

May is Speech, Language & Hearing Awareness Month

ORAL STORYTELLING:

Why narratives are essential for reading and writing

What is a narrative?

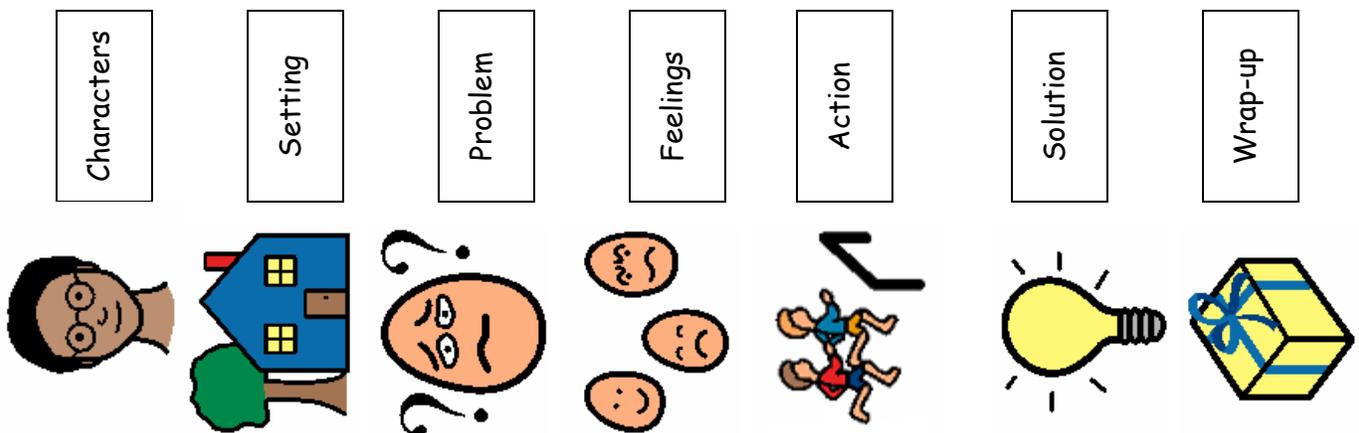
- ❖ Narration is storytelling, an important type of communication we use daily to interact with each other.
- ❖ All children come to school with their own unique style of storytelling based on cultural experience.
- ❖ Regardless of differences in cultural narratives, it is important to help children to develop the more school-based narratives.
- ❖ As a child develops, the narrative evolves from being informal (i.e., *tied to context, many cues*) to the more formal school-based narrative (i.e., *decontextualized with few cues, more complex language structures*).
- ❖ Formal narratives include a specific underlying structure which should include: *setting; characters; problem/plot; resolution*.
- ❖ Narrative structure encourages the development of complex grammatical structures which tie ideas together (i.e., *'after', 'when', 'because'*).

How do *oral* narratives develop literacy skills?

- ❖ There is a strong link between the quality of oral narrative development and reading levels.
- ❖ Oral narratives are the foundation for written language skills; failure to develop strong narrative skills limits communicative success both academically and socially.
- ❖ **Academically**, oral narratives play a key role in understanding oral and written information in the classroom:
 - Story telling, first oral and then written, is required from preschool through to the end of high school and beyond.
 - Through listening to stories and telling stories, children develop higher level thinking (e.g., *the ability to assume a character's perspective, make inferences, and analyze information*).
- ❖ **Socially**, the ability to recount experiences and events allows for successful interaction with others and provides the opportunity to reflect on morals and values:
 - Narratives play a role in connecting home and school experiences.

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Make oral storytelling an important part of your class!



What can you do to promote *oral* narrative development?

3-4 years of age: Random sequences---stories including descriptions or labelling of character's actions and feelings

Enhancing Activities	Examples: Using well known stories and fairy tales allow more access to different versions of the story and items such as finger puppets
Show and tell 	Tell us about your favourite toy, when and how you got it and why you like it the most.
Puppet play 	Have students use finger puppets during free play to enact a familiar story (e.g., Little Red Riding Hood).
Painting or drawing as storytelling 	Draw a picture about a favourite story or one that has been told in class (e.g., Goldilocks and the Three Bears).

4-5 years of age: Descriptive action sequences---stories consisting of a sequence of events

Enhancing Activities	Examples
Cooking activities 	Make pancakes and illustrate the steps with pictures. Have children take turns to describe each step orally.
Puppet presentation 	Have students use puppets to enact what happened in a book (e.g., show us what happened after Goldilocks went into the house of the bears).
Wordless books 	Tell us two things of what happened on this page.

5-6 years of age: Reactive sequences--- theme-based stories with some cause-effect relationships with a resulting consequence

Enhancing Activities	Examples
Video clip predicting 	Show a movie and pause from time to time for children to discuss causes/consequences and make predictions.
The story train 	Have each child retell one thing that the characters did and then line up in accordance with the sequence of events. Hold hands and explain how two neighbouring events are linked.
Role-play 	After reading the Princess and the Pea, have one child portray the prince, with many others being "princesses". Each princess will be called out to explain to the prince why she is a true princess.

7+ years of age: Goal-directed sequences---stories with an intact narrative structure

Enhancing Activities	Examples
Story map coming alive 	Divide children into groups of story elements (see attached bookmark). Have the groups use multisensory means to illustrate the assigned element (e.g., dressing up as characters, picture of the time and place, props for solution).
Sportscaster – using different perspectives and different genres 	Watch a silent movie and have the children form groups of three and recount the event to one another as a sportscast, as a news reporter and as a story teller.

Contact your school based Speech-Language Pathologist if you have any questions about Oral Language Development and Narratives