

## TODDLERS AND STORY TIME

KAVITHA WRITES:

I run a preschool in India. I have trouble in my toddler class when it comes to story time. How do I get them to listen to the story without being distracted?

JEAN REPLIES:

As you know, toddlers have very short attention spans. Below are some tips for working with two year olds at story time.

#1 – Don't force toddlers to come to story time, or stay in story time, if they are bored. Have those children play quietly on their own in a place where you can see them. Always make the story time seem fun and a place where children will want to come.

#2 – Choose story books for toddler that are age appropriate. Such as; books that are short or have familiar story lines for children, books that can be easily seen by all if held up and books that have minimal characters.

#3 – When reading to toddlers, use a clear animated voice that draws children to the story.

#4 – Use attention getters to keep interest alive in the story, such as; puppets or felt cutouts on a felt board.

#5 – Make up a simple, happy marching song to lead children to the story area.

#6 – Don't forget to also include simple songs and rhymes at your story time.

#7 – Choose books that involve the children's senses, such as; books with textures to feel, or books with repeating phrases, or books with animal or other sounds to repeat.

The main factor in keeping toddler interested in story time, is reading books to them that allow them to get involved in the story process. Here are some suggestions that have worked well for me.

- Let children help you with props.
- Let children help you set out floor mats if you use mats for your story time.
- Ask children simple questions about the story you are reading.
- Have children repeat story sounds; such as, animal sounds or vehicle sounds.
- Have children help sing songs or recite simple rhymes with you.
- Have children tell you how textures in books felt to them.
- Let your children help act out simple parts of the story.
- Let your children help suggest possible themes for future books to read.

In other words make story time an active time vs. a passive time for toddlers.

I hope this helps you in your toddler class.