

The Story In You

From the practice of Elliott McCray, Ed.S., The McCray Learning Lab

What this builds (transformative SEL): Identity (“Who I am”) with a thread of Belonging (“I belong”).

What this practices: self-awareness and identity (knowing where you come from and that your story has worth), plus two literacy lifts: **narrative structure** (beginning / middle / now) and **cultural literacy** (the oral tradition; moving a told story to the page). This is a practice tool for rehearsing skills, not therapy, counseling, or a clinical service.

The best thing you can do

Be a source. Sit with your child and tell one real family story: one name, one place, one moment. You are the living library this story points them to. A recipe, a photo, a “when I was your age” counts.

On the tender parts

This story names, gently, that someone the family loved (a great-grandmother) has passed, and that we keep people by keeping their story. If a family story touches something painful (a loss, a hard history), it's okay to keep it simple and age-right; you don't owe a child the whole weight at once. If a child's questions open a big feeling, a school counselor can help.

No wrong family

Every family's story is kept a different way. A child with few names or documents has roots just as deep: this story is built so that is a strength, never a lack.

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