

Katie: Hey, we're Katie and Caitlin coming to you from our library living room. We are here not just as children's librarians, but as people who are parenting our own children.

Caitlin: Each month we'll bring a new conversation about parenting with helpful resources from our library and beyond. This is "Your Family, Your Library," and we are your librarians.

Katie: Before we jump into this month's topic, we want to remind our listeners that though we're pretty good at finding resources and we have experiences parenting our own children. We are not child development experts. Our choices don't need to be your choices. There is no judgment here. We're all doing our best for the health and well-being of our families in mind.

Caitlin: All day, every day.

Katie: Yup.

Caitlin: So this is a sad one. It's a hard one.

Katie: Yeah.

Caitlin: Well, now I'm getting all teary. I got a new job, and I'm moving over to, Glenview Public Library. I have loved learning alongside you. I have loved working with you and finding new depths and ways to talk about the work that we do in the library and the work that we do as parents. It has been joyous, and it's been fun.

Katie: Yeah.

Caitlin: And it's been hard.

Katie: And now heartbreaking.

Caitlin: And now my heart is broken. Yeah, but what's not heartbreaking is I know that this is not the end of our friendship.

Katie: Oh, no. Never.

Caitlin: And I know that our paths are going to cross again professionally. Hopefully, often.

Katie: Yes.

Caitlin: And it's good to walk away from a thing on a high note.

Katie: Yeah. On top.

Caitlin: On our terms.

Katie: Yeah.

Caitlin: Feeling nothing but pride and love.

Katie: Yeah I know it's like just been like digesting this over the last couple of weeks. Paul and Amber and I and Caitlin. And you know it's like it's just been like a real special project to be a part of. And every month we've thoroughly enjoyed bringing you a new episode, mostly because we get to spend a lot of time together. Not enough.

Caitlin: Not enough.

Katie: Yeah. Never enough. But I would agree with you. Like this has definitely been one of the coolest things I've been a part of in my career. And, you know, it's pulled me out of my comfort zone and it's challenged me. And that's something that Caitlin, like you've always done for me when I have, since I've known you. And Caitlin, fun fact, was actually one of the people who hired me. So I'm indebted to you in many ways.

Caitlin: I didn't actually hire you.

Katie: Well, you were, like, interviewing me.

Caitlin: I just advocated for you. Because obviously you're amazing.

Katie: Ditto. But, it's going to be hard without you. But on the other side of it, I think I can speak for Paul and Amber as well. To say, like you know, we're going to miss you and we're so happy for you and you deserve what's coming to you. And yeah, it's just there's no one like you and there won't be, so.

Caitlin: Well, the feeling is more than mutual about all of us. Well, it's just this has been so cool. I mean, one of the really exciting and cool things about being a librarian is that you never get to stop learning. And it's been so great to have an opportunity like this one to explore and have the freedom to develop something from an idea, from a seed. And I think what we made was really cool.

Katie: Yeah.

Caitlin: All four of us. Yeah, it's been a year, right?

Katie: Yeah.

Caitlin: Big, big changes. And it's funny because for the past three weeks I've been walking around like putting up, I think, stronger and bigger walls because I care so much about my work and I'm so invested

in what I do here at the library and the community that we live in and the community that I work in. And I think even though I'm really excited about this new opportunity and looking forward to it, I'm holding a great deal of sadness and in fear in, in the other hand. And they, right now they weigh the same. So it's, it's been a weird and kind of surreal walk. And I think, I was thinking about it earlier this week about how moving out of the house that my kids have grown up in, the house that we lived in for 11 years into a new place was a big shift, too. I've never lived in a place for that long before not growing up, not as an adult. So this is a big, big change that I don't think I've all the way processed through yet. So I'm in a processing place.

Katie: Yeah, there's been a lot of changes happening.

Caitlin: Big changes.

Katie: So like, what do you do to help you like yourself process through those things? Like do you have things that you kind of look to, to help you or like, where are you at right now?

