

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.

Here are some ways you can develop or strengthen your child's ability to use language to express herself...



Babies...

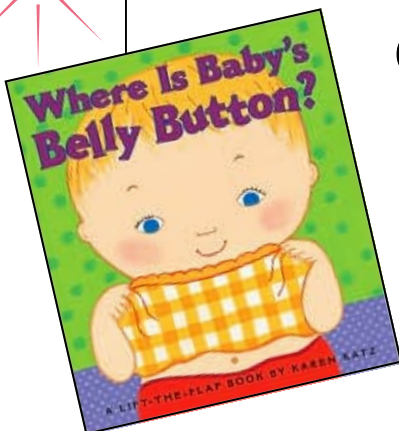
Naming things (real objects and pictures in books) as you go through the day will help Baby learn to talk. Here is a poem that names body parts:

(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

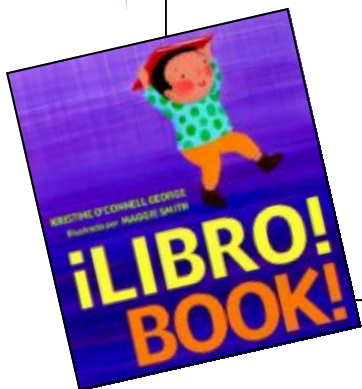


Toddlers...

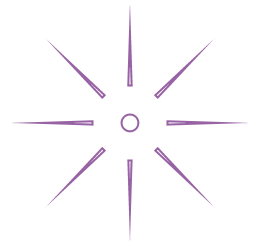
Narrate your life. As you go through your day, talk about some of the things you are doing. Explain them in simple terms: First we'll put on your shirt, then we'll go to the kitchen, and then we'll make breakfast. This helps children understand that stories have a beginning, middle and end.

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!



Preschool...



Re-telling a story

Knowing the “beginning,” “middle,” and “end” of a story is an important skill for children to have before starting school.

Activity: Read one of the stories provided. Ask your child these questions, and help him fill in some of the details.

- How did the story start?
- Then what happened?
- What happened next?
- How did the story end?

Additional questions you can ask:

What was your favorite part?

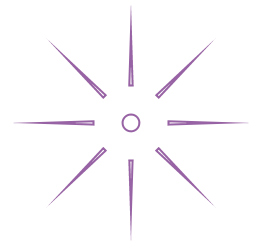
Who did you like best?

What surprised you about the story?

What part did you think was funny/
scary/sad?



Preschool...



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:

*“That’s an interesting color. Why did you choose it?”

*“I remembered the little girl in the story liked blue so I’m using it for her dress.”

*“Tell me about this part you drew on the side.”

*“Where will your bunny hop next?”

*“What sorts of flowers should I put in this garden?”



School-Age...

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)*



School-Age...

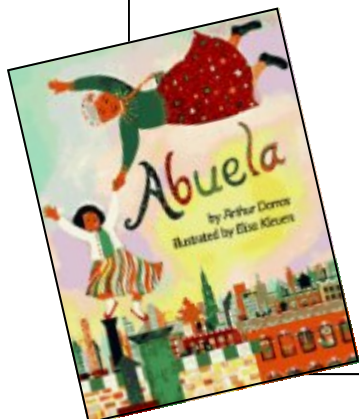
Re-telling a story:

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.

Activity: Choose a book to read aloud to your child. Then take a piece of paper and fold it in half, then in half again to make 4 squares. Ask your child to draw a picture of the beginning, middle and end of the story in the boxes. Encourage him to talk about the pictures and events as he draws.

*Older children can also use the back panels to illustrate more of the story.

Beginning	Middle
Middle	End



Center Instructions...

- Choose a variety of board books and picture books to set out.
 - Include books that have rich illustrations and short, simple plots.
- Set out lots of blank paper, as well as crayons, markers, and colored pencils
- Optional: You can also set out puppets or other props to help re-tell stories.

