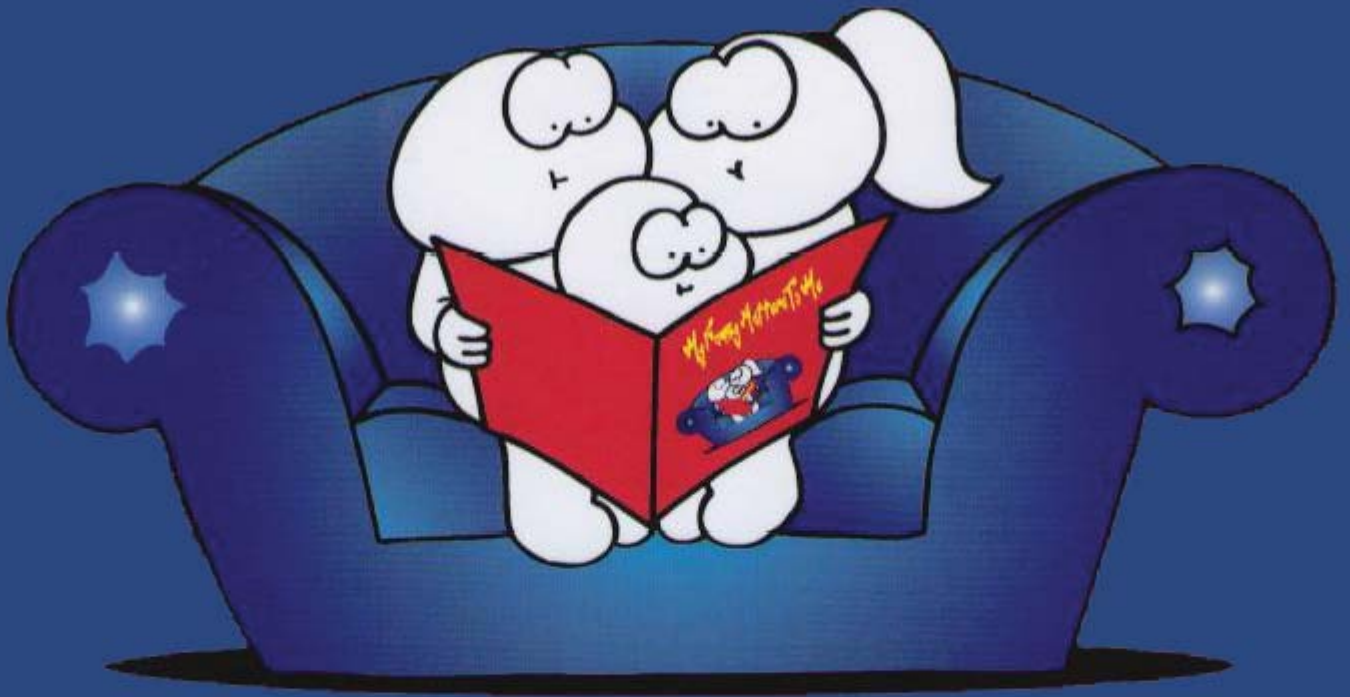


YOU AS A CHILD'S TEACHER

MY FAMILY MATTERS TO ME

PLAYBOOK



BY DR. MARLENA E. UHRİK
AWARD-WINNING AUTHOR OF "IN GRANDPA'S HANDS"
ILLUSTRATED BY MINH DANG



IN THE BEGINNING

Who said it was easy being a family? This is a full-time job in and of itself! There are so many things to think

about—everything from doing the laundry, cooking, shopping, paying the bills, cleaning the house, getting kids to school, helping with homework—and the list goes on and on—and for many, all of this, on top of working another full time job!

Undoubtedly, being a parent is hard work and being a single parent is probably the hardest job of all. It has often been said that kids don't come with an instruction manual. It's true—most of our parenting skills have been handed down from generation to generation. So parents wind up doing what their parents did to them—even though they might have vowed never to be like their parent. Then one day, you hear yourself say to one of your offspring something like, "Close the door behind you" and it is in that moment that you realize you have become like your parent. Well, for some of us, that's motivation enough to want to do something way different.

