



Books Building Character:

Using Picture Books to Support Children's
Social and Emotional Development

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NKAD



Today's Purpose

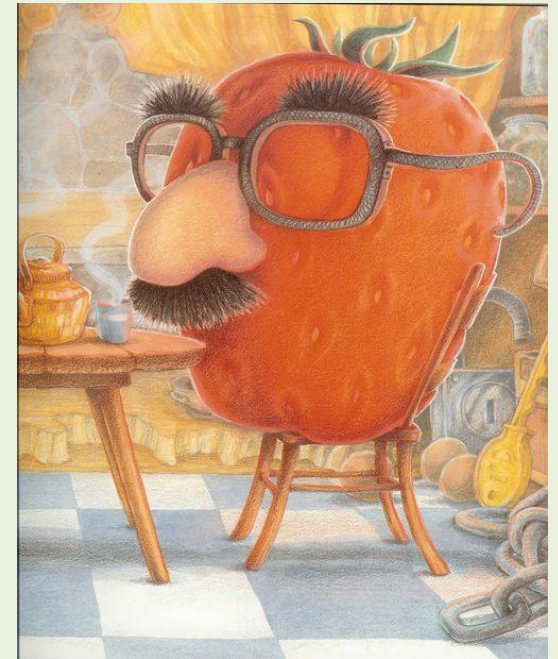
- To help you support your students' social and emotional growth using literature
- To learn about specific titles that can support social and emotional growth
- To discuss how to engage families in this type of reading



Introductions

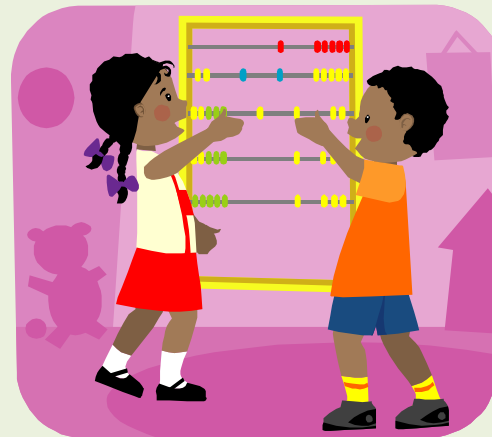


- A little about me
- How this workshop came to be
- Favorite book or character



Social and Emotional Development

- What does that mean to you?
- What are the **three** most important social and emotional skills you'd like children to learn in your classroom?





What Social and Emotional Skills Do Children Need to Succeed in School?

- Confidence
- Ability to develop good relationships with peers and adults
- Concentration and persistence on challenging tasks
- Ability to effectively communicate emotions
- Ability to listen to instructions and be attentive
- Ability to solve social problems



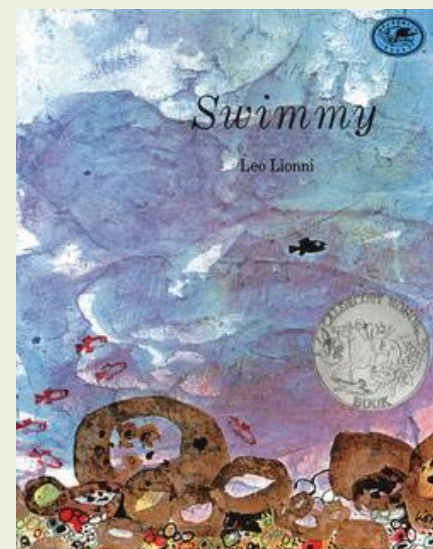
What Do the ELFs Say?

- **Self-concept**
 - SE36 Explore and participate in activities and materials designed to build understanding of individual characteristics and of diversity in culture, family structure, ability, language, age and gender in non-stereotypical ways
- **Self-regulation**
 - SE38 Recognize, label and express a range of feelings and needs appropriately
 - SE39 Begin to understand that feelings are separate from actions and that it is acceptable to have a range of feelings
- **Social relationships and cooperation**
 - SE50 Develop awareness of other's perspectives and gain an understanding of how their actions impact those around them



Why Use Picture Books?

