

4 Powerful Benefits of Enjoying Stories with Our Children

As parents, most of us can acknowledge that reading stories with our children is a good thing. And while some of these good things are obvious, some are not. In fact, even the obvious good things about story time have a *deeper, positive impact* than we probably even realized.

Let's take a closer look at why the benefits of story time are so impactful:

1. Stories Teach in Context. Stories provide *context* for teachable moments. Many stories have lessons or morals woven into them, making it more natural to talk about a topic that otherwise may have to be brought up *out of context*. **Stories open the door to conversations with kids.**

For instance, when my son's first dentist trip was coming up, we read a couple of stories that were about kids going to the dentist. In that way, he was able to "experience" the trip to the dentist with the characters in the story. He was able to connect his own life with the story in the book. We were then able to talk about what it would be like when *he* went to the dentist. Because the story taught about going to the dentist, he was able to know what to expect. I found that this ability to relate really eased his fears!

When context accompanies something to be taught, the lesson becomes more meaningful.

2. Stories Support Education. It is ideal for children to have solid reading, listening, comprehension, and speaking skills. The stronger these skills become, the greater probability kids will do well in school. Whether the subject is math, science, history, or English, kids will need to exercise these skills in *all* subject areas.

Story time provides opportunities for children to practice these required academic skills, and the more they practice, the better they become!

Stories also support the *thinking process*, which is also obviously needed throughout education. When we ask kids questions during stories or at the end of them, we are requiring children *to think*. They must process our question, think about the story, and formulate an answer. If we are doing this with our children several times a week during story time, this type of skill will improve.

3. Stories Allow for Exploration. Kids can discover and explore new things from stories. Again, there are so many books out there now that you can find stories—both fiction and non-fiction—on any subject area. When my son reads stories on his own, he absorbs information—and the information can come from both pictures and words. He has told me many facts that he has learned by exploring subjects in stories. When we allow kids to express what they've learned, they are given the opportunity to explore the thoughts in their heads.

4. Stories Strengthen the Bond We Share. This is the most important benefit of all, and there is much to be said about this point. How truly important it is to invest in our children. When we read stories to kids, when we listen to kids read stories to us, when we tell stories to kids, when we listen to kids tell us stories, when we ask kids their opinions during story time...the list goes on and on!! All of these actions—and listening is also an action—show our interest in kids. With the busy lives we live today, it is **ESPECIALLY** important that we pause and take the time to show children we care. And when we take the time and allow for stories to take place in our lives, this is exactly what happens.

First and foremost, story time must remain enjoyable. Be open to what story time may or may not bring. Do not stress out about making *every time* into a big milestone or life-changing moment.

There may be times when all we do is read a story to our kids, and there are no “teachable moments.” This is okay! There may be other times when our children are very willing to read the entire story out loud and then voluntarily explain its plot. And this is also great!

Keep in mind, no matter how many “teachable moments” are happening, relationships are always being strengthened during story times. Just by us taking the time to enjoy a story with our children speaks volumes. It's most important for us all to enjoy this precious time together.