

The Parents' Journal

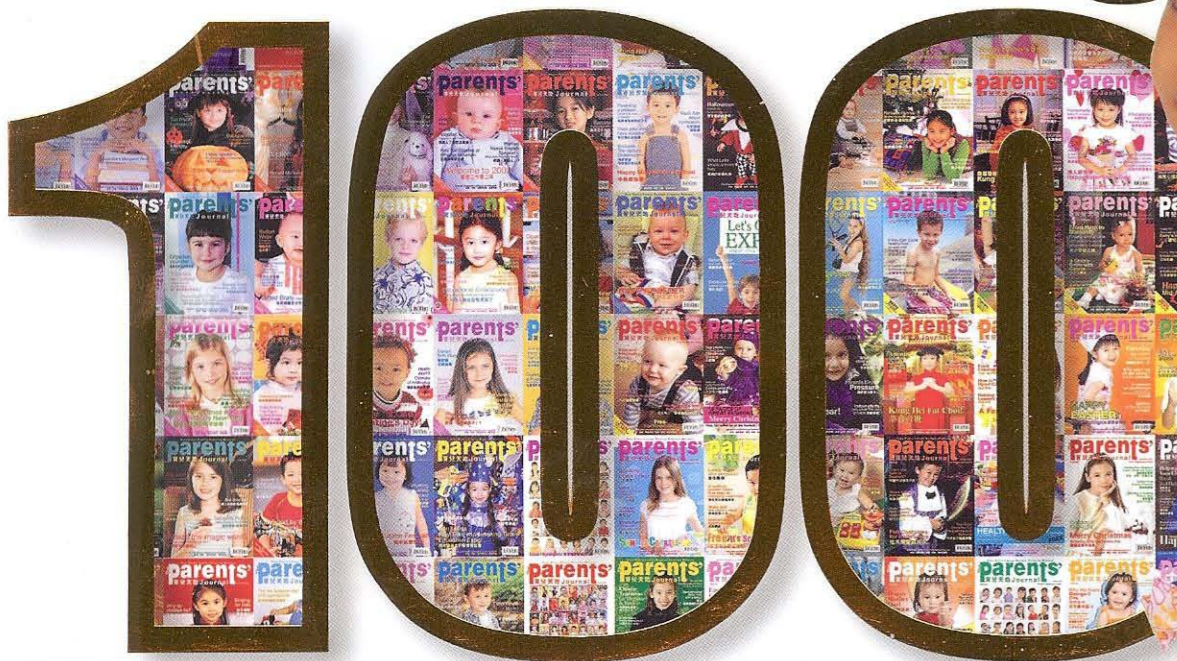
HK\$35

September 2008

From Pregnancy to Teens

www.parentsjournal.com.hk

Celebrating



Issues 創刊100期

www.parentsjournal.com.hk



Tell Me a Story

By Elizabeth McNeilly

Stories surround us, in books, in films and TV shows, in the news, and even in everyday gossip. The telling of stories has its origins in the spoken word, whether as a way of handing down the history of a people or as a means of spreading moral and cultural beliefs. Storytelling, without the help of a book, is also a great way to fire the imagination and strengthen a child's understanding of and interaction with the wider world.

Children have much to gain from storytelling, according to professional storyteller Lynne Kirk. "The power of listening, and also vocabulary acquisition, are definite benefits," she says. "Eventually, you can let them join in the telling as well," which gets their creativity going as they learn to tell a story in their own way. Many classic stories for children also include numbers, which help in learning counting and simple maths, or short songs.

Lynne has been a professional storyteller for more than 20 years, mainly in the education field, telling stories to children as well as adults and conducting storytelling workshops for educators. She says that certain elements need to be present in stories for children at different ages. "For children aged two to three years, it's important to keep things short, such as telling nursery rhymes, to match their attention span," she says. For this age group, Lynne uses a storytelling apron with pockets for small props and finger puppets "to provide a visual focus."

In telling stories to children under six years of age, she says, "you have to have a happy ending, to build trust and faith in humans and the world." Bad things can happen, but ultimately, the outcome must be positive. "Children listen, hear and understand stories on a different level to adults. And they can take what happens in a story very matter-of-factly," she says, including what can seem rather gruesome moments.

