

Keeping the Learning Going @ Home: Creating a family digital time capsule



Sharing family stories can deepen connections and strengthen relationships in the home

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In this series, specially written for Independent.ie, the Professional Development Service for Teachers (PDST), offers some valuable pointers to parents across a range of different learning areas.

PDST is a Department of Education and Skills support service.

This article about encouraging children to create and store memories is the ninth in the series.

In previous weeks, the PDST shared tips on how to make the most out of reading time, how to support children in developing digital storytelling, how to keep happy, healthy and learning movement skills and how to measure a minute.

Family Stories

Sharing family stories can deepen connections and strengthen relationships in the home. Parents' and grandparents' memories from the recent past or from long ago can give children an insight into their family history and foster an appreciation for family values.

Hearing about their school days, family holidays, special celebrations, sporting victories and more will spark children's natural sense of wonder and awe and help develop their sense of self, place and belonging.

Getting Started

Invite your child to ask a family member about one of their favourite memories. Encourage them to ask questions to learn more information about details that intrigue them or to clarify points for greater understanding.

Consider voice or video recording the conversation so that it can be listened to or viewed again. After the conversation, help your child to brainstorm creative ways that they could illustrate the memory through words, pictures, videos or music.

Documenting Memories

A simple task for younger children could be to draw a picture of their favorite part of the memory using pencils and paper or with a drawing app on a mobile or tablet device. Using the picture as a visual aid, invite your child to retell the story in their own words. Children enjoy watching videos where they star in the leading role so consider recording a video of their recount using the camera app on a digital device.

A creative task for older children could be to write and design a storybook based on the memory. Encourage them to describe the setting, atmosphere, people and emotions associated with the memory to bring it to life. Challenge them to also explain “why” the memory stands out for their loved one. After writing about the memory, children could decorate the book cover and bind the spine with available materials in the home such as wool or ribbon. Photographs of each page could be taken or a video of the child reading the book could also be recorded.



The experience of writing a paper-based or digital book will stimulate children’s creative skills

Another engaging activity would be for children to create a digital storybook or presentation to document the memory. Using a digital platform, your child could type the story, include images of photographs they find in the home connected to the memory, audio record their voice as they read the text, add background music and perhaps video footage of the conversation with their family member. A variety of websites or apps could be used to design their digital work. Options include (but are not limited to): Adobe Spark Page, Adobe Spark Video, WriteReader, Book Creator, Google Slides and Microsoft Powerpoint. Choosing a digital platform that your child is already familiar with is a good idea.

The experience of writing a paper-based or digital book would not only stimulate children's creative skills but would also provide them with a meaningful opportunity to extend their vocabulary and focus on story structure.

Making Connections

Children's work could be saved as a family digital time capsule and would be a lovely gift to share with other family members such as grandparents or siblings living away from the family home.

Drawings and storybooks could be sent in the post or explained over video calls. Voice and video recordings could be shared via different messaging apps and digital books or presentations could be emailed. In this way, technology can be used to transcend the walls of the home and to unite families through the celebration of story.

Let's use this time to pass our rich and colourful tradition of storytelling to our younger generation and capitalise on the power of technology to ensure that cherished family memories live long in the rich tapestry of family life.

