

Telling stories and making pictures using a personalized fuzzy felt story kit



A personalized fuzzy felt story kit is an easy to make resource that provides a way for students with complex communication needs to engage in making up stories about things that interest them. All children love making up and telling stories. It is a big part of developing language skills and imagination. But for children with complex communication needs this can be a challenge. A personalized fuzzy felt kit is a resource you can make which can be used as a way of supporting this skill and having some fun along the way.

Repetition with variation is also key for these students as we aim to provide familiar learning activities that they feel confident participating in, while keeping things interesting with a little bit of variety so they don't get bored. Personalized fuzzy felt allows exactly that to happen.

Here are some examples of some great stories and drawings made up by a group of children with complex communication needs using personalized fuzzy felt kits.



Neesha and Kyle and Caleb went by taxi to get pizza and burgers

By Caleb Age 9



Sam and Joe were using a hammer and a toolbox while Jack was eating chocolate and playing the drums

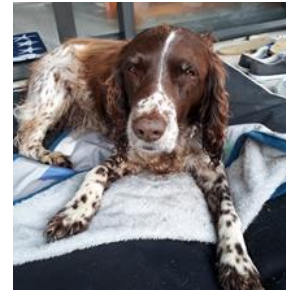
By Jack Age 5

How to make your story kit

- **Brainstorm and find favourite motivating images**

Think about all the things that really interest and motivate your student. What do they love? It could be food items, family, pets, movie characters, trucks and trains etc. Go onto Google Images and search for an image for all the things you have identified in your brainstorm.

Some example images from Google Images and a favourite pet photo



- **Add important people**

Add a bunch of people that are in your student's world....themselves, their whānau, friends, teachers, or favourite famous people like a character, singer or actor, etc. Do this by printing and cutting out photos of their faces and adding them to the body outlines supplied below.



- **Print**

Print everything in colour if possible. This may be expensive but this resource will last all year.

- **Cut out and laminate**

Leave a small edge of laminate around the printed cut outs to help things last as long as possible

- **Add Velcro (or Blu-Tac if using a whiteboard)**

Add a small piece of (fuzzy – not fluffy side) Velcro to the back of each image

- **Find a carpet square to be your story board (you could also use a small whiteboard)**

Acquire a large carpet square...A3 or A4 (you can sometimes get free samples from a carpet shop or they are cheap from \$2 stores). The velcro dots stick the images onto it really well.

- **Storage**

Put everything in a plastic box or snap lock bag for safe keeping, so that it is quick and easy to whip the whole kit out when it's time to do some story creation.

How to use your story kit

The student is now ready to make up their story. They look through all the images available and select a few to put on the carpet square to tell a story. It's a great idea for you or a peer to model your own story first to give them the idea...make and tell your story and then take everything off the carpet square (or whiteboard) and tell them "your turn". Check out this video for more info: <https://youtu.be/EbhEj8ORPAE>

If your student isn't able to directly add the figures onto the square because of difficulties with hand function and fine motor skills, you can use partner assisted scanning (see here for more info <https://talklink.org.nz/resources/tip-of-the-month-august-2016-partner-assisted-scanning>) or eye gaze to help them select.... this is a great activity to help them practise this access skill too, along with consistent YES and NO responses.

Once the story is complete, celebrate it...read it back to the student, share with others and then photocopy the whole carpet square and stick the photocopied story into the student's story book. Being able to re-read stories and look at things you have created is an important stage of development and language growth, so don't miss this step. You could also take a photograph on your phone/iPad, print and add it to the students book. You could also add it to the students online portfolio (SeeSaw or StoryPark) so they can share their stories with whanau and non-school friends.

Extension Ideas

Talk about the story with your student using their communication system

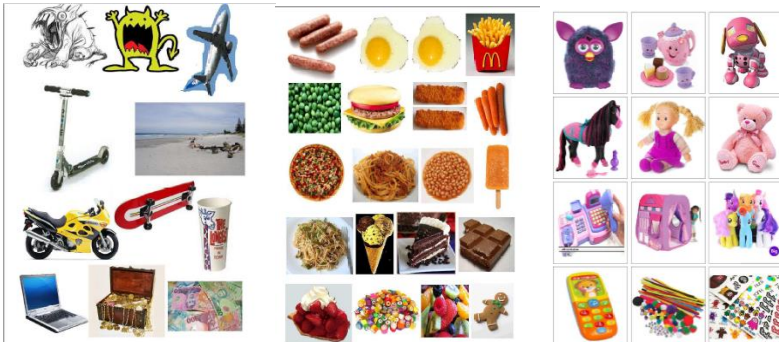


Use the story as a writing prompt and write about it using an alternative pencil (see our 'alternative pencil' tip of the month <https://talklink.org.nz/resources/-tip-of-the-month-july-2018-overcoming-barriers-to-writing>)



Resources to get you started

To help get you started we have added 10 pages of images for you to print if you think they would be of interest to your student.



The first page has some blank figures for you to add your student's relevant faces to.



Note: Adding your own images and personalising it for your student's interests is really important though to maximize their interest and motivation. As a result they are more likely to have the language needed to talk about their story in their communication system.

Have fun using this resource and please send us some of your great stories for us to publish on our social media pages.

Created by Polly Thomas and Jane Winter (TalkLink Teachers) May 2020