



Books about Relationships, Feelings, and Building Relationship Skills

A Terrible Thing Happened by Margaret Holmes (ages 5-9) - Sherman Smith saw the most terrible thing happen. At first, he tried to forget about it, but something inside him started to bother him. He felt nervous and had bad dreams. Then he met someone who helped him talk about the terrible thing and made him feel better.

Guess How Much I Love You by Sam McBratney (ages 1-3) - How much does Little Nutbrown Hare love his daddy? And how much does Big Nutbrown Hare love him back? A Story about boundless affection.

Hands Are Not for Hitting by Martine Agassi (ages 4 and up) - This book teaches children that violence is never okay. Hands are capable of positive, loving actions such as playing, making music, learning, counting, helping, and much more. Includes a special section for adults with activities and discussion starters.)

Ira Sleeps Over by Bernard Waber (ages 4-7) - Ira Sleeps Over is a book about two friends who don't tell each other how they feel about the comfort and security provided by their teddy bears. The result is unnecessary worry and anxiety before they can get things resolved. This wonderful story can be reassuring for children who may find it difficult to express their fears and insecurities.

Kindness is my Superpower by Alicia Ortego (ages 3-6) - This charming story with peaceful rhymes and colorful illustrations will explain to your child that it is okay to make a mistake and say I'm sorry.

Mad, Mad, Mad by Leslie Patricelli (ages 3-5) - This book is about recognizing signs of emotions in oneself and then learning to self-regulate.

Puppy in My Head, by Elise Gravel (ages 4-8) - This book is about how to handle stress by focusing on mindfulness breathing exercises.

Runaway Bunny, by Margaret Wise Brown (ages 1-4) - This timeless classic is about a little bunny who declares he is going to run away, and a mama bunny who will do (and become) anything in order to stay with her child.

The North Carolina Partnership for Children

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Tell Me a Story Mama by Angela Johnson (ages 4-8) - In this touching picture book, a mother and preschool-aged daughter talk together as the child is being prepared for bed...Mama's childhood memories, as related by her daughter are warm slices of life from a previous generation. Encourages parents to be story tellers.

The Big Umbrella by Amy June Bates (ages 3-7) - By the door there is an umbrella. It is big. It is so big that when it starts to rain there is room for *everyone* underneath. It doesn't matter if you are tall. Or plaid. Or hairy. It doesn't matter how many legs you have.

The Boy with Big, Big Feelings by Britney Winn Lee (ages 4-8) - This book is relatable for any child -- especially for a child experiencing anxiety, extreme emotions, a child identified as a Highly Sensitive Person, or a child on the autism spectrum. Beautifully illustrated and written in rhyming verse, children and adults explore the whole spectrum of feelings and readers navigate the emotional challenges they face throughout the day.

The Rabbit Listened by Cori Doerrfeld (ages 3-5) - When something sad happens, Taylor doesn't know where to turn. All the animals are sure they have the answer. The chicken wants to talk it out, but Taylor doesn't feel like chatting. The bear thinks Taylor should get angry, but that's not quite right either. One by one, the animals try to tell Taylor how to act, and one by one they fail to offer comfort. Then the rabbit arrives. All the rabbit does is listen . . . which is just what Taylor needs.

What If, by Samantha Berger (ages 4-8) - This book is about surviving a flood or natural disaster, being resilient in the face of a traumatic experience.

Where the Wild Things Are by Maurice Sendak (ages 1-5) - When Max dresses in his wolf suit and causes havoc in the house, his mother sends him to bed. From there, Max sets sail to an island inhabited by the Wild Things, who name him king and share a wild rumpus with him. But then from far away across the world, Max smells good things to eat... "Children fear if they are too wild, they will not be loved. By bringing dinner to his room, his mother reassures Max that, even when he is wild or out-of-control, he is still loved."

Little Gorilla by Ruth Bornstein (ages 1-3) - As beloved Little Gorilla grows up, he discovers that love grows with him. Perfect for bedtime or snuggle-time, this warm and timeless classic reassures readers that as they grow and change, they are always loved. Just about everybody in the great green forest loves Little Gorilla. His mother loves him. His father loves him. Even Big Boa Constrictor loves him. But Little Gorilla begins to grow . . . and grow . . . and GROW. And then, when Little Gorilla isn't so little anymore—everyone still loves him! A soothing, rhythmic text and expressive illustration create a heartwarming story about the security and constancy of love.

What to Do When You Feel Like Hitting by Cara Goodwin PhD (ages 2-4) - Toddlers are still learning how to speak, socialize, and understand their emotions. It's common for them to react with their hands when they get frustrated—but hitting is never okay. What to Do When You Feel Like Hitting helps toddlers understand why hitting is not allowed and shows them how to react to their feelings with actions that are safe and kind.

