

Story Sacks

A story sack is a large cloth bag containing a good quality storybook with supporting materials, such as puppets, soft toys and a game to stimulate reading/language activities. There is usually a cassette tape with the story recorded onto it so the children can follow along and act out.



Story Sacks were developed by Neil Griffiths in 1995. The initiative has now spread to schools, pre-schools and libraries throughout the country. They are designed to help adults share books with children in a way that is positive, theatrical, special, interactive and fun.

Story Sacks projects are an excellent way of encouraging parents and carers to get involved in developing both their own literacy skills and those of their children. A group of adults attends a class in creative craft work and makes the items that are used to illustrate the story. Many adults, following involvement in a Story Sacks project, go on to further adult groups, to become reading volunteers and to jobs and training.

Here's how it worked in Westgarth Primary School, Marske: a volunteer group of 35 parents, led by school literacy co-ordinator Barbara Welsh, made and stocked the sacks, paid for by fund-raising, including a weekly cake sale by one parent and a £750 donation from a nearby church. A cloakroom was transformed into a reading area. A local architect drew up the plans, his daughter did the artwork, a parent and joiner built the area and the school caretaker did the decorating. Other backers were found from the business community.