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Storybook Families

Share. Remember.
Belong.

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Welcome to Storybook Families

This week's activities invite children to explore the stories, people, traditions, and memories that make every family unique. Through storytelling, pretend play, art, books, and hands-on exploration, children will build early literacy skills while strengthening confidence, communication, and connection.

As children share experiences and learn about one another, they also practice empathy, listening, self-expression, and belonging. The activities in this pack are designed to celebrate all kinds of families while encouraging creativity, imagination, and meaningful conversation through play.

As you explore together, you can support your child by:

- Encouraging children to share stories and ideas
- Asking open-ended questions during conversations
- Listening together during storytelling moments
- Celebrating creativity, connection, and belonging

We hope this week inspires joyful storytelling, warm connections, and special moments both at home and in the classroom.

with open hearts,
the gro academy
team

Home Extension: Family Story Basket

Sharing memories, stories, and meaningful family moments together

Objective:

Children explore storytelling, communication, and identity by sharing family photos, meaningful objects, and personal memories through conversation and play.

Materials:

- Basket or small container
- Family photos or printed pictures
- Favorite books (optional)
- Small meaningful objects or keepsakes
- Paper and crayons (optional)

Instructions:

1. Invite children to place family photos or meaningful objects into a basket.
2. Encourage children to choose one item at a time and share something about it.
3. Ask simple open-ended questions to support storytelling and conversation.
4. Encourage children to listen as others share stories and memories.
5. Allow children to draw pictures or continue storytelling through pretend play.

Infant & Toddler Adaptation:

Offer soft photo cards, familiar objects, and simple family pictures while modeling short phrases, naming family members, and encouraging conversation through play.

Developmental Connections:

- **Approaches to Learning:** Curiosity • Communication through exploration
- **Literacy & Language:** Storytelling • Expressive language • Conversational skills
- **Social & Emotional:** Identity awareness • Confidence • Connection and belonging

Storybook Families

These activities encourage children to explore storytelling, identity, connection, and belonging through books, dramatic play, art, conversation, and hands-on literacy experiences. As children share stories and memories, they strengthen communication, listening, creativity, and self-expression through playful learning.

My Family Book

Creating and sharing stories about the people we love

Objective:

Children create simple books about their families, memories, traditions, and favorite experiences while strengthening storytelling and early literacy skills.

Materials:

- Stapled blank paper or mini booklets
- Crayons or markers
- Glue sticks
- Stickers or collage materials (optional)
- Family photos (optional)

Instructions:

1. Invite children to create pages about their family or favorite memories.
2. Encourage children to draw pictures and describe their ideas aloud.
3. Support children in sharing stories connected to their pages.
4. Encourage children to “read” their books to others.
5. Allow children to add more pages and details over time.

Infant & Toddler Adaptation:

Offer simple photo books, chunky crayons, and familiar family pictures while modeling storytelling language and naming important people together.

Developmental Connections:

- **Approaches to Learning:** Creative expression • Communication through play
- **Health & Physical:** Fine motor control • Hand-eye coordination
- **Literacy & Language:** Storytelling • Early writing • Expressive language
- **Social & Emotional:** Identity awareness • Confidence • Sense of belonging

Family Small World Play

Creating family stories through imaginative small world exploration

Objective:

Children use dolls, loose parts, blocks, and small world materials to create family scenes, homes, routines, and imaginative storytelling experiences.

Materials:

- Small dolls or figures
- Small furniture or home props
- Natural materials or recycled items
- Fabric pieces or scarves
- Wooden blocks or loose parts
- Trays or floor space

Instructions:

1. Invite children to explore the small world materials and figures.
2. Encourage children to create homes, family spaces, or everyday scenes.
3. Support children in acting out routines, memories, or imaginative family stories.
4. Encourage conversation and storytelling during play.
5. Allow children to redesign and expand their small world environments over time.

Infant & Toddler Adaptation:

Offer larger figures, soft props, and simple home-themed materials while modeling pretend play language and familiar routines together.

Developmental Connections:

- **Approaches to Learning:** Imagination • Flexible thinking
- **Cognitive:** Symbolic play • Spatial awareness
- **Literacy & Language:** Storytelling • Conversational language • Expressive communication
- **Social & Emotional:** Identity awareness • Emotional expression • Cooperative play

Build My Home

Designing homes, gathering spaces, and meaningful places through play

Objective:

Children use blocks, loose parts, and recycled materials to create homes and meaningful family spaces while exploring storytelling, creativity, and spatial awareness.

Materials:

- Wooden blocks or building materials
- Loose parts or recycled materials
- Small dolls or figures (optional)
- Cardboard pieces or tubes
- Floor or table space
- Fabric pieces or scarves

Instructions:

1. Invite children to explore the available building materials.
2. Encourage children to create homes or meaningful family spaces.
3. Support children in adding details such as rooms, furniture, or gathering areas.
4. Encourage children to describe who lives there and what happens in the space.
5. Allow children to redesign and expand their creations through play.

Infant & Toddler Adaptation:

Offer larger blocks and simple loose parts while encouraging toddlers to stack, arrange, and explore home-themed pretend play with familiar vocabulary.

