DEVELOPING SPECIFIC NARRATIVE PARTS

Here are some ideas on how to develop specific narrative parts. Children may only include some story elements when they first start retelling or generating their own stories. For example they may start by just including a character and some events that occurred in the story.

WHO

- Talk about ‘who’ might be a character in a book when exploring the front cover. Also discuss the characters that were in a narrative during and after reading a story book with your child.
- Encourage your child to use describing words when talking about the characters, e.g. the tall giraffe, the colourful butterfly or the scary witch.
- Play games like charades and ask your child to guess ‘who’ a person or animal is.

The Setting:

WHERE

- Talk about ‘where’ a story might be set when looking at the front cover. Also discuss the places that a character visits during and after reading a story book with your child.
- Ideal books include: *Possum in the House* by Kiersten Jensen, *Possum goes to School* by Melanie Carter, *Rosie’s Walk* by Pat Hutchins and *We’re Going on a Bear Hunt* by Michael Rosen.

WHEN

- Talk about ‘when’ a story might take place when observing the front cover together (e.g. during the day or at night, or if it looks like it might be set on a sunny day or a cold day). Talk about the words that tell you ‘when’ a story might be set (e.g. ‘Once upon a time’ or ‘One day’) during and after reading a book with your child.
- Ideal books include: *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* by Eric Carle and *Pig Out* by Sascha Hutchinson.

THE KICK OFF (The problem in the story)

- Talk about the problem that kicks off, or starts the story.
- Talk about problems in everyday contexts e.g. Forgetting the car keys, or breaking a toy.
- Ideal books include: *Mr McGee* by Pamela Allen and *Tiddalick: The Frog who Caused a Flood* by Robert Roennfeldt.
Ideas for developing later narrative parts...

FEELINGS
- Talk about how the characters feel about the problem in the story.
- Encourage your child to use the joining word ‘because’ when talking about feelings e.g. ‘The bear was angry because he couldn’t find any breakfast’.
- Ideal books include: The When I’m Feeling….Happy/Sad/ Angry etc series by Trace Moroney, The Way I Feel by Janan Cain and Panda Makes Faces by Keith Faulkner.

PLAN
- Talk about how the characters think they will solve the problem in the story.
- Encourage your child to use words ‘that tell you that the character is thinking’ e.g. ‘decided’ and ‘thought’.
- Ideal books that include multiple explicit plans include: Yummy! Yummy! Food for my Tummy! by Sam Lloyd and The Lighthouse Keeper’s Lunch by Rhonda and David Armitage.

THE COMPLICATIONS
- Talk about the reasons a plan didn’t work when reading a book.

THE EVENTS
- The sequence of events in a story occur in a specific order.
- An event can be a complication, depending on the story.
- Discuss the things that happened in a story in order, using the words ‘first’, ‘next’ and ‘finally’.

THE ENDING
- Talk about how the story ends with your child.
- Talk about how the character feels at the end of the story.
- Discuss the moral of the story with older children. Help them to understand the overall message of the story.
- Traditional fables often contain a moral. For example, The Hare and the Tortoise and The Lion and the Mouse.

Making the parts of narrative explicit helps children to understand stories better. It also helps them to tell well organised stories.

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