

Personalised story

A personalised story can be very useful for a child to help explain or explore a situation when you have not been able to find a pre-written story which matches their experiences. It can also help children feel very special when they have a story written just for them.

Where to start:

- Consider the experiences or feelings you are hoping to explore with the child.
- Begin to weave a story which could enable these themes to be explored.
- Write it in a format which can be kept safely and feels engaging and special.
- You can illustrate the story to make it feel more special and personalised by using:
 - simple drawings
 - cut-out pictures
 - computer icons
 - photos
- Read the story through with the child and explore the themes in the ways we have discussed in the other sections.
- Re-read the story with them as often as needed to keep the themes under exploration.

Case Example

2 children, Kerry and Susie, had been removed from the care of their parents due to neglect. Their father was not around and their mother had had a succession of partners who had been violent to her. After many assessments it was determined that they could not return home. The children found it hard to make sense of what had happened. They had taken a while to settle into placement and missed their mother. Gradually they were starting to attach to their foster carer who had applied to adopt them. Their worker decided to write a personalised story for them to help them begin to make sense of their lives. She invented the story of 2 kittens which was based on their experiences.

The children loved the story. They each had a book designed just for them where they were the main character. Susie who was only 4 did not readily make connections

between her life and that of the kittens, but empathised with the kittens. In this way, the story helped her symbolically process her experiences. Kerry, aged 7, consciously made connections and used the story to help them understand their own lives.

Here is an abridged version of the story of Minxi and Pixie the kittens, which was prepared for and read to Susie and Kerry.

Minxi and Pixie the Kittens

This is the story of Minxi and Pixie who are kittens.



Minxi and Pixie are kittens. They live with their mummy. Pixie is the oldest and Minxie is still very little. They didn't have a very nice home to live in but Minxi and Pixie played together as best they could. The dog next door used to bark at them all and frighten them. Minxi got bitten by the dog and lost most of her tail.

Minxi's mummy was weak and ill and used to have to lie down a lot. She slept so much that the kittens were cold and starving.



The police had to come and rescue the kittens. They were frightened to be carried away in a box.

But the police took them to new homes with kind grown ups. At first they were scared in their new home and huddled close.



Gradually they started to trust their foster mummy and allowed her to hold them



But after a while they started to feel and happy and really relaxed!



safe