



Practice Telling

Personal Narratives

A **Personal Narrative** is a story from one's life or experiences.

Encourage your child to **tell about their own experiences**. Help them to see that these experiences are actually **stories** that are valued and **important**. This will build your child's confidence with oral language and will transfer into the development of reading, writing, and critical thinking as well as social competencies.

Here are some ways to encourage your child to tell personal narratives:

- 1. Model personal storytelling by telling about your own day or experiences first.** Even older children have a hard time with the question "How was your day?". Instead of asking the question right away, model how you would answer by telling about your day first. Think of your day like a story with a cast of characters, the setting, the problems you encountered, and how you solved them. Talk about it in simple terms. E.g. *I went to the grocery store with Grandma to buy bananas but they didn't have any! We had to drive to another store and we found some there. I'm so glad we found them so we can make banana bread for the bake sale tomorrow – I was very relieved!*
- 2. Know your child's classroom or regular routines.** Ask your child's teacher or other adults who spend time with your child about what happened that day or keep the classroom calendar handy. You can use this information to help your child to talk about his or her day by filling in some of the information as a springboard for your child to tell their own narrative. E.g. *You made crafts with your auntie. I know you love folding paper and painting. I wonder what you made together first?*
- 3. First, Next, and Last.** Use sequencing words such as first, then, next, last, before, and after when talking about your day to show the sequence in which things happened. Using sequencing words will help your child understand that order matters when talking about events. E.g. *FIRST I went to Buylow with Grandma to buy bananas but they didn't have any! THEN/NEXT we had to drive to another store and we found some there. I'm so glad we found them! LAST we're going to bake banana bread tonight for the bake sale tomorrow – yahoo!*
- 4. Take pictures.** Take photos of activities you and your child do and ask others who spend time with your child to take photos of activities they participate in. It's great if it is an action photo. This can be done easily with your cell phone or I-pad for larger screen. If you can, print on paper – black and white is fine or simply look on your device
 - It's great to take photos of special events but also ordinary activities are a wonderful way for your child to practice telling their own story about what they did.
 - Everyone finds it motivating to look at pictures of themselves. Your child will like being the "star" of their own story.