



## Telling a story or describing what happened

Telling a story lets us share real and imagined experiences with each other. Children depend on all of their language skills for these complex speaking tasks.

To help children tell a story or describe what happened, you can:

**Repeat children's stories** and **add on** extra words, and

**Model how to describe what happened in your own talking.**

**Play** with telling a story: Describe what happened in your play together



### Play...pretend play

Pretend to be a fire fighter, a chef, or a vet.

Repeat your child's sentences in play, and add on more words to tell a story.

Child: Oh no, a fire!

You: There's a fire *in the factory!*



### At home...bumps and scrapes

Your child will tell you about scrapes and bumps.

Repeat your child's story and add on more words to describe *when, where, and what happened.*

Child: I hurt my knee.

You: Oh dear! *Yesterday* you hurt your knee *at the park!*



### Out and about...visiting a friend

Describe an activity you shared with your child when you are visiting a friend, or at preschool drop-off.

Friend: How was your weekend?

You: *We went on the train.*

Child: On the train!



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**Read** with stories: Visit the library and borrow some books

*Alexander's Outing* by Pamela Allen

*Terrible Tim!* by Katie Haworth

*Diary of a Wombat* by Jackie French

**Words** that tell a story: Use these words in your day

**Stories** and **descriptions** take listeners beyond the here-and-now to another place or experience. We include words about:

- When: *on my birthday, when it snowed, this morning, on the weekend, yesterday*  
Who: *Grandma, my family, my friend at day-care, dinosaur, fire fighter, wombat*  
Where: *at preschool, in the backyard, under my bed, inside, at the park*

**Learn** about telling a story: Ways to help language grow

When you **repeat children's stories** and **add on** extra words, you are:

- Showing that you understand what they have said, and
- Showing how to add more details next time.

When you **model how to describe what happened in your own talking**, you are:

- Providing the best opportunity for the **descriptions** to be meaningful to children, and
- Helping them to tell more of their own **stories**.

Children do not have to repeat words after you. The more often children hear different ways to **tell stories** and **describe what happened**, the more likely they will understand and use these more complex speaking tasks in their own talking.

**Speech pathology key terms:** early recount and narrative, expansion, modelling.