



These pages taken from the  
My Family and Friends  
Mi familia y mis amigos Teacher Guide.



TM

# My Family and Friends

## Mi familia y mis amigos

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# Theme Project

Create a Friends and Family • *Mis amigos y familia* bulletin board or album. The purpose is to get to know one another through sharing pictures of those we love. This display helps children connect their home family to their school family. It promotes a positive school climate of caring. This will be a yearlong project—a living entity. It will change as siblings are born, children take trips, relatives come to visit, and other events occur. If wall space for this display is not available, create a photo album or scrapbook.

Week  
1

Create a photo album of your family and your life. Share your album during circle time or during home visits. Include photos of the children that you have taken during home visits, open house, or in the classroom. School personnel may also be part of your album.

Week  
3

Specifically ask for pictures of pets this week. We will be discussing pets as part of our families during this week. Create a school family song or chant for your class. Post it on the board or in the album or scrapbook.

Week  
2

Ask parents or children to send pictures for the Friends and Family • *Mis amigos y familia* board or album.

Week  
4

If you have a class visitor from the community during the week, make sure you photograph the visitor and add the photo to your School Family. Discuss the Friends and Family board or album as a continuing project for the rest of the year. Invite the children to continue to share photographs of trips they take, new siblings when they are born, and any other family or friend event they wish to share with their School Family.



## Books to Support Theme from Frog Street Press

*Daisy Doll* (family, compound words)

*Dogs Can Bark*

*Elmo the Elephant* (friends)

*Fernanda la foca* (friendship)

*Follow the Treasure Map* (position and direction words)

*Frog Street "Sing & Read" Shape Collection*

*Funny Fish* (firefighters, safety)

*Ivana la iguana* (iguana, Sara Sidney)

*Jack and the Sack*

*Mis mejores amigos* (friendship)

*My Ten Best Friends* (friendship)

*Nellie Nurse* (nurses)

*Nena la naranja* (week 5, math, counting)

*One to One* (one-to-one correspondence)

*Rodrigo el perro* (pets)

*Rowdy Rides Up, Down, All Around*  
(directions)

*Sorting Shapes*

*Younger and Older* (family)

# From the Experts



**Steve Spangler**

## Spangler Science Playing with Science

When my twin boys were in preschool, I occasionally got the privilege of being the *Helping Dad* for the day. I'm not sure how much "helping" went on when I was at school,

because I found myself playing with the best of them. It didn't take long for me to forget my writing deadlines or lesson plans or other responsibilities because I was so caught up in the art of playing.

Oh, yes... there is an art and science to playing. After a quick scan of the room, I zoomed in on the building blocks where I found a little guy who was having problems keeping his structure from falling down. It was *Helping Dad* to the rescue! I made a recommendation to my playing partner that we use big blocks on the bottom of the tower to make it more stable and to keep it from falling. He looked at me with those five-year-old eyes and said, "That's so dumb! It's supposed to fall over...because that's why it's fun!" What was I thinking?

As teachers, we must remember that playing and learning go hand in hand and it's so important that we model this style of learning to our students. When the teacher discovers something new by playing and experimenting in front of her students, the students will learn from this behavior. It took a simple experience like this to remind me that I didn't need to have a structured activity or worksheet to make a discovery, test out a prediction, explore something new, or just to have fun. I needed this experience to remind me that I must MAKE the time to play so that I can continue to learn and grow as a teacher.

## Conscious Discipline™ Tips

*Conscious Discipline* advocates creating a positive school climate through the creation of the *School Family*™. Within the *School Family*, children and adults have a sense of belonging. In Theme 1, *My School and Me*, we began to build the *School Family* climate during the Greeting Circle with *Brain Smart Start* activities (stress reduction activities) and connecting rituals. We established *The Kindness Tree*, *Ways to be Helpful Board or Book* and the *Safe Place* to encourage children to be meaningful contributors to the welfare of others. In Theme 2, *Family and Friends*, we will continue building the *School Family* by creating *The Friends and Family Book* and the *Job Board*. In addition, here are two centers that can be used to nurture the *School Family*.

