

Mrs. P's Tips for the "Write Way" to Exercise Your Child's Imagination

As a professional storyteller, not only in my Magic Library at www.MrsP.com, but also with my visits to classrooms, hospitals and libraries around the country, I have learned firsthand the power that books hold for children. Without a boarding pass, a train ticket or even a good pair of walking shoes, I can take kids on a journey to the most wonderful places imaginable! And in the process, I help kids develop effective listening and comprehension skills.

I strongly believe, however, that kids should also be encouraged to create their *own* stories. It's an important exercise in creativity that offers a whole different set of benefits:

1. Helps hone vital writing skills (such as developing clarity of images and ideas)
2. Improves organizational skills (required to tell a well-structured story)
3. Gives the imagination a serious work-out (using completely different 'muscles' than when you listen to or watch a story someone else has created)
4. Generates self-confidence (when a story *you* created entertains or influences a reader!)

To help encourage kids to create their own stories, I hold an annual writing contest, which is open to submissions until October 15, 2010. The winners will have their stories read by me on my website for all the world to hear. They will also receive a bound and illustrated copy of their entry – the child's own story made into a real book! The details of the contest can be found at www.contest.mrsp.com/

The skill of mastering the written word is one of the greatest gifts we can give our children. For evidence of its power, we need only look at Shakespeare's plays, which still move audiences more than 400 years after they were written; or the Constitution of the United States, which presidents and lawmakers still look to for guidance 200 years after its authors first put pen to paper.

What better way to begin developing such an important skill than with "tell me a story...?"

About me:

TV star Kathy Kinney ("The Drew Carey Show"), portrays Mrs. P and is also one of the creators of the website. The website endeavors to expose young people to great books and stories through a celebrity storyteller, Mrs. P. MrsP.com has no advertising and is completely free, making it a fun and educational online destination for teachers, parents and children. The site also contains interactive games, coloring sheets to download, and activity guides to accompany chapter books like "Alice in Wonderland". Every story also offers read along options so children can see the words, which is helpful to early readers, and ESL students. Mrs. P is the recipient of The National Parenting Center 2009 Seal of Approval and the American Library Association distinction of "Great Website for Kids."

You can follow Mrs. P on twitter at <http://twitter.com/MrsPstorytime>