Caitlin: You know, I think, I mean, if I'm being honest, like I'm not being very healthy right now, I think I'm going to have to take some time at some point when I'm not actively like pushing through whatever the big change moment is. Like I did the same thing with the house move where it's like, okay, I really can't think about what this move means because I have tasks that I have to complete.

Katie: Yeah, there's so much to do around that.

Caitlin: Exactly. And I think it's the same with here. You know, it's like...

Katie: You have a lot of things to close up.

Caitlin: Yep.

Katie: Pass on and...

Caitlin: Exactly. You know, like I'm one thing that I'm really excited about is, presenting with you at a conference. Katie and I get to present on this amazing podcast and talk about the ways that it's helped us build community in the library, within the walls and outside of them. And, so thinking about that has got me feeling really excited, and it's a nice way that I can sort of kick the can down the road. As far as, you know, my feelings about making this big shift.

Katie: Yeah, same. I'm looking forward to it. But I feel like it's also going to be really hard because that will be the last time. Like, I kind of work with you in this Skokie capacity, at least for now.

Caitlin: For now. For now. It's a shift for the kids, too, because they've grown up in this library. Haven was two when I first started working in this job.

Katie: Oh my gosh.

Caitlin: And now she's ten. And so this you know, she's, she's a a little celebrity. And so these days of lockdown they starred in videos for the library. The whole staff knows who they are when they walk through the door. They've been allowed to come into staff areas before. So Haven's going to miss getting hot chocolate from the staff machine.

Katie: Oh, I get it for her, no worries.

Caitlin: Oh Katie. Yeah, yeah, you're, you're right. Haven Savage is a Katie Fox super fan. That's what it is. She's a super fan.

Katie: I feel the same. It's mutual.

Caitlin: Well, in terms of coping, it is like finding those little things that, like, make it. Okay. So for Haven, it's. She knows that you're still going to be here. And I think that's a really big deal for her. And I presented it to her like, we're not, losing a library. We're gaining a library. Skokie Public Library is our home library. And now we're also going to have a new library.

Katie: And that's exciting.

Caitlin: Yeah.

Katie: That's really exciting. Like a whole new place to explore.

Caitlin: And, yeah. And I, I'm excited to, to learn and see what this new position feels like. That's kind of exciting.

Katie: And they might have better hot chocolate.

Caitlin: They. Could that be? I don't think so. We have pretty good hot chocolate.

Katie: I haven't tried the new one.

Caitlin: It's good.

Katie: Has she tried it?

Caitlin: Yes.

Katie: But does she think she thinks it's good?

Caitlin: She thinks it's very good. She thinks it's very good. It might be because when she was younger and she would come here, I would really cut the hot chocolate with water. And I have not been cutting it as much. Now she's a little older, so I feel like, "oh, wow. Oh, it's so rich!"

Katie: Oh my gosh.

Caitlin: How do you process big change? Are you good at it?

Katie: I feel like I'm a lot the same as you. Like, I kind of, have tunnel vision, and I'm, like, just trying to do the tasks and, like, get to the thing.

Caitlin: Yeah.

Katie: And then what happens beyond that? It's kind of like, you know, I don't know, it's like, I feel like at some point it kind of all kind of falls apart a little bit for me. Like, I'm really trying to find better ways to relax and find time for myself. But it's been really hard.

Caitlin: For me, too. I, I feel like, like, I can keep it going for a while, and then it comes out in really weird ways. Like, I, I was listening to this book and it's an adult book, which I never read, and I enjoyed it. It was just one of those, like, literary fiction books about life, and they kept jumping through time. So it's like one minute the narrator is like a young adult, like 19, 20, and then she's middle aged, and then she goes back in time a little like, it's not a time jumping one. But like, that's how the narrative flows. And then she's she has her first baby, you know. So it goes back ten years or so and I just like I think it like made me like way too circumspect about like my own life and I like lost it. I was like, I know I have to be at work in 20 minutes, but I'm like in the bathroom like a puddle of tears and snot. Like what is happening. And I'm pretty locked down in general.

Katie: Like, but, you know, I mean, I think that even though those things can be surprising, I think that's like super healthy. Because it's like, does things need to come out? And that's actually a productive way of doing it.

