
The Bedtime Story for Dad

Classroom Guide

Tonight, your child tucks YOU in

CASEL Competency: Social Awareness

Grade Level: Pre-K–3

Duration: 40–50 minutes

Category: Seasonal

Learning Objectives

- Practice perspective-taking by seeing daily life through a caregiver's eyes
- Recognize that small, repeated acts (making food, saying "careful," carrying to bed) are expressions of love
- Understand that caregivers need to be SEEN and appreciated, just like children do
- Learn that "You did a good job today" is one of the most powerful sentences you can say

Overview & Preparation

Key Vocabulary

Perspective • Appreciate • Invisible • Caregiver • Recognize • Repeated • Routine • Role Reversal • Love • Validate

Materials Needed

- The personalized story
- Paper and crayons
- Letter-writing supplies
- Optional: family photos
- Optional: a blanket for role-play

Before Reading

Connection Question

Think about what your dad or caregiver does every single day. Which of those things do you think nobody ever thanks them for?

Background Building

Dad is tired. Really tired. So tonight, the child takes over. They lead dad to bed, pull the comforter up to his chin, and open an invisible book — except the story inside is DAD. The pancakes he makes. The "careful" he says six hundred times a day. The way he carries sleeping children from the car without making a sound. Dad's eyes get heavy. He smiles. And the last page is the thing every dad needs to hear: "You did a good job today."

During Reading — Pause Points

- **When the child tucks dad in and pulls the comforter up too tight** — The child is doing what Dad usually does! What does it feel like to switch roles? Have you ever taken care of a grown-up?
- **When the invisible book reveals all the daily things dad does** — The invisible book is full of SMALL things — making food, saying "careful," checking the locks. Why are the small things so important?
- **When the child says "You did a good job today"** — Seven simple words. Why do they matter so much? Does your dad or caregiver ever hear that?

Discussion Questions

1. The child reads from an invisible book about dad's invisible acts of love. What does "invisible love" look like in YOUR home?

↳ Why do we call it invisible if we can see it happening?

2. The dad says "careful" six hundred times a day. The child hears it as "I love you" six hundred times. Can you think of something a grown-up says that secretly means "I love you"?

↳ Do grown-ups always SAY "I love you" with those exact words?

3. The role reversal — the child tucking in the parent — is funny and tender. Why is it powerful for a child to take care of a grown-up?

↳ Have you ever comforted a grown-up? What happened?

4. "You did a good job today." Why is that one of the most important things you can say to someone?

↳ Who in your life needs to hear that? Could you say it to them today?

Facilitation Tips

This story is designed for Father's Day but works for any caregiver appreciation moment. Be inclusive: some children have two dads, grandparents, uncles, foster parents, or other caregivers. Frame it as "the person who takes care of you" when needed. If a child doesn't have a father figure, let them write for any caregiver they love. The emotional core — SEEING someone who usually does the seeing — is universal.

Emotional Payoff

The rarest gift: being SEEN by your child. Not thanked in the abstract but recognized in the specific — the exact food, the exact phrase, the exact small brave act. When the child whispers "you did a good job today," it validates the entire invisible architecture of caregiving. This is the book dads will reach for on hard days.

After Reading Activities

The Invisible Love List

Duration: 15 min | Materials: Paper, crayons, markers

Each child makes a list (written or drawn) of all the "invisible" things their caregiver does every day that nobody thanks them for. Examples: packing lunch, driving to school, checking homework, saying "be careful," reading bedtime stories, waking up early. Decorate the list as a gift. Title: "The Things You Do That I See."

Write "You Did a Good Job Today"

Duration: 10 min | Materials: Card stock, markers, stickers, envelopes

Each child creates a card with just one sentence: "You did a good job today." Decorate it. Seal it in an envelope labeled "Open When You're Tired." This becomes a real gift the caregiver can keep and read on hard days.

Role Reversal Skit

Duration: 10 min | Materials: A blanket or towel, a "book" (any book held upside down)

In pairs, children take turns being the child who tucks in the parent. Practice: pull up the blanket ("Too tight?" "Perfect."), read from the invisible book (make up silly things the "parent" does), and deliver the final line: "You did a good job today." Discuss what it felt like to play both roles.

Writing Prompts

- Write the invisible book for YOUR caregiver. What would be in Chapter 1? Chapter 2? The last chapter?
- Draw your caregiver doing the smallest, most invisible thing they do every day. Why does it matter?
- Write a letter to your caregiver starting with: "I see you when you _____. And I want you to know _____."

Home Connection

Family Letter

Dear Families,

Today we read "The Bedtime Story for Dad," where a child turns the tables and tucks dad into bed, reading from an invisible book about all the small, repeated acts of love that make up fatherhood. Your child created an "Invisible Love List" of the things you do that they notice — even when you think nobody sees.

Here is how you can continue this learning at home:

- Let your child "tuck you in" this weekend — the full routine, comforter and all
- Open the "Open When You're Tired" card together — or save it for a day when you really need it
- Start a family tradition: say "You did a good job today" to each other at bedtime

With warmth,

Your Child's Teacher

Related Books

- Just Me and My Dad by Mercer Mayer
- Guess How Much I Love You by Sam McBratney
- Love You Forever by Robert Munsch
- My Dad Is Amazing by Sabrina Moyle