"There's a story of a man helping some creatures. Eventually it becomes clear that the only way to help some starving baby birds is to

kill his horse to feed it to them. While it may sound gory to adults, children will accept it as they see that it serves the story, which ends when the fully grown birds bring the man a golden apple that helps him fulfil a challenge and marry a princess," she explains. Similarly, adults are used to bad characters being punished, "but children need to know that evil deeds have consequences at the end," she adds.

"For children aged five years and up, I would also definitely have them join in with a few actions that fit with the story," Lynne says. "Because children are good imitators, they are also very good listeners and part of the fun of telling a story they've heard before is when they catch mistakes." Leaving things out on purpose for the child to spot can help build logical thinking skills and the ability to order things in sequence.

All are techniques that professional storyteller Andrea Darvill uses in her performances. A former NET teacher in Hong Kong, Darvill has since moved to Australia, but returns to take part in the Faust Festival each summer. She uses a mix of traditional stories, fairy tales and legends from different cultures in her storytelling sessions, as does Lynne.

In addition to performing for audiences of children, from three year olds up to teenagers, she has helped teachers use stories for extended classroom work. "Everyone can relate to storytelling," she says, calling it the oldest form of teaching. "Long before TV and computers, there were stories. Our ancestors would sit around the fire telling stories to each other and this is how people learned," she says.

To show the power of actively engaging young people in the stories she tells, by having them make certain noises at particular points in a story, for instance, or chanting certain refrains, some students were asked to draw pictures after a storytelling session, even though they had nothing but her words to go on. "The results were these wonderfully detailed pictures that captured exactly what I had been talking about," Andrea enthuses.

For older children, she often provides teachers with a fact sheet afterwards, complete with discussion questions and suggested activities. "With one Japanese class, they had to make up their own stories using puppets. The teenagers worked as a team, each taking a role and creating the story together," she says. "Even the shyest ones were getting involved."

In addition to taking children to hear a live storyteller, parents can utilise storytelling techniques with their kids at home. Mindplays is a Hong Kong-based educational group that offers workshops in how to tell stories, in Cantonese or English.

Says Mindplays director Lily Poon, "The storytelling process is not just the teller talking. We encourage parents to interact with their children, not just read a book." Parents don't need to be overtly theatrical to tell a story, she adds. "Get the children to raise questions, to see if they understand, and leave the ending open. Ask them what they think will happen."

She says storytelling can help develop a child's character. "Local children tend to be very shy and passive due to the education system in Hong Kong," she says. "Most of the time teachers do the talking and [the children] just repeat what [their teacher] says."

Of Hong Kong parents, she says, "They can be very authoritarian and feel they have to put on a 'parent's' face." In her company's storytelling seminars, Lily says, "We encourage parents to act out the story, to use facial expressions and body language to set the scene."

Mindplays also distributes *Storysacks*, which include a few props for telling different stories to pre-schoolers. But, says Lily, all children can benefit from sharing story time with their parents. "Storytelling is a continuous activity," she says, recommending parents spend at least 15 unhurried minutes telling stories with their children, "not just once a month, but twice or thrice a week."

With the in-school storytelling programmes Mindplays conducts, Lily reports that "children make a great deal of progress in understanding vocabulary, especially in learning English, and it also builds confidence and encourages them to express their ideas."

Lily also says, "We believe storytelling is not just a one-off thing - children want to hear a story again and again." Part of the reason for this, especially among very young children, is the repetitive aspect, according to storyteller Lynne.

"What parents need to know and understand is that these stories are truths for the children. Most children want to hear the same

story over and over again. Something in the story is filling the child's needs, and when he's had enough, he'll stop asking to hear it," she says. ■

Storyteller Lynne Kirk - Tel: 9453 7216
Faust International Youth Theatre -
Tel: 2547 9114, Website: www.FaustWorld.com
Mindplays Limited - Tel: 3549 6088, Email: info@mindplays.com.hk

Ask Tina

Our children are changing every day and each stage of their development needs care and understanding. Tina Stephenson is a child behaviour management specialist for Edukey. For more details on their innovative services for Hong Kong parents, check out www.Edukey.net. If you have a question concerning any stage of your child's development, please email editor@parentsjournal.com.hk and Tina will be happy to answer your questions.



