



**SOUTH DAKOTA STATE
UNIVERSITY EXTENSION**

Growing Active
READERS

A Chair for My Mother

Target Age: K to 3rd Grade

About the book:

A Chair for My Mother

by Vera Williams

Publisher: Harper Collins Publishers

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A family loses all their furniture in a fire. They set a goal to buy a chair for their mother. The family, neighbors, and friends work together for success.

Key Ideas

By the time you finish this discussion guide, your child will be able to **point to examples** of these key ideas in the book you read and discuss **real-life examples**, too. Use these definitions to explain the idea. We have also included ways children can show they are ready to use them in their daily lives.

1. **Setting goals** — A goal is something you want to do or to have. When you set a goal, you make a plan to reach it by a certain time. You then follow the plan until you succeed. Reaching a goal feels good. Celebrate your success and the successes of others.

How kids show it: They can follow a multi-step plan to reach a goal (with a little help and encouragement).

2. **Earning** — People use their time and skills to get money. Paper money and coins have different values.

How kids show it: They can identify the different jobs people in the family and the community do to earn money.

3. **Saving** — Things costs more money than we have at one time. Saving means putting some money aside until we have enough to buy what we want.

How kids show it: They keep money in a safe place and keep track of the amount saved for future spending. (ages 7+) They can explain why money saved in a bank or credit union is still a personal belonging.

4. **Follow-through** — Sticking with a plan to reach a goal can be hard. It takes effort, skill, and sometimes help from others.

How kids show it: They can identify who they can turn to for help reaching a goal, or what tools or tricks might help them stick with a plan.

Something to think about

First, read the book yourself and think about these ideas:

- The family in the story had many friends and neighbors who helped them in an emergency. They gave the family furniture and food. Sometimes we forget that family and friends are valuable resources. Money is not our only resource.
- The family in the story saved their coins for a long time to buy the new chair. Sticking to a goal can be hard and takes patience.
- When we set a goal and reach it, we need to congratulate ourselves. That is one way to recognize success. The family in the story was successful in saving enough money for a new chair. They celebrated by bringing it home right away and having their picture taken in the chair.

Something to talk about

Before you begin to read the story with your child, look at the cover of the book together. Ask

what the story might be about. As you read the story with your child, talk about these ideas:

- How did all the family's friends and neighbors help after the fire? Have friends or relatives ever helped your family? Has your family ever helped friends or relatives?
- What goal did the family set?
- Look at the picture of the money jar from the story. Did it take a long time to fill the jar? Have you and your family saved for something? Did it take a long time?
- Talk about saving money as a goal. To reach a goal you need to plan. To make the plan work, you must be patient and not give up.
- We feel good when we work hard, stick to our plan, and reach our goal. When we reach a goal, we need to do something to celebrate our success. How did the family in the story celebrate their success? How did the family in the story celebrate saving enough money for the chair? How does your family celebrate success?

Something to do

Make your own money jar (ages 4+): This activity will help your family set a goal. Save your money in a special jar just like the family in the story. Use mayonnaise or other large container you have at home. Wash it carefully. Help your child cut a slot in the lid.

Recognize success (Ages 6+): This activity will help your child celebrate success. The family in the story saved a long time for a chair. They have their picture taken in their chair to celebrate their success. Think of someone who has worked hard for something or has helped you lately. Celebrate their success. Draw them a special picture or take a special photograph of them. Cut out a frame from cardboard. Use an old box from around your house. Decorate the frame with macaroni shells or color it with markers. Use anything you think is pretty. Glue or tape the frame around the picture.

Family talent brainstorm (Ages 6+): This activity will help your family recognize the skills and talents of each family member. These resources can help the family use what it has to get what it needs. Get a large piece of blank paper. A paper bag will work. You will also need a marking pen. Have the family gather around. Lay the paper on the table or tape it on the wall. Decide who will do the writing. Across the top of the paper, write each family member's name. Now brainstorm. For one person at a time, say aloud all the special talents and skills that family members have. On the paper, write these talents and skills under the person's name. Do this for each member of the family. Talk about everyone's special skills and talents. Talk about ways these skills and talents can help the family get what it wants and needs.