Developmental Connections:

- **Approaches to Learning:** Creativity • Flexible thinking
- **Cognitive:** Spatial awareness • Symbolic representation
- **Literacy & Language:** Storytelling • Descriptive language • Conversational skills
- **Social & Emotional:** Identity awareness • Sense of belonging • Emotional connection

Memory Kitchen Sensory Play

Exploring family memories and traditions through pretend cooking play

Objective:

Children use sensory materials and dramatic play to explore family traditions, favorite meals, storytelling, and imaginative social experiences.

Materials:

- Sensory bin or tray
- Scoops, bowls, and spoons
- Fabric napkins or pretend menus
- Pots, pans, or kitchen props
- Play food or sensory fillers
- Loose parts for pretend cooking

Instructions:

1. Invite children to explore the pretend kitchen and sensory materials.
2. Encourage children to create favorite meals or imaginative family recipes.
3. Support children in describing foods, traditions, and cooking experiences.
4. Encourage storytelling and social interaction during pretend play.
5. Allow children to continue expanding their kitchen and restaurant ideas together.

Infant & Toddler Adaptation:

Offer simple scooping tools, soft play food, and sensory materials while modeling cooking vocabulary and pretend play routines together.

Developmental Connections:

- **Approaches to Learning:** Imagination • Creative exploration
- **Health & Physical:** Fine motor coordination • Sensory exploration
- **Literacy & Language:** Conversational language • Storytelling • Descriptive vocabulary
- **Social & Emotional:** Cooperation • Identity awareness • Emotional connection

Our Classroom Story Quilt

Creating a collaborative quilt filled with stories, memories, and belonging

Objective:

Children contribute artwork and storytelling pieces to a collaborative classroom quilt celebrating family, identity, and connection.

Materials:

- Paper squares or cardstock pieces
- Crayons, markers, or paint
- Glue sticks
- Fabric scraps or collage materials
- Family photos (optional)
- Large display paper or bulletin board space

Instructions:

1. Invite children to decorate a square representing their family or favorite memories.
2. Encourage children to draw pictures, symbols, people, or meaningful activities.
3. Support children in describing their artwork and sharing stories aloud.
4. Combine the completed squares into a collaborative classroom quilt display.
5. Encourage children to explore and discuss the completed quilt together.

Infant & Toddler Adaptation:

Offer larger paper pieces, chunky crayons, and simple collage materials while modeling language about family, colors, and familiar experiences.

Developmental Connections:

- **Approaches to Learning:** Creativity • Self-expression
- **Health & Physical:** Fine motor control • Creative art exploration
- **Literacy & Language:** Storytelling • Expressive language • Conversational skills
- **Social & Emotional:** Identity awareness • Sense of belonging • Community connection

Facilitator Focus: Storybook Families

- 🌟 **Theme** *Children explore storytelling, identity, belonging, communication, and connection through books, dramatic play, art, family memories, and imaginative literacy experiences.*



Overview

This week's activities encourage children to share stories, express ideas, explore family experiences, and build meaningful connections through playful literacy and SEL-based learning. Through storytelling, art, sensory play, dramatic play, and collaborative activities, children strengthen communication, confidence, listening, creativity, and emotional awareness while celebrating the unique stories that make every family special. The activities are intentionally open-ended and inclusive, allowing children to explore memories, traditions, relationships, and imaginative storytelling in ways that feel meaningful and developmentally appropriate.



Facilitator Tips

- Encourage children to share stories and memories in their own words
- Model warm conversational language during storytelling activities
- Support listening and turn-taking during group conversations
- Celebrate each child's unique experiences and family connections
- Allow storytelling and imaginative play to develop naturally



Vocabulary to Emphasize

family • memory • story • belong • tradition • home • celebrate • together • listen • share • connect • imagine

Short Sentence Prompts (for modeling language):

- "Can you tell me about that?"
- "Who is in your story?"
- "What happens next?"
- "What makes your family special?"
- "Can we create a story together?"

💡 **Developmental Connections (WMELS Alignment)**

🧠 **Approaches to Learning:**

- Children strengthen curiosity, creativity, flexible thinking, and confidence through storytelling, imaginative play, and self-expression.

🧠 **Cognition & General Knowledge:**

- Children build memory recall, sequencing, symbolic thinking, and connections between family experiences, routines, stories, and shared traditions.

💪 **Health & Physical Development:**

- Children develop fine motor coordination and creative control through drawing, bookmaking, sensory play, and collaborative art experiences.

🐦 **Language & Literacy Development:**

- Children build expressive language, storytelling, listening, conversational skills, sequencing, and early literacy through books, dramatic play, and meaningful communication.

❤️ **Social & Emotional Development:**

- Children explore identity, belonging, empathy, emotional expression, confidence, and connection while sharing stories and learning about one another.



🌟 **Reflection for Educators**

- How are children expressing identity and belonging during storytelling activities?
- What kinds of conversations and connections are emerging during play?
- How are children using creativity, communication, and imagination to share their experiences?

