



## Family Roots - Help Them Grow



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**H**elp your kids learn about their roots by working together to create a family tree and a family crest.

A family tree gives kids a sense of who they are and how they are related to others. It shows them that they have a personal history going back before they were born. As you and your child trace your family tree, even if you just go as far back as grandparents, take time to share family stories and facts. How did Grandma and Grandpa meet? What ever happened to Aunt Marie? Perhaps a favorite family dessert was passed down from a great-grandparent. Was it served often or saved for special occasions? Making a family tree opens the door to these conversations and the important stories that make up a family history.

There are many places to start your family tree. Older kids can search online for genealogy websites and can create a traditional family tree, connecting family member's names with lines to show relationships. For younger children, make your family tree using photographs. A thoughtfully made, pictorial family tree can be displayed in a child's room, giving them a visual of the scope of their family.

After your child completes the family tree, it's time to create a family crest. Work together to identify defining characteristics of your immediate family. What is special about your family and what do you value? A family crest helps define what makes your family unique and identifies how you are all contributing to your family's story. It's a project that is sure to make your family history come alive for your children!

### Family Tree in Pictures

#### What you need

- Large poster board
- Crayons, markers, colored pencils
- Construction paper
- An assortment of family photos, including immediate family, grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins, great-grandparents and other ancestors if desired.

#### What to do

1. Have your child draw a large tree shape on the poster board. For a younger child, draw the tree in pencil and let him trace over the outline with marker or crayon.
2. Give your child several pictures of family members and help her identify them. This is a good time to explain to young children how the members are related, i.e. Aunt Lucy is Daddy's sister.
3. Have your child sort the photos, putting family groups together if desired.
4. Have your child glue the photos onto his tree.
5. Display the tree in your child's bedroom or playroom.

### Family Crest

#### What you need

- Piece of poster board
- Markers, crayons, glue, construction paper and other items to decorate the crest.

#### What to do

1. Talk to your child about the things your family likes to do. What are your family hobbies or interests? Discuss the different things your family likes to do together and help your child make a list of 3 or 4 things, such as hiking, biking, watching movies, picking apples, going to the beach, etc.
2. Have your child draw a large shield onto the poster board. Younger children may need help with this. This shield is the base for your family crest.
3. Have your child draw lines to divide the shield into 3 or 4 sections, depending on what you want to feature.
4. Have your child draw pictures in each of the sections, illustrating the things on the list. Help him or her write the family name someplace on the shield.
5. Display your new family crest in your home as a reminder of the things that define your family.

#### This Helps Develop...

**Cognitive skills** - the mental process of knowing by developing awareness, perception and reasoning.

In this activity children's cognitive skills are engaged by following multi-step directions and sorting pictures. It also introduces concepts of family relationships.

**Fine motor skills** - the use of small muscle movements in the hands that occur in coordination with eyes.

Fine motors skills targeted in this activity are tracing, drawing and gluing. These activities help strengthen the muscles involved in fine motor development.

**Language** - the expressive ability to communicate ideas and needs, and the receptive ability to understand what is said or written.

This is a language enriched activity when parents help to facilitate discussion about their family's past and current history. For young children, pictures on their family tree provide a visual guide which helps them to learn and practice saying each of their family members' names.

**Social emotional development** - involves a child's feelings of self worth and confidence.

Finally, while making their family tree and family crest children can explore their sense of self while discovering what makes their family unique in its own special way. ♦

This monthly family activity series, "Hands-on-Kids!" is brought to you by a partnership between the Children's Museum of Northern Virginia (CMNOVA) and FAMILY Magazine. For more activities you can do with your children to spark their love of learning, visit the CMNOVA web site, [www.cmnova.org](http://www.cmnova.org). On their web site you will also find information about the Children's Museum of Northern Virginia and how you can become involved. CMNOVA is committed to building a place where our children can freely explore and develop a lifelong love of learning. Robin DeRosa Lundgren, a CMNOVA volunteer, is Vice President of Aquarian Entertainment and creator of the kids' cooking show "Culinary Kids".