bornlearning℠

Family History Projects ...

The following projects are perfect starting points for passing on your history and having fun with your grandchildren. In fact, the AARP suggests getting the grandchildren to help "so they can learn and start to connect the past and present."

Picture perfect

Help grandchildren identify with the family history by gathering and preserving photos and old records. Ask relatives for originals they might have that you can copy. Learn who is in the picture and any interesting stories about them. Arrange all your collected memorabilia in a scrapbook. Write down the details of the picture and how it connects to other information you have about your family such as diaries, letters, and interviews.

Home truths

Take the children to visit homes and towns where previous generations have lived. A home is evidence of your history, as well as an expression of the people who lived in it. It also reveals trends in architecture and construction. Fixtures and landscaping are tied up with tastes and technologies. Also, a home might offer clues about births, jobs, and the local economy.

Talk about it

Pass on stories of your family's past by emphasizing funny adventures highlighting similarities to or differences from your child's experience. Gather these stories by interviewing your relatives and writing down their answers or recording them on tape. Conduct the interviews with care, and you'll end up with a coherent oral history rather than random reminiscences. The tapes also will preserve something fragile and precious — your narrators' voices, how they express themselves, and a sense of who they are.

Civitas thanks **Parents as Teachers**, an international early childhood parent education and family support program, for their ongoing support.

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Road trip

Take your family on a vacation to places that are significant in your family history. This will bring those places to life for the children.

Hand-me-downs

Keep a journal. Write what you think and feel, see, read, and hear about; weddings, jobs, scandals, news, politics, parades, etc. Relax. Start small. Keep it fun. Years from now, you will have a document that will fascinate your descendants.

Family video

Use the following interview questions to capture your family story on tape.

1. Describe where your family lived. What did you like best about it? How did it look? What color was your room? With whom did you share it?
2. Discuss ethnic heritage and customs. Talk about religion — discuss what traditions and practices are most important to you.
3. Describe historical events during your lifetime — wars, past presidents, etc.
4. Where did you go to school? Take a trip to the building, if possible. Talk about best friends and teachers, favorite classes, sports played, and other activities and highlights of these years.
5. Did you go to college, serve in the military, or go to technical school? What did you study? What were the highlights of those years?
6. Share pictures from your childhood. Describe or visit old houses and neighborhoods. Talk about neighbors and places you used to visit.
7. What kinds of friends have you had in your life? Discuss what qualities made these people special. Arrange to meet them, if possible.
8. Tell the tale of your relationship with your spouse. Where did you meet? When did you get married? Where? What was the wedding like? Why do you love your partner?
9. Talk about work — the jobs you've had over the years. Talk about the challenges you have faced, the rewards you've received. If possible, visit a place of current or past employment.
10. Pass on life lessons. Share hopes, philosophies, disappointments, and advice.

Born Learning℠ is a public engagement campaign helping parents, caregivers and communities create early learning opportunities for young children. Designed to support you in your critical role as a child's first teacher, *Born Learning* educational materials are made available through the efforts of United Way, United Way Success By 6 and Civitas. For more information, visit us online at www.bornlearning.org.

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