

**Storytime Spectacular**  
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**Kids Are Customers: Grab Bag**  
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Sophia's storytime ideas  
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**The Beautiful Mouse Daughter**

Felt pieces: 3 upright mice, sun, cloud, wind, brick wall, 1 nibbling mouse

Once upon a time, there was a mother and father mouse who had what they were sure was the most beautiful daughter in the world. Mother and Father Mouse want to marry their beautiful daughter to the most powerful being of all. As they stand in the field, they feel the strength of the hot summer sun. And they realize that the sun is the most powerful being in the world.

“Sun, O Sun, you are so powerful. You bring light to the day. You are worthy to marry our beautiful daughter. Sun, O Sun, will you marry our beautiful daughter?” No answer. While the mouse parents continue to call to the sun, a cloud covers the sun. The mouse parents look at each other. The Cloud is more powerful than the Sun! “Cloud, O Cloud, you are so powerful. You hide the sun and bring the rain. You are worthy to marry our beautiful daughter....”

Then the wind blows away the cloud. “Wind, O Wind, you are so powerful. You chase the clouds and bend mighty trees...”

The the wind is stopped by a brick wall. “Brick Wall, O Brick Wall, you are so powerful. You stop the wind and shelter the crops...”

No answer. And as the mouse parents call and listen, they hear the sound of nibbling and when they look closely, they see the strong son of the neighboring mouse family nibbling a hole in the brick wall to make a fine home. The foolish mouse parents look at each other and smile for they have found the most powerful husband for their beautiful daughter.

I have heard this story told with foolish human parents – which brings the foolishness to a whole new level – and the wall may not be brick but wooden which the son is chopping to make a bigger field. Or something – you decide. There are points in this story where you could ask the children if they think the sun or the cloud or son on will answer.

**The Contest Between the Sun and the Wind**

Felt pieces: sun, wind (from above)

The wind was a big blowhard, scowling and shoving in front of the sun, knocking everything down wherever he went. He kept boasting to the sun about how powerful he was: “everything trembles as I draw near. I can make anyone do anything. All bow down before me. Ha, Ha Ha Ha.” (*You can do your best maniacal laugh here.*) Well the sun had been listening to this for awhile and finally had had enough. “OK wind. You

can make anyone do anything. *(If you need to stretch your story a bit, you could have the sun give some suggestions here: you can make the rivers run empty. You can make the mountains fall down.)* “I don’t think you can even make that man walking on the street down there take off his jacket.” The wind said quickly without thinking, “Of course I can. I can do it quicker than you could.” “Agreed.” Said the sun. “First one to make him take off his jacket wins. I’ll even let you go first.”

So the wind rushed down to the man with a fierce scowl and began huffing and puffing, blowing as hard as he could, trying to blow the man’s jacket off. But the harder he blew and the more he scowled, the tighter the man clung to his jacket, buttoning it up and pulling up the collar to keep himself warm from the sudden cold windiness. The wind blew and blew with no luck. Finally the sun said “I think it’s my turn.” The wind was so tired, he didn’t argue but hid himself quietly in some nearby trees. The sun shone and smiled, and smiled and shone and the day warmed up quickly. The man looked up at the sky with surprise but seeing only the beautiful warm sun, he soon took off his jacket and walked on his way.

The moral of the story is: You can get more done with a smile than with a frown.

The children can help the wind blow and blow and show how tired the wind gets too. You could also ask if they think the man will take off his jacket while the wind is blowing. An easy craft activity would be paper plate sun and wind puppets so the children could act out the story for themselves.

### **Weather storytimes**

The Snowman (tell and cut)

On Sunday, it snowed just like that *(show a blank piece of paper)*

On Monday, I made a snowman just like that *(paper folded in half lengthways; start cutting the snowman shape at the fold, hold open the unfolded paper)*

On Tuesday, the wind blew some snow away, just like that. *(cut a smaller snowman inside the first one and hold open the folded paper)*

On Wednesday, it rained and my snowman melted a bit, just like that. *(as above)*

On Thursday, it rained some more and my snowman grew smaller, just like that *(as above)*

On Friday, the sun shone and my snowman went away, just like that *(the paper is now a circle – a puddle)*

On Saturday, I stayed inside.

On Sunday, it snowed, just like that. *(show a blank piece of paper)*

Group activity: bring in some quilt batting, or white sheets, or white fabric. Lay it out flat on the floor and have the kids roll it into an indoor snowman. It may not look very snowmanlike to us but they enjoy the action of rolling up the material anyway. A hat, scarf, maybe tie on a construction paper carrot nose and some sticker eyes and mouth. Hey, he looks great!

