



SURVIVING THROUGH STORY guidelines/joining in

JOINING IN

If your child has trouble talking, there are still lots of ways that he or she can join in a story...

You can encourage them to use their skills in the story by... copying what they do and using it yourself as you tell the story with them

- Say what they are doing with their hands, faces, eyes, so you are “voicing” their contribution to the story
- Modelling sounds, gestures and facial expressions yourself.

You are the best person to know how your child communicates.



Vocalisations & sounds

singing, sighing, coughing, squealing, growling, giggling,

In my work as a speech therapist I found that children with even severe disabilities communicated through making sounds. Using their sounds in stories helps them develop their voice, and attach meaning to what they do



Signs and gestures

Not all children can sign, but many can use gestures like reaching, pointing, flapping, waving.



Facial expressions

Use these reactions in a story by immediately saying what the child is communicating and pulling it into the story...

.Sad/ So you were looking really sad!
Funny/You were laughing and laughing! Proud/you were really proud that you had helped



SURVIVING THROUGH STORY guidelines/joining in



Eye gaze and eye pointing

Either to objects or pictures you hold up, or as part of a dedicated communication system.

Or just gazing at something or someone in the room. Immediately say what they are doing and pull it into the story - so you're looking at the dog, yes it was the dog wagged his tail and knocked over our dinner...!



Showing an object, picture or photo

Prompt or support the child to show an object or a photo at the appropriate place in the story...

Mum was looking for her (keys)

The cat tangled up all the (wool)

My sister knocked over the (milk) etc...



Technology: sound buttons & communication aids

Devices that allow you to record a short sound or message, which the child can press to actively take part. Easily available from sites such as Inclusive Technology

<http://www.inclusive.co.uk/talking-button-p2107>

A more robust option for children with severe disabilities is a communication aid such as a "Big Mack" which are used a lot in schools. You can also record sounds and exclamations. They are expensive, so if you haven't got one at home, maybe see if you can borrow one from school. There are lots of different ways of using them - see our Big Mack guide.

Whoosh!

Sound effects

These are great in stories. You can include them as you tell, and you can encourage the child to create sound effects with objects, instruments and their own voices. Our resource section shows you how to find and use clips.