- Need for explicit teaching and intentional support for social/emotional skill development
- Support children in dealing with the range of challenges they face



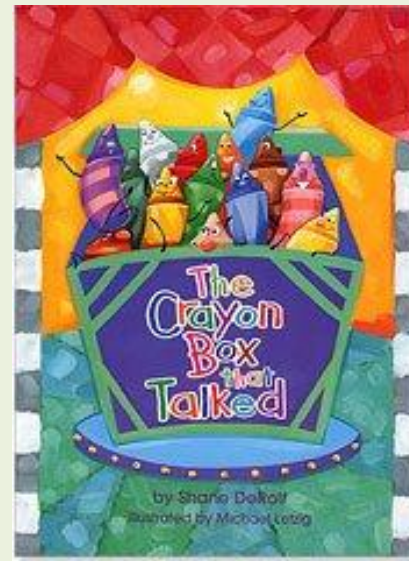


Literature can...

- Help children better understand life experiences
- Provide insights into human behaviors, emotions, dilemmas
- Stimulate curiosity
- Develop problem-solving skills
- Inform with facts, concepts, new understanding, demystifies
- Provide comfort
- Model coping strategies by walking readers through possible solutions or ways to cope

Why Teach This Way?

- To teach our students *emotional intelligence*
- To promote academic success
- To build classroom community





“Books are mirrors in which children can see themselves. When they are represented in the literature we read, they can see themselves as valuable and worthy of notice.”

—A World of Difference Institute 2009





What Attributes Do We Need to Teach This Way?

- Maturity
- Integrity
- Responsibility
- Adaptability
- Empathy
- Respect
- Genuineness



Benefits of Reading Aloud

- Builds literacy skills
 - Comprehension
 - Oral Language
 - Vocabulary
 - Print Knowledge
 - Critical Thinking
- Strengthens adult-child bond
- Builds general cognitive skills



"The single most important activity for building the knowledge required for eventual success in reading is reading aloud to children."

On Becoming a Nation of Readers: The Report on the Commission on Reading

"Extensive research has proven that reading aloud to a child is the single most important factor in raising a reader. These inexpensive 15 minutes a day are the best-kept secret in American education."

Jim Trelease, *Read-Aloud Handbook*



Literacy Autobiography

- **See Handout**
- When did you learn to read? How were you taught to read? Did you have favorite books as a child?
- When did you learn to write? How were you taught to write? Do you have any memories of particular pieces?
- Do you have any pleasant or unpleasant memories related to literacy learning at school?
- How did you feel about reading and writing as you grew up? What is the place of literacy in your life today? Has it had a positive or negative influence? Do you have favorite authors or books?
- Based on your experience, how do you think young children should learn to read and write?



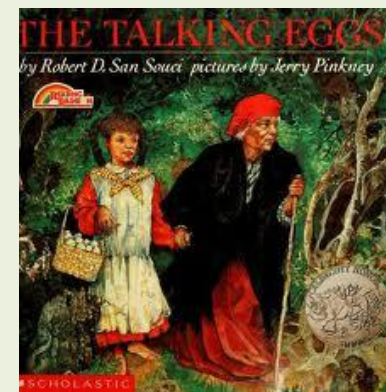
Types of Literature

- **Social/emotional books**
 - Written explicitly to teach social/emotional skills
 - Builds vocabulary
 - Instructional format
- **Authentic children's literature**
 - Tells a good story in its own right
 - Addresses challenging issues within a storyline
 - Often more engaging



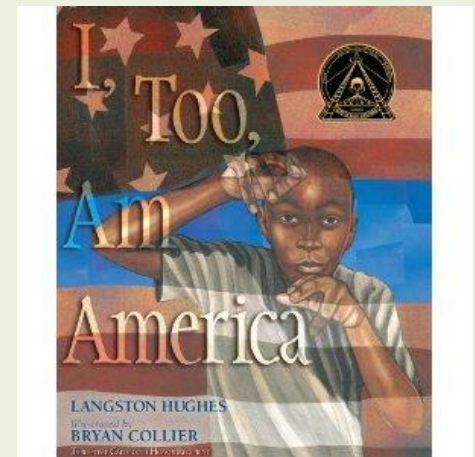
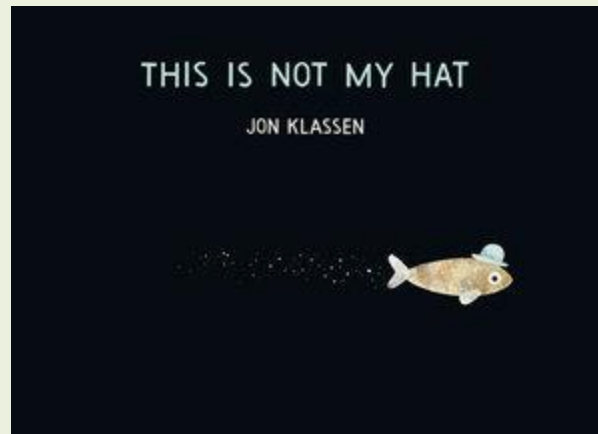
What is High-Quality Literature?

