

## Dialogic 'Story Path'

Diana Church, Deputy Headteacher at ACE Nursery School, Cambridge, discusses dialogic reading, an interactive approach to storytelling that encourages children to actively engage with the text.

Unlike storytelling in the traditional sense, dialogic reading is interactive with a focus on encouraging the child to become the active storyteller; the adult scaffolds, supporting understanding and enjoyment. The child takes ownership and as practitioners it is our role simply to guide, through discussion and summarising.

For the staff and children at ACE Nursery School dialogic reading is the pedagogical tool that keeps on giving and they choose a different book to explore termly. Their most recent book, 'Story Path' by Kate Baker, has been magical. The tale begins, "*Once upon a time there lived a....*" and where you go after that is up to you.

Working individually or in small groups they encouraged the children to tap into their imaginations using the bold and quirky illustrations, by Madalena Matoso, to create their own characters, settings, and plots with each turn of the page.

Staff offered simple prompts such as, "*Where will you go?*" or "*Who will you meet?*" when needed. The children soon became adept at the process and quickly began producing their own illustrations while their stories became increasingly elaborate and wildly funny! They even super-sized their own 'Story Path' on a giant piece of paper for a dynamic group time activity.

Interactive engagement with books, like the one suggested above, stimulates a love of literature, extends vocabulary, and enhances communication as well as language skills.

Unlike traditional storytelling, where the adult takes the lead, dialogic reading involves asking questions, exploring unfamiliar words, and analysing story components. By fostering dialogue, this pedagogical tool enhances literacy skills, vocabulary, and communication, empowering young readers to become storytellers themselves.

Why not give it a go, and see where your story path will lead you?

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