Activity

Mapping Our Histories
Surprises erupt and concepts develop as children discover their families' fascinating histories.

Grades: PreK–K

Overview
Children read about immigration, then develop a questionnaire to fill in the story of where their families lived in past times, chart selected results, and practice mapping skills as they trace origins and routes. As a simple exercise, they make a map of their room or house.

Materials:
- variety of maps including city, state, world map, and map of the United States
- book about immigration, such as Coming to America: The Story of Immigration by Betsy Maestro (Scholastic Inc.)
- chart paper
- markers
- small coding stickers
ACTIVITY
1. Read a book about immigration. Engage children in a discussion about what they learned from reading the book. Ask if they know of any family members who came to America or to their town or city from another place. Record their responses on chart paper.
2. Invite children to develop a questionnaire to take home to their family members so that they can learn about where their family members came from and how they traveled. Include a question to find out why families came to America. Send the questionnaire home along with a note to families explaining the activity.
3. Schedule time for each child to present his information. Create a chart to record specific information. Review the completed chart and ask children to compare and contrast their answers.
4. Show children a variety of maps. Ask them to share what they already know about maps. Can they point out the state or city where they live? Which country do they live in? How do we find bodies of water on a map? What other information can they find by studying maps?
5. Encourage children to use the maps to locate the different areas where their families came from. Begin with a local city or state map to locate where children reside. Use a map of North America to find areas throughout the continent that families may have come from. Display a world map to find other areas throughout the world. Place small stickers on the maps to indicate the different places families came from.
6. Ask children to review all the maps and create a chart or graph to organize the information. Which part of the state, country, or world did most of their families come from? How many children were born in other places? How many parents were immigrants? Re-read Coming to America. Invite children to compare the information presented in the book with their own family histories.

Linked Activities
Mapping Our Bedroom. Provide the class with drawing materials and invite them to draw a map of their bedroom. Ask them to think of the shape of their bedroom, where windows and doors are located. Then ask children to draw the different things that are in their room. Invite them to share and compare their work.

• Subjects:
  Geography, History, Migration, Data Collection, Charts and Diagrams