



FACT SHEET

The benefits of storytelling



Why is storytelling important?

Storytelling is a powerful part of early childhood learning. Through listening to, participating in and creating stories, children develop their language, communication, imagination, social skills and understanding of the world around them.

Storytelling doesn't always need to involve a book. Educators can use puppets, songs, photographs, natural materials, familiar objects and their own imagination to bring stories to life.

Storytelling supports children's development by:

Building language and communication

Listening to stories introduces children to new words, sounds and sentence structures while supporting their ability to understand and use language.

Encouraging listening and attention

Props, actions, different voices and visual cues can help capture children's interest and support them to remain engaged.

Developing imagination and creativity

Children can act out familiar stories, invent characters, change what happens next or create entirely new stories.

Building confidence

Puppets, characters and props give children different ways to participate. Children can join in through words, actions, sounds or movement without needing to speak in front of the whole group.

Supporting social and emotional development

Stories provide opportunities to explore emotions, friendships, relationships and different perspectives in a safe and familiar way.

Supporting memory and comprehension

Retelling stories, remembering characters and sequencing events can help children develop recall and understanding.

Encouraging active participation

Children can hold props, make sounds, move characters, predict what happens next or contribute their own ideas rather than simply listening.

Supporting diverse ways of learning and communicating

Visual, tactile and hands-on resources provide children with different ways to understand, communicate and participate in storytelling experiences.

EYLF Link

Outcome 5: Children are Effective Communicators

Storytelling provides opportunities for children to engage with and make meaning from a range of texts. Through listening, singing, retelling, creating and participating in stories, children can develop their communication skills and express their ideas in different ways.

NQS Link

Quality Area 1: Educational Program and Practice

Element 1.2.1: Intentional Teaching

Educators are deliberate, purposeful and thoughtful in their decisions and actions. Storytelling provides opportunities for educators to intentionally extend children's learning through modelling, questioning, shared conversations, play and responsive interactions.

Bring stories to life

Storytelling props don't need to be expensive or complicated. Try using:

- Puppets and soft toys
- Story stones or story sacks
- Masks, costumes and hats
- Pictures and photographs
- Toy food or household objects
- Natural materials such as leaves, sticks and shells
- Objects connected to a familiar story

For example, *Where Is the Green Sheep?* could be brought to life using toy sheep, coloured pictures, felt pieces or simple handmade props.

Where can storytelling happen?

Anywhere!

Try storytelling under a tree, outside on a picnic rug, on the veranda on a rainy day, during routines and transitions, or in a cosy space with cushions and beanbags.

Think about the environment and how children are experiencing the story. Can everyone see and hear? Are children comfortable? Can they move and participate? Consider your tone of voice, facial expressions, body language and positioning.

A book isn't always needed either. Educators and children can retell familiar stories, share experiences or create a story together. Try changing a character, adding a funny event or asking children what they think should happen next.

Sing a story

Songs are another way to tell stories. Rhythm, repetition and actions can make storytelling engaging and accessible for children.

You don't need to be a confident singer. Have fun with it! Change your voice, add actions, use props or let children create their own sounds and movements.

Some familiar stories and songs to try include:

- *There Was an Old Lady Who Swallowed a Fly*
- *The Little White Duck*
- *The Wonky Donkey*
- *Puff the Magic Dragon*

Educator tips

Make storytelling interactive by:

- Pausing and giving children time to respond
- Asking open-ended questions such as, "What do you think might happen next?"
- Encouraging children to choose and use props
- Following children's ideas, even when they take the story in a different direction
- Using facial expressions, movement and different voices
- Repeating favourite stories so children can become increasingly involved
- Inviting children to retell, change or create their own stories
- Using children's interests, cultures, families and experiences as inspiration

There is no single "right" way to tell a story. Follow the children's interests and enjoy creating the story together.