NURTURING FAMILY AND FRIENDS

THE FOUNDATION OF LIFE
ED U. GATOR GETS CLOSE TO HIS FAMILY
A FUNNY LOVE STORY
It would be a pretty lonely world if we didn't have friends and family. Who would spend time with us? Who would talk with us? Who would take care of us when we're feeling sad or sick? Who would we visit during the holidays? Friends and family are the most essential things in our lives. In fact, you might say friends and family are our “foundation,” because they give us the strength and support we need to live happy and healthy lives. Our friends and families take care of us. They give us love and understanding. In other words, they “nurture” us. We'd be lost without friends and family.

That's why it's so important to respect and stand by your friends and family. We want them to be around us for a very long time! And just as our friends and family take care of and nurture us, we need to do the same for them.

There are many different kinds of families. Some of you may have two parents and lots of brothers and sisters. Some of you might have one parent and no siblings. You might live with a grandparent, or an aunt, uncle or cousin. It doesn't really matter who or how many people are in your family. The main thing is that you're part of a family.

We don't get to choose our families, but we can choose our friends. It takes a special kind of person to be a friend. A friend is someone who respects you and treats you fairly. A friend is someone you can talk with easily. A friend is someone who will stand by you when the going gets rough. Do you have what it takes to be a good friend? It's hard work being a friend, and keeping a friend. It's hard work keeping a family together, too. But all that hard work really pays off in the end!

ACTIVITY:

Your family nurtures you in many ways. Your family gives you protection by putting a roof over your head. Your family provides you with food, clothes, love and support. Think about some ways that you nurture your family. What do you do to help at home? What things could you do that would help your family stay happy and healthy?
Hi friends! Ed here. Gramps has been having a tough time ever since he hurt his back. He hasn't been able to walk around very much, so he's been sitting on the couch in the living room, reading books and watching TV. We've all been pitching in to try to help Gramps feel more comfortable. Mom and Dad have been keeping him company in the evenings after work. Aunt Lucy drove up last weekend from Swamp City and cooked a week's worth of Gramps' favorite meals to put in the freezer. El's been playing cards and Monopoly with Gramps, and she drew him a nice get well picture to hang on the wall near his couch. I've been returning and picking up new books and videos for Gramps from the public library. It's a funny thing. Ever since Gramps hurt his back our whole family's been spending a lot more time together.

But even with all the games, books, videos, favorite meals and good company, I could tell Gramps was getting bored and restless. The doctor came by and said it would be another week before Gramps returned to his normal self. A few nights ago Dad had a great idea at dinner. He said Gramps might need a good project to keep him busy for awhile. We all tried to think of something fun that he could do while sitting on the couch. Then I remembered something. Gramps has always talked about his boxes of old family letters and photographs in the attic. He often complains in his grumpy way how he's never had time to organize them. This was a perfect time!

So we hauled five very heavy boxes down the stairs into the living room. At first Gramps wasn't very interested in our idea. Then, as we pulled out more and more stuff, he started to get enthusiastic about the project. All those pictures and letters brought back tons of memories. Gramps told some hysterical stories about our ancestors, and some sad ones, too. He got teary-eyed when he read some letters from his mother and dad. He told me about my great-great-grandfather I was named after, Edward Oliver Gator. I was surprised to find out that old Edward was a very brave sea captain who discovered an island in the Pacific Ocean. Wow! That was exciting news!

The project turned out to be a huge success. Every night for a week we sorted photographs and letters, and put them together in some big scrapbooks. Gramps was pleased to have finally finished that task, and we all learned a great deal about our history. I think that by taking care of Gramps we all got much closer as a family.

ED DISCOVERS HIS ANCESTORS

VOCABULARY:
Ancestors: family of the past.
Hysterical: very funny.

QUESTIONS
1) In what ways did Ed's family nurture Gramps? What were some of the things they did to make him more comfortable?
2) Why was doing a project such a good idea? What got Gramps interested in the project?
3) What did Ed learn about one of his ancestors?
4) How did the whole family benefit by nurturing Gramps?
5) What have you learned about your ancestors? How could you find out more about them?
A FAMILY GET-TOGETHER

Directions: Think of a special activity that your family does together. It might be eating a special meal, playing a game or visiting a favorite place. In the space below, draw a detailed picture of your family doing that activity.

FRIENDS AND FAMILY AROUND THE COUNTRY

Directions: Below is a map of the United States. Sit down with an adult in your family and find out where other members of your family and your family's friends live. Write their initials on the map. Then think about the last time your family visited, spoke to, or wrote to those far away folks.
**IN THE NEWSPAPER**

*Directions:* Imagine that you are the head of the family, and that you take care of several people. You would probably need to buy things like food and clothes for your family. Look through the advertisements in the paper. Pretend you’re going shopping. What things would you buy for your family? Cut out some of those items and paste them in the space below.

**YOU SCRATCH MY BACK, I’LL SCRATCH YOURS!**

*Directions:* Think of somebody in your life who “nurture” you. It could be a member of your family or a really good friend. On one set of lines below, list a few things that person does to take care of you. Then on the other set of lines, list a few things that you do to nurture somebody else. (It might be the same person, but it doesn’t have to be!)

