

ME IN THIS PLACE: USING STORY TO HELP YOUNG CHILDREN DEVELOP GEOGRAPHIES OF SELF

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What's in a story?

- structure
- characters
- content
- pacing
- setting or context
- predictability
- surprise
- meaning

How do we all know how to recognize these aspects of stories, even when we're too young to label them?

We're all hard-wired to understand story, whether at a simple or a complex level. To be human is to live with the understanding of story. We all begin our stories with ourselves at the center. As we grow from childhood, we fill in the circles of place and people around us.

Objects carry stories

Objects (pictures, stuffed toys, blankets, favorite books, favorite art materials) that are important to children can form places of comfort in early childhood classrooms

Write your own stories

- writing a story down gives you a feeling for its sequence and pacing
- writing or telling a story is a different process from reading or hearing someone else's story
- if you don't write or tell stories important to you, who will?
- you don't always have to write for publication

Young children carry stories too

- encourage children to express their own narrative accounts of their surroundings, experiences, and immediately past events
- encourage drawing and play writing as soon as children begin to show interest in writing and drawing materials
- ask children to tell stories about what they have "written" and drawn
- write down dictated stories and read out loud
- invite family members in to tell stories
- make books together
- describe places/shared experiences together
- the sequence can be repeated with varying themes

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