Caitlin: You're right. It's like, A couple years ago, I was working with the community Engagement team. Shout out to Holly and Laura. And we would do these, meetings with district 69 preschool families. So the grown-ups. And one of the things that we were talking about was processing big emotions and how play was a really good way of, of doing that. And sometimes, like if a kid doesn't have the words for

talking about what the big thing is or if they're really locked down about it, like getting out some toys, you know, can work in two ways, right? Like, so like you're either distracted because you're playing with something that you really enjoy playing with or you act out whatever the thing is through the toys. Maybe that's what I need to do.

Katie: Yeah, I actually feel like I need to go back and listen to our Big Feelings episode, because I think, isn't that one of our most downloaded ones?

Caitlin: I think it is. Yeah. Maybe we just need puppets of each other.

Katie: So we can like, talk it out. Oh my gosh.

Caitlin: "I'm really sad you're leaving. Caitlin." "I'm really going to miss you."

Katie: Well, I got back from vacation like, a couple weeks ago, and Caitlin had just announced that she was leaving. And I know Caitlin was, like, a hugger, but, like I am when I saw her, I was like, "can I give you a hug?" And then I, I broke down, I was crying because it's like I had like a few days to process it, but it's like finally like seeing you in person, like it's just different, you know, it's different when you're like, yeah, looking in that in each other, in the eyes. I'm like, you know, I'm really feeling what that feels like.

Caitlin: I, the reason I'm not a hugger is because I lock it down. Like I lock the feelings down, and because I don't want to not be able to stop crying. And that's kind of what I feel like is going to happen.

Katie: It's like you're opening yourself...

Caitlin: Yes. So, Gudrun got me like she came in and was like, I'm really sad you're leaving. And then she gave me a hug. And I was like, "why, Gudrun?" Yeah. So I don't know, processing these things is hard. We do have multiple collections in our picture book section that can help. And we also have some books in the kids nonfiction area that talk about processing grief and processing change. And I know that we've talked about some of those in, in our Big Feelings episode, but we'll also provide some links to those specific categories and some books that we really love. One book that, and maybe Paul will remember this, but a long time ago, before you got here, I had a buddy named Kathy who did a little video series with me called Talking Books with Caitlin and Kathy and Kathy moved to a new library, and it was devastating. And so we talked a little bit about, you know, how we say goodbye on that episode and we did all of our processing through books with Kathy and I. So she brought three from the adult side, and I

brought three from the kid side. But one that really resonated with me at the time was "The Goodbye Book" by Todd Parr. I think it's, it's nearly wordless. He really does a good job with, like, very simple pictures and primary colors of just sort of like emoting through those things. And what I liked about that book is that there's not just one way to say goodbye, and there's not just one way to feel about it, because you can feel mad and actually, like, I think I did feel mad for a little while even about this goodbye. And you can feel really sad. And sometimes you can just feel excited because it's change, and sometimes you can feel all those things at the same time, and your two hands that you're holding all those feelings and weigh the same amount. So it's a lot.

Katie: Spend winter break at the library! We'll have family-fun events from Monday, December 23 through Sunday, January 5. Check the show notes for dates and times.

Caitlin: So I guess the other side to feeling sad is feeling joyful. And we can celebrate the things that have gone really well.

Katie: Yeah, we have a lot to celebrate. Yeah. And I think that's, that's what these, presentations are going to be about. I'm doing around with Caitlin, and then Paul and I are presenting at another conference with a smaller library that also has a podcast about our podcast. So there's like some exciting things coming up with that. And I feel like it's a way to celebrate, like what we've done and what we created from zilch. I mean, it's pretty cool.

Caitlin: It's really cool.

Katie: It's really cool when you think about it. And also celebrating all of us working together. Yeah, I mean, we all know group projects can be really hard, but, this has been just, like, so good.

Caitlin: An absolute dream boat.

Katie: This is like a haven.

Caitlin: Awww, haven.

Katie: Haven.

Caitlin: No, it really has been a dream. It's all of our baby. Like, we all built this together and. And that feels amazing.

