Narrative Skills

Narrative Skills are the ability to describe things and events and tell stories. Helping your child develop these skills when she is young will help her understand what she hears, and later, what she reads. An example of a narrative skill is a child’s ability to tell what happened at a birthday party or on a trip to the zoo.

What can parents do to help build Narrative Skills with babies and toddlers?

- Re-tell stories with your child using puppets or props. Talk about what is going on in the pictures.
- Name things (real objects and pictures in books) as you go through the day. Use songs and nursery rhymes.
- Make sure your child has lots of chances to talk with you, not just listen to you talk.
- Ask your baby a question and then answer for her. “Your diaper needs changing; let’s do that right now, OK? Good!”
- Ask your toddler to tell you about something that happened to him today; ask questions so he can add details.
- Use the language that is most comfortable for you!

Featured Book

The Very Hungry Caterpillar, by Eric Carle

This all-time favorite not only follows the very hungry caterpillar as it grows from egg to cocoon to beautiful butterfly, but also teaches the days of the week, counting, and nutrition. Your child will want to read it again and again!

About the author

Eric Carle is the creator of many beautifully illustrated picture books for young children. He has illustrated more than 70 books, most of which he also wrote. Find a complete list of books and about his art at www.eric-carle.com

The Fuzzy Caterpillar

(To tune of Itsy Bitsy Spider)

The fuzzy caterpillar
Curled upon a leaf.
Spun her little chrysalis
And then fell asleep.
While she was sleeping,
She dreamed that she could fly.
And later when she woke up,
She was a butterfly!
~ Author Unknown
More fun with *The Very Hungry Caterpillar*...

**Taste it...** The Very Hungry Caterpillar ate a lot of different foods. If your child is eating solid foods, let them try some of them. There are baby food versions of many of these foods, such as pears. Show your child the picture of the food in the book as you are serving it to them, so they can make the connection between the two.

**What’s the Pattern?...** The days of the week are a pattern of time. It is fun to point out patterns that you see around the house—on clothing, sheets and blankets, dishes, wallpaper. Create patterns with your child using blocks, cars, or other small toys like this:

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**Good Books to Build Narrative Skills**

**Books with a repeated phrase**

*Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See?* by Bill Martin, Jr. and Eric Carle

*Moo Moo, Brown Cow,* by Jakki Wood

**Books with repeated parts of the story**

*Overboard,* by Sarah Weeks

*Mrs. Wishy Washy,* by Joy Cowley

**Books where events happen in an order**

*Goodnight Gorilla,* by Peggy Rathman

**Books with photos of babies, animals, and everyday objects**

*Animal Babies: A Counting Book,* by Daniel Moreton

*Splash! (Baby Faces series)* by Roberta Grobel Intrater

**Any book!** You can find lots of things in books to talk about with your child.

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**Action Rhyme**

**Days of the Week**

Sunday, Sunday,
Clap, clap, clap. *(Clap hands)*

Monday, Monday,
Tap, tap, tap. *(Tap foot)*

Tuesday, Tuesday,
Hop, hop, hop. *(Hop on one foot)*

Wednesday, Wednesday,
Stop, stop, stop. *(Hold up hand)*

Thursday, Thursday,
Jump, jump, jump. *(Jump on 2 feet)*

Friday, Friday,
Thump, thump, thump. *(Pound fists)*

Saturday, Saturday,
Turn around. *(Turn around)*

Now smile quietly
Without a sound! *(Sit down and smile)*

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**What your library can do for you...**

Don’t let having a library fine keep you from using library services. Talk to your local librarian about forgiving the fines or a payment plan.

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