

HELPFUL TIPS & STRATEGIES FOR  
**Planet 2 - Oral Storymaking**

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## Overview

This Planet encourages the telling of stories through verbal communication. The general ambience of this space should be more relaxed and appropriate for a discussion between participants. This is to allow participants to share their stories with other members that might have been through similar situations during the last two years. We hope this will build a sense of community within the group that could potentially be reflected outside of the session(s) as well.

A facilitator will guide this station by starting the discussion and listening to the participants' stories. Later, the participants wishing to do so, can record their story. However, the focus should be put on sharing and listening in the group, and not necessarily on recording, as everyone might not feel comfortable doing so.

Prompts will be available for both the caregiver and the child; these can be done together or individually, and used as starting points for the discussion. Participants can also make use of both the Memory and Emotion Cards to help remember stories they'd like to share.

In the eventuality of participants wanting to record their stories, here are some examples of how the facilitator might help them:

- » The facilitator might act as an interviewer/narrator, and ask the child or the caregiver questions
- » If they choose to do so, the caregiver could share the story, and the child might add sounds that are relevant to a certain part of the story. The facilitator would record the interaction.
  - **Example:** if the family got a puppy during the pandemic, the child might share what sound the dog makes
- » The participants could sit in groups of two or three caregiver/child duos, and tell their stories to each other. They could start from the same questions, but they will probably have very different experiences.

**Work Produced:** voice recordings and/or videos

**Note:** The following breakdown is a suggestion. Each group can, and should, adapt these points to best fit their own participants, facilitators, and the space they will use for the session(s). This breakdown is not meant as a prescriptive procedure on how to set up this Planet, but as an example of steps that might be useful while setting-up and running this station.

## Infants (0-24 months)

Materials Needed	Why?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Microphone, camera, or a phone</li> </ul>	To record the participants
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Paper and pencil, clipboards</li> </ul>	Accessibility reasons
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Chairs</li> </ul>	Accessibility reasons & comfort of participants
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Emotion Cards (if possible)</li> </ul>	Help participant link storymaking with emotions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Prompt Cards</li> </ul>	Starting point for the discussion
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Comfort toys (to bring from home or choosing one from the centre)</li> </ul>	Reduce stress

Verbal Strategies	Why?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Inform caregiver of the activity and its purpose</b></li> </ul>	<p>Establishes the main objective and the outcome of the activity.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Ask caregivers if they would like to share one of their stories that happened during the pandemic</b></li> </ul>	<p>Enables infants to hear the sounds, repeating words, and tones, aiding with understanding and promoting communication. The infant can verbalise back to the best of their abilities (if possible).</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Encourage interactions between caregivers and infants towards other caregivers and infants</b></li> </ul>	<p>Expands on the infant's understanding of the world and allows them the opportunity to think, hear, and communicate to the best of their abilities towards others outside of their immediate family. Creates awareness and builds community.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Use new vocabulary words and rhyming words.</b></li> </ul>	<p>Promotes understanding of new vocabulary words. In addition, repeating words helps infants hear different sounds and tones.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Use simple open-ended questions</b></li> </ul>	<p>Enables creativity, communication and promotes their thinking as they hear themselves converse with caregiver and facilitator.</p>

<b>Arrangements Strategies</b>	<b>Why?</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ <b>Having a toy from home or handing out solid toys to the infants for the purpose of the activity (e.g. toy camera or microphone)</b></li></ul>	Helps build awareness of the activity taking place and stimulates cognitive development.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ <b>Providing a carpet to sit down on and chairs nearby, available to be pulled up depending on the participants' preferences.</b></li></ul>	For accessibility purposes, as many children and caregivers may feel more comfortable, or may require chairs to participate.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ <b>Set recording tool in a quiet area (if the participants are interested)</b></li></ul>	Having the camera or recording device ready will establish readiness and smooth transition.

Behavioural Strategies	Why?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Starting circle time with a song and/or some movements</b></li> </ul>	<p>Promotes interest, draws everybody's attention into the circle, and helps everyone focus.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Observe children actions</b></li> </ul>	<p>Reinforces the infant's actions and encourages the infant to continue engaging.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Point to and touch the toys and play materials</b></li> </ul>	<p>Helps the infant focus on the materials and further explore.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Hand comfort toys or tell the caregiver to place infant on their lap</b></li> </ul>	<p>Reduce stressors and enable comfortability.</p>

## Toddlers *(14 months - 3 yrs old)*

Materials Needed	Why?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Microphone, camera, or a phone</b></li> </ul>	To record the participants
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Paper and pencil, clipboards</b></li> </ul>	Accessibility reasons
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Chairs</b></li> </ul>	Accessibility reasons & comfort of participants
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Emotion Cards (if possible)</b></li> </ul>	Help participant link storymaking with emotions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Prompt Cards</b></li> </ul>	Starting point for the discussion
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Comfort toys (to bring from home or choosing one from the centre)</b></li> </ul>	Reduce stress
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>If needed, a toy to use during the recording of a story</b></li> </ul>	Be creative, it can be anything. The purpose is to engage the child during the recording (e.g. pretend microphone using a spoon)

