

# Storytelling and Reading Comprehension

## Why Storytelling?

Bedtime stories lull our children into a state of serenity and wonder. The fables we narrate teach our children about infinite possibilities, far-away worlds, and impossible feats. One of the most effective ways to engage our children in reading is through the infallible art of storytelling. As humans, we enjoy the unfolding and progression of a story, from the introduction, to the climax, to the resolution of a suspenseful chronicle.

There is a tinge of magic to stories because they engage the visual mind, the creative faculties, and language abilities. Stories conjure the sheer power of our imaginations.

Literacy is a lingering issue among United States children, and we can proliferate this ongoing trend with storytelling and its imaginative capabilities.

Through story books, parents and children can explore the many uses of letters and words, as well as the unique job that every letter and word performs in language. Fraught with color, adventure, fantastical illustration and amusement, children's story books are the perfect tool for every child struggling to comprehend text.

## Precursor to reading comprehension

Vocabulary accounts for a large portion of reading comprehension. Without a certain degree of word knowledge, your child will struggle immensely with comprehension. Asking your child to remember a series of words and definitions is not an appropriate approach, especially if your child is just beginning grade school. You should consider integrating visual and kinesthetic activities to express the meaning of words.

In order to teach your child a new word, consider accompanying the word with visuals and body movement. Actively engaging your child in these interactive activities will give your child a better grasp of the word.

For example, you may request that your child draw the meaning of a word with crayons. Performing the word definition in a skit is another effective way to solidify word meaning. This will make vocabulary more tangible and easier to grapple.

If your child is an auditory learner, consider expressing the definition of a word in the form of a tune, asking your child to sing along with you.

## Building Comprehension Skills through Storytelling

Not only are stories intriguing, but they also have the capacity to teach the function of words in a larger context, and increase your child's ability to interpret the meaning of text. Successful reading comprehension is an integral ability that requires a multitude of different skills. So, how does one go about acquiring this ability?

Begin with a very simple book. After reading a page aloud to your child, ask your child to summarize the contents of that page. Then, give your child the opportunity to read a book, and comprehend it in his/her own words.

Here is an example of a more advanced approach. Select a book and compile a list of reading comprehension questions for your child. After your child has read the book, quiz your child using the reading comprehension questions you compiled.

As you can see, basic storytelling, skits, songs, and art can all combine to instill in your child a vast and solid reading foundation and the critical ability to effectively comprehend what he/she reads. This will adequately prepare them for the rigors of grade school.