

A LITTLE IMAGINATION...STARCATCHERS JUNE COMPETITION!

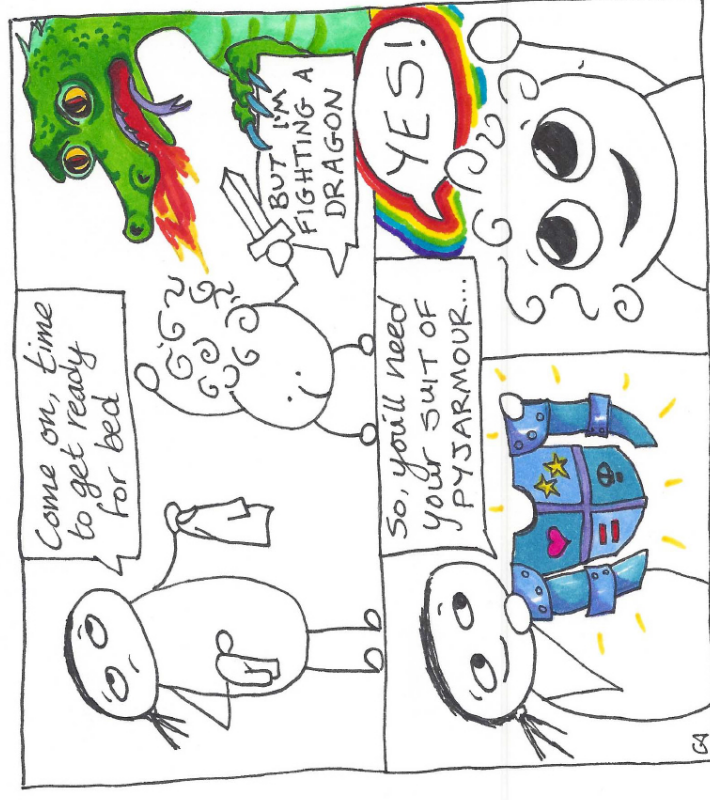
Have you ever played spot the dragon on a long car journey, or pretended the trolley was a train as you dashed round the supermarket? Ever turned a spoonful of porridge into an aeroplane? Pretended the washing basket was a pirate ship so you could finish making dinner?

This month we're celebrating imagination and creative play by running our "A Little Imagination: Tales of Parenting" competition. We're asking parents and carers to share their stories about those lovely moments when you capture your wee one's imagination with something fun, silly or magical...and it just so happens to make your life easier to boot.

Throughout this month we'll be sharing comic strips with some imaginative parenting ideas – please share them with the parents and carers you work with, and encourage them to share their own stories with us. They can do this by emailing info@starcatchers.org.uk, by tweeting @starcatchersUK or by commenting on our facebook page.

At the end of the month, we'll choose our favourite story and the winner will receive their own personalised cartoon strip, starring their family and signed by the artist.

1. GETTING DRESSED



WHY WE'RE RUNNING THIS COMPETITION:

We want to celebrate all the amazing, creative parenting that's already going on, and encourage families to use their imaginations together more often.

We want people to feel good about being creative with their children.

We want creativity to be seen as something that helps make parenting easier AND more fun.

When parents think creativity and the arts for wee ones, it can strike fear into their hearts. Glitter and dough mashed into carpets. Avalanches of recycling materials and puddles of glue. Half an hour to set up, half an hour to tidy up, and three minutes when your child is actually engaged. Expense. Mess. Wasting time when there are always a hundred other things that need doing. Worst of all, when you're tired and stressed and have the worries of the world on your shoulders, the creative, fun bit of parenting can be the first thing to go.

It's a shame, because creativity is one of the best parenting tools you can have – shared creative experiences support healthy attachment, reduces stress, helps language development, numeracy and literacy – it's a one way ticket to smarter, happier, healthier families. And some of the most effective and magical moments of shared creativity happen nowhere near a glue gun.

They work because they're personal – they meet the needs of the child AND the parent. A shared joke. Something you're both interested in. Sometimes it's a one off idea that gets you through an otherwise tricky situation, and sometimes those moments get woven into the rituals and routines of your family.

Creative moments help you feel good about being a parent, because they can turn a battle ground into a playground.

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Starcatchers Productions Ltd.

Company number: SC97 561 Charity number: SC042222