Home Reading Books

**Why wordless books?**

Children in the Early Years are still learning names for many objects, actions and feelings. When an adult uses new vocabulary in the context of a wordless book, the child has concrete images to help them understand the new words. Each adult who reads the wordless book to a child will tell the same basic story but with his or her own twist. In this way, the child hears a broader vocabulary base than with a static, word-ful book. Wordless books use pictures to lay the foundation of the literary elements -- characters, setting, conflict, plot, and theme, and children can freely explore these elements without being tied up in the phonics of the text.

Children at this age love to "read" wordless books themselves even before they have actually learnt to read independently. This confidence with books and a love of books is foundational to literacy. At first, they will mirror what you have said but they may also choose creative interpretations of the wordless books,

exercising great creativity.

Encouraging your child to look closely at the detail in the pictures will also help to train your child's eyes to look carefully at the detail in all books. This will mean that when your child reads more word-full books they are less likely to make common reading mistakes, for example, reading ‘saw’ as ‘was’ and reading the letter ‘d’ as a ‘b’.

**How are wordless books used?**

Here are some ideas for how you can use wordless picture books with your child to help develop their reading, writing and comprehension skills.

 **Encourage Discussion** The beauty of these types of books is that there is much less pressure to read the story in a prescribed way. You can pause and discuss the pictures at length and take time to talk about the details of the pictures, follow up on your child's observations, build vocabulary, make connections and ask questions.

 **Introduce New Vocabulary** Use the wordless picture books with your child to tell the story which accompanies the pictures in your own words. This is an effective way of introducing new [vocabulary](http://www.childrens-books-and-reading.com/improve-reading-skills.html#vocabulary) to your child. As well as explaining the action in the picture, don't forget to also describe what else you see in the picture, using as many detailed words as possible.

 **Appreciate the Visual Story** With wordless picture books you can focus all of your attention on the pictures and help point out things which your children may not spot. How does the picture portray action or emotions? How can picture clues help your child understand more of the story and support their inferences, that is ideas not explicitly stated in the text? Encourage your child to also think about the colour choices and mood of the pictures. Why do they think the illustrator used a particular colour or technique?

 **Encourage Storytelling** Ask your child to tell the story in their own words based on the pictures on each page. Help them to develop their storytelling skills by prompting them to include details about the setting and descriptions of the characters, as well as encouraging them to include the key elements of the plot including the problem which arises and its resolution. Promote creativity and imagination by allowing your child to embellish the story however they want. Suggest that they add dialogue to the storyline. For younger children you could start by narrating the beginning and middle of the wordless picture book and then asking your child to narrate the ending. Or ask them to make up a completely new ending. If they are reluctant, give a number of alternative endings and see which one they prefer.

**Learn About Story Structure and Sequencing** Wordless picture books are a great way of teaching your child about basic story structure and the sequencing of events in a story. Once your child has told the story in their own words, ask them to summarise what happened in the beginning, middle and the end. This will start to give them an understanding of basic story structure. Then talk about the different