

# HomeFront. PROJECT

# KIDS

Teach, Empower and Enjoy Your Children.

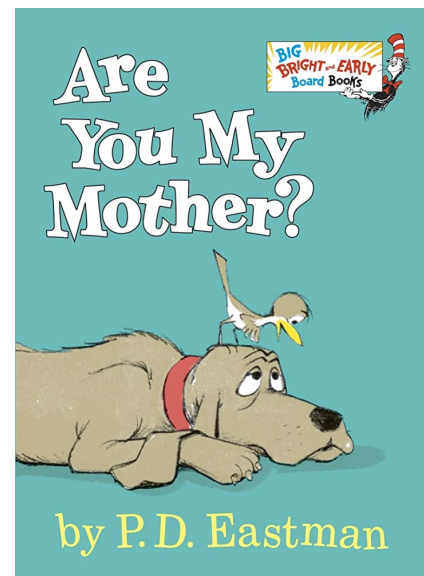
## A.R.T. - Children's Needs Come First

## Knowing Family History Promotes Resilience

Younger Children –

**WATCH:**  
*Are You My Mother?*  
By P.D. Eastman

All children desire to know and be loved by their mother just like the baby bird in the story. Knowing where you came from is an important part of a child's identity. Research has shown there are many benefits to a person knowing their family and their family's story. Children have increased self-esteem and greater self-confidence. Even if there are stories in the family history that aren't good, children can still learn skills of forgiveness and be inspired to make better choices. A person finds their identity and a connection to something bigger than themselves through connecting to their family history. Studies have even shown knowing your family history can help you through difficulties and trauma. For a child, knowing your parents and your family history is a must for healthy development.



Older Children –

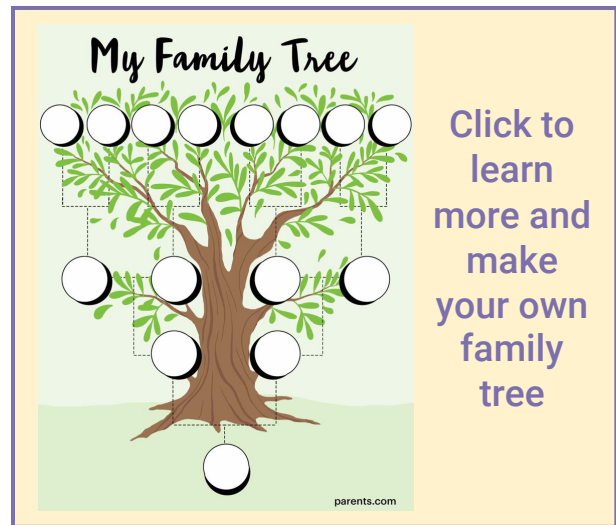
**WATCH:**  
*Family Search – Every  
Family Has a Story,  
Discover Yours*

**WATCH:**  
*5 Benefits of Knowing  
Your Family History*

## A.R.T. - Children's Needs Come First

### Knowing Family History Promotes Resilience

Research has shown there are many benefits to a person knowing their family and their family's story. Children have increased self-esteem and greater self-confidence. Even if there are stories in the family history that are challenging, children can still learn skills of forgiveness and be inspired to make better choices. A person finds their identity and a connection to something bigger than themselves through connecting to their family history. It has even been shown that knowing your family history can help you through difficulties and trauma.



<https://www.parents.com/fun/activities/indoor/how-to-make-a-family-tree-with-kids/>

One of the problems with Assisted Reproductive Technologies is that children aren't always able to know their family history depending on the situation. For these children, not knowing the identity of one - or both - parents creates a real challenge and leaves a hole in their understanding of who they are.

**Optional: Watch or try the following experiment –**

#### Copper Coating an Iron Nail

**DISCUSS:** The pennies, or the tarnished copper object, represent our ancestors, or family members who came before you. These ancestors were real people in our family. They lived their lives, faced challenges and disappointments and had successes. They have left their story behind for us to learn from – just like the pennies, or copper objects, left the copper behind in the solution. Those nails received a beautiful new protective layer as a result. Similarly, we can receive help, comfort, reassurance, increased confidence and self-identity from learning about and knowing the stories of our ancestors. This includes both the good stories of positive traits, or pushing through trials, and also learning from those stories of their mistakes. Knowing our family's history helps us to know more about ourselves. Learning their stories can give us insight to know how we can overcome our trials, make better choices, or be even stronger as a result of their example – even if there weren't always great.

# HomeFront. PROJECT

# KIDS

Teach, Empower and Enjoy Your Children.

## A.R.T. - Children's Needs Come First

### Knowing Family History Promotes Resilience

Additional reading and research on this topic –

- Why should children learn their family history?
- Reasons why knowing your family history is important
- Family history knowledge helps adolescents develop a healthy sense of identity

### Additional Short Summaries from Research on the Positive Impact of Knowing Your Family's History



- “Thinking about one's genetic origin (i.e. ancestors) provides people with a positive psychological resource that increases their intellectual performance.” There was no difference shown between thinking of positive family stories or negative family stories. Fischer, Peter & Sauer, Anne & Vogrincic, Claudia & Weisweiler, Silke. (2011). The ancestor effect: Thinking about our genetic origin enhances intellectual performance. *European Journal of Social Psychology*. 41. 11 - 16. 10.1002/ejsp.778. [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/227729592\\_The\\_ancestor\\_effect\\_Thinking\\_about\\_our\\_genetic\\_origin\\_enhances\\_intellectual\\_performance](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/227729592_The_ancestor_effect_Thinking_about_our_genetic_origin_enhances_intellectual_performance)
- Knowing your family's history produced “health benefits across the lifespan.” “Knowing one's family stories creates meaning that goes beyond the individual to provide a sense of self, through time, and in relation to family... [and] provides a larger context for understanding and dealing with life's experience(s) and challenges... contribut[ing] to resilience at all stages of life.” Driessnack M. “Who Are You From?": The Importance of Family Stories, *Journal of Family Nursing*, 2017;23(4):434-449. doi:10.1177/1074840717735510

# HomeFront. PROJECT

# KIDS

Teach, Empower and Enjoy Your Children.

