

# Practica Newsletter



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## Story Telling

Let's make this a story-filled holiday!



Children adore sitting on a lap exploring pictures with a loving adult. There can be no better introduction to the joys of expressive language and literature than enjoying a picture book with a loving adult.

Even children under a year old benefit by starting their own personal library. Put together a personalized picture book by printing and ring binding pictures of parents, siblings, grandparents, pets, his room and toys.

Make sure read his favourite books to him over and over again. It may seem unnecessary to share the same, simple story with him for the fifteenth time, but your toddler won't think so. By the fifteenth reading he may just be getting into the story!

He will enjoy being able to predict what's going to happen next; the phrasing and rhythm of the words will become increasingly familiar and he will feel as if he 'owns' the story just a little more with every reading. Beware the hasty parent who tries to skip a couple of well known pages of the story!

### Picture books

Choose books which have a simple story and plenty of illustrations. One sentence beneath each picture is ideal. Children won't fuss if the illustrations are more complicated than they can cope with. You can involve him by asking him to look for and point to certain things in the picture.

Rhyme books are great since there is always plenty of turning over and plenty of action to keep a child interested.

Stories about everyday happenings and other children just like themselves are always popular.

Children need a constant supply of fresh stories over the years to help build their vocabulary. Your child will gradually look forward to longer and more complicated tales.



### Tales of Yesteryear

Those of us who were lucky enough to hear stories from our parents which began: "When I was young ..." will treasure the memory.

Was my Mummy ever that naughty!  
Was Daddy really trying to help when it all went wrong?

The most important aspect of these stories was that they humanized our parents. You learned that your parents had had similar insecurities and had made all the same mistakes that you made at the same age.

The children were misunderstanding the adults and their rules whilst the adults were misunderstanding the children and their motives!

Stories which begin with: 'When I was young' are marvelous. The audience will be thrilled to learn that you made a fuss in a shoe shop and threw yourself down on the floor in a frenzy. Perhaps they haven't done that—but they may have felt like it.

Don't edit the stories to make yourself the 'goody' or it will take the meat out of the tale.

As one mother remarked: 'I often think that my children love me more for when we threw Auntie Phyllis into the stinging nettles than they do for me keeping them clean and warm!'

Children will love to hear all about your childhood even if it seemed pretty uneventful to you. There is no need to embroider the facts. After all, your childhood is sacred history to a four-year-old!

Tales of 'When I was young ...' can become family legend, asked for often and trotted out at almost any time. 'Daddy, did Grandma really pick you up by the seat of your best blue trousers? Oh, do tell us about it again.'

### 4-5 Year Olds

Trained story listeners of four or five will listen attentively to tales of adventure, fantasy or of common, everyday mischief. By now they will enjoy a fresh tale everyday but may still enjoy going back over old favourites occasionally.

As imagination grows, the need for illustrations slowly diminishes. The words are becoming more vital than the pictures.

Sometimes a bright four-year-old will be able to estimate how long it will take to read a certain amount of words on a page. He will notice if you read only one or two sentences instead of the whole page!



### Read every day

If we want literate, intelligent and creative children, we should try to radically limit the amount of time that they spend in front of the television and make the effort to read to them every day.

Even if your child has started reading, it will still be beneficial to read to him as the plots of the stories that he will be able to read will not be complex enough to stimulate his intellectual development.

Both of you will also benefit from spending special bonding time together as you share the excitement of a story!