

# Using storytelling to talk about...

# Making Relationships

Stories, Poems and Activities to teach and learn in the Early Years

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# Introduction

## About the series

This book is part of the 'Using storytelling to talk about...' series which gives teaching practitioners the support and resources to develop and use storytelling and poetry/song performance skills in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Each book has specifically-written short interactive stories and poems/songs that are linked to the three different learning and development areas, 'Personal, social and emotional development', 'Understanding the world' and 'Health and self-care'. The prime area 'Communication and language' is a running thread throughout all five books.

## How to use the series

All the stories and poems/songs deal with issues or experiences that would be familiar to young children. They are short, interactive and simple to perform, with repetitive texts that offer the children the opportunity to respond and join in at their own level of understanding and language development.

The stories and poems/songs can be used in a variety of ways, for example:

- as a 'Let's have a short story (poem/song)' session at a set time each day or on a particular day of the week.
- as a way to help introduce, support or consolidate a topic or theme.
- by choosing a themed story/poem to support or discuss a particular issue, e.g. sharing.
- as an assembly or class performance resource.
- as a book corner recording for play sessions or quiet time.

## How to use this book

This book contains eight themed sections that are linked to different early learning goals listed in the focused learning and development area. Each section has a story or a poem icon to show what type of text it is. Use the contents page to select the theme or type of text that you require.

Each section is divided into the following parts:

### A. Teacher's notes

- **Theme name:** main learning skill or idea focus behind the story or poem/song and accompanying activities.
- **EYFS learning objectives:** relevant early learning goals from the book's main learning and development area.
- **What you need:** list of resources such as props, images/pictures, puppets and resource sheets.

### Before the story or poem/song

- **Getting ready:** tips on what resources to collect, prepare and have ready in advance.
- **Introducing the story or poem/song:** suggestions on how to stimulate the children's curiosity and imagination

about the theme, story or poem, e.g. telling and sharing an experience, introducing a character puppet and using props or images .

- **Performance suggestions:** suggestions on how to tell or perform a story or poem/song, e.g. body movements, use of voice and child participation ideas.

### After the story or poem/song

These two parts are designed as springboards for further exploration and discussion about the story or poem/song as well as its theme. They could be carried out straight after the story or poem/rhyme or over several days or weeks.

- **Ideas to reinforce the theme:** discussion ideas, activities and question examples to help consolidate the children's understanding and response to the story or poem/song and its main theme.
- **Consolidation activities:** interactive activities to reinforce the story or poem/song and its theme, e.g. using puppets, circle games, music, performance ideas, role play, parachute games and display suggestions.

## B. The story or poem/song texts

Body and voice actions suggestions are included for some of the stories and poems/songs. As you get to know the stories and poems/songs, you may want to add in your own ideas and actions.

## C. Related activities within the learning environment

A mix of child-led and adult-led cross-curricular activities relating to the story or poem/song and its theme. The activities can be carried out within activity stations, play or in specific learning sessions. Areas include: literacy, mathematics, art and craft, environment, small world play.

## D. Resource sheets

Most of the stories and poems/songs have character or picture images. These can be copied onto card, laminated and used as puppets or as story support. Other resource sheets include games, activity cards or templates.

## Other resources

### Storytelling and performance evaluation record

Use this record to self-evaluate your storytelling skills and performance after each of the stories and poems/songs and for future sessions.

### Observation suggestions and chart

Use 'Observation suggestions' and 'Observation chart' as an assessment guide to help you identify and note the developing skills, knowledge and attitudes of individuals or groups of children.

## Preparation

One of the most important elements of story telling and poem/song performance is good preparation. Areas to consider before you see the children are:

### 1. Choosing a place to read or perform

Choose a comfortable and spacious area to tell stories or perform poems and songs. This could be in a book corner or a place where there is a big rug for the children to sit on. Make sure that there is room for the children to move if they will need to use body actions.

### 2. Look, read and learn the texts

**a. Reading the text** - If you prefer to read the text to the children, practise reading it out loud several times on your own. Note any need for voice intonation and expression and simple body actions as well as repetitive words or phrases that the children could join in with you.

#### b. Learning a story or poem/song

- Read the story or poem/song out loud to yourself several times so you get to know the plot, characters, actions, voices and repetitive texts.
- Split the story or verses into easy sections to learn off by heart.
- You don't have to learn it exactly word for word but try and learn the repetitive text and choruses.
- Story memory aid: Have the skeleton of the story with the main repetitive words/phrases by your side or put it into a 'prompt envelope'. If you forget the story, tell the children that a character has sent you a letter or card about what happened next.
- Poem/song memory aid: Have the verses on a sheet of paper near you or add the verses onto the storyboard so you can read them if needed.

