

## Stages of Narrative Development

Stage	Age	Description	Example
Heaps	2	Children may relate a group of unrelated ideas with topic switches frequently.	"The girl is eating cookies. The man is going in the car. The baby is sleeping."
Sequences	2-3	Children begin to tell a story with arbitrary links between elements such as characters, setting or topic.	"She has a doll. The doll is eating soup. I don't like to eat soup because it tastes yucky."
Primitive Narratives	3-4	Stories contain characters, setting and a topic, with events following a central theme. Cause and effect relationships emerge in these stories.	"My dad went to work. My mom stayed home. My kitty cat came up to me and I pet him then I started to cry because he bit me. So mom came in and I got a bandaid."
Focused Chains	4-5	Stories contain all relevant elements such as characters, setting and a topic. As well, stories are told in a logical sequence but the listener may still need to have additional knowledge to interpret the ending correctly.	"Once upon a time there was a mommy named Christie and a daddy named Tom. They had a little boy and his name was Peter. Mommy told Peter to go outside to play, and then he came in and said, "Mommy our dog's outside and he's barking." Mommy said, "He wants to come in"."
True Narratives	5-7	These stories contain a true plot, including a problem in the story, which is resolved at the end. It follows a logical sequence of events and includes character development by connecting motivations and goals of the character with the plot.	"One day there was a boy named Bobby and a girl named Sharon. They found a cat in their front yard and they brought it into the house. They fed the cat and they gave it some milk. They played with it and then a little while after a lady called and asked if anybody had seen her cat. And then they said that they had it at their house. And they brought it to the lady's house. And she gave them each five dollars for finding the cat, taking care of it and feeding it milk."

Narrative skills are the ability to use language to tell a story. As children's narrative skills develop they will begin to follow the rules of story telling such as the correct sequencing of events, including all relevant characters and establishing a plot. Narratives may be true events about personal experiences or created from their own imagination.

Chart Adapted from Hutson-Nechkash, Peg. (2001), Ripley, K., 2012.