Have you ever ask yourself if you are a good parent? Are you doing it the right way? Could you be doing things differently? Will my kid grow up to be successful? Can I be an even better parent? These are questions that many parents asked themselves.

Investing your time so that you can look at some of these questions is a great start. By completing *My Family Matters To Me* Parent Guidebook, you have already made a commitment to be an even better parent. This does not mean you will be the perfect parent—there might not really be such a thing. We all make mistakes and we can also learn from those mistakes and have better results.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE A GOOD PARENT? WHEN ALL IS SAID AND DONE, WE WANT TO LAY A STRONG FOUNDATION FOR OUR CHILDREN SO THAT THEY ARE HEALTHY AND HAPPY AND PREPARED FOR LIFE.

What does it mean to be a good parent? When all is said and done, we want to lay a strong foundation for our children so that they are healthy and happy and prepared for life. It is up to us as parents to help foster quality interactions, good communication, and positive outcomes.



MY OWN AH-HA MOMENT

I remember a time in my life when I had a wake-up call—my own Ah-Ha moment—about my parenting skills.

It was a hot, steaming afternoon and I was having a hard time being a single parent, making ends meet, and dealing with my 10 year old daughter. We had been arguing about something and I could tell I was losing my patience with her. "It's not easy being a parent," I blurted out. To my amazement, she looked me in the eyes and blurted back, "It's not easy being a kid!" In that moment, I realized that I needed to take a moment and reflect.

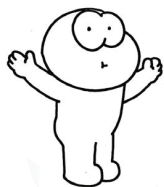
I decided that it was time for me to take a look at my parenting skills. I realized I needed to be educated about being a parent. I realized that I was doing a lot of things my parents did only because I could not think of another way to things. I decided it was time for me to take Parenting Classes so I could learn to be an even better parent. Eventually, I learned new skills and techniques and practiced them on my two children. It wasn't long after that, that I started teaching other parents how to be even better parents, too.



ROLE MODELS FOR PARENTING

Some of our role models for being a parent have been seen on TV. The range of parenting styles goes from *The Brady Bunch*, *Father Knows Best*,

Leave it To Beaver, *Modern Family* and *the Simpsons*! It's easy to understand that parents sometimes feel like they are not quite sure they have made all the right decision when it comes to certain situations.



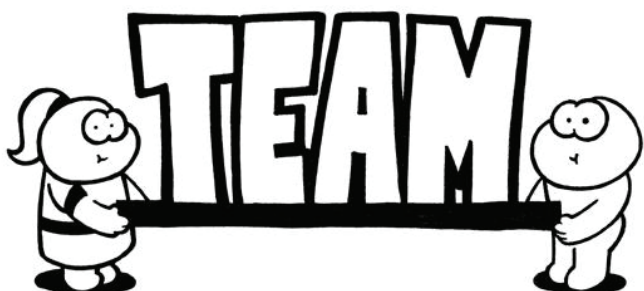
BEING YOUR CHILD'S FIRST TEACHER

Being your child's first teacher is such an awesome concept and huge responsibility. When I was raising my kids, I really did not think of myself as their teacher, even though I was a teacher in real life. It wasn't until I heard my 3 year old son repeat some not-so nice words that I had said about someone, that I realized that his eyes and ears were open to *everything* I said and did. I was the role model for my children. I was their teacher.

I had to re-think some of my behaviors—for instance, I realized that if I wanted to have both of my children to grow and be kind and compassionate people, I would have to be that, too. I had to learn to be an *even better* parent and person, too!

So let's look at how *My Family Matters To Me* can help you become an even better parent by clarifying your goals and values, having fun, and spending some quality time together. This quality time that you spend together will help build the foundation for the kind of relationships you want to have with your children. By fostering quality interactions now with your children, you are building the foundation for a strong, healthy relationship that will sustain itself into their adulthood.

