

Taxi! Taxi!

BY CARI BEST

ILLUSTRATED BY DALE GOTTLIEB

Tina's Papi (pronounced *Poppy*) drives a bright yellow taxi. Papi doesn't live with Tina and her mom but on Sundays he turns on his taxi's "Off Duty" sign and visits Tina.

As she waits for him on this particular Sunday, she stands outside her apartment building, counting cars and airplanes, skipping, singing, and talking to her friends as they pass by. Will Papi come today?

Yes! He pulls up to the curb and he and Tina begin their adventure. Papi surprises Tina with a picnic and a visit to a farm. She returns home full of happy memories and also with a tomato plant, ready to grow tomatoes for a future picnic with Papi.

Dads who spend only short periods of time with their children will appreciate how Papi manages to fit educational, social, and fun experiences into one day.

Reading and talking together

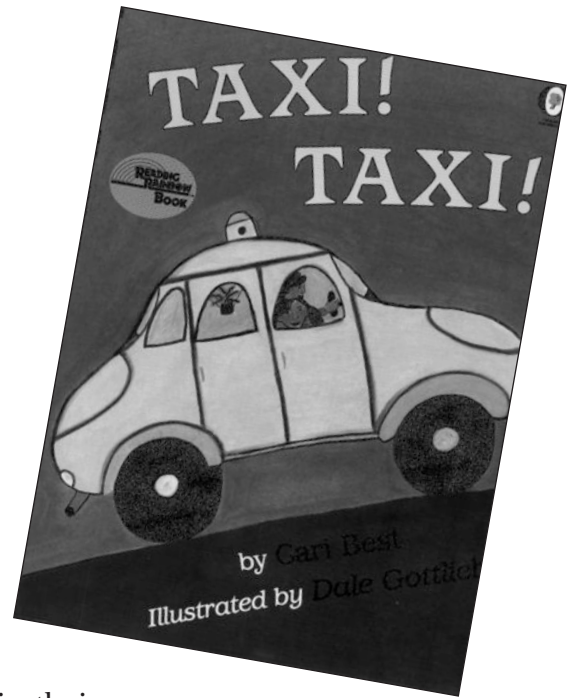
Tina has two families and children with two families will be able to understand Tina and see their own family structure reflected in her story.

Some ideas to talk about with your child

Have you ever waited to see someone special? To do something special? How did you feel? What did you do while you were waiting?

Safety note:

You might want to remind your child that it's always important to wear a seatbelt and/or sit in a car seat. In the story, Anita's mother doesn't buckle Anita or the baby in, but to be safe, children and adults must always wear seat belts in real life.



Especially for Dads

©2004 Vermont Center for the Book
www.mothersgooseprograms.org

This book has some Spanish phrases. If you don't speak Spanish, they are translated here:

Papi: Daddy or Papa

Uno, dos, tres, cuatro, cinco, seis: one, two, three, four, five, six

Qué bonita: very pretty

Siempre lo mejor: always the best

Para mi chica la más preciosa: for my best girl

Querida: dear or love

Por supuesto: of course

Hola: Hello

Adiós, señorita mía: Goodbye my little miss

Adiós: goodbye

Communication means *both* talking and listening. Help your child learn to be a good communicator by taking turns talking and listening to each other's stories.

Activities to do with *Taxi! Taxi!*

'When you have to wait" box

Find a shoebox or small, sturdy bag that your child can easily fill and carry. Talk together about what books and other things your child would like to have the next time the two of you have to wait for someone or something. You might include: books, paper, pencils, markers, toys and action figures. Let your child choose the contents. Some children like workbooks or coloring books, and others like play-dough.

The next time your child has to cope with waiting (for the bus, on an errand, on a long car ride, at a restaurant, at the doctor's office) use the box you've made together and encourage your child to find ways to keep busy.

Make a map

Taxi! Taxi! is full of pictures that are different kinds of maps. Tina's neighborhood is full of stores she's familiar with. The book also has a map of her and Papi's journey to the farm. You and your child can make a map together.



Take a short walk down just one street or to a neighborhood park or store. On your walk, stop and talk together about what you see:

Are there trees? Where are the trees located?

Do you see houses? How many on one block? What colors are they?

Do you see a fire station or other special buildings like a library or store?

Are there stop signs or traffic lights?

When you return home you and your child can make a map. A map is not just a picture of the places you went, but it's also a way to retrace your steps and see and discuss the route you traveled.

Map-making is a great way for children to prepare for school. It uses math, science, social studies, reading, and writing skills.

Make a mask

You and your child can make masks out of paper plates. To make the masks you'll need: large, white paper plates, string, scrap paper, glitter, yarn, cotton balls, or pictures from magazines (be creative – any material that will make your mask more interesting and will be fun to work with is fine). You will also need scissors, glue, and markers.

Before you begin this project you may want to ask your child what he or she wants to look like: An animal? A clown? Something scary? Something silly?

Use tape to attach string to either side of the paper plate, and cut the eyeholes for your child. He or she may need help after this, but many children will be able to finish their masks on their own.

When you have finished making your masks, look in the mirror together. See if you can have someone take pictures of you and your child in your masks. You may want to make masks for other family members as well.

Telling family stories

Every Sunday Tina spends a day with her Papi. This is part of her family's routine. Chances are, when you grew up there were some routines in your family, and there are probably weekly routines in your family now.

Talk about your family routines with your child. Have your child describe his or her routines to you and talk about the routines in your family growing up.

As you discuss this, you and your child may begin a new family tradition.