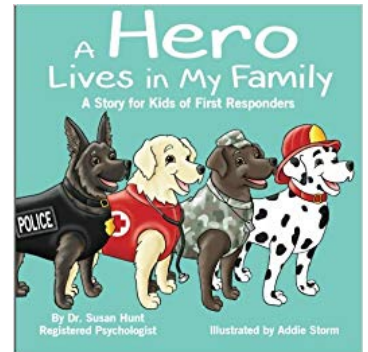


A Hero Lives in My Family: A Story for Kids of First Responders

By Dr. Susan Hunt



This book is intended for children of first responders such as paramedics, firefighters, and military personnel, as well as children who want to learn about these important community helpers. The book explores the many things first responders do in their jobs and describes the emotions they may experience. The author explains that a helping hero's favorite job is being a parent.

Discussion and Questions:

- What does it mean to be a hero? Do you know anyone who is a Helping Hero?
- What are some ways you help other people?
- What kinds of feelings do Helping Heroes experience?
- Can you think of a time you felt sad? Mad? Worried? Scared? What are some things that helped you to feel better?

Activities:

- **Act out a Hero**
 - Find costumes of helping heroes and put them in the dramatic play area.
 - After reading the book, ask children what kind of hero they may want to be. Provide prompts (i.e., police officer, nurse, firefighter) if needed.
 - List each helping hero on the board or a poster. Children can place their name or picture in the columns of the hero they choose (as shown to the right). Encourage children to try on the costume of the helping hero they chose (or any of the others available) during centers or free-choice.
 - If children seem to want/need additional guidance, suggest that they take turns putting on a costume and acting out their role using other materials (i.e., blocks, toy cars, first aid kit) while other children pretend to be someone who needs the help of the hero. Then take turns changing roles.
- **Feeling Faces**
 - While reading the book, emphasize and talk about the feeling words (i.e., sad, tired, mad, happy, frustrated, etc.).
 - When you read a feeling word encourage children to make the facial expressions to match the word.
 - Children can look around at the faces of their peers or family members to see a variety of ways people show certain feelings. Children can also hold mirrors and look at their expressions.
 - For younger children, make the faces at them first and try to get them to imitate. Label the feeling of the face you are making and exaggerate your voice to help very young children connect the word to the facial expression.
 - Play a guessing game in which a volunteer demonstrates a feeling face of their choice to others who then guess what feeling it represents.



See <http://bit.ly/2TZ8Elq>

- **Helping Hero Interview**

- Explain to the children that Helping Heroes are people just like them and they may know someone who is a helping hero. Ask children if they know a helper personally.
- If a child has a caregiver or family member who is a first responder, invite that person to be interviewed by the group.
- If there are multiple children with first responders as parents, this activity can be repeated or, with additional adult help, break the group into smaller groups and have multiple interviews simultaneously.
- Before the interview, help children brainstorm questions to ask the Helping Hero. Provide examples if needed such as, “What is the best part of your job?” and “How long have you been a firefighter?”
- Create a list of these questions and invite children to volunteer to ask a question during the interview. Help the children memorize their question. Be understanding that some children may need more help than others. Modify this for children with disabilities. For example, help children who are non-verbal decorate a piece of paper with their question written on it that they can show to the interviewee. Or, prerecord the child asking the question to an audio recording device if speaking takes concentrated time and effort for the child or if the child is particularly shy. Be creative in how to adapt this to meet the needs of all children.
- During the interview, children can ask their questions one at a time while an adult records the responses to the questions on a large piece of paper.
- If possible, take a photo of the whole group with the Helping Hero and glue it to the paper. Hang the paper in the classroom.
- ****Note –** This can be adapted for home settings. Families can contact their local police, fire, or EMS agencies to request a time to interview a first responder with their child. Most agencies have at least one individual who would be more than happy to participate. The same type of poster can be created and hung in the child’s home or bedroom.

- **Helping Heroes in the Classroom**

- Ask the children to describe what kinds of things the helping heroes in the book did for others.
- Turn to page 4 in the book and read, “I protect, I serve, I help, and I observe. I listen, I care, and I give hope to people in despair.” Help the children define these words and provide examples as needed.
- Ask the children what they can do in the classroom to help others. If needed, give suggestions such as “Listen to a friend when they’re sad” and “Help a friend stand up when they fall.”
- In an area of the classroom, place an empty, open-top, clear, plastic jar and another container of large beads, beans, or other small items.
- Share with the children that whenever they notice someone in the class being a “Helping Hero” they should quietly take one of the small items and place it in the clear plastic jar.
- As the jar fills over time, during morning meeting or another convenient group time, ask the children if they remember why they put a small item in the jar. If no one remembers, you can ask them to share one helpful thing they’ve noticed someone do recently. They may need to be prompted to recall something by saying, “Remember this morning when you were struggling with _____? Who helped you?”
- Consider some kind of class reward or special sticker for all children when the jar is full.

- **Helping Heroes Hats**

- Print a selection of Helping Hero hats from Tot Schooling (<http://bit.ly/37oLPLF>).
- Encourage the children to select a hat and decorate them with markers, crayons, glitter, paint pens, etc. Ensure that art materials are developmentally appropriate for the age group.
- Allow very young children to scribble on their paper hat.
- Help children cut out (or cut out for them if needed) their hats and assemble them.

- During this process, talk about what each helping hero does for their job.
- Ask questions about the Helping Hero each child chose. Write the children's answers on the back of their head strap (i.e. "I want to protect people" or "I can run fast.")
- These hats can be worn in the activity above.
- **Helping Heroes Matching Game**
 - Print off pictures of different first responders in their uniforms and write their job title on the paper.
 - Make clue cards for each type of first responder such as:
 - I wear a hard hat and a red uniform.
 - Sometimes I ride in a big truck with a siren.
 - My job is to get people out of dangerous places.
 - Invite a small group of children to play a game on the floor or at a table.
 - Lay the pictures of the first responders in front of all the children and place the clue cards in a pile face down. Encourage each child to draw a clue card from the pile one at a time.
 - Read the card aloud with the child. Children should place this card by the picture of the first responder who best fits the description on the clue card.
 - If a child struggles, ask them to choose between two possible options (one being the correct answer).
 - When the match is made, ask children if they know anyone with that job and/or what other things this kind of helping hero does.
 - Continue the game until all the first responder pictures have been matched to the clue cards.