a new ending)*

Re-telling a story:

Being able to re-tell the main events in a story shows that the child understands what she reads. You can help your child build this skill by reading a story aloud and asking her to re-tell it with words, by acting it out, by using props such as puppets, or by drawing it and explaining the illustrations.

Toddlers...

Narrate your life. As you go through your day, talk about some of the things you are doing. Explain them in simple terms: First we'll put on your shirt, then we'll go to the kitchen, and then we'll make breakfast. This helps children understand that stories have a beginning, middle and end.

Here is an action rhyme to help your toddler name body parts: *(Help him touch each part as you say it)*

Touch your nose,
Touch your chin,
That's the way this game begins.
Touch your eyes,
Touch your knees,
Now pretend you're going to sneeze!
ACHOO!
Touch your hair,
Touch one ear,
Touch your two red lips right here.
Touch your elbows where they bend,
That is how this game will end!