

THE IMPORTANCE OF STORYTELLING

an ancient art that builds listening skills

Storytelling is not the same as "reading aloud."

With storytelling, a person recites a tale from memory to a captivated audience of listeners.

Storytelling sessions allow children to exercise their imagination and sharpen their "oral memory," a skill that is important for future school success.

Here is an excerpt from *The Legend of Mimigweseeos*, a Cree legend told by Adam Ballantyne and recorded by Prentice C. Downs.

As you read this excerpt, think of the ways it sounds different from ordinary book-style stories.

<<And if you listen enough, all these sounds which sound so strange at first will become friendly to you. You will know what they mean, and you will feel at last as we do, that once in the forest you are under the good spirits of friendliness of the wondrous trees, and that is your home and protection from all the rest of the world, for here among man's oldest friends, the trees, the world of men when it is cruel or unkind can never find you; and the forest provides all you need. And when you go through the forest, you may think that no one sees you and that you are all alone. Such is not true, as we well know, for beings of the forest, the fox, a rabbit here, a squirrel there, a bird, a mouse, and the trees themselves, all of them notice your passing and each one tells the others in some way... This is part of the magic of the forest.>>

Good idea: after you've read your children a story, have them retell it in their very own words!



See www.storytellers-conteurs.ca for a list of Canadian and Quebec storytellers.

Find aboriginal storytelling at firstnationspedagogy.ca/storytelling.html

The Legend of Mimigweseeos is one book in a trilogy and is reprinted with permission of Penumbra Press. www.penumbrapress.ca