Through this process, *My Family Matters To Me* will help guide you to see the importance of being your child's first teacher. You will be teaching everything from basic lessons for teaching letters of the alphabet to teaching core values that are important to you and your family. You will be supporting your child's physical, social, emotional, intellectual and spiritual growth and development.



Let's get started!

So that *My Family Matters To Me* can guide you to maximize this book as an educational tool, here is an activity:



Activity: Write your responses to these questions.

Who is in your family? List their names here.

What do you love about your family?

You might notice that almost every family is different. Your family might be entirely different than any one you know. Our focus is to acknowledge and celebrate the differences and build upon the strengths of each family.

WHAT MATTERS TO YOU?

How do you want your child/ren to grow up? What qualities do you want them to have?

What are your core values as a family? Some ideas might be: honesty, caring, being respectful, being part of a team, having fun together, and being responsible.



Write your ideas here.

What would be your goals for your family? Check the things that apply. (Some of the items listed below would apply for families with older children.)

I want to:

- Support my child's learning
- Read to my child every day
- Have more meals together at the family table
- Eat nutritious food at every meal
- Spend more time doing physical activity like walking, etc.
- Share special events—picnics, day at the park, zoo, beach, and library
- Pray/worship together
- Share household chores
- Play music/dance together
- Have a family game night
- Volunteer together for a worthy cause
- Other: _____



**WHAT COULD BE WORKING BETTER?
MY GOAL FOR MY FAMILY**

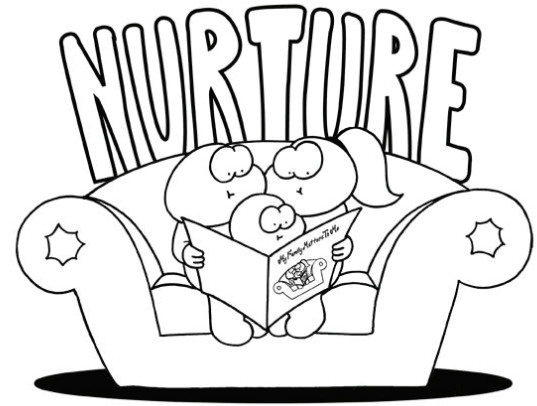
5 Steps

Write your responses to the questions listed below.

1. Identify one of the things that you indicated that are important to you that could be working better. (An example from the list might be if you wanted to support your child's learning by reading to him/her every day.)

2. What do you think is missing that would make it work better? (What is missing is having a plan to make it happen.)

3. What would it take to make sure that you accomplish what you want? (You need some children's books or magazines and a regular, uninterrupted time to read to your child such as before bedtime or naptime.)



4. Who can be part of your support system to help make this happen? (Perhaps your partner or spouse can be part of the process or help in other ways while to read to your child.)

5. By focusing on this goal for your family, what do you think will be different? How will your family benefit? (What would be different is that you would be spending uninterrupted quality time with your child which creates a special emotional bond between you and your child. Your child will be hearing new words, seeing new pictures, which helps promote your child's cognitive development and builds the child's vocabulary. Your family will benefit from these special experiences and can lead to your child being happy and successful in school and in life.)

LIFE'S TEACHABLE MOMENTS

Even a routine trip to the store or walk around the neighborhood, can provide “teachable moments.” It is a moment in time when you realize that you have an opportunity to teach or reinforce a concept to your child. Teachable moments can occur by talking, reading, touching, playing, singing, and listening. So for instance, if you are driving in your car and you come up to a STOP sign, you have all kinds of opportunities to talk with your child to expand his or her learning.



An example would be (depending on the age of the child) some of the following questions or comments:

- What color is the sign?
- What are the letters on the sign?
- What word does it spell?
- What shape is the sign?
- Why do we have to take turns stopping?

MY FAMILY MATTERS TO ME TEACHABLE MOMENTS

So here are some ways to have those “teachable moments” while using *My Family Matters to Me*: besides reading the text/story, you can discuss on the left hand side of the book:

- The illustration—Ask what the picture means to them? What things are in the picture? This is a good time to discuss an experience you shared, “Remember when...”
- The letters and the word—Ask about the letters that make up the word. Do they know any other words that begin with that letter?