Verbal Strategies	Why?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Inform toddler and caregiver of the activity and its purpose</b></li> </ul>	<p>Establishes the main objective and the outcome of the activity.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Ask indirect questions to introduce material: " Have you ever seen an Emotion Card?" "Would you like to pick one?"</b></li> <li>▪ <b>"Can you pick a card that shows how you feel today?"</b></li> </ul>	<p>Enables toddlers to start linking an emotion with a story</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Ask the caregiver or the toddler if they would like to share one of their stories that happened during the pandemic</b></li> </ul>	<p>Enables toddlers to understand the process of storymaking while sharing orally. Through observation children will vocalise their side of the story and their experience.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Encourage interaction between caregivers and toddlers towards other caregivers and toddlers</b></li> </ul>	<p>Expanding on the toddler's understanding of the world and allowing them the opportunity to think, hear, and communicate to the best of their abilities towards others outside of their immediate family. Creates awareness and builds community.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Use simple open-ended questions</b></li> </ul>	<p>Open-ended questions will enable meaningful responses and communicate their thinking.</p>

<b>Arrangements Strategies</b>	<b>Why?</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ <b>Having a toy from home or handing out solid toys to the toddler for the purpose of the activity (e.g. toy camera or microphone)</b></li></ul>	Helps build awareness of the activity taking place and stimulates cognitive development.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ <b>Providing a carpet to sit down on and chairs nearby, available to be pulled up depending on the participants' preferences.</b></li></ul>	For accessibility purposes, as many children and caregivers may feel more comfortable, or may require chairs to participate.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ <b>Set recording tool in a quiet area (if the participants are interested)</b></li></ul>	Having the camera or recording device ready will establish readiness and smooth transition.

Behavioural Strategies	Why?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ <b>Starting circle time with a song and/or some movements</b></li></ul>	Promotes interest, draws everybody's attention into the circle, and helps everyone focus
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ <b>Observe children actions</b></li></ul>	Reinforces the toddler's actions and encourages them to continue engaging.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ <b>Point and touch toys and play materials, and engage with the toddler</b></li></ul>	Helps the toddlers focus on the materials and further explore

## Pre-School *(2.5 - 6 yrs old)*

Materials Needed	Why?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Microphone, camera, or a phone</b></li> </ul>	To record the participants
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Paper and pencil, clipboards</b></li> </ul>	Accessibility reasons
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Chairs</b></li> </ul>	Accessibility reasons & comfort of participants
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Emotion Cards (if possible)</b></li> </ul>	Help participant link storymaking with emotions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Prompt Cards</b></li> </ul>	Starting point for the discussion
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Comfort toys (to bring from home or choosing one from the centre)</b></li> </ul>	Reduce stress
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>If needed, a toy to use during the recording of a story</b></li> </ul>	Be creative, it can be anything. The purpose is to engage the child during the recording (e.g. pretend microphone using a spoon)

Verbal Strategies	Why?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Inform child and caregiver of the activity and its purpose</b></li> </ul>	<p>Establishes the main objective and the outcome of the activity.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Inform child of activity using the list of prompts provided, ask the child age-appropriate questions related to the theme</b></li> </ul>	<p>Helps children to understand what is coming and participate comfortably. Provides participants with a starting point for the story they want to share</p> <p>It's important to remind them that they are free to pick a story that goes beyond the original question</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Use relationship questions: "Can you pick an Emotion Card that shows how you feel today?"</b></li> </ul>	<p>Inquiring formative questions enable the child to construct logical responses. Linking their story with an emotion.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Ask the child to talk about an experience that took place during the pandemic</b></li> </ul>	<p>Help narrow down tasks and enable them to communicate freely.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Use simple, open-ended questions</b></li> </ul>	<p>Open-ended questions will enable meaningful responses and communicate their thinking.</p>

Arrangements Strategies	Why?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Having a toy from home or handing out solid toys to the child for the purpose of the activity (e.g. toy camera or microphone)</b></li> </ul>	<p>Helps build awareness of the activity taking place and stimulates cognitive development.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Providing a carpet to sit down on and chairs nearby, available to be pulled up depending on the participants' preferences.</b></li> </ul>	<p>For accessibility purposes, as many children and caregivers may feel more comfortable, or may require chairs to participate.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Set recording tool in a quiet area (if the participants are interested)</b></li> </ul>	<p>Having the camera or recording device ready will establish readiness and smooth transition.</p>

Behavioural Strategies	Why?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Starting circle time with a song and/or some movements</b></li> </ul>	<p>Promotes interest, draws everybody's attention into the circle, and helps everyone focus</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Observe children actions</b></li> </ul>	<p>Reinforces the child's actions and encourages them to continue engaging.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>If the group gets too noisy and off track, gently regain the group's attention by going "shhhhhh waterfall" or "hands on top, that means stop!" and refocusing the group</b></li> </ul>	<p>Creating awareness of when you're too noisy and de-escalating/calm-ing through simple grounding strategies. Helps the facilitator feel more at ease and have a better sense of control if things get out of hand.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Grounding strategies as we transition into and out of the space</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– 3 things you see, 2 things you hear, 1 thing you smell</li> <li>– For more examples please see the grounding exercises</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p>Less jarring of an experience for the children and their caregivers when coming into and out of the space. Provides a transitional period where they feel at ease and understand what they need to do. Provides simple activities that reduce stress.</p>

### Helpful Tips:

- » Allow kids to speak aloud in whatever way makes them most comfortable (ex. In another language outside of English, through animal noises, etc)
- » Allow for the conversation to go on tangents if that forms naturally. This encourages the children to speak the way they feel most comfortable with and to practice their conversational skills in a safe environment. It also allows for non-linear storytelling that may make them and the other kids very excited. Encourage this excitement.