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A treasure sack...

... or box or drawer or shelf. Whether your imagination is raring to go or not, a few props are always handy, especially if this is all new to you. Gather a few objects together that will help fire everybody's imagination when you need to make a decision about the key points of your story.

A favourite soft toy or doll could become the central character in a whole series of stories or an ongoing adventure. Or, used like a puppet, it could act as the storyteller. This is particularly useful if you are dealing with a story that touches on a difficult experience your child is having.

Build up a hoard of 'treasures': bits of jewellery, colourful pebbles, strange shaped bits of wood, old photos, little statuettes, miniatures of everyday objects. When you are collecting your hoard, how about involving other family members? Ask them to contribute to the 'treasure' with some extra surprises.

Your child might like to make their own collection of favourite toys. Then you can weave them together into a story.

Then, when you need to decide on a *who* or a *what*, you can ask your child to choose an object from the treasure sack. Make it more fun by asking them to close their eyes and take one out at random.



Questions to ask your child about the 'treasure'

- ★ what name shall she/he/it have?
- ★ what magic thing can this rock/bangle/scarf do?
- ★ where does this ball/elephant/vase live?
- ★ why not make a treasure holder together?

Decorate a shoe box or sew shapes onto a PE bag.



Key points to a story

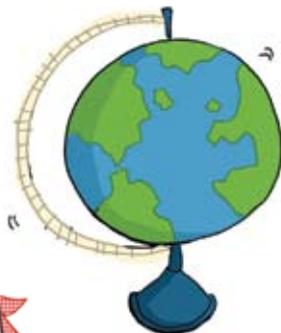
There are five key points to any good story. You can decide on them in any order and don't worry about deciding on them all before you start. You can allow them to develop as you go along.

The next pages will give you some ideas on each key point and how to use them. They are:

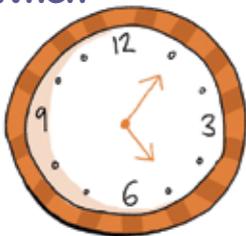
★ Who



★ Where



★ When



★ What



★ Why



★ To help you remember, why not write each of these key points on a separate piece of card and stick them up where you can see them?

★ Make them different from each other by using different colours, or drawing or sticking a little picture on each one.

Who



You need a central figure for your story. They could be:

- a person (your child, a fantasy figure or a historical character)
- an animal (a favourite soft toy or a family pet)
- a thing (a machine, a toy, a tree or even a shop or lighthouse)

If you can't decide on one then use your treasure sack. Ask your child to shut their eyes and pull something out of your treasure sack – just like the nursery rhyme about Little Jack Horner:

*"He put in his thumb
and pulled out a plum!"*

Together decide on a name for your central figure and talk about what he/she/it looks like and can do. Ask your child questions:

- Is it huge or tiny?
- Is she blue or black or green with red spots?
- Is he just ordinary or can he change shape or grant wishes?

Are you going to tell the story as though you were the central character? *"I went into the cave and saw the giant dragon."*

Or are you telling the story on behalf of the character (who might be your child)? *"So then you decided to follow the path."* Or the character might be someone else: *"Then Bertie Bear leapt up into the tree."*

If you and your child like this character, then keep on using them to help you both remember your stories. Build up a series of adventures and develop what they can do and what they learn from event to event. If your child wants to hear a particular story again, then ask them to start telling more and more of it themselves, even if they change bits!



Suggestions

- ★ a grandma who can do magic;
- ★ a cat that fits through any space;
- ★ a bus that can fly.