I recently learned that my 12-year-old daughter and her friends were bullying another girl at their school. I was shocked, as she has always been well behaved. She said her friends pressured her to join in, although she was reluctant. All of the girls have been disciplined at school and at home, but I feel I have failed to teach her to stand up for her beliefs. What can I do to help her resist such peer pressure?

It is great to hear from you; it can take a lot of courage to confront a problem like bullying. Bullies are not terrible kids, or even especially naughty. In fact, a child or a teen that is a victim one day can be a bully on another day. Our society and especially popular media is full of situations in which people impose their will, sometimes violently, to get what they want, and our children also get these messages. Standing up for someone also takes a lot of courage, and developing courage takes practice. Just because your daughter didn't get it right this time doesn't mean that she won't in the future. But there are a few things you can do to help her develop the courage to stand up for her beliefs. First, help her to become involved in activities that involve pushing her mental and physical limits as part of a group or team. Adventure sports, team sports, group musical performances, dance and drama all do this. They will promote her mental and physical growth as well as develop her confidence, empathy and community spirit. Second, if standing up for the rights of others and committing no harm are truly important values for you, you will need to spend more quality time with her to pass these values on. Our lives are busy and quality time, sharing fun times, talking and sharing thoughts and feelings are often the first thing to go off the schedule. Spend at least one afternoon together per week, talking and sharing while doing a hobby or sport. It is easier to talk to tweens and teens when you are also 'doing' something together. You have wisdom and experience to share with her and she has successes and uncertainties to share with you, but it can be hard to have good 'talks' in our busy lives. Make your relationship a priority and you will see lots of positive results - better communication, problem solving and decision making, more trust and more confidence for both of you.

- 因材施教，配合孩子能力設計全面右腦培訓課程
- 啟發式思考讓孩子主動學習
- 超小班教學，導師與學生比例 (1:2)
- 每堂課後向家長匯報學生進度
- 《右腦發展檔案》詳細記錄孩子進度
- 免費家長培訓講座
- 歡迎20個月幼兒至18歲青少年參加

- Lessons are designed to suit each child's capability for full right brain development
- Children learn through innovative guidance
- Small class sizes with 1:2 instructor-student ratio
- After-class discussions with parents on children's performance
- "Right Brain Development Report" to record children's progress
- Free regular seminars for parents
- Suitable for children from 20 months to 18 years

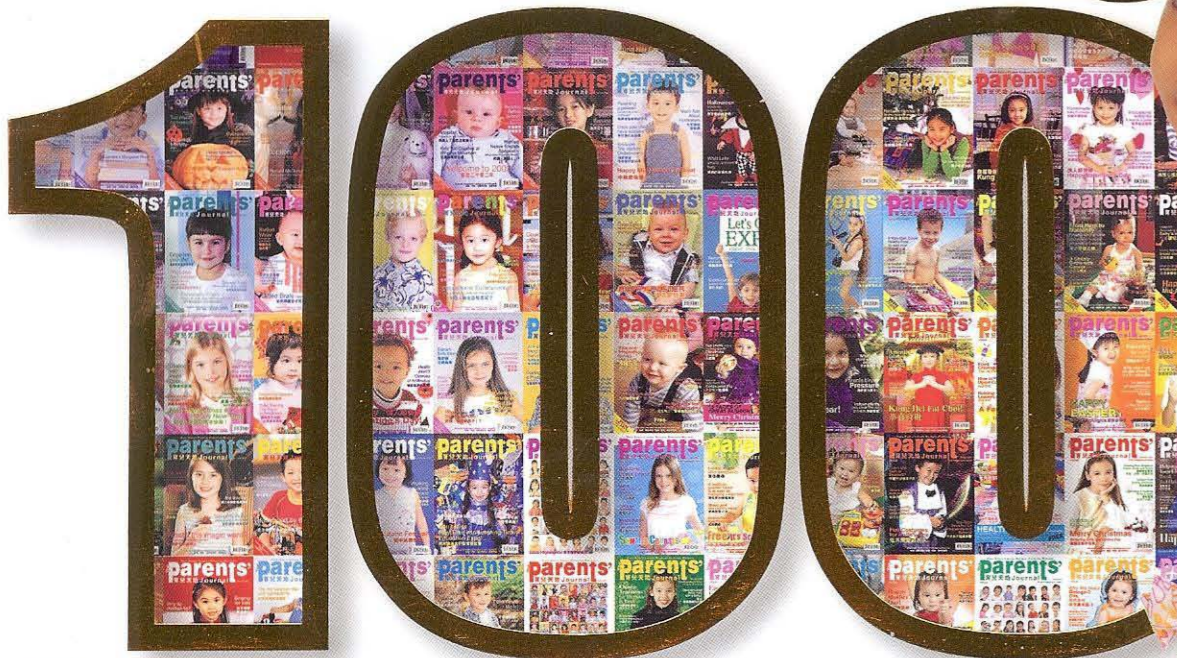
請即報名(免費右腦評估)
Enrol now (Free Right Brain Assessment)

