

Our smallest warriors, our strongest medicine

Honoring Our Teachings during COVID-19!

Parent and Caregiver Resources

Tips for Reading and Talking About the Story with Children of Different Ages

Children in Early Childhood

One way to help younger children engage or feel connected to a story is to personalize the story. You can do this by changing the names of the characters when you read it to your children. For example, instead of Tara and Virgil, you could use your children's names or names of children they know. If Grandma is not the word that they use to refer to a grandparent, use something that is more familiar to your child. The friends' names in the book can also be changed to familiar names to your child/children. Finally, if you speak your tribal language and see places to add words or concepts into the book in your language, that also can help the child feel more connected to the story.

Young children are comforted when they are spoken to by their caregivers. You can look at pictures, talk about actions, and label emotions. For example, you can say "Look at the grandma smiling, she is happy." or "Look at the children dancing." If you know it, use your Native language when reading with your child.

Young children like to bond with their caregivers. Sit your child in your lap and read the story or look at pictures together. Make frequent eye contact and smile when your child looks at you. Make reading books with your child a daily routine. Enjoy coloring with your child using the coloring pages.

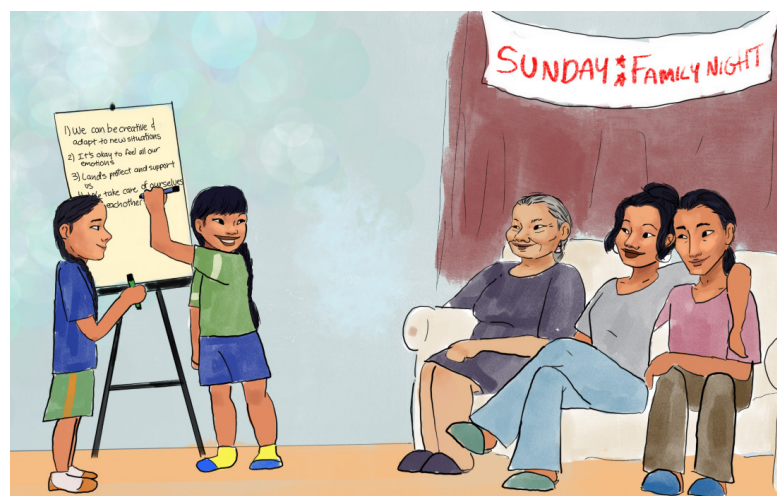
Young children learn to read and communicate in early childhood. Modeling language is important for a child who is learning words and emotions. When reading to your child, label emotions of the characters, talk about your own feelings, and use a comforting voice when reading/talking to your young child.

Young children learn vocabulary and letters from reading books. While reading the story, ask your child Wh- questions such as "What is (name of character) doing in the story?" or "Where is grandma?" Ask your child questions about sounds in words. For example, the "d" sound is in dancing. Highlight the actions in the stories such as playing, gardening, dancing, and learning.

School Age Children

School age children are learning about their identity. Encourage traditional storytelling and help your child to learn where they are from. Help them to learn their clans, family names, and anything else about their tribe and who they are. When reading the book, ask your child to guess where each child is from. Praise your child when they talk about where they are from or who they are as Native children.

School age children are learning about



their emotional support system. Encourage them to identify and talk about their support system including parents, grandparents, friends, and other relatives. Ask your school age children about the characters' support system and use the "My Relations" worksheet to map out your child's support system.

School age children are learning to express their emotions. Always validate your child's emotions by talking to them when they talk about their feelings, just like the grandma did with the twins in the story. Talk to your child about how the twins expressed their emotions. Talk about how you overcome difficult situations. For example, you can tell your child what you do to cope in a healthy way (e.g., take deep breaths, imagine yourself in a safe place, dance, smell flowers or a candle, or others) when you feel nervous or anxious.

School age children are learning to become fluent readers. Incorporate this story into other family routines, such as having your child read the story to you or acting out the story together. You can dance and sing at home. If you have it, you can dress up in traditional or powwow regalia at home. You can tell stories or look at pictures from powwows, ceremonies, and other gatherings with family and friends. Remind your child that your home is a special place.

Adolescent or Teenage Children

Teenagers are learning more about their feelings and who they can talk to in confidence. You can use the story to talk to your teenager about how they are feeling and who is important to them. Reference the twins in the story and how they checked on their friends. Encourage your child to talk openly about any fears or worries. You can use the My Relations worksheet to help your teenager map out their support system.

Teenagers are learning about the roles they have in their communities. Help teenagers maintain these connections with family and friends through phone calls, FaceTime, videoconferencing, and writing letters. Write letters to family members or make a sign together to celebrate health care workers, tribal leaders, and essential workers.

Teenagers are learning about responsibility and how they can help their family/community. Talk to your teenager about responsibilities they have at home, such as taking out the trash, helping to feed animals, or helping to clean the house. Use the worksheet activities to talk about important public health practices such as handwashing, physical distancing, and using facemasks.

Teenagers are learning self-control. Talk to your teenager about overcoming obstacles. Remind your teenager that difficult times are temporary and to focus on the positive things in their lives. Remind your teenager that it is okay to feel scared, nervous, or frustrated when they are required to distance themselves from their friends and family.

