

## 5 benefits of learning about your heritage

*Family Literacy Day* is taking place on January 27, 2023, and this year's theme is "Celebrate Your Heritage". Learning as a family not only helps to build strong literacy skills for both adults and children, but it also strengthens family bonds and ties. Did you know that there are actually many benefits to learning about your heritage and family history?

Here are a few of the advantages:

### 1. Strong sense of identity

Tracing family roots back through generations can help a person connect with a sense of self by learning about their family's past. By learning about your ancestors, celebrating family traditions, embracing your culture and understanding where you came from, you will realize how special and unique you are, which can lead to a stronger sense of self. People with a strong sense of identity tend to be more self aware of their values, opinions and thoughts, and aren't afraid to be who they are. Researching your family history can help you discover what exactly makes you, you!

### 2. Strong social connections

Learning about your family history can impact the way you connect with others because it allows you to connect with people in the past, present and future. When you begin your family history journey, you may end up discovering new family members all over the world! Since researching family history is such a popular hobby, it also offers the chance to meet other people who are likewise engaged in learning about their own families.

Researching genealogy also makes for a great family activity, involving siblings, children and grandchildren. It can bring family members together around a shared interest and also inspire intergenerational storytelling and sharing.

### 3. Better health

Knowing your family health history can help you better understand what health challenges may run in your family. This can empower you to look after your own health by making better choices and living a healthier lifestyle. It also encourages you to be on the look out for specific health challenges that might arise.

### 4. More compassion

[Research by Emory University](#) found that the more children knew about their families, the stronger their sense of control over their lives. They also had higher self-esteem and believed their families functioned more successfully.

By understanding where you come from, you can better understand your place in the world. By learning about the hardships or challenges your ancestors encountered, you can become more understanding of the trials and tribulations of life.

Knowing your family history can also help you to appreciate different cultures and open your mind to new things. Whether your ancestors were from a different cultural background or religion, your newfound knowledge can help expand your horizons and strengthen your understanding of your own beliefs.

### **5. Stronger literacy skills**

Family research encourages the development of many literacy skills, such as reading, comprehension and digital skills. It also offers opportunities to improve cognition and self-esteem. Reminiscing and exploring the past can have deep psychological benefits for older people, giving them a chance to reconnect with their own memories while also learning new things about family members they never knew. Some studies have shown that reminiscing can actually lower a person's blood pressure and heart rate.

This January, take time to explore and learn about your heritage. After all, there's no better way to learn about your family, than together as a family. Visit [FamilyLiteracyDay.ca](https://www.familyliteracyday.ca) to learn more and to access free downloadable resources.

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