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## Reach Out and Connect: Create Your Own Storybook!

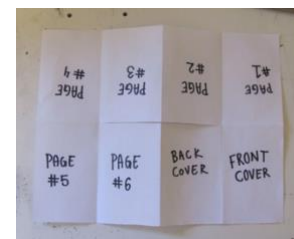


In the 23<sup>rd</sup> installment of the Reach Out and Connect workshops, Kari and Michael dove into the topic of creating your own storybook! This is a wonderful activity for your child to engage in, as by telling their own story, children not only learn to organize their own thoughts and hone communication skills, but they also learn to read and understand stories written by other people. In other words, this is about as good of an activity for building early literacy as your child can do!

### Binding a Physical Book

Before we can write our own story, we first need to have a book to write that story in. There are many different ways to make your own book – check out Kari’s demonstration of these different ways [here!](#)

- **Board Book**
  1. Set two rectangle pieces of cardboard short end to short end
  2. Leave a small gap between the cardboard pieces so that they will open and close completely
  3. Wrap tape around the two pieces at the bottom, middle, and top
- **Single Sheet of Paper**
  1. Fold single paper in half three times
  2. Cut paper in the middle
  3. Stand it up, and fold it into a book
- **Staples & Paper**
  1. Simply take as many pages as you want, fold it in half, and staple 2-3x down the side!
- **Paper, Yarn/String, & Hole Punch**
  1. Take as many pages as you want, but not too many
  2. Line them up and hole punch holes along the left side of the paper
  3. Take your yarn/string and tie bows/knots through the holes

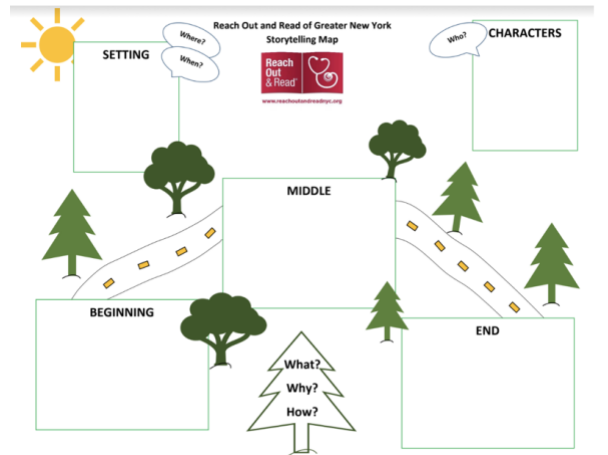


### Parts of a Story

Now that you’ve created the physical book, it’s time to create the story! This is a great time to introduce your child to the different elements that make up a story: **characters**, **setting**, and **plot**.

- **Characters**
  - These are the individuals in the story
  - You could help your child write a story with characters from your own family, their friends, made-up people, or even animals!
  - This is a good chance to introduce the words “fiction” and “nonfiction” to your child
- **Setting**
  - This is where the story takes place
    - Will it take place in a city, on an island, in a forest? In the day/nighttime?
- **Plot**

- This is what will happen to the characters in the story
  - This is the fun part – you and your child can be as creative and expansive as you want to be!
- It can be helpful to plan out your story by thinking about what will happen in the beginning, middle, and end (see right and the links below for a template that will help you do this!)
  - [English Template](#)
  - [Spanish Template](#)



## Putting Your Story Together

Now that we have the physical book binding as well as the idea of what our story will be about, it's time to put it together! Remember, never force your child to write a story they don't want to. Let your child be the guide and let their creativity shine through – even if it's not exactly what you want!

- Title & Title Page
  - Sometimes coming up with the title is often a bit easier after you've written the book!
  - For the title page, take a look at title pages from other books for inspiration – they usually contain the title, the name of the author/illustrator, and an image! Always remember to have your child write their name as the author and illustrator, even if they can't quite write their name yet!
- Illustrations
  - Illustrations are what will truly bring your story together!
  - Talk with your child about what is happening at each part of the story and what they would like to draw
    - For example, in *The Snowy Day* by Ezra Jack Keats, when Peter is walking in the snow, the picture on the page shows his footprints
- Words
  - It's great to have your child write the story out if they can!
    - If they are not excited about writing, have them draw the pictures, and then ask them to tell the story to you in their own words
    - As they are telling their story, write what they're saying below the pictures – this will show them that their spoken words correspond with written words
  - If your child doesn't want writing on their pictures, that's okay too – you have just created a wordless picture book!
  - Furthermore, keep in mind that if your child's writing is a mess, that's normal! Every child's writing journey begins with scribbling.
    - Check out [this handout](#) describing children's writing development



## Additional Resources

1. [Storyjumper](#) is a great website where kids can read stories written by other kids, as well as create and publish their own books.
2. Scholastic has a [3 Bitty Books](#) set, which comes with three blank books that can be filled with your child's thoughts and creations. Kids can write poems, draw comics, or create a scrapbook.
3. Little Bird Tales is a site that encourages children to create stories and artwork of their own. You can upload your child's existing drawings, or kids can use the art pad to create something new. It's free to try!
4. Storybird is so much fun! There's lots of stunning artwork from adult illustrators available, and members can use these works to illustrate their own stories.

5. [ToonDoo](#) is a great website where kids can create their own cartoons and comics by manipulating artwork, speech bubbles, text, and templates. It has a book-making feature where you can compile your created comics into a book.

For any questions about the content or our virtual programming, please email Kristen Rocha Aldrich at [krochaaldrich@reachoutandreadnyc.org](mailto:krochaaldrich@reachoutandreadnyc.org).