

RELATIONSHIP SKILLS: OUR FAMILY STORY

Families grow a deeper understanding and appreciation for past generations by creating a family tree.

TIME

15-20 minutes

PARTICIPANTS

Kindergarten and Up, Parents, Family Members

MATERIALS

Large piece of white paper, your choice of favorite art supplies including tools to draw with.

DIRECTIONS

1. On a large piece of white paper, draw or construct (with construction paper and glue) a tree trunk and limbs.
2. Each family member can draw or cut out leaves to go on the tree that represent a family member. Begin with your immediate family and move to extended family and previous generations.
3. On the leaf, write the name of the person and role to your children ("Grandma"). Be sure and share what you know and love about them as you go. For ancestors, you may know less but do share their name, location, heritage and anything else you might know.
4. Find a place in your home to display the tree you've created together.

REFLECTIONS

Did anything surprise you about this activity?

Did anyone learn anything new about a family member?

Are there values that you share across generations?

Do you know about the hard times your ancestors endured? Be sure and share those stories.

What do you know about the cultures of previous generations? What gives you a sense of pride? What do you want to learn more about?

SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL SKILLS

- **Self-Awareness** – Learning about yourself and your own identity in the context of your larger family, previous generations and the values and culture you share.
- **Social Awareness** – Learning about the circumstances of previous generations and discovering empathy for family members by reflecting on their stories.
- **Relationship Skills** – Collaboratively building the family tree and sharing and building on one another's stories.

DID YOU KNOW?

Researchers in Berlin and Munich have shown that children who spend a short time learning about ancestors performed better on intelligence tests. They dubbed this the "ancestor effect," the idea being that thinking about the multitude of adversities our genetic lines had to overcome makes us feel empowered, more competent and in control. If their ancestors could deal with hunger, poverty, war, discrimination, and more, certainly they could manage their current reality.