The Parents' Journal

HK\$35

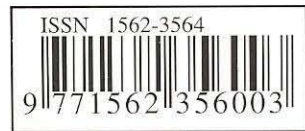
September 2008
From Pregnancy to Teens
www.parentsjournal.com.hk

Celebrating



Issues 創刊100期

www.parentsjournal.com.hk



講個故事給我聽

故事充斥著我們的生活，在書本上、電影和電視劇裡、新聞報道中，甚至日常閒聊間，隨處可聞。隨著人類口頭語言的誕生，講述故事也隨之發展，無論其最初目的是為傳頌某人的歷史，或是宣揚道德、文化信念。拋開書本講故事，也是燃點孩子想像力、加強他們對廣闊世界的理解與互動的絕佳途徑。



Faust International Ltd.

職業 故事人Lynne Kirk 指出，孩子們能從聽故事過程中獲益良多。「靜心聆聽的能力和擴展詞彙是顯而易見的益處」她說道，「按著故事的發展，你也可以讓他們加入一起講故事。」隨著孩子們的學會以自己的方式講故事，他們的創造力也將得到發展。許多經典的兒童故事還與簡短的童話及數字完美結合，幫助兒童學習數數和簡單的運算。

Lynne 成為職業故事人已有 20 年，主要服務教育界，專為孩子及成人講故事，也為教育者開設講故事工作坊。她指出，為不同年齡的孩子講故事時，需要注意不同的特定因素。她說：「為兩到三歲的幼兒講故事，保持簡短凝練非常重要，例如可唱頌一些童謠，以遷就他們較短的專注力。」針對這個年紀，Lynne 就愛採用故事圍裙，上面綴有許多口袋用於放置各種小道具和指偶，以便「給孩子營造視覺焦點」。

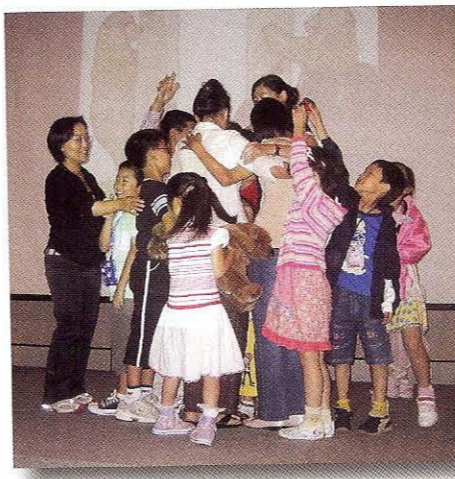
給六歲以下的孩子講故事時，她說道：「故事必須有個皆大歡喜的結尾，為孩子樹立起對人類以及世界的信任和信心。」壞事可以發生，但最終，結局必須是積極樂觀的。「孩子在一個與成人截然不同的層面聆聽、思考、理解故事。他們會理所當然地接受故事中發生的事。」她說道，包括一些幾乎讓人毛骨悚然的情節。

