



Key Area: Oral Language



Overview of Story Telling Development

Narrative tasks (i.e. storytelling, telling news, reports) require organisation of ideas, sequencing of ideas, establishing the main idea and taking different perspectives. Children's story telling skills develop over time.

Stage 1: Heaps (2 Years)

The child relates a collection of unrelated ideas. No cohesive links (e.g. and, then) are used.

Example

"A boy is sleeping. A girl is drawing. Bird flying."

Stage 2: Sequences (2-3 Year Olds)

The child starts to link story elements together. There is a central character, topic or setting. Tends to be a basic description of event with no causal or time links.

Example

"Dog. And boy climbing tree. Dog ran away. And dog was happy. Boy fell down. Dog and boy swimming."

Stage 3: Primitive Narratives (3-4 Year Olds) 1

Stories contain a central character, topic or setting. They may include emerging story structure elements (i.e. initiating event, actions, consequences), and will often discuss a character's emotions and expressions. Basic joining words to link ideas may be used (e.g. and, then).

Example

"The boy got up. Mum was sleeping. The boy went into the kitchen. He put in the toast and then got some milk. And then the toast was smoke. The boy dropped milk and started to cry. Mum comes running and stop smoke."

Stage 3: Unfocused Chains (4-4½ Year Olds) 1

The story is a sequence of events which are linked logically or with a cause-effect relationship. The story is related from one part to the next, but not from beginning to end. The child may now use joining words such as "but" and "because".

Example

"One day a baby duck won't come out of the egg. He rolled away and then he stood on his head. Then he hid. Then the two geese came. Then he rolled under a sheep. Then they said "don't come out". Then they left."

Stage 3: Focused Chains (4½-5 Year Olds) 2

Stories now contain a central character and a logical sequence of events. Stories have a cause and effect or temporal (time) relationship but the plot does not show the attributes or the motivations of the characters. Endings may be abrupt.

Example

"A wombat lost his dummy at his house. He looked in the kitchen and in the bathroom but it wasn't there. Then he looked in his mum's pocket. He found it."

Stage 3: True Narrative (6+ Year Olds) 3, 4

Stories now focus around an incident. There is a true plot, character development and sequence of events. The problem in the story is resolved in the end.

Example

"Once there was a boy named Sam who had a dog. One day Sam tried to buy a boat but he didn't have enough money. Sam was walking home feeling sad. But then his dog stopped to do a wee. Sam saw an old tea pot on the ground. He took the tea pot back to the shop to sell it, but the man said he did not want it. Then Sam's dog saw a cat and he bumped Sam when he ran off. The teapot fell on the ground and broke. Inside was some money. So Sam bought the boat and he was really happy."

PLD's programs that develop the above skills can be viewed by searching the codes:

1) Pbr4, 2) Pbr5, 3) Mn68, 4) Mn912 available from www.pld-literacy.org mail@pld-literacy.org Phone: +61 (08) 9227 0846
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