Sensational Stories

Access to stories for all children

Special Educational Needs & Children with Additional Needs, Area SENCo team (2008)
Inclusive activities

• You should take into account the differing needs of individual children within the setting and **tailor your approach** to each child’s needs.

  *EYFS Guidance 1.14 (2008)*

• Practitioners should focus on each child’s individual learning, development and care needs by:
  – *removing* or helping to overcome barriers for children where these already exist
  – *stretching* and challenging all children

  *EYFS Statutory Framework 1.14 (2008)*

• Early years settings must ‘**make reasonable adjustments**’ and not treat disabled children ‘less favourably’ than their peers.

  *Disability Discrimination Act (1995)*
Session aims

Participants will:

- Consider different levels of sensory stories and the benefits for children of all abilities
- Experience and explore examples of sensory stories
- Plan how you might develop sensory stories
- Consider how a sensory story can be presented as an inclusive practice in the pre-school setting
Multi-sensory stories involve...

- **sight**
- **sound**
- **smell**
- **taste**
- **touch**
- **action**

Present a wide range of experiences and activities that children can respond to by using many of their senses.  

*EYFS Guidance page 107*
Resources that might provide sensory experiences ...
Who benefits?

**All** children learn best through activities and experiences that engage all the senses.

EYFS Practice Guidance, 2008 (page 41)

Multi-sensory stories are particularly beneficial for those children who have difficulties with

- Developmental delay
- Speech and language difficulties
- Sensory impairments
- Autistic Spectrum disorder
- Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties
# Levels of multi-sensory stories

1. **Children’s story books** (typically for babies) which incorporate features that are highly visual, auditory and tactile.  
   - Resources are generally available.

2. **Standard children’s story books** enhanced by the addition of sensory props to convey the story’s sensations (rather than the story’s events).  
   - Generally available but need adaptation.

3. **Simple stories** devised by practitioners, based on children’s interests and experiences, that are presented primarily using sensory means.  
   - Need to be created with individual needs in mind.
Making story time more meaningful for children with visual difficulties …

**OBJECTS**
- Collect objects that appear in the story and let the child hold them while you read

**REAL LIFE EXPERIENCES**
- Link to what the child has recently experienced

**“Touch and Feel” books**

**VOICE**
- For different characters, moods
- Sound effects

**DRAMA**
- Act out what is happening
Creating tactile stories

Present meaningful information

Which is the best representation of a ‘tree’ for a child who cannot see?

Reduce confusion clear, simple and uncluttered

- Leaves
  - Synthetic leaves
  - Textured fabric
  - wrong
  - right

- Fence
  - Ice-lolly sticks
  - Plastic strips
  - wrong
  - right
Tactile tips

- Variety of textures and touchable elements which convey the ideas, objects and characters
- Attach securely and safely for enthusiastic exploration
- Simple and complete shapes
- Clear spacing between elements
- Not too much detail
- Consistency in use of textures throughout the story

Emphasise significant details (eg girl’s tears, wolf’s teeth)
Story time

• Enrich the experience for all by focusing on the sensations within the story as well as the story line

• Enable children with SEN to access the story at different levels
  – Experiencing the sensations
  – Using the sensations to compensate for hearing/visual impairments
Making story time a sensory experience

Example:

- Identify the main sensation linked to each event in the story
- How could you enable the children to experience this sensation?

www.sparklebox.co.uk
Desmond was in bed fast asleep when SUDDENLY .. the alarm went off! But Desmond kept on sleeping. Mum shouted up the stairs, “Desmond, get up!” But Desmond kept on sleeping. Mum said, “I’m coming up the stairs and there’ll be BIG trouble!” At the top of the stairs Mum fell over the cat - and she threw Dad’s tea all over Desmond. Desmond shot out of bed! He put on his sweater .. his trousers .. his shoes ... Uh-oh, it’s the school bus. “Quick Desmond, run for the bus!” Desmond’s just in time! “Goodbye Desmond, goodbye”.
Presenting a multi-sensory story

- Small group of children
- Allow time for each child to handle material/object or experience sensation
- Repeat the sentence for each child
- Acknowledge each child’s response
- Be aware of any sensory defensiveness
More stories ...

Please Be Quiet
Sasha has two new gerbils that live in a cage in her bedroom. When she wants to sleep, they want to play but in the morning the tables are turned!

The Party
Gita arrives home from school both excited and impatient about the party that evening and proceeds to irritate the whole family until the dancing begins!

Sea Rescue
Once a year Sam and Rosie visit their Uncle who lives by the sea but this time was different, there is someone in trouble and the lifeboat is needed.

Charmaine’s Bonfire Adventure
Charmaine and Winston arrive at the community bonfire and start to help by putting foil on the potatoes and guarding the sausages. However, a passing dog has his own idea about the sausages.

Gran’s Visit
A typical scene in any family home. Gran sends a letter to tell of her impending visit and the story depicts the speedy clean up of the house and the anxiety that it will not be ready in time!

www.bagbooks.org
Developing a multi-sensory story

Ideas come from anywhere
an object, a place, an activity, an experience or a character (realistic, imaginary or fantasy)

Concentrate on one simple event
• fun, exciting, tense, charming, scary, silly, exciting, intriguing
• NOT: ‘at the hospital’, ‘getting up and getting dressed’, ‘eating a lovely meal’

Develop the idea
• Who’s there? What are their names? Why are they there? What’s happening? What are they doing? What’s likely to happen? How might things play out?

10 to 15 sentences
• long enough for an average group of listeners, so that they will not lose attention and interest

Characters should speak
• Giving them names and dialogue brings them to life!

Sensory actions
• every sentence must involve a sight, sound, texture, smell or action
• sensory experiences must be mixed up, to keep attention
Let’s experience your story

Could every child access the story at some level?

Does it meet the needs of children across the whole developmental range?
Multi-sensory stories and EYFS

Early Learning Goals:

Children respond in a variety of ways to what they see, hear, smell, touch and feel.

*EYFS (2.18) Creative Development*

Children listen with enjoyment, and respond to stories, songs and other music, rhymes and poems and make up their own stories, songs, rhymes and poems.

*EYFS (2.10) Communication, Language and Literacy*
A multi-sensory experience

- Lots of energetic and enthusiastic adults
- Children
- The snowman CD
- Microphone and stereo system
- Light wheel
- Fibre optic strands
- White streamers
- Coloured streamers
- Snowman costume: brown hat, scarf and white suit
- Father Christmas costume
- White/silver parachute
- Space blankets (foil)
- White and coloured balloons
- Blankets

“At 1.45 pm every Wednesday before Christmas you can find me dressed up as a snowman running around the school hall to music, holding hands and leading a long chain of adults and children whizzing about in circles.”
Multi-sensory stories and the IDP

Do you as a practitioner … think about the language skills that are involved in the activities you are providing and ensure that all children can access them?

“It is important to remember that we need to specifically plan for the development of communication, speaking and listening skills, utilising the multi-sensory activities that we know children enjoy participating in.”

Inclusion Development Programme (2008) page 21

Inclusion Development Programme (2008) page 50