

Playful storytelling at home

Children are natural storytellers. When they set up races with their toy cars or make beds for their teddies, they use their imagination to tell a story. This helps them develop their vocabulary, which will support them as they learn to read and write.

Here are some tips for storytelling play.

Follow your child's lead

Children learn best through play, especially when it's based around things they like and are interested in. Join in their games by following their lead.

Repeat what your child says, and build on what they say

When your child is playing, repeat back the words they say and add in new ones. This will help build their vocabulary.

If your child is lining up their cars for a race and says, *"They're getting ready to race"* you could add *"Oh yes, they're getting ready to race to the finish line."*

Encourage children to use their imagination

When you play together, you can help your child to develop their ideas and expand their imagination. The easiest way to do this is to prompt further conversation. For example:

"I wonder what's going to happen now that..."

"What might the driver do if..."

Here are some storytelling activities to get you started



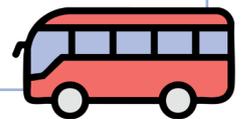
Chat with your child about what they'd like to be when they grow up. Find household items that will help you pretend to play that role. For example, a big box could become a car for a racing driver.



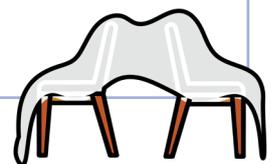
Use puppets (you could make your own with an odd sock) or toys as characters in a made-up story. Try giving them a silly voice or talk about how they feel.



When you're out and about, visiting the shops or on the bus, tell stories together based on the things your child notices and using your imaginations. For example, imagine where the bus could go if it had wings.



Build a storytelling den. You could use chairs, sheets or towels. Invite your child to bring some of their toys or items from around the house inside to help you make up stories. You could offer them prompts to help get them started, for example, "*One day there was a very tiny...*" or "*It snowed so much that...*"



Visit our website for more playful storytelling ideas:
[wordsforlife.org.uk/activities/make-your-own-story](https://www.wordsforlife.org.uk/activities/make-your-own-story)



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