## A.R.T. - Children's Needs Come First

### Knowing Family History Promotes Resilience

- When a child can answer questions about their immediate family history, the higher their self-esteem, the more positive their views and the stronger their individual sense of control over their circumstances. Understanding your family's history and narrative was a high predictor of some of life's most affirming character traits. When children know "where they come from" they have increased resilience and are better able to respond to life's challenges;



showing showed "higher levels of emotional well-being, and also higher levels of identity achievement." Marshall Duke, et al., "Do You Know..." The power of family history in adolescent identity and well-being, Emory University, Journal of Family Life, 2010.

- Using family narratives can be a tool for effective parenting. Family narrative is "the way through which children and adolescents connect across generations to create self-identity... by anchoring oneself in family history, one develops a sense of place and security that may facilitate self-confidence and self-competence." Family stories help families pass on values, experiences, traditions and important life lessons to the next generations. Maurya, Rakesh. (2016). Use of Family Narratives as a Tool of Effective Parenting. The International Journal of Indian Psychology. 3. 2348-5396. 10.25215/0302.090.
- The opposite of addiction is not sobriety, it is connection. Connecting with members of our family past and present by learning their history fills an innate need in each one of us. Bruce Alexander, "The Globalization of Addiction: A Study in Poverty of Spirit," Oxford University Press, 2008. Johann Hari, "Everything You Think You Know about Addiction is Wrong, TED Talk, [https://www.ted.com/talks/johann\\_hari\\_everything\\_you\\_think\\_you\\_know\\_about\\_addiction\\_is\\_wrong#t-202527](https://www.ted.com/talks/johann_hari_everything_you_think_you_know_about_addiction_is_wrong#t-202527)

# HomeFront. PROJECT

# KIDS

Teach, Empower and Enjoy Your Children.

## A.R.T. - Children's Needs Come First

### Knowing Family History Promotes Resilience

- Ancient Haudenosaunee (Iroquois) philosophy states that every individual is accountable to seven generations or seven circles. Starting from the left is your great grandparents, then your grandparents, then parents, with the individual comprising the middle circle. Continuing on, the fifth circle is your children, then grandchildren, then great-grandchildren – seven generations. It's the ability to think about 75-100 years in the past and 75 to 100 years into the future and to see them all as connected and a part of you. It is your past and your future, and you act with responsibility toward them all. <https://www.pbs.org/warrior/content/timeline/opendoor/roleOfChief.html>

- “To know who your ancestors are is the same as knowing the road that leads you home.” In Kazakhstan, the citizens are asked to know their ancestors going back seven generations [zhety ata]. Knowing your shezhyre [family tree], “embodies the lore that surround[s] every social event.” It is the “cultural medium through which [Kazakhs] express their values, construct and communicate their perceptions of social organization, and maintain local politics.”

Saulesh Yessenova (2005) “Knowing the Road That Leads You Home: Family, Genealogy, and Migration in Post-Socialist Kazakhstan” *The Journal of Guangxi University for Nationalities, Philosophy and Social Sciences Edition, China*, 27/7: 40-48.  
<https://edspace.american.edu/silkroadjournal/wp-content/uploads/sites/984/2017/09/%E2%80%98Knowing-the-Road-That-Leads-You-Home%E2%80%99-Family-Genealogy-and-Migration-in-Post-Socialist-Kazakhstan.pdf>



- Grandparents have a positive influence on their grandchildren that is distinct from parent-child relationships. When grandparents stayed connected and involved with their grandkids, the children in both single parent and two-parent families “were kinder to others outside their immediate family and friends – and, in some cases, smarter.” Jeremy B. Yorgason, et al., “Nonresidential Grandparents’ Emotion and Financial Involvement in Relation to Early Adolescent Grandchild Outcomes,” *Journal of Research on Adolescence*, Vol. 21, 3, (September 2011): 552-558.

# HomeFront. PROJECT

# KIDS

Teach, Empower and Enjoy Your Children.

## A.R.T. - Children's Needs Come First

### Knowing Family History Promotes Resilience

- A study from Oxford University showed that teenagers whose grandparents were actively involved in their lives were happier. They had fewer emotional and behavior problems and got along with their peers better. "Close relationships between grandparents and grandchildren buffer the effects of adverse life events." University of Oxford. "Grandma And Grandpa Are Good For Children." ScienceDaily. ScienceDaily, 7 June 2008. [www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2008/06/080605091358.htm](http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2008/06/080605091358.htm)
- Extended family can have a positive impact on children's educational attainment. "In addition to siblings resembling each other, first cousins also resemble each other with regard to how much education they complete." Aunts, uncles, and grandparents help children to be more resilient, by compensating for resources that may be lacking in their immediate family. Jæger, M. M. (2012). The Extended Family and Children's Educational Success. American Sociological Review, 77(6), 903-922. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0003122412464040>

