Sharing Family Stories

Every family has a story, and children love hearing about theirs. It is important to hear tales of when they were younger, or where they have lived. If you have a map or globe, or access to a computer, you can show them where their ancestors came from. It is hard for children to make the connections between family relationships. You can help them by showing them family photos or creating a family tree.

Storytelling is an art that you can practice with your child. In some countries they pass stories down from generation to generation by telling them instead of writing them. Have your child tell you a story about something that has happened to them. Encourage them to add details to the story by asking open-ended questions at the end of the story — who, what, when, where, why. This will help your child:

• Build self-confidence in talking in front of people
• Develop imagination
• Improve expressive language skill

Make sharing family stories a family tradition!

Featured Book

Abuela, by Arthur Dorros

While in the park feeding the birds with her abuela (grandmother), Rosalba wonders what it would be like to fly -- and in her imagination they soar off together to see the sights. This is a beautiful book full of bright illustrations, and it is a great story for your child to re-tell!

More books about families...

• Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No-Good, Very Bad Day, by Judith Viorst
• The Relatives Came, by Cynthia Rylant
• Big, Red Lollipop, by Rukhsana Khan
• Families, by Ann Morris
• Tell Me Again about the Night I Was Born, by Jamie Lee Curtis
• A Chair for My Mother, by Vera B. Williams
• My Father is Taller Than a Tree, by Joseph Bruchac
More fun with Abuela…

Make a book… Stack five pieces of paper together and fold them in half to make a book. Staple the folded edge to fasten the pages in place. Tell a story to your child starting with:

- “When you were a baby…”
- “One time when I was your age…”
- “These were the chores I did as a child.”
- Other stories about your childhood

Write some simple words on each page that describe the story. Your child can draw pictures to illustrate it, and you now have a family story to read together.

Start a tradition… Start a family tradition such as going for a walk on Sunday afternoon, or reading books together before going to bed. Talk about traditions that people have in other countries, or that you had as a child.

Family picture… Have your child draw a picture of your family. They can decorate it with buttons, yarn, stickers, ribbon, etc.

Nursery Rhyme

Diddle, Diddle Dumpling

Diddle, diddle, dumpling,
My son John,
Went to bed
With his trousers on.
One shoe off,
And one shoe on
Diddle, diddle, dumpling
My son John.

Fingerplay

Grandma’s Glasses

These are Grandma’s glasses, (fingers make glasses around eyes)
And this is Grandma’s hat,
(hands make hat on head)
And this is the way she folds her hands,
(fold hands)
And lays them in her lap.
(hands on lap)

These are Grandpa’s glasses,
(make large glasses with hands)
And this is Grandpa’s hat,
(make large hat above head)
And this is the way he folds his arms,
(big gestures to fold arms)
And lays them in his lap.
(lay folded arms down)

What your library can do for you…

You can look for your own family stories on HeritageQuest, a family history database available at your library.

Books to Go from Your Library

This project is made possible by a grant from the U.S. Institute of Museum and Library Services. Brought to you by the Idaho Commission for Libraries’ Read to Me program and your local library.