Katie: It does.

Caitlin: I think I said it, it, you know, when we first started talking about this. But I think, like, what I've really enjoyed is watching it grow and and the way that, I did theater all like, pretty

much all my childhood and most of my adult life and still do it you know during story time and whatnot, but it's this feeling that you get before you go on stage where you just feel like you're going to like yak, and it's such a bad feeling, you know, like, what did I do? Why am I doing this? Like, this is I guess it's just me. It's not just me, but like. And, you know, I'm trash and how did I get up here? Like, this is the worst. And then you do it, and it's so cathartic, and it feels so amazing. And I think, like, this has been such a great way to achieve that feeling of like catharsis without that, like stage fright feeling at the beginning. And I think like I remember the first, the first episode that we did, like the very first one and I had literally three pages of like...

Katie: Oh, me too.

Caitlin: These tiny typed out notes. And I had like spent a week, like thinking about, like, how do I say this? And how do you know, like, what's this going to sound like? And how do we really, like, hit all of the points that we need to hit? And I left that, like, where did we, we filmed it in the tiny room. Right? Like in our old, old office. I left that office feeling like I could fly. Like I just felt like there's no way it could have gone better. We really like we hit the notes that we needed to hit. And each episode since then has been progressively less scary and less stressful and just more joyful. Like something to look forward to.

Katie: Yeah, I agree, I mean, the first few episodes for me were kind of like that. I want to yak, you know, and also the place where we were recording was like super hot.

Caitlin: It was really hot.

Katie: So that one that didn't help, but I never thought I would get to a place like where I'm this comfortable, like just talking and I guess, like, I just realized, like coming into it, thinking of it more as like a conversation just between us and like we happened to be wearing headphones and speaking into a giant microphone.

Caitlin: Right. And like, every once in a while, Amber will give us a thumbs up.

Katie: Yeah. And I just feel like this, the confidence that I've had in myself in this project, like, I feel like I see it transferring to other things. Like, if I can do that, then I can do this. And it's like, I feel like that kind of no matter how old you get, like, that kind of stuff never goes away.

Caitlin: Nope.

Katie: And yeah. So it's like, I feel like not only have, have I grown



like professionally with this, but I've, I've definitely I've, I've grown as a person through it too.

Caitlin: Me too. I also really appreciate I think like, some of it is just having conversations with you because you're a parent. Your kids are similarly aged to my kids and we are simpatico on a lot of things. But I think it's given me a more secure footing to feel comfortable about talking to people. When I'm downstairs working at the desk to or people out in the community about their own experiences. Yeah, in a way that feels conversational and authentic. Like, I really appreciate that.

Katie: Yeah. Me too.

Katie: It's BINGO time! Visit the library or bookmobile to collect your Winter Reading Bingo card! Get five in a row and collect a small prize. Ambitious Skokie residents can complete the whole card for an extra special prize.

Caitlin: Do you have favorite episodes?

Katie: Well, I really liked the one that we did with Amanda.

Caitlin: Oh my gosh, that was so fun.

Katie: I mean, it was just really cool to bring someone else in from the community that's doing really cool things. Was able to teach us...

Caitlin: So much!

Katie: So much stuff. And I'm sure our listeners too. And yeah, it just felt like really full circle. I don't know, it just felt really good.

Caitlin: Yeah.

Katie: And she's amazing. Amanda Krause and like, we made a new friend.

Caitlin: I know when she left, I was sad. It was kind of like, I wasn't intentionally following her out the door, but I was. Yeah. I was like, "how, how can we find you?" I guess we just sent her an email. We could say we want to do, seed propagation just to see her. "We're here! Part of the seed collection project also. What are you doing? How's everything?"

Katie: Oh, my gosh.

Caitlin: I will tell you one of my favorite moments. And one of the maybe the moment that I thought that this podcast was going to be

successful was. And I know I've told you this, but I'll say it on the air. When we were in the tiny room...

Katie: The tiny room!?