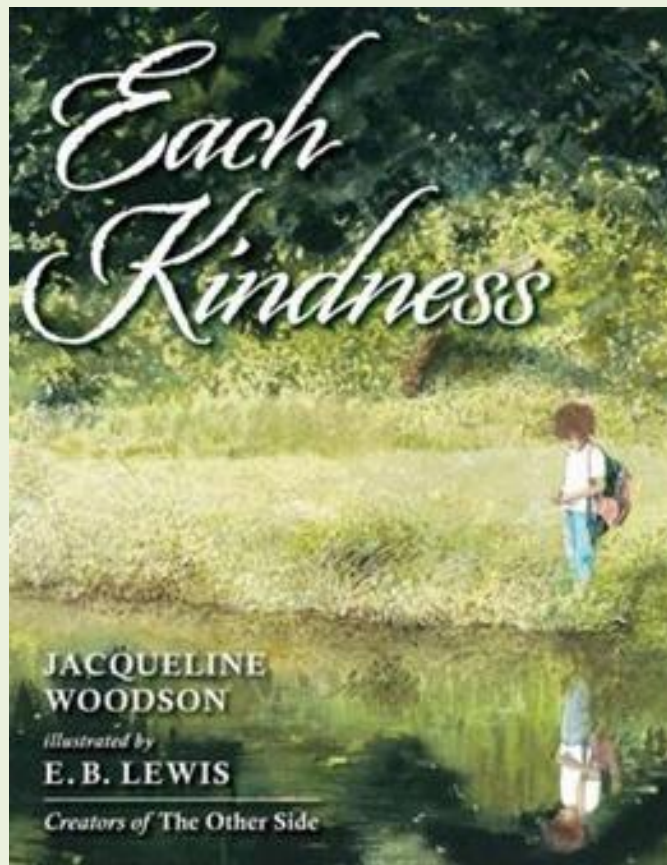
- **Topics** and themes that children enjoy or need
- **Pleasing illustrations** that are accurate to the plot, characters, and setting
- Pictures and words **avoid stereotyping**
- **Length and amount of text** appropriate to the age or development of the child
- **Offer something** to the reader and listener
- Not written for a strictly instructional purpose



