

# Once Upon A Time...

## A Lesson on Storytelling

### Playgroup #7

#### Materials Needed

- A big picture for parents to practice making up short stories from images
- Printed-out copy of a story, cut into sections

#### Handouts

- Born to Read pamphlet
- SHELLS

### Introduction

Once Upon a Time! What a beautiful and simple phrase that dives into a world of fantasy, a world of wonder, learning, and life. When children curl up with their parents to listen to a book the results are far more reaching than anyone can know.

Storytelling can occur while driving in a car, sitting on the couch, or getting ready for bed. The habits that are created between parent and child through reading will enhance children's cognitive development.

Pictures are worth a thousand words, plus they are fun for children to look at. Children love to look at pictures while you tell them a story. Stories can be as simple as a 30 second story or they can have more depth and last much longer. *For this lesson start by having a big picture for everyone to see and then ask a member of the group to make up a short story about the picture. This exercise can help parents get in the habit of telling their children stories about things that they see.*

### Lesson Plan

#### Lesson Objectives

- Learn and share different ways to implement storytelling in the daily lives of your children.
- Discuss the benefits of reading and storytelling for children and their families.

Stories have an amazing power that enables children and parents to participate in the same fantasy world. When parents read to their children, not only does it create a bond between parent and child, but it helps their child's imagination and cognitive development. This development is essential in preparing your child to learn in school.

### **Reading to Your Child**

When reading to your child, make the book and pictures exciting. Change your *voice patterns* for different characters and emotion. Also talk to your child about the pictures and the story by *asking questions*. Researchers have coined a new term called *dialogic reading*. Dialogic reading involves having a discussion with your child about the book. Ask open ended questions about

*who, what, and where*, and then expand upon the child's comments. This will help your child learn vocabulary, while also encouraging them to engage their imagination.

Reading to a young child can be hectic. Children do not always have the attention span to sit still during a whole book. On average, if you add **2 minutes to your child's age** that is the amount of time that you can expect your child to pay attention, but be flexible and don't make reading time something that they will not like.

### **Making Time for Story-Time**

There never seems to be enough time in the day to complete your to-do list, and adding another 5 to 10 minutes in reading to your child can seem impossible. Find the moments where you can "read while you work." One mother mentioned that she would read to her children while they were in the bathtub, another mother would tell stories while she was driving with her kids. Bedtime is also another popular time to read because it helps to calm children down and get ready for the night. It doesn't matter when you find the time to read, how you find the time, or how much time you have, just that you find an opportunity every day.

### **Activity**

Story time is wonderful because there are so many ways to have fun and accomplish the desired goal. Share the following activities with the mothers in your group and choose one to do as a group.

#### **Circle Stories**

Circle Stories are created by every member in the group. Together choose a theme for your story and someone to start the story. Go around the circle and allow each person to add a little to the story at a time. It is up to you whether you switch off at every word, sentence, or allow the individuals to stop when they want. If possible, you can use a tape recorder to record the story and later type up the story so everyone can keep a copy of the story.

#### **Puzzle Tale**

Copy a folktale from a printed anthology and cut it up into sections or scenes. Paste each section on a separate page. Give each mother a section and have her prepare to retell her piece of the whole story. Assemble the story by having each mother retell her part in the plot's sequence. Have mothers keep the flow going as the story is told so that the performance moves along as though one person were telling it. Do a second round by giving mothers different sections to retell. Notice how differently parents retell the same sections!

#### **Life Stories**

Allow everyone to pick an interesting story from their life and take turns telling each story. The following is a list of ideas so you can create a theme throughout the stories, or to help them pick their favorite story.

- Most embarrassing moment
- First day of school
- Family vacations
- Family pets
- Holiday stories
- Favorite stories from Grandma and Grandpa

## **SHELLS**

See handout for instructions on making your child's own story book about him/herself!

## **Suggested Reading**

### **Creative Storytelling: Choosing, Inventing, & Sharing Tales for Children**

by Jack Maguire

## **References**

- Little One's Reading Resource (2005). *20 minutes a day: The positive effects of reading aloud to children*. Retrieved on January 8, 2008, from <http://www.littleonesreadingresource.com/positive-effects-of-reading-aloud-to-children.html>
- Storytelling Activities & Lesson Ideas* (2000). Retrieved on January 8, 2008, from <http://www.storyarts.org/lessonplans/lessonideas/>