

# Pointers For Parents

## Telling Family Stories

(NAPSA)—“Once upon a time...” “Those words immediately take us back to our childhood,” says Barbara Anderson, Ed.D., vice president of education for KinderCare Learning Centers, which operates more than 1,250 early childhood education and child care centers nationwide. Stories—especially true stories about ourselves—are one of the earliest ways we learn about the world and about our families.

Anderson encourages parents to tell their children stories about their own lives. While every child loves to have her favorite bedtime story read to her again and again, real stories about mom or dad’s own childhood can be even more special. “Hearing about their parents’ and grandparents’ lives gives children an understanding of who they are, a context they don’t get from fiction,” says Anderson.

For some parents, story telling is a natural talent. For others, Anderson offers a few simple suggestions.

Talk about your life when you were the same age your child is now. Where did you live? Where did you go to school? Who were your friends?

When you read to your child, tell her about your favorite books when you were her age. You might want to find a copy and read her one of your favorite childhood stories.

Talk about your child’s favorite games and those you played when you were a child. Encourage her to ask her grandparents what games they played, too. (Older children may enjoy tape-recording their grandparents’ stories.)



Photo credit: KinderCare Learning Centers

What’s your child’s favorite food? What was yours when you were a child? Prepare those foods together and talk about why they’re favorites. Does the smell of freshly baked cookies remind you of the grandmother who used to bake for you?

Every child loves to hear about her own childhood, before her earliest memories. “When you were born...” is always the beginning of a fascinating story.

Ask your child to tell you stories, as well. Telling her own story is great fun and will offer insights into the kinds of stories she finds most interesting.

Anderson also suggests scheduling a regular family story telling time, perhaps at bedtime or during a weekend dinner together. Saturday night pizza and family stories can become a family tradition.