The *We Care Center*, to be introduced during Week 2, provides children with a symbolic way of expressing empathy, encouragement, and affection for others. Suggested materials include:

- |                |   |
|----------------|---|
| Band-Aids      | stuffed heart                                     |
| blanket        | heart-shaped or star-shaped glasses               |
| stuffed animal | heart-shaped stickers                             |
| facial tissues | paper, markers, preprinted note cards or notepads |
|                | CD player with calming music                      |

The *Celebration Center* provides a way to celebrate life events, individual achievements (losing a tooth, learning to button, birth of a sibling), and contributions to the *School Family*™ (using a big voice, helpful hands). You can introduce the *Celebration Center* when an opportunity arises naturally. Your job is to find the gift that each child or adult has to offer and celebrate it. Suggested materials include:

- celebration chair
- a prop box that contains items to use in the celebration (necklaces, theme glasses or hats, ribbons, and so on).

Bailey, Becky (2000). *I Love You Rituals*. New York: Harper Collins  
Bailey, Becky (2001). *Conscious Discipline, revised*. Oviedo, Florida: Loving Guidance



**Becky Bailey, PhD**



## Character Education Focus

The *My Family and Friends* theme provides several opportunities for teaching tolerance and helpfulness.

Tolerance • tolerant • **tolerante**—involves learning to accept and appreciate differences.  
 Helpfulness • **amabilidad** • helpful • **amable**—is the practice of aiding and assisting others.  
 It is also an attitude.

For many children their family may have been their only window into the outside world. They may assume that all families are the same. They may have developed habits related to playing alone, to having access to whatever they want, and to being waited on. Here are some tips for teaching children to be tolerant and helpful.

Incorporate activities that focus on differences—how many children like melons, live in apartments, have traveled outside the state, were born in May, have siblings, and so on.  
 Provide variety in art materials, snacks, stories, field trips, music, routines, and so on. Encourage the children to try new things.

- Use materials that promote diversity.
- Assign jobs in the classroom
- Invite children to brainstorm a list of things they still need help doing (getting to school, cutting, cooking). Make a list of things they can do to help others (putting on a smock, building, cleaning up).
- Include group projects such as murals, a garden, or caring for a class pet.



**Pam  
Schiller,  
PhD**

**Alma  
Flor  
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PhD**



## Cultural Sensitivity: The Family

Eliminating the concept of *the other* or the idea of *different* and adopting the notions of *diversity* and *uniqueness* is not easy: it requires unlearning biases, a constant in most peoples' upbringing. There is a long tradition of ethnocentrism, of viewing one's culture as the normal one, and all others as not normal. This is so prevalent, that most times we don't see our culture. The notion, for example, of "ethnic foods" is a misconception: all food is ethnic; all food belongs to a particular group of people. Hamburgers and hot dogs are just as ethnic as burritos or curried chicken. It is only because they belong to the dominant culture that their ethnicity becomes invisible.

### Activity

- Discuss the concept of family to help children understand that families are formed by people who care for each other. Sometimes they live together, sometimes they don't.
- Invite children to explore the concept that families change: when someone is born, or someone dies, or someone gets married, or someone who lived elsewhere now comes to live in the home. Use numbers to show how different families can be. Encourage children to provide as many examples as possible: a family of two people—father and child, foster mother and child, . . . ; or of three people—mother and two children, grandparents and a child, . . . ; or of four people—mother, father and two children, . . . The combinations will be numerous and they will contribute to opening children's minds to diversity.

Have children draw their families. Turn their drawings into a book.

Transition Tips

Buddy Sticks

Partner activities are a wonderful way to encourage social skills and reinforce academic skills. Children can look at books with a partner, play games with a partner, draw pictures with a partner, and do many other activities. To insure that no one gets left out, put pairs of identical stickers on the bottom of large craft sticks (one sticker on each stick). You will need as many sticks as there are children in your classroom. Place the sticks with the stickers on the bottom in a plastic cup. Each child draws a stick and then walks around the room looking for the buddy stick with the matching sticker to find their partner. If you have an odd number of children, the last child can choose which partners she wants to join.



Dr. Jean

Early Authors

Self-published books should be protected, in order to preserve them through multiple readings. Laminate each page before binding them, or insert the sheets in page protectors (two at a time, back to back, to better resemble a book) and then place them in a simple binder. As you get ready to create more self-published books, remind the children that these books are special because they are about them. Encourage children to think about what they would like to say in their books and begin to develop their awareness as protagonists of their stories and authors of their books.

