



Picture books

Wordless picture books help to develop your child's reading, writing and comprehension skills.

The beauty of these types of books is that there is much less pressure to read the story in a prescribed way. You can pause and discuss the pictures at length without feeling that you are interrupting the flow of any words. Research at Utah State University confirmed that many mothers are more responsive to their children when they read them wordless books. So, take time to talk about the pictures, follow up on your child's observations, build vocabulary, make connections and ask questions.

Introduce New Vocabulary One of the ways of using wordless picture books with your child is to tell the story which accompanies the pictures in your own words. Interestingly, the researchers at Utah State University discovered that mothers who read a wordless book used richer language, more complex sentences and longer phrases than mothers who simply retold the printed story. So this is an effective way of introducing new vocabulary to your child. As well as explaining the action in the picture, don't forget to also describe what else you see in the picture, using as many detailed words as possible.

Appreciate the Visual Story With wordless picture books you can focus your attention on the pictures and help point out things that children may not spot. How does the picture portray action or emotions? How can picture clues help your child understand more of the story and support their inferences, that is ideas not explicitly stated in the text? Encourage your child to also think about the colour choices and mood of the pictures. Why do they think the illustrator used a particular colour or technique?

Encourage Storytelling Ask your child to tell the story in their own words based on the pictures on each page. Help them to develop their storytelling skills by prompting them to include details about the setting and descriptions of the characters, as well as encouraging them to include the key elements of the plot including the problem which arises and its resolution. Promote creativity and imagination by allowing your child to embellish the story however they want. Suggest that they add dialogue to the storyline. For younger children you could start by narrating the beginning and middle of the wordless picture book and then asking your child to narrate the ending. Or ask them to make up a completely new ending. If they are reluctant, give a number of alternative endings and see which one they prefer.

Learn About Story Structure and Sequencing Wordless picture books are a great way of teaching your child about basic story structure and the sequencing of events in a story. Once your child has told the story in their own words, ask them to summarise what happened in the beginning, middle and the end. This will start to give them an understanding of basic story structure. Then talk about the different elements of the plot and the sequence of these events in the story. Being able to summarise a story in this way helps to develop comprehension skills.

Practice Comprehension Skills Encourage your child to predict what will happen next, make connections between the story and their own lives, discuss what the characters may be thinking and ponder the overall message of the story. If your child is hesitant, start by modelling what you are talking about. Describe what you think will happen next or what certain parts of the story remind you of. Your child should soon get the idea and will hopefully join in.

Verbal Skills and Discussion

Model how to describe the plot, setting and characters. You can discuss **cause and effect**, conflict resolution, add dialogue and elaborate on what is happening. Encourage imagination by thinking of new ways to retell the story on each new reading.

Asking questions teaches children that clues to the story are not only in text but also the illustrations. Here are a few questions to get you started.

- What is happening?
- Tell me about the characters. What are their emotions?
- What is the character thinking? How do you know?
 - What is the character's goal/mission? How will they achieve their goal?
 - Why did the character make this choice? Could they have made a better choice?
 - What is the character going to do next? How will their actions effect the story?
 - What do you think the character is saying? Why?
 - What is the setting of the story? What do you notice about the setting?
 - What will happen next? How do you know?

Storytelling increases vocabulary and verbal skills. When discussing the story introduce new and more complex vocabulary. Describe illustrations, plots and characters actions and emotions in detail. As you introduce new words, children will incorporate them into their own language as they understand the context within which to use it.

Steps to Sharing Picture books at home.

Step 1: Get comfy, snuggle up together. Make this a special time together.

Step 2: You tell the story to your child.

Step 3: Encourage them to tell the story to you (their story about what is happening in each picture. Their story may be different from yours, as they begin to use their own ideas).

If your child is confident then let them do the story telling first.

Step 4: Re-tell the story- adding dialogue and more detail.- developing vocabulary. So instead of just saying 'he went on a train', you can be more descriptive and say 'he climbed on board a fast, red train'.

Step 5: Talk about the story they have made up. How did it make you feel? Was it a scary story?

Step 6: Write in the home reading record book, for example, did your child like this book? What did they like about it? Were they confident to make up their own story? You don't need to write in the home reading record every time you share the story book. Your comments give us an idea of how your child is able to make up a story and share their ideas. Later on when your child has a book with words, we will ask that you sign every time they read at home.

Step 7: Share the story book again on another day or at another time in the day. Your child might like to tell the story to you and then later to nanny or daddy. We will ask your child to choose a different book either on a Monday and a Thursday.

Please make time for a cuddle and snuggle together sharing a book, with no phones, television or distractions.

Enjoy the learning journey together!