

# FOCUS

Helping children understand Alzheimer's disease



## When someone in your family has Alzheimer's disease

You may have someone in your family who has Alzheimer's disease. Alzheimer's disease affects the person's brain. When people have this disease, they forget, they get confused, they have trouble speaking and taking care of themselves.

Scientists don't know why people get Alzheimer's disease, but they are working hard to find a cause so they can stop it from happening.

You can't get Alzheimer's disease from another person, like the cold or the flu. Just because someone in your family has the disease, it doesn't mean you will get it.

Alzheimer's disease is not a normal part of growing old. Most people who have the disease are over 65 but sometimes (not very often) people in their 40s and 50s get it too. As people get older, their chances of developing the disease increases.

**Word Scramble**

**Unscramble the words using the clues**

**NABIR**  
Alzheimer's disease affects the \_\_\_\_\_

**F G O E R T**  
People with Alzheimer's disease \_\_\_\_\_

**L N R O A M**  
Alzheimer's disease is not a \_\_\_\_\_ part of growing old.

**U A S C E**  
Scientists are working hard to find the \_\_\_\_\_ of Alzheimer's disease.

**P**eople with **Alzheimer's disease** may forget your name, see or hear things that are not there, get lost, have trouble sleeping or say the same things over and over. This can cause them to become frustrated or nervous and they may get angry with you for no reason. It is important to know that they do not mean to treat you badly. It is not your fault if the person gets upset. Alzheimer's disease makes the person act in this way.

Taking care of someone with Alzheimer's disease is a hard job. If your mom, dad or grandparent is taking care of someone with the disease, they are probably very busy. You may find that they do not have as much time to spend with you or when they do, they are too tired to do anything. You may feel sad or angry about this. It is important to remember that they still love you. Talk to your family, a teacher or a trusted adult about your feelings.

People with Alzheimer's disease need to know you care. When you hold their hand or give them a hug, they will always feel your love.

## Book List

Here are a few suggestions to get you started. Check your public library, school library or book stores for more resources.

### **The Memory Box**

*Mary Bahr, 1995, Ages 6-11*  
ISBN 0807550531

**Z**ach could hardly wait to spend his three-week vacation with gram and gramps at the lake, fishing and listening to gramps tell his stories. But when gramps wants to start a memory box and forgets his way around the forest path, Zach begins to worry. Together the three fill the memory box with pictures, souvenirs, written memories — old and new, and prepare themselves for the changes in gramps and the summers ahead.

**Y**ou may have questions about what is happening to the person with Alzheimer's disease. You can learn more about the disease and how to help the person. Here is a list of things you can do:

### **Remember past events**

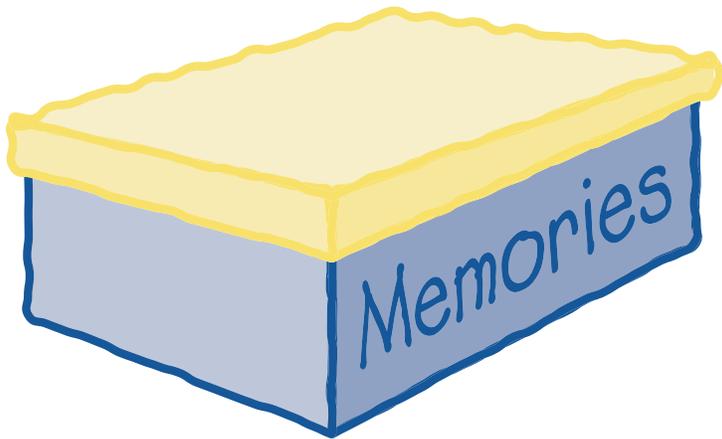
People with Alzheimer's disease like to remember things from long ago. You can help them remember by sitting with them and looking at old pictures or photo albums.



### **What's Happening to Grandpa?**

*Maria Shriver, 2004*  
Ages 4-8 ISBN 0-316-00101-5

**G**randpa has always been the best storyteller Kate has ever known, but lately, he seems different. He repeats himself, becomes easily frustrated, and then one day, he even forgets Kate's name. When her mother explains Grandpa's disease, Kate is overwhelmed. But with remarkable strength, Kate resolves to cherish her grandpa's life and memories.



### Make a Memory Box

You probably have many special memories about spending time with the person who has Alzheimer's disease. Fill a box with five special things that will help you to remember those times. Examples could be: fishing hook, a gold coin, a letter or card, a piece of jewellery (pin or broach), a watch, a medal, a baseball, a theatre ticket stub.



### Help around the house

People with Alzheimer's disease like to keep busy. You can help them make their bed, fold their laundry, help make lunch, go for walks or rake leaves in the yard.



### To learn more

- Contact your local Alzheimer Society
- Visit our website [www.alzheimer.ca](http://www.alzheimer.ca)

### If I Forget, You Remember

*Carol Lynch Williams, 1999*  
*Ages 9-12 ISBN 0440414202*

**E**lyse has just graduated from grade 6 and is looking forward to a busy summer. Then Elyse finds out that her grandmother is moving in for the summer. She has Alzheimer's disease and Elyse has to care for her while her mother works. Elyse thinks her grandmother will get better if Elyse is patient. But Elyse finds out it is not that easy and she learns to watch over her grandmother who was always there for her.

