# SEQUENCING AND NARRATIVE

# HOW TO SUPPORT

**WHY MIGHT A CHILD HAVE DIFFICULTIES?**

Children with speech and language difficulties have trouble giving accounts of events in their lives and telling and writing stories. The reasons for this could be:

* Sequencing difficulties and poor understanding of time concepts e.g. first, next, last, minutes, hours etc. This means getting ideas into a chronological order is hard. – *See concept handout.*
* Problems with order of words in sentences and producing the correct grammatical structures- verb tenses are often a problem.
* Vocabulary difficulties- if a child can’t access the right words he may ‘go round the houses’ to try to get the message over and this may upset the structure and meaning of the sentences he uses.
* The child may have comprehension difficulties and therefore not understand the task for a range of reasons.
* The child may have literacy problems.

**STRATEGIES / ACTIVITIES THAT MAY HELP**

The following strategies/activities can be used to help:

* Check ability to sequence pictures into a ‘story’ or ‘event’ order – See the example of baking biscuits below.
* A home-school book can be useful to help a child discuss events at the weekend or outside of school, so that the adult can support them to do this.
* Use scaffolding questions to support the child to give all the information about the story or event. For this children will need to understand question words, e.g. who, what, where, what happened, how did it happen, who said what, what was the solution / how did it end. *– see ‘Questions’ handout.*
* Use stick picture drawings to illustrate events. Cut these up and use them to show sequence of events. Storyboards/grids are great for this!
* Add written captions if this helps the child to retell the story. It is a spoken language task and therefore spelling and writing are not essential to this task, only use if it aids the child.
* Do similar activities for everyday sequential events to practise sequencing skills e.g. making a sandwich, dressing for PE etc.
* Teach the vocabulary connected with sequencing e.g. first, next, last. Practise these in everyday situations – give simple instructions e.g. ‘First colour in the squares and then colour in the circles’. ‘Who’s first in the line?’ ‘ Who’s last?’ Use the sequences suggested above to talk about first, next and last.
* The child may also have difficulties with sequencing days of the week and parts of the day. Assess this and provide input if required. Always use picture representation e.g. a timeline of days of the week with each day illustrated with something that is personal to the child on that day e.g. ‘Monday- visit grandma’.
* Make the activities ‘active’! I.e. it is not sufficient to draw a sequence of pictures and expect the child to recall it. They must work with it. Put it on card, cut it up, mix the cards up and see if the child can correctly sequence them and ‘tell’ the story. Make sure you start at the right level, e.g. sequence 2-3 cards first and work up to 6 cards. Whenever possible use the child’s own experience to develop sequencing and narrative skills. - Family/school events/topic activities (e.g. science experiments), stories he/she likes.
* Don’t let literacy difficulties get in the way-act as a scribe if necessary and encourage the child to add pictures.
* Use pictures to give ideas when creating a story or encourage your child to retell a familiar story they have read.

**PUBLISHED RESOURCES THAT MAY BE USEFUL**

* Black Sheep Press:
  + Nursery Narrative 3rd edition
  + Fun with narrative – early years
  + Reception Narrative Pack – age 3-5
  + Speaking and listening through narrative – ages 5-7
  + From oral to written language – ages 7 - 11
  + Story starters – constructing story sequences
  + Creating super hero stories – Key stage 3
  + Secondary Talk Narrative – Key stage 3 – 4
  + Sequencing pictures – 2 and 4 step
* You can use the published sequential thinking packs - LDA, Winslow Press or create your own using photographs or pictures etc.
* The website [www.pobble365.com](http://www.pobble365.com) gives a different picture everyday which could be used to give an idea for a new story.

**ACTIVITY EXAMPLE – SEQUENCING CARDS**

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**ACTIVITY EXAMPLE – STORY GRID (COLOURFUL SEMANTICS COLOURS)**

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| **Who**  Who are your characters and what are their names?  Who was at the event? | **Where**  Where did your story/ event take place? | **When**  When did your story/event take place? |
| **Beginning / First**  Use a story starter e.g. early one morning, once upon a time, one winter day  What happened first?  Introduce your who/where/when information | **Middle / Next**  What happened? Did something go wrong? What was the exciting part of your story or event? | **End / Last**  What happened in the end? Was there a solution? |