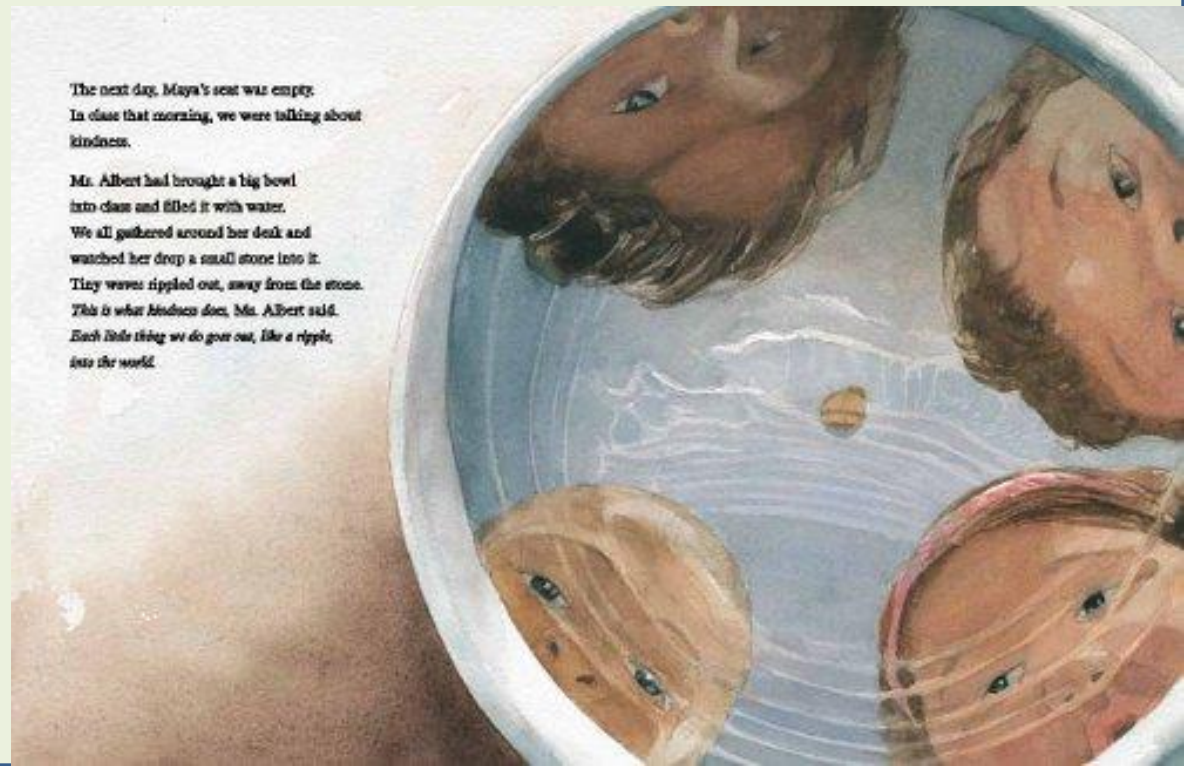
Selecting High-Quality Literature

- Can use professional **recommendations and awards** as guides





2013 Charlotte Zolotow Award winner *Each Kindness* by Jacqueline Woodson



The next day, Maya's seat was empty.
In class that morning, we were talking about
kindness.

Mr. Albert had brought a big bowl
into class and filled it with water.
We all gathered around her desk and
watched her drop a small stone into it.
Tiny waves rippled out, away from the stone.
This is what kindness does, Mr. Albert said.
Each little thing we do goes out, like a ripple,
into the world.



Evaluating Children's Books

- Do illustrations or text depict stereotypes?
- Is author knowledgeable about the topic?
- Are problems solved realistically?
- Does writing style encourage discussion?
- What kind of language does author use to describe people?
- Is story developmentally appropriate and interesting?

Adapted from Mankiw, S., & Strasser, J. (2013). Tender topics: Exploring sensitive issues with pre-k through first grade children through read-aloud. *Young Children*, 68(1).



High-Quality Literature— Why Does It Matter?

- Children whose caregivers were better able to select high-quality books demonstrated greater empathy and social/emotional adjustment (Aram & Aviram, 2009)
- Encourages complex thinking, questioning skills, and comprehension (Hassett, 2009)
- With high-quality literature...
 - Characters serve as role models for appropriate behavior
 - Metaphors help children make connections to their own lives
 - Strong characters and storylines make it easier to engage children in discussions related to social and emotional concepts



Sharing Stories

- Use before, during, and after reading strategies
- Ask questions and have conversation
- Make it comfortable and fun
- Make connections and extend the story



Before Reading

- Sit in a **comfortable** place in close proximity with the child.
- Look at the **front cover** and read the title, author, and illustrator. Review what an author and illustrator do.
- Review the **parts of a book**: front cover, back cover, spine.
- Look at the illustration on the front cover and make a **prediction** about the story.
- Take a **picture walk** through the story, without revealing the ending.
- Introduce **vocabulary** that may be challenging.



During Reading

- Read with **expression**.
- **Ask questions** throughout the story about the characters, plot, print and vocabulary.
- Encourage children to **participate** verbally and make predictions.
- Find **vocabulary** words and discuss them in context.



After Reading

- Ask **questions** about the story.
- Help the child make **connections**:
 - Text-to-self
 - Text-to-world
 - Text-to-text
- Do an **activity** to reinforce the concepts in the book.



