

# Talking Together in Cambridgeshire's Festival of Stories

## Top Tips for Sharing Stories with Young Children

Stories are found at the heart of books, but they can also be found in the everyday. Stories do not cost anything; you do not need a book to tell your child a made-up story about something you've done with them today. Of course, you could borrow a children's storybook from the library and make up a story based on the illustrations seen in the book rather than reading the text, or if you wanted, you could read a storybook in a more traditional way. Whatever method you choose, you are making a difference to your child's life.



Here are some top tips for sharing stories with young children:

1. Remove any distractions, for instance turn off the television or put your mobile 'phone out of sight.
2. Follow your child's lead and make up a story about what they are doing or looking at, or gently encourage them to pick up one of their favourite storybooks and look at the illustrations with them. If your child feels settled, you can try to read some of the storybook to them.
3. Remember, you do not have to read all the words in a storybook. Simply pointing out and naming the things your child seems interested in, just as you would with a made-up story, can help them understand what they're looking at and can support their language development.
4. Try to find ways of bringing the story to life by using different voices for different characters, or by acting out key parts of the story in a simple way when no-one other than your child is there to see you.
5. You could try repeating some of the key phrases from stories out-loud together but in different scenarios, for instance, "I'll huff, and I'll puff..." whilst blowing a piece of kitchen towel to and from.
6. If your child has had enough of the story, stop, and try again another time.
7. You could try sharing stories in different places such as in a den that you've made by putting bedsheets over the table, sitting in the garden under a tree or even in the bath.
8. Try to build sharing stories into your daily routine by making up a story or sharing a book for just 15 minutes across the day, as this will help your child to develop a love of stories, and it will help them with their language and literacy learning.
9. Bring a little calm to the end of the day, by snuggling up and sharing a story with your child about what you have done today or share a story from a storybook at bedtime.
10. Most importantly, have fun making up and sharing stories with your child.