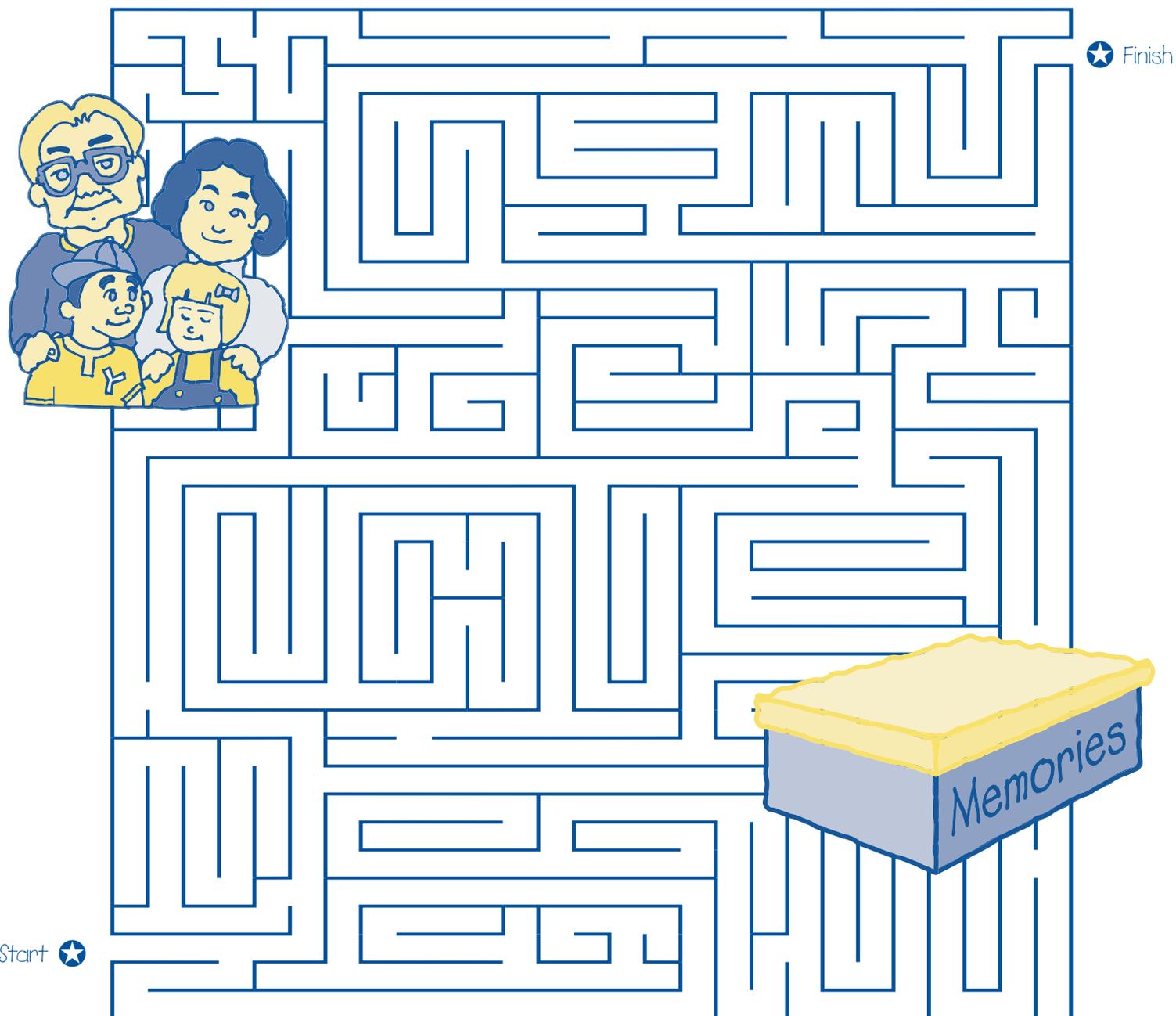
### Mr. Knowsit™ Learns About Alzheimer's Disease

*Doug Stowe, 2000*  
*Ages 4-6*  
Foresight Consultants, (905) 268-5639

**W**hy was Timothy's grandpa acting as if he didn't know him? Was it a practical joke? With some coaxing, a little affection and care, Mr. Knowsit helps Timothy learn the truth about his grandpa and something called "Alzheimer's disease." A candid and creative format to help children, and their families, understand this disease.



# Find the Memory Box



## Alzheimer Society

For more information:

Alzheimer Society of Canada  
20 Eglinton Avenue West, 16th Floor, Toronto, Ontario, M4R 1K8  
Tel: (416) 488-8772 1-800-616-8816 Fax: (416) 322-6656  
E-mail: [info@alzheimer.ca](mailto:info@alzheimer.ca) Website: [www.alzheimer.ca](http://www.alzheimer.ca)  
Facebook: [www.facebook.com/AlzheimerSociety](http://www.facebook.com/AlzheimerSociety)  
Twitter: [www.twitter.com/AlzSociety](http://www.twitter.com/AlzSociety)

or check the phone book for your local Alzheimer Society.

Charitable registration number: 11878-4925 RR0001