Caitlin: and we were having a conversation, I don't know how else to describe it. We used to record our, podcast in a little tiny like it was. We kind of felt like a closet. It didn't feel like a closet without all of our recording equipment, but as. when we were, when we had everything set up, it was quite tight. Quite tight. You...it was crayfish wedding. So when we were talking about the crawdads and, and you the look on your face and the, the visceral description that you had of the, the crawdads coming up from the ground has stuck with me ever since. And I just knew I was like, we're never going to run out of things to talk about. Like, that really was the moment that I was like, I think we have something amazing.

Katie: The anniversary is coming up.

Caitlin: Oh boy.

Katie: 11 years. I think about a lot. The day of the crayfish. I still don't know what to call them.

Caitlin: I think you could call it both. I, I looked it up. I think it's crawdads or crayfish. I'm pretty sure it's like. So we. I went down this loop the other day with, Devin because we grew up with, Pawpaws in Indiana. We talked about Pawpaws and the, do you know about Pawpaws. I think it's a southern Indiana thing.

Katie: Yeah, it must be.

Caitlin: And then persimmons.

Katie: Yeah, persimmons. I never really...

Caitlin: so I thought they were interchangeable, but I don't think they are. And then I was, we were at the Botanic Gardens and they had a Pawpaw tree. And it turns out they have Pawpaws that are like, tropical. So then I was like, are we just like, is this like a, like an Indiana thing that we just call persimmons, Pawpaws? And it's not real, but I think there actually are Indiana Pawpaws. I don't know, for some sort of like...

Katie: I don't know, but I need to try one. Wait, what, what was it that your grandma made?

Caitlin: Persimmon pudding?

Katie: Persimmon pudding.

Caitlin: Yeah.

Katie: Is that literally pudding?

Caitlin: Yeah. Like, like in the...

Katie: Or is it called pudding?

Caitlin: I think it's, it's so it's not like tapioca or like whatever. Like you peel the cap off and eat it like, it's like you bake it so it's solid, but like, it's like, a moist solid.

Katie: Yes. So like, okay...

Caitlin: I don't know...

Katie: Cheesecake=y.

Caitlin: Yeah it's like cheesecake.

Katie: Or quiche.

Caitlin: Yes. Something like. Yes. I'd say much more akin to cheesecake. But it's like slightly...

Katie: I need to try this.

Caitlin: Slightly gritty. I recommend it. So I just cover the whole thing in whipped cream. It's like a vehicle for my whipped cream.

Katie: As you do.

Caitlin: Honestly. That's what it is. But we, we love it. It's a standard, the ham salad I could do without, but the, persimmon pudding. It's forever.

Katie: I love how the ham salad in the fridge in the staff lounge is just called sandwich spread.

Caitlin: Yeah. Oh, my gosh. So wait, so when you say you're you grew up in Indy, which is just, like a little...so an I grew up in rural southern Indiana until I was eight. But like a staple of our of any big holiday like Easter, Thanksgiving, Christmas, whatever. Like there was always...

Katie: Ham.

Caitlin: Ham salad.

Katie: We specifically had like ham, ham.

Caitlin: Sometimes...

Katie: We had like, honey baked ham.

Caitlin: Yeah. I...

Katie: My mom would always get...

Caitlin: I have been vegetarian since 2005 and I still miss ham.

Katie: Really?

Caitlin: I really liked ham. Ham and bacon. I don't miss anything else but bacon and ham. Yeah, I really miss that. Not ham salad. That was weird. So I was wondering if it was like, yeah. Is it a southern thing?

Katie: Maybe.

Caitlin: Like. Cause I know, like, like half of it or like..

Katie: You know, it, it because PJ, who is a program assistant here, he is from Virginia and he got a sandwich spread for his sandwich.

Caitlin: Did he?

Katie: And he was like, it's great. And he was like, oh, it's ham salad.

Caitlin: Yeah. Okay. So maybe it's a southern. Because I do think like there's that lower quarter of Indiana that's like it might as well be the South. And we even had the accent. So I don't know. Did I tell you about that. I have my, my parents, we didn't have a TV when I was growing up. My mom would record us, like, on audio cassettes and so, like, we read all the time, and I read this, this book of Shel Silverstein poetry. And I have a recording in myself somewhere. I was like, "I have a hot dog for a pet. It's the only kind of pet that my folks will let me get." like, really.