**Indoor storm:** Rainstick shakers, or 1 rainstick; maybe some children will beat on the floor as thunder or shake a cookie sheet for a thunder effect; another child by the light switch to flicker the lights on and off like lightning or hand out a flashlight for the same effect. The storyteller will probably want to be in charge of any rain squirting. Everyone can puff like the wind to bring the storm on or a child can be in charge of turning on a fan. This may be a brief activity though my experience is that children will want to do it a couple of times and try a few of the jobs.

**Big weather/natural events;**

**Hurricanes:** gather all your fans, plug them into a surge protector, give the children pinwheels, squirt some water across the front of the fans, let the children throw small objects toward the fans.

**Volcano:** the baking soda and vinegar volcano is still very popular

**Earthquake:** lay long 1” thick dowels or broom handles on the floor. Put a piece of plywood on top so that the dowels stick out a bit. Let the children walk on the plywood and turn the dowels so they have the sensation of walking during an earthquake.

**Elephants, spiders and other critters**

Use masking tape to make a big spider web on the floor. Make it big enough so that children can walk along sections of the web and play a bit of follow the leader. I play Sharon Lois and Bram’s “One Elephant Went Out to Play”, stand on the spiderweb myself and call for a couple of friends to come join me on the web. I mean to try this sometime giving each child an animal finger puppet and calling for the lion or the bear or the bird to come join the elephant (me) on the web and having them do the sound of their animal.

Having the spider web already, you might as well do “The Eensy Weensy Spider”. And then you can do “Little Miss Muffet”.

Move a crocodile puppet on the floor and chant

“A crocodile could walk a mile  
But it would take him quite a while.”

Have the children chant it with you as you move the puppet around between them. You could coax them into following behind you and making a people crocodile.

Hold a plastic bottle pierced with holes on the side in your hands dry side down and say “Every time I say the word *crocodile* I’m going to turn this bottle over and you may get wet.”

Chant

1 little, 2 little, 3 little crocodiles  
4 little, 5 little, 6 little crocodiles  
7 little, 8 little, 9 little crocodiles  
10 little bumpy, grumpy crocodiles

You can substitute anything for the crocodiles to suit your storytime. My experience has been that the children stay close to you hoping to get wet. A squirt bottle would work just as well.

## **Mother Goose story stretchers**

Jack be nimble – toilet paper roll candle (toilet paper roll wrapped in tissue paper with red or yellow tissue paper flame), have the children take turns jumping over the candlestick. Easy craft to make and take

Humpty Dumpty – make a “wall” out of a sturdy box or a library step. Place pillows behind the wall and help each child to “have a great fall” gently. Maybe the other children could pat each Humpty to try and put him together.

The Grand Old Duke of York – He could march up and down his hill with anyone. If your’re doing a farm storytime, maybe he marched 10,000 cows up and down the hill. And maybe they said “moo” at the top and the bottom and halfway up.

Here is the bunny – Besides doing this with their fingers, have the children stand up and use their arms for “ears so funny”. The space in front of them is “the hole in the ground”. When a noise he hears, he pops up his ears (stretch their arms up high) and jumps in his hole in the ground (1 jump forward).

## **Opening and Closing Storytime**

*For the musically challenged among us*

### **Opening**

I use a koosh or soft ball to open storytime. I throw it to a child, saying my name, have them tell me their name and throw it back. If a child feels shy about this, I walk toward them and touch their hand with the koosh (they all seem to love the fuzzy texture), asking for their name.

If I have too many children in storytime for this to be practical, I take one of our larger puppets and move amongst the children as they’re getting settled in the room and get as many names and hugs and high fives and hellos as possible.

I use bubbles for storytimes for babies 6 to 24 months. I blow bubbles toward each child (above them) and ask the caregiver for their name and continue blowing bubbles while the song “Bubbles” from Feel the Music (Parachute Express) plays.

### **Closing**

I close with “The King Commands”. I substitute a character from storytime for the king so it could be

“Tacky the Penguin commands us to take 1 step forward

Take 1 step back

Tacky the Penguin commands us to lean this way

Lean that way

Tacky the Penguin commands us to stretch up high

Bend down low

Tacky the Penguin commands us to jump up and down as fast as we can go.

I repeat this with another character from the stories we’ve read.

For the baby storytimes, I close with us picking up all the puppets and toys and books we've pulled out and putting them back in the Tickle Bag (a big zippered tote bag) while the Clean Up song plays, followed by Bye Bye Baby Bye Bye and Skinnamarink. I may repeat this set of songs a second time while we continue to put everything away and gather up all the babies' belongings and the adults chat.