My Mouth Is A Volcano by Julia Cook (ages 4-7) - Louis always interrupts! All of his thoughts are very important to him, and when he has something to say, his words rumble and grumble in his tummy, they wiggle and jiggle on his tongue and then they push on his teeth, right before he ERUPTS (or interrupts). His mouth is a volcano! But when others begin to interrupt Louis, he learns how to respectfully wait for his turn to talk. My Mouth Is A Volcano takes an empathetic approach to the habit of interrupting and teaches children a witty technique to help them manage their rambunctious thoughts and words. Told from Louis' perspective, this story provides parents, teachers, and counselors with an entertaining way to teach children the value of respecting others by listening and waiting for their turn to speak.

The Circles All Around Us by Brad Motague (ages 5+) - In the circles all around us, everywhere that we all go, there's a difference we can make and a love we can all show.

This is the story of a circle. When we're first born, our circle is very small, but as we grow and build relationships, our circle keeps getting bigger and bigger to include family, friends, neighbors, community, and beyond. This picture book is the perfect way to start a conversation about how to expand our worlds with kindness and inclusivity—even if it seems scary or uncomfortable.

Shine Bright by Kheris Rogers (ages 4-8) - When her confidence is shaken by peers who say they are scared of her because she's "too dark," Imani turns to her sister for a loving reminder that she's smart, hope, brave, beautiful, strong, and just enough. After embracing what makes her truly special, Imani learns to be fearless! A perfect tool to teach children about appreciating both outer & inner beauty, embracing differences, being kind to oneself & others, and the power of reciting affirmations.

Mindful Mr. Sloth by Katy Hudson (ages 3-5) - Sasha has one speed--fast. She loves to do lots of things, all at once, as fast as possible. Mr. Sloth has one speed--slow. He loves to do things one at a time, at a nice, easy pace. Can Mr. Sloth's mindful ways teach Sasha to slow down and enjoy life? Best-selling author Katy Hudson gently weaves a mindfulness theme into this unlikely friendship tale between an energetic girl and a sloth, encouraging children to stop, breathe, and be present in every moment.

Eyes That Kiss in the Corners by Joanna Ho (ages 2-7) - A young Asian girl notices that her eyes look different from her peers'. They have big, round eyes and long lashes. She realizes that her eyes are like her mother's, her grandmother's, and her little sister's. They have eyes that kiss in the corners and glow like warm tea, crinkle into crescent moons, and are filled with stories of the past and hope for the future. Drawing from the strength of these powerful women in her life, she recognizes her own beauty and discovers a path to self-love and empowerment.

Hair Love by Matthew A. Cherry (ages 2-7) - Zuri's hair has a mind of its own. It kinks, coils, and curls every which way. Zuri knows it's beautiful. When Daddy steps in to style it for an extra special occasion, he has a lot to learn. But he LOVES his Zuri, and he'll do anything to make her -- and her hair -- happy. Tender and empowering, Hair Love is an ode to loving your natural hair -- and a celebration of daddies and daughters everywhere.

Indigo Dreaming by Dinah Johnson (ages 4-8) - A young girl living on the coast of South Carolina dreams of her distant relatives on the shores of Africa and beyond. Indigo Dreaming is a poetic meditation between two young girls—on different sides of the sea—who wonder about how they are intricately linked by culture, even though they are separated by location. The girls' reflections come together, creating an imaginative and illuminating vision of home, as well as a celebration of the Black diaspora.

The Story of Ferdinand by Munro Leaf (ages 2-6) - All the other bulls run, jump, and butt their heads together in fights. Ferdinand, on the other hand, would rather sit and smell the flowers. So, what will happen when Ferdinand is picked for the bullfights in Madrid?

Leo the Late Bloomer by Robert Krauss (ages 3-6) - Leo isn't reading, or writing, or drawing, or even speaking, and his father is concerned. But Leo's mother isn't. She knows her son will do all those things, and more, when he's ready.

Follow the Drinking Gourd by Jeanette Winter (ages 3-7) - "Winter's story begins with a peg-leg sailor who aids slaves on their escape on the Underground Railroad. While working for plantation owners, Peg Leg Joe teaches the slaves a song about the drinking gourd (the Big Dipper). A couple, their son, and two others make their escape by following the song's directions.

The Relatives Came by Cynthia Rylant (ages 2-7) - In a rainbow-colored station wagon that smelled like a real car, the relatives came. When they arrived, they hugged and hugged from the kitchen to the front room. All summer they tended the garden and ate up all the strawberries and melons. They plucked banjos and strummed guitars. When they finally had to leave, they were sad, but not for long. They all knew they would be together next summer.