「有個故事，講述了一個人為了餵飽一群飢腸轆轆的小鳥而殺死自己的馬。最終，小鳥長大後給他帶來一個金蘋果，助他完成艱鉅任務，娶得公主做妻子。對成人而言這可能顯得血腥，孩子們卻能接受，因為他們認為這樣說得通。」成人習慣於反面人物受到懲罰，「而孩子們要知道，邪惡的行為最終會得到惡報。」

「面對五歲和更大的孩子時，我也會有一些順應故事的小舉措，讓他們積極參與，」Lynne 說道，「因為孩子的模仿能力很強，同時也是非常好的聽眾，因此，在為他們講述一個以前聽過的故事時，許多樂趣來自於讓他們發現錯誤。」實際上，你可以故意遺漏一些細節留待孩子們發現！幫助他們培養邏輯思維技巧和順序組織的能力。

職業故事人 Andrea Darvill 在表演中將所有這些技巧都發揮得淋漓盡致。Andrea 曾在香港擔任英語教師，隨後移居澳洲，但每年夏天她都會返港參加浮士德戲劇節。她在自己的故事中融入來自各個不同文化的傳統、童話和傳奇故事，Lynne 也是如此。

除了為三歲至十歲歲的兒童聽眾們表演，Andrea 還指導教師將故事運用於課室以外的活動。「每個人都和講故事息息相關，」她說道，並稱其為最古老的教學方式。



「在電視、電腦出現之前的很長一段時間裡，故事就存在了。我們的祖先常圍坐在篝火旁相互講著故事，這是古代人們學習的途徑。」

為求證年輕聽眾積極融入自己講述故事中的程度，Andrea 要求他們在故事的一些特定情節發出特定的聲音，例如吟唱某些副歌。有一個班級的學生在聽她講完故事後，需要繪一幅圖畫，雖然學生除了她的語言外，沒有任何其他參照。「結果是，這些細緻入微的圖畫正準確無誤地抓住了我所講述的事物。」Andrea 熱切地說。

針對稍大的孩子，她常在教學後為教師提供實況工作紙，並備有討論問題和建議展開的活動。「在一個全是日本孩子的課堂中，學生必須用玩偶編構他們自己的故事。這些十幾歲的孩子分成一個個小組，每個人都需要扮演一個角色，並共同創造出這個故事，」她說道，「即使最害羞的孩子也樂於參與其中。」

除了帶孩子觀看故事人的現場表演，父母也可以在家裡與孩子一起應用這些講故事技巧。Mindplays 是一家總部設於香港的教育集團，開設了許多關於如何用廣東話或英語講故事的研習課程。

Mindplays 的主管潘芳芳說道：「講故事的過程並不單是講述者的表演。我們鼓勵父母與孩子展開互動，而不是單純地讀書。」家長在講故事時並不需要非常戲劇化的表演，她補充說，「讓孩子提出問題，看他們是否理解，並留下開放式的結尾，問問他們認為接下來會發生什麼事，這是很好的啟迪方式。」

她指出，講故事能夠促進孩子性格發展。「由於香港的教育制度問題，我們的孩子往往非常害羞、被動。課堂的絕大部分時間裡都是由教師主導，孩子們僅僅重複教師所說的話。」

對於香港的父母，潘氏在公司舉辦的研討會上說道：「有些父母可以非常專斷，覺得自己必須擺出一副「家長」的面孔。我們鼓勵父母將故事表演出來，運用面部表情和肢體語言來展現故事情節。」

Mindplays 還經銷故事錦囊 *Storysacks*，其中包括一些小道具，方便為學前兒童講述不同的故事時使用。潘氏補充道：「所有孩子都能從親子共讀的時間中得益，講故事是一項持續的活動。」她建議父母每天至少 15 分鐘為孩子講故事，「不是一個月一次，而是每個禮拜兩或三次」。

