

Make Your Child a Hero

Fiction/Fantasy, Part 2: Finding a Story in Your Sprints

Review your sprint lists. Think of each item in your list as story potential. Amelia likes to color? Maybe the pages she has colored come to life and the pages she hasn't colored yet (or only half-colored) complain they never have any fun. Or Amelia falls, like Alice in Wonderland, through the screen of her tablet and into the action of a video game. Maybe Amelia's love of horses can be developed into a story.

Let's explore the horse sprint in more depth. The story could start when a horse follows Amelia home from school. She begs to be allowed to keep it. The family has all kinds of reasons why this won't work, but Amelia persists, bargains, begs, and wins. The horse moves in and the troubles begin.

Maybe a swish of the horse's tail and dinner on the table would have gone flying, but Amelia's quick action saves the pot roast. A story could be developed from the single idea that Amelia plans a party for the horse and must take into consideration the guest list that includes a pig, a goat, two chickens and a donkey. Would Amelia have to calm complaining neighbors? Would she invite the neighbors to the party?

All of these ideas are funny, silly potential stories, and that's the point! Keep asking yourself what happens next. When you answer that question, ask the next one and let a tale unfold. Silence that serious adult voice critic that says your ideas are nonsense. That's the point. Silly is good. Letting your mind wander into right brain territory can be scary when responsible adults are supposed to be grounded in the "real" world. This is an excellent opportunity to let your creative side romp and play.

It is also an excellent opportunity to involve your child in the story making project. If not one of your ideas takes on a life of its own, have your child help you. Kids, if not buttoned down, are fearless and love storytelling. Alan Watt, in his book, *The 90-Day Screenplay*, encourages us to "think of how children tell stories. They are fearless, lost in the bliss of their imaginations...Children are not concerned with whether their story works. They simply find a way to support whatever their imagination serves up."

If you can connect with your inner child to create your story, fantastic! Try to "find the way to support whatever your imagination serves up," as Mr. Watt says. If you can't connect with your inner child, connect with the real child. Ask your child to help create his or her story and write it up as a team project.

What to do now: Write. Don't edit; just write.