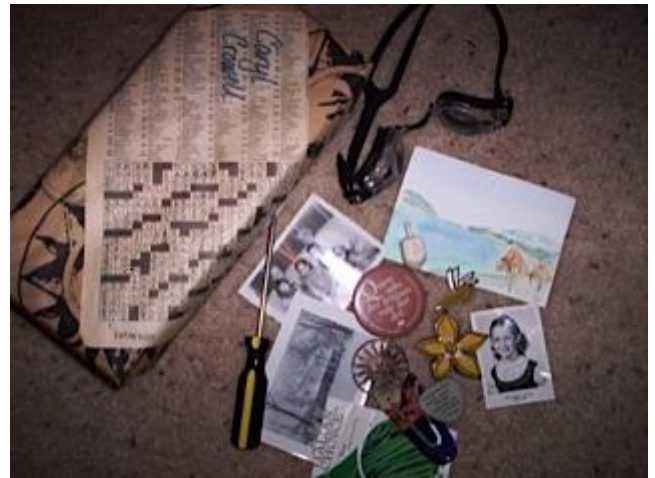# TEACHER TO TEACHER RESOURCE: SHOEBOX AUTOBIOGRAPHIES

Information for Parents about Shoebox Autobiographies

This is the homework assignment for the week, due next Monday, August 23. It will be used for oral language development, storytelling, and writing activities in class.

The children and adults in the Sunshine Room are creating Shoebox Autobiographies as a way of getting to know each other. A Shoebox Autobiography is a collection of objects from home and community that reveal something about the person. We would prefer that the children include at least some objects that remind them of a story about themselves or their family. Typically, a shoebox autobiography might contain photos, hobby items, a favorite thing, religious symbols, mementos from a trip or special event, or objects of personal importance or interest, among other items. The objects chosen should fit in the box and be appropriate for handling.

Here's an example of what I put in my box:

- pebbles that I collect on my travels
- a dreidl
- a seashell
- photos of family and ancestors
- a copy of my great-grandmother's Prussian passport
- my first grade school photo
- a souvenir rock that says "Annihilate Ohio State"
- a booklet on whale watching in Hawaii
- a paper butterfly

The outside of the box can also be decorated. Mine is covered with sun-themed paper, the NY Times Sunday crossword puzzle, and plans for remodeling a bathroom. The owner's name also needs to be on the outside of the box.

In addition to the wonderful storytelling that always accompanies the sharing of shoebox autobiographies, we make connections to each other that build a strong learning community. After sharing our boxes, we'll be using the objects as inspiration for writing the stories that they tell.

Please help your child be thoughtful about what he or she chooses to put in the box. Be sure to talk about each object that's chosen. This rehearsal will help your child prepare for sharing the box in class. Feel free to contact me with any questions you might have.

Thanks in advance for your support with this important project.