



# Family Reading Guide

## The Tiny Code Inside Me

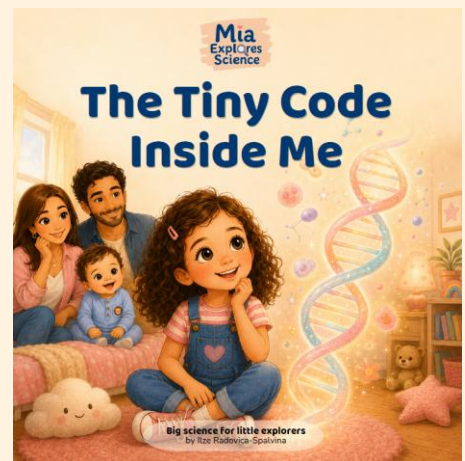
A gentle companion guide for reading, wondering, and talking about DNA with young children.

This guide helps families, teachers, and caregivers talk with children about the story in a warm, simple way. The goal is not to teach complicated genetics but to help children understand that their bodies carry tiny instructions, while love, kindness, practice, and choices also help shape who they become.

### Best for:

- ♥ Ages 4–8
- ♥ Family reading
- ♥ Bedtime conversations
- ♥ Classroom or library read-alouds

No science background needed.



# Before You Read

Before opening the book, invite your child to notice what makes people in a family look alike and what makes each person unique.

## Conversation starters:

1. What do you notice about Mia on the cover?
2. Do you think people in a family always look the same?
3. What is something special about your eyes, hair, smile, or laugh?
4. Can family members share things besides looks?
5. What do you think “tiny code” might mean?

## Gentle adult note:

Children may connect this story to many kinds of families. Keep the conversation open and loving. Families can be connected by biology, love, care, adoption, stepfamilies, friendship, and everyday belonging.

# While You Read

Pause gently during the story and let your child wonder out loud. There are no wrong answers.

## Pause-and-talk prompts:



### **When Mia wonders why she is herself:**

What do you think makes you “you”?



### **When the story talks about tiny instructions:**

Can you imagine something very tiny helping your body grow?



### **When Mia notices family traits:**

Who in your family has a smile, curl, dimple, laugh, or habit that you notice?



### **When the story talks about choices and kindness:**

What is something kind you practiced today?



### **When the story feels emotional:**

How do you think Mia feels right now?

## Adult reminder:

Keep explanations short. For young children, “DNA is like tiny instructions inside our cells” is enough.

# After You Read

## Reflection questions:

- What did Mia learn about herself?
- What is one thing Mia shares with her family?
- What is one thing that makes Mia unique?
- What are some things DNA can help shape?
- What are some things love, practice, and choices can help shape?

## Simple child-friendly explanation:

DNA is like a tiny instruction book inside our cells. It can help shape things like eye color, hair, and some body traits. But DNA is not the whole story. The people who love us, the things we learn, and the choices we make are also part of who we become.

## Mini activity: Family Trait Hunt

Ask your child to choose 3 things to notice:

- ♥ Eyes
- ♥ Hair
- ♥ Smile
- ♥ Laugh
- ♥ Freckles
- ♥ Dimples
- ♥ Eyebrows
- ♥ A favorite habit
- ♥ A kind thing someone does

### Then ask:

What do we share? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What makes each person special? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Every child is connected, loved, and wonderfully unique.**