What’s the point of wordless books?

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| **Routine**  Receiving a wordless book at the very beginning of your child’s reading journey will give you the opportunity to establish a routine together without the pressure of actually ‘reading’ the book.  You can figure out the best time of day and the best space in your home to share the book. Find a place with few distractions. It could be after breakfast, before dinner or at bedtime, or whenever suits you and your child. | **Book Care**  Model how to look after the book, holding it correctly and turning the pages carefully. Let your child practice this and take responsibility for looking after it. Talk about the best place to keep the book when you are not looking at it. Discuss the parts of the book including the front cover, back cover and spine. | **Oracy Skills**  Wordless books are an incredible opportunity to develop oracy skills in children and support rich conversations.  By sharing the book in a quiet space, you can really focus on discussing the illustrations and the story. Encourage children to ask questions about the pictures, give their point of view, listen to others and talk about what is happening.  *Oral narrative skills are critical to early literacy development, as they assist children in making the transition between oral narrative and written text (Collins and Glover, 2015)* | **Vocabulary**  Wordless books are a great way to expand children’s vocabulary. Vocabulary is a key predictor of later academic success.  You can name objects you see in the illustrations and identify anything they may not be familiar with. Once you’ve named the objects you can encourage children to add a describing word. You can also model using alternative words, for example big tree to enormous tree. |
| **Phonological Awareness**  Even in a wordless book you can prepare children for later phonics learning.  You can point out or think of something that rhymes with an illustration or play I spy and find objects that start with a certain sound. You can also clap the syllables in words or practice blending the sounds together to form the whole word. | **Story Structure**  A story is told through the illustrations within a wordless book rather than the text. The stories will have a beginning, middle and end and, quite likely a problem and resolution. Identifying these features within a story is great practice for when children read independently and it will have a positive impact on their comprehension.  Discuss what is happening in the story, predict what might happen at the end. | **Comprehension**  Discussing the book together can really impact a child’s comprehension skills. Can they talk about what is happening? Can they make predictions?  You can look at facial expressions of the characters and make inferences about what they might be thinking and feeling, and why. Prompt children to imagine they are the main character and ask them what they might do differently or the same. | **Retelling and Imagination**  Once you have visited the story several times you can encourage children to retell in their own words. Can they correctly sequence the main events?  You can prompt them to act the story out through role play or using small toys. Acting out and retelling the story can further develop their familiarity with story structure and have a positive impact on their written compositions. |

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