The “Do You Know?” 20 Questions About Family Stories
Here is one way to start telling and sharing family stories.

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I have been blogging about the value of family stories, and research from The Family Narratives Lab showing that children and adolescents who know more of their family stories show higher well-being on multiple measures, including higher self-esteem, higher academic competence, higher social competence, and fewer behavior problems. So how can you start sharing your family stories?

Marshall Duke and I developed the “Do You Know...?” scale sometimes called “The 20 Questions” that tap into different kinds of family stories. These questions are designed as a starting point for sharing family stories. Please keep in mind that it is not knowledge of these specific facts that is important – it is the process of families sharing stories about their lives that is important. So these questions are a way to begin to ask and to tell, and to begin a family tradition of sharing the stories of our lives.

1. Do you know how your parents met?
2. Do you know where your mother grew up?
3. Do you know where your father grew up?
4. Do you know where some of your grandparents grew up?
5. Do you know where some of your grandparents met?
6. Do you know where your parents were married?
7. Do you know what went on when you were being born?
8. Do you know the source of your name?
9. Do you know some things about what happened when your brothers or sisters were being born?
10. Do you know which person in your family you look most like?
11. Do you know which person in the family you act most like?
12. Do you know some of the illnesses and injuries that your parents experienced when they were younger?
13. Do you know some of the lessons that your parents learned from good or bad experiences?
14. Do you know some things that happened to your mom or dad when they were in school?
15. Do you know the national background of your family (such as English, German, Russian, etc.)?
16. Do you know some of the jobs that your parents had when they were young?
17. Do you know some awards that your parents received when they were young?
18. Do you know the names of the schools that your mom went to?
19. Do you know the names of the schools that your dad went to?
20. Do you know about a relative whose face “froze” in a grumpy position because he or she did not smile enough?

References

Have a great idea worth sharing? Contact us!

The Council for Youth Development (CYD) is a Bartholomew County network that identifies, coordinates, and aligns community efforts to ensure the development of the whole child. As part of our commitment to build Developmental Assets in every young person, we are providing free resources that help strengthen positive family communication. Visit the CYD website to learn more about the Developmental Assets framework, watch our video series, and subscribe to our Weekly Assets emails. (2018)