Types of Prompts: CROWD

- **Completion** (pause, let them finish the sentence)
- **Recall** (“What happened in the story?”)
- **Open-ended** (“How do you think...”)
- **Wh-** (“Why? Where? Who? When? What?”)
- **Distancing** (“Has that ever happened to you?” Higher-level, making connections)



Teaching Vocabulary

- Select words before reading
- Come up with child-friendly definitions
- Find words in context
- Revisit words after reading
- Provide concrete experiences with the words



Child-Friendly Definitions

- Comfort
- Fierce
- Celebrate
- Adventure



Literature and Tender Topics

- What are tender topics?
- Not enough to give children *access* to books about these topics
- Consider child's developmental level and family contexts
- Value of including these books regularly in your classroom

Adapted from Mankiw, S., & Strasser, J. (2013). Tender topics: Exploring sensitive issues with pre-k through first grade children through read-aloud. *Young Children*, 68(1).



Literature and Tender Topics

- Be sensitive to circumstances and personalities
- Introduce sensitive issues/content beforehand
- Provide opportunities for responding to books – orally, through art, writing, movement, etc.
- Honor children's unique response to books
- Read the same book for several days to provide more opportunities for children to talk about the story and own experiences
- Use to embed social-emotional skills building into everyday activities: circle time, art, music, science, math, dramatic play



Bibliotherapy

- Basically: helping through books
- Clinical vs. developmental
 - **Clinical Bibliotherapy** is implemented by trained helping professionals dealing with significant emotional or behavioral problems
 - **Developmental Bibliotherapy** may be used by teachers, librarians or lay helpers to facilitate normal development
- Psychologists have effectively used children's literature as therapy tools for children needing emotional support (Aram & Aviram, 2009)
- Plausible that parents and teachers could use these books in a similar way (Ableser, 2008)

Stages of Developmental Bibliotherapy

1. Identification

- Process by which reader identifies with a character in the book
- Book characters can be very real to children
- Text to self connection

2. Surfacing of Emotions (the Catharsis)

- Occurs as reader follows the character through a difficult situation to a successful resolution



