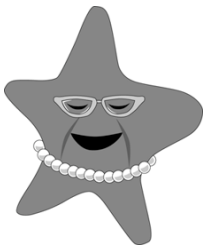


Make It Up!*

Once upon a time you were a kid, and we bet you loved to hear and learn from stories! Did you know it can be as much fun to make them up as to hear them? Often the purpose of a story is to teach something in a playful and indirect way. So in this activity, let yourself be a storyteller or an author. Don't be afraid to use your *imagination*. Once you get started making up a story, it often just tells itself. As children see you making up stories and having fun, they may become more confident in creating their own tales when they are asked to do that in school.

Here is one way to do it:

- 1) Start out telling a story for your children. Pick an animal *character* you would like to have as the hero or heroine – maybe a puppy dog, a giraffe, a singing bird, or something like that. Describe that character to your child. For example, “Once upon a time, there was a little gray mouse who lived under a house. This mouse was ...”
- 2) Think of a *challenge* for your animal character to overcome – a kid-type dilemma. Maybe the character is lost, wants to help someone, has to face someone mean, needs to find food, or is feeling afraid of the dark. It's great if this challenge is similar to one in your child's own experience. For example, “This little gray mouse didn't like to eat vegetables even though he knew they had vitamins...”
- 3) Invent some way for the character to *solve* the problem. Or ask your children for suggestions as to how they could solve the problem. (Solving problems in a story can assist children to solve concerns in their own lives.)
- 4) Now wrap that all together in *story form*. We recommend you give your story a happy ending.
- 5) If you and your children liked your story, write it down and put it in the **Our Treasures** section of your **WAY TO GO!** FAMILY LEARNING JOURNAL™.



“I *made up a story* for my young grandchild because she often didn't want to go to the bathroom when she needed to go. I told about a brown puppy dog that didn't want to pee when its owner took it out for a walk, and then it almost had an accident in the house. So the puppy learned to do its ‘business’ when it was taken outside. My granddaughter loved the story and asked me to *retell* it many times. I wish I'd written it down. Not surprisingly, her own bathroom habits soon changed!”

— *Grandma Anna*

**Make It Up!* supports the English-Language Arts Content Standards related to narrative writing applications.

Next month, go to www.familylearningjournal.com for a new Family Activity!