

◇ Chapter 1
Families, Society, and You

Enrichment Activities

COMMUNITY SUPPORT FOR FAMILIES

Strong families that meet the needs of their members are an important key to building and maintaining a healthy society. Yet families today often need help in fulfilling their responsibilities. Fortunately, the community can provide many support services for families.

Directions: Investigate organizations or groups in your community that provide support services for families. Try to find at least two organizations or groups for each function. Use a newspaper, library, telephone book, community guidebook, or any other resource you find helpful to complete the chart below. Then answer the questions that follow.

FAMILY SUPPORT SERVICES			
	Organization/Group	Function Fulfilled	How It Helps
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			
6.			
7.			
8.			
9.			
10.			

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Analyzing Your Findings

1. For which function did you find the most support in your community? Why do you think this is?

2. For which function did you find the least support? Why do you think this is?

3. Are resources easy to find in your community? What suggestions do you have for making this information more accessible to families?

4. Do any of these organizations or groups use volunteers? If so, in what ways?

5. If you were to volunteer, which one would you choose, and why?

6. If you had the funding to create two *new* organizations or groups to serve families in your community, what would you create? Why?

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A LITERARY LOOK AT FAMILY-BUILDING SKILLS

The challenges of family life have existed as long as families have existed. Every family faces both successes and struggles. The level of success depends in part on the family-building skills a family develops. Understanding family dynamics is a good place to begin.

The importance of these skills can be analyzed in Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*. In this play, two families, the Montagues and the Capulets, carry on a longtime feud. Discussions of the play often focus on the relationships between the two families, but the characters might have prevented the crisis in the story if they had practiced family-building skills.

Family-Building Skills

- Good communication
- Making sound decisions
- Managing the family's schedules and finances
- Problem solving
- Conflict resolution
- Commitment to family first
- Valuing every family member as a contributor
- Knowing how to get outside help for problems
- Believing that change is possible

Romeo and Juliet Synopsis

Romeo, the oldest son and heir to the Montague fortune, attends a party in costume at the Capulets' home. He falls in love with Juliet, the Capulets' daughter. The two meet secretly and decide to marry. They sneak away to a friar's house and ask him to perform the ceremony. A fight breaks out, and Juliet's cousin Tybalt kills Romeo's friend Mercutio. Enraged, Romeo kills Tybalt. He must escape the law and leave the city.

Meanwhile, Juliet's parents try to force her to marry someone else against her will. The friar gives her a sleeping pill that will make her appear dead. Romeo hears of her death without hearing the friar's explanation. He comes to Juliet's tomb and drinks poison. When she wakes up to find him dead, she stabs herself. Realizing that their hatred caused the tragedy, the two households finally establish a truce.

Focus In

After reading the synopsis and the list of family-building skills, identify at least two skills from the list that the Montague and Capulet parents needed to develop. Then list at least two family-building skills their children (Romeo and Juliet) should have developed. Give reasons or evidence from the story for each skill you choose.

Do you think that an improvement in family-building skills could have changed the story's ending? Why or why not?