

## Children's Books about Families

A thematic unit on families is a great way to begin the year with a new class of preschool children. A family unit supports children in countless ways, including easing their transitions, helping them learn about the other boys and girls in the class, and strengthening their self-awareness. Teachers can draw on the following books to explore the rich diversity of families with preschoolers.

**A Chair for My Mother**, by Vera B. Williams. 1982. New York: Greenwillow Books.

When the home Rosa shares with her mother and grandmother is destroyed by fire, the family saves up their spare change to buy a new chair.

**A Day with Dad**, by Bo R. Holmberg. Illus. by Eva Eriksson. 2008. Cambridge, MA: Candlewick Press.

Tim's father lives in a different town, but when he comes to visit Tim on the train, father and son spend a special day together.

**And Tango Makes Three**, by Justin Richardson and Peter Parnell. Illus. by Henry Cole. 2005. New York: Simon & Schuster.

Silo and Roy, two male chinstrap penguins, fall in love and raise baby Tango together.

**Annie Rose Is My Little Sister**, by Shirley Hughes. 2003. Cambridge, MA: Candlewick Press.

Big brother Alfie lovingly discusses the different things he and his younger sister do together.

**Black Is Brown Is Tan**, by Arnold Adoff. Illus. by Emily Arnold McCully. 2002. New York: Harper Collins.

New illustrations accompany the original 1973 text, which explores and celebrates multi-racial families.

**Dear Juno**, by Soyung Pak. Illus. by Susan Kathleen Hartung. 1999. New York: Penguin.

Juno figures out a creative way to communicate with his Korean grandmother who lives far away in Seoul.

**Daddy Makes the Best Spaghetti**, by Anna Grossnickle Hines. 1999. New York: Clarion.

Corey's dad makes the evening routine fun by cooking great spaghetti, dressing up as Batman, and pretending to be a barking dog.

**Every Year on Your Birthday**, by Rose A. Lewis. Illus. by Jane Dyer. 2007. New York: Brown, Little.

A mother shares thoughts and memories from her adopted Chinese daughter's previous birthdays.

**Everywhere Babies**, by Susan Meyers. Illus. by Marla Frazee. 2001. San Diego: Harcourt. Nursing, rocking, giggling, and growing—this book celebrates babies and all that they do.

**The Family Book**, by Todd Parr. 2003. New York: Little, Brown.

This colorful, lively story celebrates many different types of families, including stepfamilies, families with two moms or two dads, and single-parent families.

**Fred Stays with Me!** by Nancy Coffelt. Illus. by Tricia Tusa. 2007. New York: Little, Brown.

A little girl whose parents are divorced runs into trouble when her dog, Fred, starts misbehaving.

**Has Anyone Seen My Emily Greene?** by Norma Fox Mazer. Illus. by Christine Davenier. 2007. Cambridge, MA: Candlewick Press.

It's time for lunch and the table is set, but Emily Greene is hiding. Will her father find her?

**Heather Has Two Mommies**, by Leslea Newman. Illus. by Diana Souza. 2000. Los Angeles: Alyson Wonderland.

In this now classic story, Heather, a preschooler with two moms, discovers that many of her friends have very different sorts of families.

**Jamaica Tag-Along**, by Juanita Havill. Illus. by Anne Sibley O'Brien. 1989. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

Jamaica is hurt when her older brother doesn't want her to tag along with him and his friends. But when she begins playing with a younger child, she learns an important lesson.

**In Daddy's Arms I Am Tall: African Americans Celebrating Fathers**, by Javaka Steptoe. 1997. New York: Lee and Low Books.

This collection of poems honoring African American fathers won the 1998 Coretta Scott King Illustrator Award.

**Lots of Grandparents**, by Shelley Rotner and Sheila Kelly. 2003. Brookfield, CT: Millbrook.

Full of photographs, this simple book celebrates many different kinds of grandparents.

**Mystery Bottle**, by Kristen Balouch. 2006. New York: Hyperion.

A young boy and his Iranian grandfather are brought together by a magic bottle.

**My Hippie Grandmother**, by Reeve Lindbergh. Illus. by Abby Carter. 2003. Cambridge, MA: Candlewick Press.

A little girl describes all the things she loves to do with her hippie grandmother—from selling veggies at the farmer’s market to picketing city hall.

**On Mother’s Lap**, by Ann Herbert Scott. Illus. by Glo Coalson. 1992. Clarion Books: New York.

An Eskimo boy learns that there is room for everyone on his mother’s lap, even his new baby sister.

**Quinito, Day and Night**, by Ina Cumpiano. Illus. by Jose Ramirez. 2008. San Francisco: Children’s Book Press.

In this bilingual book (English and Spanish), Quinito and his family introduce readers to the world of opposites.

### **Young Children articles**

Bennett-Armistead, V.S., N.K. Duke, & A. Moses. 2007. Ideas for families: Materials for reading, A to Z. Beyond the Journal: *Young Children* on the Web, May 2007. Online: <http://journal.naeyc.org/btj/200705>.

Birckmayer, J., J. Cohen, I.D. Jensen, & D.A. Variano. 2005. Children’s books about family relationships and experiences. Beyond the Journal: *Young Children* on the Web, May 2005. Online: <http://journal.naeyc.org/btj/200505>.

Rowell, E. 2007. Missing! Picture books reflecting gay and lesbian families: Make the curriculum inclusive for all children. *Young Children* 62 (3): 24–30. Online: <http://journal.naeyc.org/btj/200705>.