隨著 Mindplays 在校內講故事項目的展開，潘芳芳總結說：「孩子在理解詞匯上進步顯著，尤其是英語學習，同時，還幫助他們建立信心、鼓勵他們表達自己的觀點。」

潘氏還指出：「我們相信，一個故事並不是講一遍就結束了——孩子渴望一遍又一遍地重複聆聽。」根據 Lynne 的觀點，其部分原因在於孩子們喜歡重複的事物，尤其是非常小的孩子。

「父母們需要知道並理解，這些故事對孩子們而言是真理。絕大多數孩子都希望重複聆聽同一個故事。故事中的某些元素能夠滿足孩子的需求，而當他厭煩了，他就不會要求你講這個故事了。」Lynne 說道。■

故事人 Lynne Kirk —
電話：9453 7216
Faust International Youth Theatre —
電話：2547 9114；網址：www.FaustWorld.com
Mindplays Limited —
電話：3549 6088；電郵：info@mindplays.com.hk

Ask Tina
我們的孩子每天長大，每個發展階段都需要照顧和體諒。Tina Stephenson 是 Edukey 的兒童行為管理專家，如欲了解他們為香港家長提供的革新性服務，請瀏覽網址：www.Edukey.net。無論你的孩子處於那一個發展階段，如有任何問題，歡迎聯絡我們，電郵：editor@parentsjournal.com.hk，Tina 將給予解答。

最近我發現 12 歲的女兒跟朋友在學校欺凌另一個女孩。我感到非常震驚，因為她一向行為良好。女兒說她只是受到朋友的壓力，才勉強參與。儘管全部涉事女孩無論在學校或在家裡，都受到家長老師的處分，但我覺得自己忽略了教導女兒要維護個人信念，我應如何助她抵抗朋輩的壓力？

很高興收到你的來信。要面對欺凌這個問題，需要莫大的勇氣。欺凌者並非是特別可怕或頑皮的孩子。事實上，對於兒童或青少年來說，今天他們是受害者，明天或許便變成欺凌者。我們從社會裡，尤其是大眾傳媒，看到不少負面例子，有些人為求達到目的，而不惜不擇手段，將個人意願強加於別人身。孩子在耳濡目染下，難免有樣學樣。此外，要伸張正義，維護他人需要極大的勇氣，而培養這份勇氣使須不斷的學習。你的女兒今次做得不對，並不代表她會一直錯下去。不過，你可以做些工夫，鍛鍊她堅持自己信念的勇氣。首先，鼓勵她參加一些能突破自己的團體活動，例如：歷險和團隊運動、小組音樂表演、舞蹈和戲劇等。這些活動可促進孩子身心健康成長，培養她的自信心、同情心和關注社區的精神。其次，如果你認為伸張正義，不恃強凌弱的價值觀極之重要，你便應用多少優質時間與孩子相處，將這些價值觀灌輸給她。現代人生活忙碌，當忙亂起來的時候往往第一時間犧牲與孩子相處的時光，或再沒有心情與他們談天、分享趣事、思想和感受，但這些活動應佔據日程表的首要位置。我建議你每周最少花一個下午，與孩子一起做運動或進行其他消閒活動，並趁這段時間與她談天說地，盡量聽她的心事。對青少年來說，如果能和他們一起「幹」同一件事，往往較易打開話匣子。你可與女兒分享你的經驗和智慧，她亦可向你傾訴她的成功和困惑。不過，在忙碌緊張的生活裡，要好聊天大真是談何容易。如果能將親子關係放在首位，自然可看到很多正面效果，包括改善溝通、加強解決能力和決定能力、提升互信和自信等。

KCS Kiangsu & Chekiang Primary School (International Section)

PRIMARY SECTION
30 Ching Wah Street NorthPoint Hong Kong
Tel: 2570 4594 Fax: 2570 4627
email: inter@kcs.edu.hk

- * Offering seamless education from Kindergarten - College
- * British National Curriculum adapted for local needs
- * Small class sizes
- * Wireless ibook computer for all Secondary students

SECONDARY SECTION
20 Braemar Hill Road NorthPoint Hong Kong
Tel: 2570 1281 Fax: 2570 3281
email: inter2@kcs.edu.hk

Kiangsu - Chekiang College (International Section)

Your Child's Future Today

Website: www.kcis.edu.hk