**Activity:** Create a *How Old Am I? • ¿Cuántos años tengo?* book

Create the self-published collective book *How Old Am I? • ¿Cuántos años tengo?* Print with large font on top of each page:

- I am (child's name). *Me llamo (nombre del niño).* (Paste or scan child's photo.)
- I am (a boy or a girl). I am (child's age).
- Yo soy (un niño o una niña). Tengo (edad del niño) anos.*
- I am a wonderful child. *Soy un niño/una niña maravilloso/maravillosa.*

As you read the book, move your hand under the words. Read the last line with emphasis and enthusiasm and encourage children to “read” with you. Take a moment on each page to focus on the child in the photo. Make an encouraging statement or point out a positive characteristic about the child. For example: *Jaime has a wonderful smile. Jaime tiene una sonrisa encantadora.* or *María is always cheerful. María siempre está alegre.* Sincere statements that focus on aspects of character will highlight intangible attributes that may otherwise go unnoticed.

Ada, Alma Flor and Campoy, Isabel (2004) *Authors in the Classroom: A Transformative Education Process.* Portland, Oregon, Allyn and Bacon



F. Isabel Campoy, PhD





**Pat Edwards,  
PhD**

### Family Connections

The collection of parent visions is an extension of parent stories of children's literacy development. In order to help children succeed in the eyes of all (school, society, and parent), it is important to understand a parent's vision of school success for their child. Parents who support their children's academic achievement often hold powerful visions of school success—this is why the exercise of having parents write a vision statement is so powerful. Here are a couple suggestions for collecting parents' visions.

#### Parent Vision Survey

This survey collects basic information about the family (names, number of siblings, email contact information) as well as narrative information from questions ("What do you like to do as a family?" --- "What does your child like to do with his or her free time?" --- "What are your child's needs"?)

#### Parents' Vision for Children's Education Form

- This form allows parents to reflect on their vision and explain it, in their own words, as they respond to questions.
- What is your vision for your child's classroom (how should it look, be set up, decorated)? What is the teacher doing? What are the students doing?
- What is your vision for your role in your child's education? For your child as a student? For your child's future?

To form an even more complete picture of a family's vision of educational success, teachers can elicit vision statements from both younger children who can use their drawings to convey their images and older students who can answer questions similar to those asked their parents. Collecting and incorporating parent (and child) visions, helps parents feel as if they are involved with and have contributed to their children's education. Parent (and child) visions help the teacher understand the specific aspects of parent and children's visions that make them unique individuals.

Edwards, P. A. (2009). *Tapping the potential of parents: A strategic guide to boosting student involvement through family involvement*. New York: Scholastic.

### Pam Schiller's Brain Booster

Children are the result of a complex interplay between their genetic compositions and the experiences they encounter within the environment. This accounts for the vast differences in each of us. Recent findings indicate that the environment plays a far greater role in building the structure and capacity of the brain than was previously believed. Therefore, we hold a tremendous opportunity in our hands. Experience wires the brain, and repetition strengthens the connections. Positive experiences during fertile times result in positive outcomes. Negative experiences result in negative outcomes. Curriculum is the sum total of all experiences children encounter from the moment they enter the classroom to the moment they leave. Plan positive experiences using the "Windows of Opportunity" as your guide.

Window	Wiring Opportunity	Greatest Enhancement
Emotional Intelligence Trust Impulse Control	0 – 48 months 0 – 14 months 16 – 48 months	4 years to puberty
Social Development Attachment Independence Cooperation	0 – 48 months 0 – 12 months 18 – 36 months 24 – 48 months	4 years to puberty
Thinking Skills Cause and Effect Problem-Solving	0 – 48 months 0 – 16 months 16 – 48 months	4 years to puberty
Motor Development	0 – 24 months	2 years to puberty
Vision	0 – 24 months	2 years to puberty
Reading Foundation Skills Early Sounds Vocabulary	0 – 24 months 4 – 8 months 0 – 24 months	2 – 7 years 8 months to puberty 2 – 5 years



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