

Stories Full of Feelings

Exploring social-emotional skills through books

Books are great tools to support young children's social-emotional learning. The characters in the stories introduce many different feelings and ways of being a good friend or helper. And many stories also share creative ways of problem-solving.

The Basics

Books are full of characters who face similar things to what children experience every day. They might be excited or worried about trying something new. They might want to play with a group of children and not quite know how. Or they might make mistakes and then find ways of trying again.

Books offer lots of opportunities for you to talk through situations and feelings with your child. And the characters can become role models for young children as they practice their own social-emotional skills.

Reading together is also a great way to enjoy some quiet time with your child—and you can learn a lot about each other too!

Books to Explore Together

“So many feelings! Let's try naming the different feelings.” “How are you feeling today?”

Happy, sad, mad—so many ways to feel! Books can help young children learn to put names to each feeling. Pictures can also help them connect facial expressions, body movements, and colors to those feelings.

Book suggestions:

- *Tiger Days: A Book of Feelings* by M.H. Clark
- *The Color Monster: A Story About Emotions* by Anna Llenas
- *Why Do We Cry?* by Fran Pintadera
- *Lots of Feelings* by Shelley Rotner

Getting Started

Every story has feelings to explore or problems to be solved. Pick your child's favorite book or one you have not read before. Point to pictures and ask questions. Talk about what is happening in the story and in your child's life.

Looking for books?

Visit your local library to find many of these books. Ask your librarian for suggestions!



More! 

Books to Explore Together

“It seems like he might be feeling a little scared.

What did he do to help with that feeling?”

“What else could you do if you were feeling scared?”

Everyone gets scared or frustrated or angry sometimes. Characters can model lots of different ways of working through big feelings. And you and your child can think together about safe and healthy ways for them to handle their own feelings.

Book suggestions:

- *When Sophie Gets Angry—Really, Really Angry...* by Molly Bang
- *Jabari Jumps* by Gaia Cornwall
- *The Rabbit Listened* by Cori Doerrfeld
- *Ruby Finds a Worry* by Tom Percival
- *Sometimes I’m Bombaloo* by Rachel Vail

“Hmm... do you think she is playing nicely with the other children? What would you do differently?”

“What is Bear doing to be a good listener?”

Young children are just starting to learn how to work and play together—and it is not always easy. Taking turns, following directions, and saying kind words are all skills they are practicing. Books can help you and your child talk about what it means to work and play nicely with others.

Book suggestions:

- *Rex Wrecks It!* by Ben Clanton
- *The Magical Yet* by Angela DiTerlizzi
- *Be Kind* by Pat Zietlow Miller
- *The Problem with Problems* by Rachel Rooney

“Let’s turn to the next page.

What do you think will happen next?”

Even if a book is not “about” social-emotional skills, there are still lots of social-emotional skills in stories to learn from. Learning to imagine what someone else is thinking or what might happen next are important steps for being able to work together and solve problems.

Book suggestions:

- *Help!: A Story of Friendship* by Holly Keller
- *Saturday* by Oge Mora
- *Russell the Sheep* by Rob Scotton
- *Lali’s Feather* by Farhana Zia

