



## Stories and Traditions

Many parents know the benefits of cuddling up and reading with a child—but did you know that telling stories has many of the same benefits? It is also a powerful way to pass on family history and family traditions and values to your child.

Family stories have special meaning because they are about your child and the people she loves. Family stories can help your child feel more connected to the important people in her life as she discovers who she is and where she came from. Have fun remembering your past and making your family history part of your child's future.

- Weave storytelling into your family routines. For example, as you fold the clothes, tell a story about a favorite pair of pajamas you had as a child. As you make dinner, tell about a time your mother let you help in the kitchen when you were little.
- Encourage an older sibling or adult to sit with your child and tell stories about family members who they think share some of his physical characteristics, interests, or positive traits.
- Stories help your child learn about the languages, stories, and traditions that are unique to your family or family's culture(s). At your next family gathering, encourage each person to share a favorite family song or story.
- Children love learning about the people who are most important to them. Pull out pictures (or a photo album) of your immediate and extended family members. Have fun pointing out how your family members are the same or different from extended family members.
- Set up a regular time with a family member to call, Skype, or gChat with your child. You may want to suggest an evening or afternoon quiet time where a grandparent reads or tells a story to your child.
- Visit your local or school library and check out traditional folktales and/or fairy tales from different parts of the world where your relatives came from or live.
- During your bedtime routine, instead of reading a story, tell your child stories about when you and your siblings were little.
- Take a trip to your local library to check out books or CDs about families from around the world, such as *Families* by Ann Morris; *Quinito's Neighborhood, El Vecindario de Quinito* by Ina Cumpiano; or "Families of the World" CDs ([www.familiesoftheworld.com](http://www.familiesoftheworld.com)).
- Family stories can help your child become more aware of emotions that all people feel and express sometimes. Tell a story about a family member who shared a similar experience that your child has had and how he/she felt in that situation.