Stages of Developmental Bibliotherapy

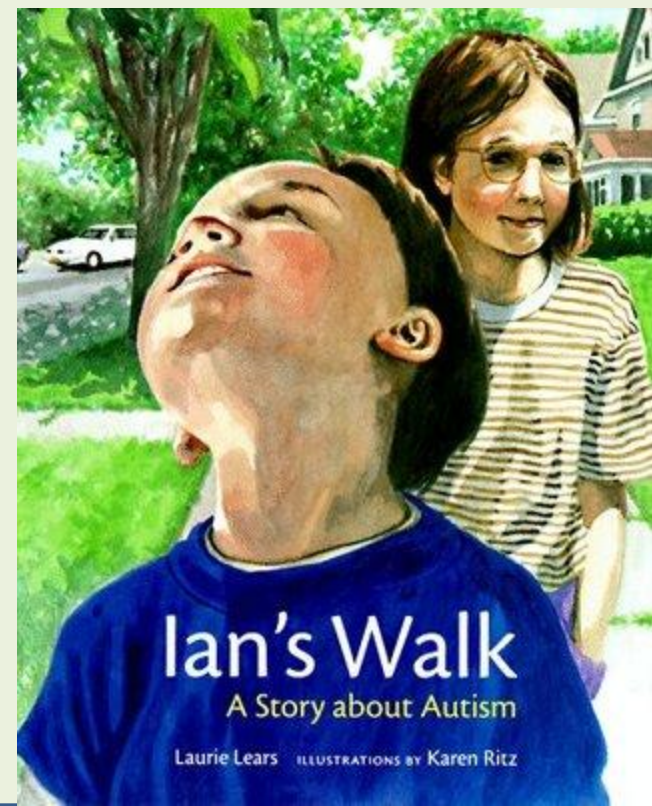
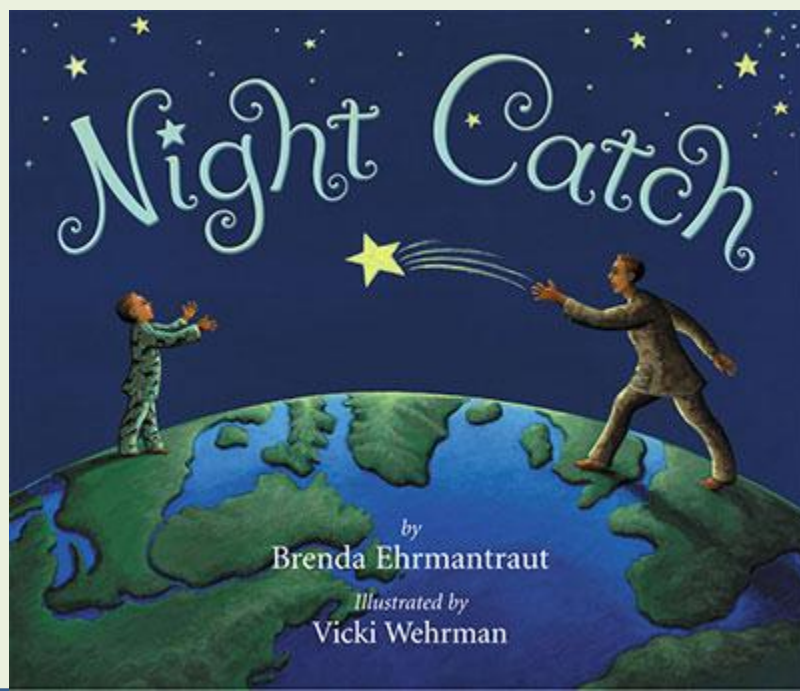
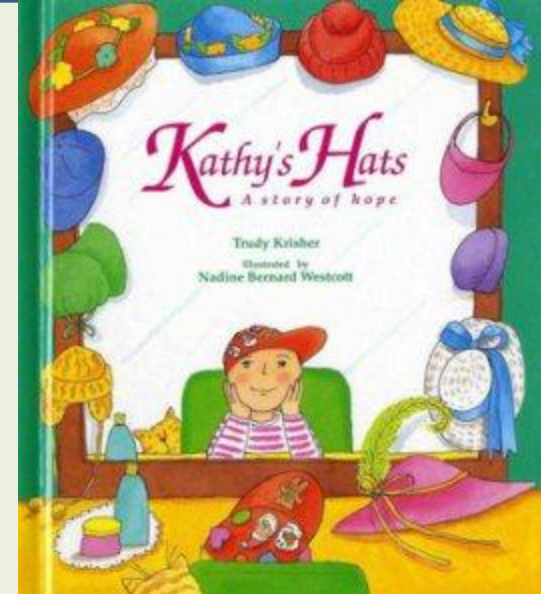
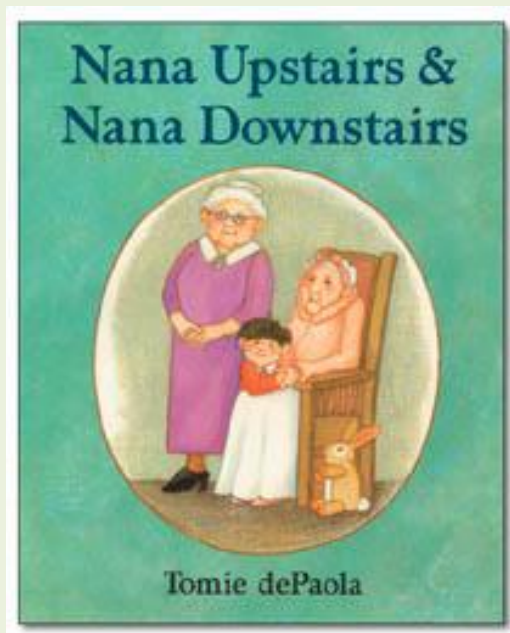
3. Insight

- Reader develops an awareness of the character's situation to their own life
- Reflects on the story and makes an awareness transfer which fosters **self-understanding**
- Can lead to changed attitudes and hopefully changed behavior