Looking at the right side of the book, here is an example of how you can have “teachable moments:”

- What letter is at the top?—capital letter and a smaller version of the same letter.
- What is the word at the top of the page? What are the letters in that word?
- Read the text and find the word in the text (word done in bold.)

- Find the variation of the word in the text—sometimes it has an “ing” on the end, but the “root” word is the same.
- Do the activity together and ask your child to tell you about it.
- Just listen—which all kids want—someone to listen to them.



Remember: You and your children can write in the book! As a matter of fact, this book was created to have kids write, color, and paste things in it.

The examples that are listed below are merely examples and are meant to be general in nature as each child learns at a different pace. This book is meant to become a fun, educational tool that you can use in your very own home or any other special place. The examples used as responses are slightly different as it is important to make things age-appropriate.

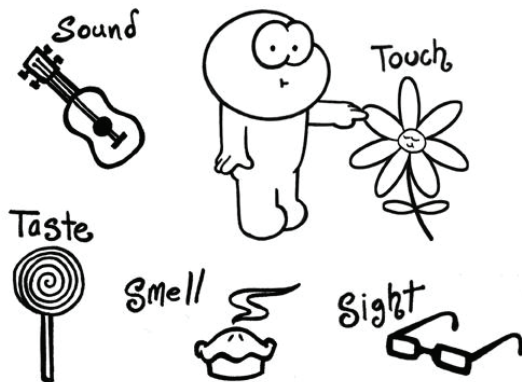
The following are merely suggestions to support you as your child’s first teacher. In this scenario, the “Young Child” approach is considered appropriate for children 3-5 years old and the “Older Child” approach is for ages 5-10 years old. Please adjust to your own preference—you know your child best!

Remember, this book is for kids of all ages. Let’s face it; we are all kids at heart. Some of these concepts are things that adults can also talk about, too. You might find out a lot more about each other in a fun way!

Let’s give it a try!!! Let’s take the first letter, letter A. Here’s how the process works:

- **You**—What letter is at the top? It’s the first letter of the alphabet. It is a capital letter and a smaller size/version of the same letter.
Young Child—The letter at the top is letter A.
Older Child—The letter at the top is letter A.
- **You**—What is the word at the top of the page? What are the letters in that word?
Young Child—A young child probably will not know this word and will need coaching from you.

AWARENESS



A young child might be able to know the letters:
A-w-a-r-e-n-e-s-s.

Older Child—An older child might know this word or can sound it out. He or she would also probably know the letters: A-w-a-r-e-n-e-s-s.

- Read the text and find the word in the text (word done in **bold** font.)

You—Read the text and ask the questions and wait for a response. For instance: “Look around you.” The first question is, “What do you see?” Listen to what your child says. Let your child describe in detail what he/she sees. Try to see those things through his/her eyes. *Really* listen. When your child is done, ask the next question in the text and so on.

You can also make this a game to see how many times the “A” word **awareness** appears. Your child can point to all the words that are in bold. In this case, **awareness** shows up on this page six times (seven if you count the one at the top of the page.) You can circle all the words that say “**awareness**.”

Young Child—The description of all of the senses might be very simple. For a really young child, you can ask him/her to point to his/her nose (smell), ears (hear), mouth (taste), eyes (see), and fingers (touch).

Older Child—The description of all of the senses will most likely be more complex.

- Find the variation of the word in the text—sometimes a word has a different ending, but the “root” word is the same. In this case, there is the word “aware,” the root word of awareness.

You—Let’s find the “root” word “aware.”

Young Child—Help guide him/her to find the “root” word.

Older Child—Can probably find the root word “aware” and perhaps underline the “root” word.

- Do the activity together and ask your child to tell you about it. Listen.

You—This is a great time to ask some questions as you do the activities together. Some questions you might ask: What is your favorite part on this page? What did you like best? Is there anyone you would like to share this with?

Young Child—Let your child know what a special time this was for you.

Older Child—Let your child know what a special time this was for you.