#### c. Props

Use props to introduce a story or poem/song, enhance the telling and message, encourage interactive participation by the children or aid discussion after the telling.

Prepare or collect your props before the session and plan out how they will be used. Have them close at hand and if possible away from the children's reach. If you need to show a number of props then make sure they are laid out in the right order so that you don't need to work out where each one is while you are performing.

When selecting props, think about the story or poem/song and decide which props would work well, e.g. a bucket and spade for a sandcastle story.

#### d. A special story and rhyme basket/box

Have a story basket (e.g. picnic hamper) or a box with a lid in which to store the props suggested in the story or poem/song. Over time, the children will become eager to find out what is in

the basket/box for that session. Keep them guessing or offer little clues, e.g. In the basket is something we can use to build sandcastles. What is it?

#### e. Story board - a visual aid

Some young children find visual images help reinforce story events or characters. These are especially useful for children who speak English as a second language. One way to do this, is to have a good sized storyboard in which you can attach pictures and characters (see Resource Sheets) before and during the performance or telling. Attach a sticky backing so they can stick easily onto the board.

### 2. Starting the session

Develop a routine where the children know that it is story time or poem/song time. Make sure children with sight or hearing disabilities are near to you and if possible, have adult support on hand for children with physical or learning difficulties.

Start with a simple rhythm or chant as a clear signal that it's time for stories or poems and songs, e.g. a clapping rhythm, word sounds or 'Time to sit, time to listen. 1-2-3 it's story time!'

#### Introducing the story or poem/song

It is important to engage the children's imagination and curiosity before you start telling your story or poem/song, e.g. a related prop such as baked bread for exploring senses; introducing a character image or puppet; using an image to encourage discussion or make up a small story about your own life that links to the story or poem/song theme.

#### Performance skills

A storyteller can use a range of different methods to tell a story or perform a poem or song to a young audience.

These include:

- speaking slowly and clearly to a point behind the group so that all the children can hear you
- looking around the group while you perform so that every child feels involved
- using different voice tone to distinguish between different characters and their moods, as well as highlighting sound effects, actions and events
- using body actions to illustrate movements and expressions
- using a small number of props
- involving the children where possible, e.g. join in with actions, words, sounds
- improvising the text or actions if you can't remember the words or in response to the children's involvement or reactions
- positively acknowledging any interruptions and then weaving back to the story.
- revisiting the story or poem/song several times so that the children recognise it and join in with words and phrases.

The most important thing is to enjoy, share and have fun with the stories, poems and songs!

# Theme: Making new friends

## EYFS learning outcomes

To understand how we can:

- play co-operatively, taking turns with others
- show sensitivity to other's needs and feelings
- form positive relationships with other children

## What you need:

- Our special short story and rhyme box' (optional)
- 'Milo's Snowball Friend' – story
- Snow images
- Snowball photograph – Resource sheet 1 (RS1)
- Milo and Asha story puppets – Resource sheet 2 (RS2)
- Snowball template – Resource sheet 3 (RS3)

## Getting ready:

Have snow images available (or in 'Our special short story and rhyme box'). If you want to use the story puppets (see Puppets below) in the same session, have them ready and available.

### Introducing the story

Show 'Snowball photograph RS1' to the children. Point to the snow and ask: What is this called? Encourage the children to share their experiences of seeing, feeling and playing in snow. Use snow images to use as stimulus.

Point to the large snowball in the photograph. Ask: *What do you think the children are making together?* Shiver as if cold and say *'It looks very cold and that snowball looks very big! It's a good thing that the two children are helping each other – I wonder what the girl is making? I'm going to tell you a story about Milo Monster who made a large snowball and found a new friend.'*

### Performance suggestions

This story uses a lot of hand actions to show how each character makes their snowball faces. Speak slowly as you do each action and encourage the children to follow you. When the snowball face is rolled by Asha, encourage the children to join in with the 'rolling' instructions.

While reading the story, act out any other actions and encourage the children to join you so that they feel part of the story, e.g. putting on coats and gloves.

## Ideas to reinforce theme

- Asha was new and felt very shy, but Milo became her friend and made her feel happy and welcome. Imagine a new boy or girl has started today. How could we help them feel welcome and happy? (Include them in your play, introduce them to other children or show them around.)
- Why do you think it is important that we look after each other and try to be friends?
- Have you ever looked after someone in the class or in another group? How did you look after them? (Suggest times when a child was hurt, feeling sad or had lost something).