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Trina was very excited when she found out her mother was going to have a baby. “A kid sister for me?” she asked.

“Well, maybe,” said her mom, “or it could be a little baby brother.” But Trina was certain it was going to be a girl. She couldn’t wait till the baby arrived. As the day got closer, she helped her mother fix up the nursery. She went with her father to the store to get a crib and blankets. Her father let her pick out a mobile with pink and yellow dancing bears, too. When it was time for her mother to deliver the baby, Trina wanted to go with her. Her father explained that she could visit after the baby was born, but that grandmother was coming to stay with Trina for a few days.

The very next morning her Dad called from the hospital. “It’s a girl, Trina! Just as you thought!”

The next few weeks were very hard for Trina. When her Mom came home with the new baby, a steady stream of visitors came to the house. It seemed as though everyone had come to see the baby, and nobody paid attention to Trina. Mom and Dad were so busy feeding, burping, changing, holding, kissing and cuddling the baby that they barely had time for Trina. Trina wished her new baby sister would just go away. One evening, Trina’s mother found her crying in her bedroom. Her mother asked her what was wrong. “Nobody loves me anymore!” said Trina.

“Of course we love you,” said her mother, holding her close. “You’re our big girl. Your baby sister can’t do anything for herself right now, and she needs us to be with her most of the time. But someday soon she’ll be big and responsible like you!” That night before bed, Trina’s mom pulled out a box of old photos. There were hundreds of pictures of Trina as a baby. There was Dad holding her in the living room. There was Mom pushing her on the swing set in the backyard. It helped Trina to see herself as an infant, being loved and cared for in the same way as her new baby sister. She fell asleep that night in her mother’s arms, listening to lullabies.

The next day Trina woke up with a big smile. She got dressed quickly and ran downstairs. She found her mother and father in the kitchen, feeding the baby. “May I help?” she asked. In a few days, Trina felt very comfortable feeding, burping, changing, holding, kissing and cuddling her baby sister. The family was a little bit bigger now, and the house seemed a little bit smaller with all the baby stuff, but for Trina it felt just right.
George Burns and Gracie Allen were one of the most famous comedy acts in American entertainment history. They became popular stars in vaudeville, radio, movies and television. Burns and Allen had a successful TV show that ran from 1950 until Allen’s retirement in 1958. Burns and Allen were husband and wife, but they were also known for their special friendship.

George Burns, whose real name was Nathan Birnbaum, was born in New York City in 1896. Gracie Allen was born in San Francisco in 1896. They met in the early 1920s, and formed their comedy team in 1923. Burns and Allen were married three years later. Over the course of 35 years they performed comedy regularly and starred in more than a dozen motion pictures. Allen retired in 1958, but Burns kept working in television. Although he stopped performing for many years, Burns returned to film and television in 1975 and continued acting into his nineties! He starred in many movies, including Oh God! and The Sunshine Boys. Gracie Allen died in 1964, and George Burns died in 1996. He was 100 years old.

Burns and Allen had a tremendous amount of love and respect for each other. After Allen passed away, Burns always spoke kindly about his wife, performing partner and best friend. He missed her wonderful wit and talent, and her warm companionship. He told the world about his special friend in his book, Gracie, A Love Story.

**VOCABULARY:**

- **Entertainment**: something that provides pleasure to an audience, like a show or concert.
- **Vaudeville**: a stage show made up of skits, songs and dances.
- **Retirement**: to give up one’s work or career.
TIPS

1) Help your child to understand the value of a good friendship. Encourage your child to be caring, considerate and loyal to friends. It's important to understand that keeping friends requires work and commitment and that friends shouldn't be taken for granted. It might help if you share with your child stories about good friends you've had throughout your life and talk about the qualities you look for in a friend.

2) Take the time to give your child some verbal and physical affection. Saying "I love you" makes a child feel good about him/herself. Think about how you feel when your child says that to you spontaneously. Kisses and hugs go a long way in maintaining your child's self-esteem. We often shower babies with affection, but we tend to do it less with our older kids. They need it, too. Also, let your child know that even grownups need hugs every now and then.

3) Keep in touch with members of your extended family, young and old. Whenever possible, include your child in family get togethers. It's reassuring to your child to know that he/she is part of a bigger family picture.

4) Kids learn a lot about nurturing and responsibility from their interactions with family pets. If you have a pet, try to let your child take part in its care. Is your child gentle or rough with animals? Look for opportunities to encourage positive nurturing behaviors. Perhaps your child has a younger sibling that he/she can help feed or get dressed. Learning these skills early might make things easier for you later on.

FAMILY ACTIVITY

Try to think of a relative or a friend who would enjoy or benefit from a "care package." It could be very simple. Let your child help prepare some cookies, a sandwich or some fruit. Maybe your child could make a "best wishes" or "get well" card or create a piece of artwork to accompany or decorate the package. Let your child help deliver the "care package." It will be rewarding for your child to see how much this thoughtfulness is appreciated.

RESOURCES


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