

Parenting Together

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Beyond the Book: Bringing Stories to Life

Books offer children a unique way to learn about the world around them. They can share details of events from the past, offer a glimpse into the future, and introduce fictional worlds that seem very real. Families can use books as a springboard for learning about history, geography, art, science, and more.

Discussions and hands-on activities help children understand and process the information they read. There are so many different ways to make books, and the information they contain, more interesting and relatable for our children.



By giving your children various ways and opportunities to respond and react to books & stories, they can construct more personal meaning(s) for themselves. Here are some fun and creative ideas to keep the exploration of books going beyond the last page:

1. Create a storytelling basket and retell the story

A storytelling basket is simply a basket of props that can be used to tell or retell a story. They are fairly simple to put together. With a little imagination, chances are you already have everything you need to create a basket based on one of your child's favorite books (e.g., stuffed animals, kitchen utensils, paper towel tubes, recycled items).

When putting together the basket, don't worry too much about replicating all of the story's elements. As long as you have a few items you can use to represent some of the characters or objects in a story, your child's imagination will take care of the rest!

Once ready, set the basket out in a cozy spot and watch as your child(ren) retells their favorite story and watch the new directions the story takes, too!

**"The more
that you read,
the more things
you will know.
The more that you
learn,
the more places
you'll go."**

-Dr. Seuss

2. Put together a themed play dough tray and play!

We absolutely love play dough in our house! Playing with it is a fantastic sensory experience that allows little ones to build hand strength and coordination and encourages them to be creative and build their imaginations. With the addition of different tools and loose parts, the possibilities are truly endless.

To put together a book-themed play dough tray, simply choose a certain element of the book, whether it is the setting or a particular character, and run with it—there’s really no right or wrong here. Color the dough accordingly, add in a few kitchen utensils, small figures, or toy cars and let your little one dive in. Check out this site to see an example of a kit inspired by Goodnight, Goodnight, Construction Site: bit.ly/playdoughkit2021

3. Dress up and role play

Children love to dress up and role play. Whether you read a story about a firefighter, a bear, a teacher, or a princess, you are bound to find something in the house that will transform your little one into one of the story’s characters.

Turn a towel into a superhero cape, add construction paper ears to a headband or transform a paper bag into a robot’s body—follow your imagination! When ready, reenact the story, play out your child’s favorite scene or create a completely new one involving the book’s characters.

4. Create puppets and put on a show

Puppets are another fun activity that lend themselves well to all kinds of books. Making a puppet gets your child involved not only in creating the puppet, but also bringing the puppet to life to tell a story.

You can create puppets out of many different materials, including paper bag puppets, popsicle stick puppets, sock puppets, toilet tube puppets, wooden spoon puppets. Get creative - there is no wrong or right way to create fun puppets!

Get started by making a list together of your story’s main characters, then look through your craft cupboard, recycling bin, and/or kitchen drawers to find supplies and get crafting! Once your puppets are ready, join your child(ren) in putting on a show!

The Book Nook

Can I Play Too?
by Samantha Cotterill

El gran libro de las emociones
by Mary Hoffman

Howl
by Kat Patrick

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resources visit us at:

orparenting.org

References

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<https://www.readingrockets.org/article/103-things-do-during-or-after-reading>
- Goodnight, Goodnight, Construction Site Play Dough Kit
<https://mamapapabubba.com/2015/05/01/goodnight-goodnight-construction-site-play-dough-kit/>
- Bringing Books to Life with Children
<https://fun-a-day.com/bringing-books-to-life/>