


Storytelling Practice




Not everyone may be comfortable telling spontaneous stories for an audience right away, and that's ok! You can do some exercises that build confidence to nimbly move in and around and through stories. Do these exercises aloud while you're walking the dog or driving...get used to the sound of your own voice, and don't be afraid to sit in silence, pause, and regroup if you get stuck!


Challenge yourself to retell short versions of long stories you know well. Choose any stories you like – they don't have to be for children! This is just to get you some practice putting them in your own words and distilling the parts that are the most important.



Tell stories in short, two to three word sentences. Remind yourself of the awesome verbs out there and distill the most important plot points.



Practice describing things in great detail. Train your noticing muscles! Details add richness to stories, and describing people and places can buy you time if you get stuck in your plot.




5-item stories



Play this game on your own to practice spontaneous creativity, or play it with your kids as a collaborative storytelling game! If you don't laugh at yourself while you're playing, you might be doing it wrong.


1. Gather any 5 items. Toys, a shoe, a magazine, a bath towel, a spoon, anything will work.

2. Assign each item a role in the story, and then play the story out. It doesn't take very long, but the imagining is the fun part – and the most important part.



3. Experiment with different sets of predetermined roles. We recommend starting with: main character, side-kick, mode of transportation, villain, treasure.

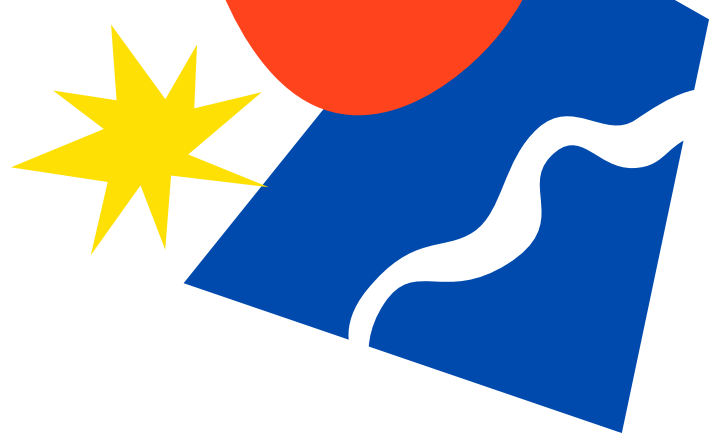
4. How can a magazine be a mode of transportation, you ask? Find a picture of a car in the magazine. Open it and hold it upside down so it has "wings." Use it as a magic portal to the images on its pages. Roll it into a tube for characters to ride on, or in.



5. Be very silly.



Overcoming fear



Make up stories to help your kids overcome their fears. Give them funny narratives and sweet characters to help them deal with their fears on their own. Here are some ideas:

Afraid of the dark? Create characters to protect them out of the shadows made by nightlights.

Afraid of monsters? Make them silly instead of scary. Werewolves aren't so scary if they can only burp instead of howl.



Afraid of being alone? Create a cast of characters whose job it is to make sure no one ever feels alone. Use them to give your child affirming mantras.



Afraid of something real? Use stories to make the scary thing interesting instead of scary. Knowledge is power. Help your kid become an expert!