## Consolidation activities

### Role play

Put the children in pairs and find a space. Repeat the story actions to make a snow face and invite the children to mime the actions using all of their bodies. In their pairs, encourage them to mime making and modelling another object from snow – offer suggestions or let them use their own imaginations.

### Puppets

Use the 'Milo and Asha story puppets – RS2' to extend the story. Ask the children what happened when Milo and Asha went inside. How did Milo make Asha feel welcome? What games did they play?

### Circle game

Introduce the Asha puppet (RS2) to the children. Pass the puppet round the circle and ask each child in turn to say their name and their favourite activity e.g. 'Welcome Asha. My name is .... I like to play with the building blocks.'

### Display idea

Display the snowball picture faces made in 'Art and Craft' as a friendship chain. Include images of Milo and Asha standing either end of the friendship chain.



# Milo's Snowball Friend



It had been snowing all morning and the school playground was completely covered in thick snow. Milo and his class quickly put on their warm clothes and rushed outside to play.

Milo's friends wanted to run around and jump in the snow, but Milo had a better idea. He scooped up some snow and patted it into a small, smooth snowball.

Then, using both hands, he rolled the snowball along the ground, patting in the snow as he went.

He rolled it forwards. He rolled it to the left. He rolled it to the right.

The snowball grew bigger and bigger and bigger until Milo couldn't roll it any longer.

Then he carefully used his hands to scoop, flatten and dig the snow until he had made a...big smiley snow face.

Suddenly, Milo noticed the new girl, Asha watching him. "Do you like my snowball face?" he asked.

Asha nodded shyly.

"Shall I show you how to make one?" asked Milo.

"Yes please," said Asha happily.

So Milo helped Asha to scoop up some snow and pat it into a small, smooth snowball.

Using both their hands, they rolled it along the ground, patting in the snow as he went.

They rolled it forwards. They rolled it to the left. They rolled it to the right.

Soon Asha's snowball was so big that they couldn't roll it any longer.

Milo helped Asha scoop, flatten, and dig the snow until they had made a big happy snow face.

"My snow face looks as happy as I feel," laughed Asha. "Thank you for letting me play with you, Milo."

"That's ok," grinned Milo. "It was fun."

"What wonderful giant snow faces", exclaimed their teacher. "How did you make them?"

Can you remember?

*(Mime scooping up snow and making a small ball.)*

*(Pretend to roll and pat the snowball.)*

*(Push hands forwards, left and right.)*

*(Push with hands further and further apart to show snowball growing.)*

*(Use hands to show scooping, flattening, digging and modeling.)*

*(Mime scooping up snow and making a small ball.)*

*(Pretend to roll and pat the snowball.)*

*(Push hands forwards, left and right.)*

*(Push with hands further and further apart to show snowball growing.)*

*(Use hands to show scooping, flattening, digging and modeling.)*

## Related activities within the learning environment



### Literacy

Make a class book for new children to look at. Let each child draw a picture of themselves doing a favourite activity inside the outline of the 'Snowball template – RS3'. The children can add their name and copy or trace over the activity name or its initial letter. Older children (Yr1) can write a sentence about the activity e.g. 'I like to...'

Set out cards and pens for the children to create their own welcome cards for new children or future visitors. Add 'Welcome' inside for the children to copy or colour in.



### Mathematics

Wrap up sets of different sized balls in white paper or paint them white, so they look like snowballs. Invite the children to put them in size order. Give them more than one set of balls and let them sort the balls into their size groups.



### Art & Craft

Give the children copies of the 'Snowball template – RS3'. Ask them to draw their faces in the outline. Cut the snowballs out and display as a friendship chain.

Give the children clay or salt dough. Let them explore rolling it into a face shape and use tools to shape and mould different face expressions.



### Exploring

Let the children wrap an object with layers of newspaper until it gets bigger and bigger. How big can it get? The children could then use it as a game of 'pass the parcel'.

Provide a large soft white cushion or beanbag which the children can push into and mould shapes.



### Role play corner

Set out a kitchen with table and chairs so that children can role play inviting new friends back for tea.

Leave out the story puppets to enable the children to re-enact the story in their own words.



### Small world

Leave out small play figures for the children to role play making friends. Watch them play, and introduce a new figure, explaining that this is a new person who needs help and friendship.