Katie: When did it go away? When you moved here?

Caitlin: Well, no, when I moved to Bloomington, I had, like, there really is like, a divide.

Katie: Interesting. You know, to me, I consider Bloomington still, like, kind of south. Yeah. It's just when you are from southern Indiana. That would still be more north, right?

Caitlin: Yeah, it is definitely. Yeah, it was definitely north of where we lived, about an hour north of Kentucky.

Katie: Okay.

Caitlin: It was, and it was really rural, like farms all around us. And the only store in our town was this little country store that I called the Dan Store because the guy that ran it was named Dan. The Dan, Dan Store.

Katie: Dan Store.

Caitlin: The Dan Store. I don't know. Anyway, what do you hope that people take from this series?

Katie: I mean, I hope that people felt seen listening to us and, like, felt like they were a part of our conversation. I hope maybe it inspires people to have more conversations with people about hard, hard things because I think they help.

Caitlin: I agree.

Katie: You know, like we all hold on to a lot of stuff. And I know for me, like talking through some of the things that we've talked through have helped me process, like not only in real time, but also like kind of like past stuff too, you know, it's like I feel like especially as parents, like, you hold on to a lot of like, guilt or, you know, it's like you kind of all trails along with you. And I think it helps to know that, like, everyone kind of has that.

Caitlin: Yeah. I think that's really important because I do think it's really easy to put yourself in a bubble and forget that other people might be going through the same thing that you're going through. And yeah, I mean, a lot of times they are. Like, I can't tell you how many times either talking to you or talking to, you know, somebody else around. And it's like, I've got this, this thing, this happening that seems super insurmountable. And then somebody would be like, "oh, yeah, I'm in...I'm right in there with you." Or like, "oh, that was that was last year for me. It's better this year." It's like, okay, maybe, maybe it's normal. Maybe it's not just me. I hope that people remember that we're here as more than just, you know, a place that you can come and hang out, which is a great, it's a great way to think about the library. We are a place that you can come and hang out, and we are a great place that you can come and get resources. But also your librarians are resources for you. And I hope that, you know, maybe somebody listening might come in the library and see us, you know, a friend like somebody that's your part of your community?

Katie: Yeah. I mean, it's, it's happened a couple times. Or like, people will recognize my voice, you know, and they're like, "oh,

you're on the podcast," you know? So it's kind of cool to like, know people are listening and, and also that, you know, it's like we're, we're here.

Caitlin: We're here. So we're here and we, even if we don't know, you know, exactly off the top of our heads what the right thing is.

Katie: We'll help you figure it out. We will find it together. We will commiserate with you.

Caitlin: 100%. 100%.

Katie: Well, I know I'm gonna miss talking about Pawpaws and crayfish and all the, those fun things with you. And I know this is in our conversations end. But, yeah, it's just been really great. And I love you so much.

Caitlin: And I love you so much too. You're going to make me cry again.

Katie: A really big part of my life. And I'm just happy. I'm happy for you moving forward. And we shall meet again.

Caitlin: I used to film the kids every year, the day before their birthday, and when Desi was turning seven, I was like, so what do you think? What do you think? You're turning seven tomorrow? And he said, I said, how are you feeling? And he said, a little bit happy and a little bit sad. And I said, why can you say more about that? And he said, well, happy to say hello to the new. But sad to say goodbye to what was.

Katie: So wise.

Caitlin: I know. I was really impressed, but that's exactly how I feel. Happy to say hello to the new but sad to say goodbye to what was.

Caitlin: Thanks for sticking with us this past year and a half. It has been a joy to talk about parenting and library shenanigans, and we hope that you had fun too.

Katie: We will definitely miss Caitlin, but that's not it for "Your Family, Your Library." We'll be back in 2025 with more voices, and conversations from the community and library staff. We can't wait for you to hear what's next!