

Storytelling with children is important prior to when they begin schooling as it provides them the opportunity to understand the world around them. Vygotsky (1978) believed that language is an essential tool for communicating with the outside world and allows children to express themselves however they wish to (Bluden, 2011). Research suggests that children's home literacy setting is where children first discover their language and literacy skills. Bourdieu's (1986) social theory states that it is vital for parents to support children when their literacy skills are developing. He also suggests that the resources available to the child correlates with their home literacy environment. Collier (2019) states that there are many benefits of reading to children which aid their development. Some of these benefits include benefitting their later literacy skills, better social interaction with both children and adults and reading can also motivate children to explore the world around them. Times are changing and digital literacy is becoming more popular inside and outside of the classroom. Technology can have a great impact on a child's early communication, language and literacy using interactive stories, animations and songs to play along assisting the story (Billington, 2016).

Davis (no date) states that with every story read to a child is an opportunity to discover who they really are, in terms of creativity and understanding of the world around them. Story telling has many benefits for children states the imagination centre (2021) some of these benefits include instilling children with virtues and values, enhances listening skills, fosters imagination and communication skills. There are many approaches to storytelling; oral, visual, written and digital. Each of these different techniques grasp the child's attention (Masterclass, 2022). Frith's theory (1985) states that children accumulate their literacy skills through three different stages. In the first stage children demonstrate understanding of logos and signs such as Target Bullseye or McDonald's logos. Using picture books at this stage will allow children to memorise certain words as the image will stay in their memory. As children progress into the second stage, they begin to use symbols representing sounds and some children will attempt writing sounds such as 'KT' for cat. Using regular reading and recognition of pictures logos, the tone of voice used and props. As children go into the ages 3 and up, they familiarise themselves with words and sounds, some children begin to imitate the sounds, progressing their language development. As children go into the third stage, known as the orthographic stage. At this stage children begin recognising words individually without the need of prompting off parents or teachers (Viva, no date). At the age of three to twelve months old babies will begin to respond to pictures of faces, shapes and colours. It is important to read to children from before the age of three months using pictures and texture books. This develops their brain development, imagination, language and emotional development (Capstone, 2022). When a child reaches a year old, they can simply interact with others such as waving or saying 'hi', copying actions such as waving a finger saying 'no'. When children are around the age of two to three years old, they will begin to link certain elements of stories together, as they progress to three to four, they will begin to copy actions or expressions at this stage children will also begin to gain an understanding of simple words such as 'yes' 'big' 'tall' rhyming songs or books will aid this development (Welsh Government, 2019). The Welsh Government (2020) stated that they recognise how vital a child's development in the early years can be. 'Talk with me' has been set up by the Welsh government to emphasise the importance of speech, language and communication in the early years, this scheme will remove any barriers which may disadvantage a child from progressing their language development from early on in life. It is important for children to feel interested in literacy and language and one way this is possible is through using books which are

relevant to a child's interest (Bower, 2014). Reading stories to babies from birth to three months will allow the child to form connections and understand different tones in voices. Using books which rhyme, repeat and rhythm help babies to learn books like these develop early literacy skills. When reading with children the use of props or actions for words will allow children to feel involved in the story, for example, waving to say hello or goodbye. The use of actions will allow children to recognise words and their meaning earlier on, the use of props is a great tool to introduce new words to children, for example, using a toy cow will allow the child to recognise what the word is, and children may begin to say the words when they see cows outside of the home or classroom (Lewis, no date). Although books have been improving children's language and literacy skills for decades it is vital that society accepts that the times are changing and today there is more digital literacy used in classrooms, day cares and home settings now more than ever. Digital literacy has been seen to have several positive effects in the classroom. Some of these include improved motivation due to being more intrigued by animation, lights and sounds which results in more participation off children who would not normally get involved in story time, due to children having iPads and tablets they are able to access these things anywhere they would like, digital literacy also allows the child to progress at their own pace (Conneally, 2013). Just how children will become engrossed in picture books due to colours used they will also become engrossed through the sounds and moving images in animations (Conneally, 2013). Levy (2011) states that a child's exposure to reading is constantly changing due to the new forms of technology and changes in the media. Although there are many benefits to digital literacy there are also many arguments against the use of digital literacy in schools and at home too. Some of these disadvantages include if children are fortunate enough to have broadband in the home, or if children do not have access to technology at home. Some children who may live with older generations may not be able to access the digital world due to lack of understanding too (Conneally, 2013).

Engaging with children while reading stories can be achieved in different ways. Including music from the internet or animations playing on the whiteboard behind in a classroom or on a tv in the house can help the story stick in the children's memory as they might remember tunes linked to the words or remember which part of the video meant what word. Many children respond well to rhyming, question times and changing tone of voices for characters. Rhyming provides a child with little doses of learning opportunities for young children. Rhyming can develop creative thinking and free play. Bennett (2019) states that rhyming is a powerful tool when teaching children early literacy skills. Rhyming is a great technique which can boost a child's communication and language development. Simple rhyming patterns allow babies and young children to remember the words and eventually repeat or say them with you. The use of rhyme allows a child to 'act' along with you as you tell the stories. Encouraging children to participate in this way is great for fine motor skills development. Rhyming can also help a child's numeracy skills. Rhymes which have numbers help a child to recognise number sounds (Bennett, 2019). Rhyming can give children the opportunity to become more phonetically aware. Rhyming allows children to discover the different tones in their voice which will further their reading development, they will also begin to recognise similar sounds such as pen, ten, when, ken (Nixon, 2013). Logsdon (2020) states that when children can recognise and say rhyming words, they have learnt how to be phonologically aware. This correlates with a child's reading ability. Crystal (1971) stated that to keep a child engrossed by storytelling the use of rhyme, rhythm and change of voice will allow you to do

so. Asking questions while reading the story with children such as ‘how many teeth did he have’ or ‘do you think that’s nice’ will help a child to feel involved in the story. Asking questions before during and even after a story are teaching children how to analyse a piece of text and evaluate it from a very young age (Kids Academy, 2018). When reading a story to children it is important to make the characters come to life for the child to visualise the words that you are saying. One way to do this is through changing the tone of voice you are using throughout the story Cambourne (1988) also agree with this in his 7 conditions of learning which talks about immersion, demonstration, engagement, expectation, use, approximation and response. Using a monotone voice will bore a child and not grab their attention, doing nothing for their literacy and language development. Morin (no date) states that through using story telling children will slowly begin to recognise and understand pitch through using different tones of voices for different aspects of the story. Using your voice when storytelling supports children to make meanings out of the words that you are saying. Changes in the pitch for characters such as high pitch for a mouse and low pitch for a cow help the child to feel as though the characters are real life and it allows them to visualise an interaction between characters. Showing the change of emotion, a character may be feeling will allow a child to empathise with the character and enable a child to know how to express their feelings in the future as hearing different tones of voice will help them to understand how to express themselves. Pitch and speed builds intensity and can enhance the totally. While changing the tone of your voice it is important to think about using gestures and body language to help improve a child’s understanding of the meaning of words, for example, if a character is sad using a sad toned voice and pulling a sad face will allow the child to understand the emotion and physically see it through your actions. To increase suspense during storytelling it is a good idea to stay silent, or lean close to the audience to build the tension and make the audience wonder what will happen next (Victoria state government, no date). To conclude, story telling has been a great opportunity for children to understand the world around them and slowly allow them to grasp the language and literacy skills they will need throughout their entire lives. It is argued that reading paper books has always worked so why change things from how they have always worked. However, it is important to note that society is changing, and the times are moving forward, and digital literacy has had many positive impacts on a child’s language and literacy development.

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