

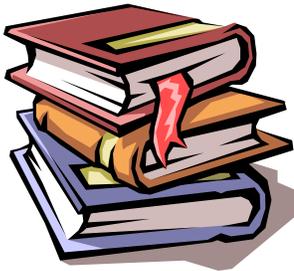


## Narrative Skills



**Narrative Skills** is the ability to use expressive language including being able to describe things, to tell events in order, and to retell stories. Reading with your child is a great way to promote narrative skills because it works as a model for your child. The language in storybooks is different from what we use when we are speaking, so reading will help expand your child's **vocabulary**. Stories also have a sequence of events. There is always a beginning, middle and end. Reading with your child also opens up conversation and can be inspiration for **play**. Your child's understanding of **how stories work** can help determine the meaning of the text when your child begins to read.

### What to Look for in a Book



Read repetitive: help your child practice predicting what comes next in a story

Read different versions of familiar folktales: makes your child aware of the basic structure of a story

Read wordless books: ask your child to tell you what's happening

Read question and answer books: let your child respond with answers between pages

### Strategies to use while Reading with Your Child

- Summarize a story you just read in your own words. This demonstrate narrative skills and will help your child remember what you've read
- Ask your baby a question and then answer it, holding your own personal conversation that your baby witnesses. At later stages, make sure your child has many opportunities to talk to you rather than just listen to you talk. Remember to leave time for your baby to answer, even if it's only babbles and coos. It takes more time for children to hear, process, and respond to questions than it does for adults. Letting your baby answer questions demonstrates that conversations go two ways.
- Read one of your child's favorite stories, stopping at certain points to ask your child what happens next. Your child will already know how the story goes, so this will help them learn how to verbally retell the story. Have your child tell you the whole story as they get better at telling stories.
- Ask follow-up questions to help your child add details. Keeping your child interested in the story by involving them. Asking your child to predict what happens next also gets them thinking about how events are connected (cause and effect). This is a skill your child can use when he or she begins to read on their own.
- As you read the book out loud, have the children act out the parts that you are reading. This will help your child internalize the story. Play helps children think symbolically: a ruler becomes a magic wand, today becomes a time when dinosaurs were alive, and a playmate becomes an astronaut exploring space. Through play, children realize that one thing can stand for another. This also helps children understand that written words stand for real objects and experiences.



Mengle Memorial Library  
324 Main Street  
Brockway, PA 15824  
[menglelibrary.org](http://menglelibrary.org)

This project has been partially funded with federal Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) funds from the Institute of Museum and Library



## Narrative Skills



### **Activities with your Baby**

Talk - When your baby babbles and coos, talk back to him or her. Expose your baby to new vocabulary and ask questions to teach your baby that conversations go two ways. Leave time for your baby to answer you. Children need extra time to respond even if babbling.

Naming Things - As you go through your day identify objects in real life and in books. This will help develop a vocabulary your child can use to talk.

Nursery Rhymes - Children find the rhythm and rhymes of nursery rhymes very enjoyable. They can also be recited as a poem or a song, however you prefer. And, because they are easily memorized, you can recite nursery rhymes at any time with your child.

### **Activities with your Toddler**

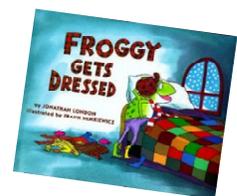
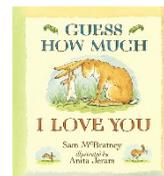
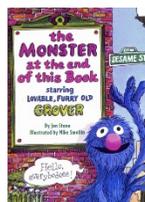
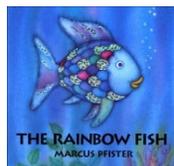
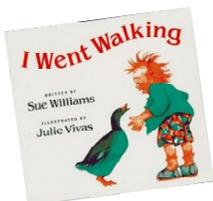
Narrate Your Life - When you are with your child, talk to him or her about what you are doing. "Now I am making lunch. Then, we will eat. And then, we will visit grandma." Sequencing events will help your child understand and talk about the order of events in storybooks. At the end of the day, ask your child about what he or she did. This gives your child a chance to practice narrative skills.

Add Descriptions Talk about emotions beyond just happy, sad and mad. Can your child identify frustrations, worried and excited? If your child identifies a picture of a fire truck as a "truck," expand upon it as a "red fire truck." Using a larger variety of words with your child will expand vocabulary.

### **Activities with your Preschooler**

Re-telling a Story - Once you're done reading a story have your child summarize what happened. You can help them along by looking back through the picture and asking questions. "How did the story start?" "Then what happened?" "What happened next?" "How did the story end?"

Act out a Story - Books can be inspiration for play. Encourage your child to act out familiar stories. Encourage your child to use body motions to help internalize and understand what is happening in the story.



Mengle Memorial Library  
324 Main Street  
Brockway, PA 15824  
[menglelibrary.org](http://menglelibrary.org)

This project has been partially funded with federal Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) funds from the Institute of Museum and Library