My Journey Home

Family Connection

This week your child is reading *The Girl Who Loved Spiders*, a story about a boy who learns to appreciate spiders.

**Vocabulary on the Go**  In this week’s story, a boy named Luis and his family have just moved from New York to Florida. Talk with your child about what it might be like to move to a place that is totally different than the place where you now live. Try to use some of these words as you discuss memorable things you might discover in a new hometown.

peculiar  observes  condition  intends  memorable

**A Fearful Problem**  The boy in the story is afraid of being bitten by a poisonous spider. Have your child list other fears that could be turned into story problems, such as climbing a ladder, feeding a snake, or eating a strange food. Talk about ways the story characters might overcome their fears.

**Spider vs. Insect**  What are some differences between spiders and insects? Help your child use books or the Internet to find out more about these bugs.

Together, make a chart to compare spiders and insects. Include information about what they look like, where they live, and what they eat.
A Scottish Legend  Read and discuss this legend with your child. It tells about Robert Bruce, who fought to free Scotland from English rule in the 1300s.

Robert Bruce and the Spider

Robert Bruce led his troops against the English army again and again, but each time he was defeated. Forced to retreat, Bruce hid in a cave, where he considered giving up the cause.

Bruce noticed a spider dangling from the cave entrance. He watched as she swung from a single silk thread, trying to reach a place to fix its end so that she could spin her web.

Bruce counted her attempts: one, two, three, four, five, six. Each time, the spider failed. “Now, teach me what to do,” Bruce said to the spider, “for I have faced six defeats, too.”

On the seventh try, the spider reached her goal, anchored the thread, and began her web. Her success inspired Bruce to make another try. He gathered his followers and launched a surprise attack against the English. This time he succeeded in defeating them.

It’s been said that ever since that time, no one in Scotland with the family name Bruce is permitted to harm a spider.

Spider Similes  Authors often use insects and animals in similes to describe people and human behavior. Some examples are “patient as a spider” and “cunning as a fox.” With your child, use the simile frame “_____ as a _____” to write at least three more animal or insect similes.

Book Links
- Ace Lacewing: Bug Detective, by David Biedrzycki
- Millicent Min, Girl Genius, by Lisa Yee  CHALLENGE

Internet Challenge  Anansi is a spider character in many African and Caribbean folktales. Help your child search the Internet for a tale about Anansi. Read and discuss the tale with your child.