4. Universalization

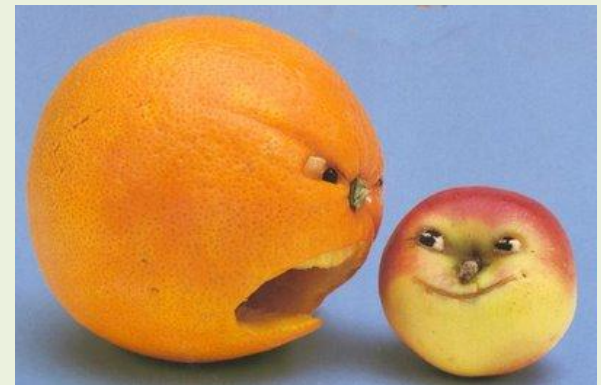
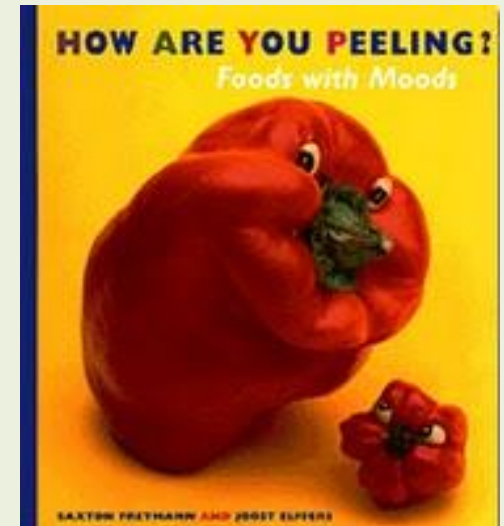
- Truly can identify with the character presented in the text/story/picture book
- Child can relate to how the story character handled a situation and can see relationships in their own life





Using Literature to Support Social and Emotional Development

- Feelings
- Friendship
- Self-Concept
- Diversity
- Family Events





Using Literature to Support Social and Emotional Development

- What are some other social and emotional skills or tender topics you might want to use literature to teach?



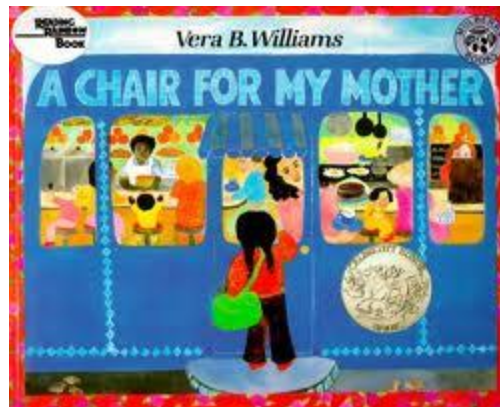
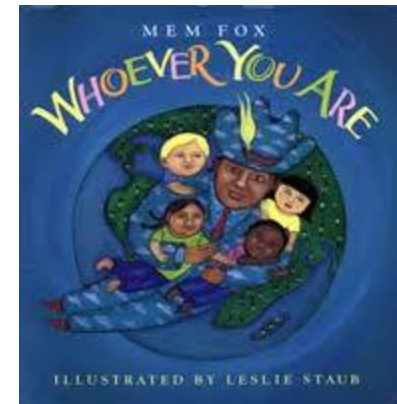
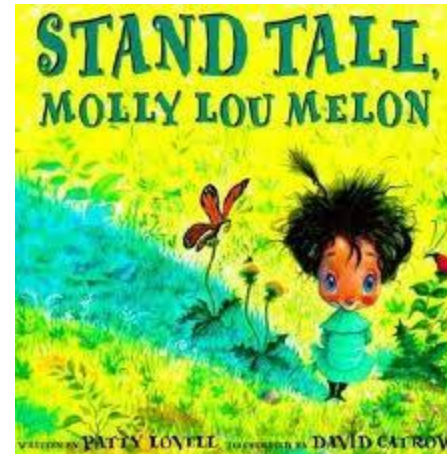
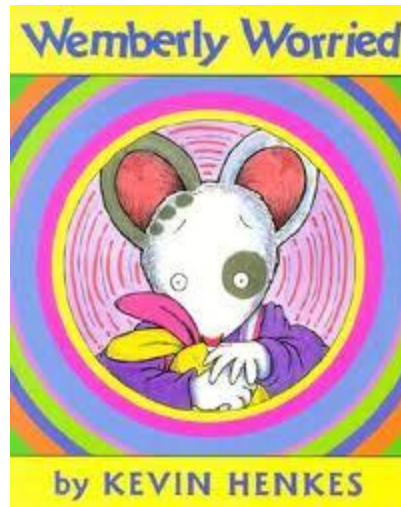
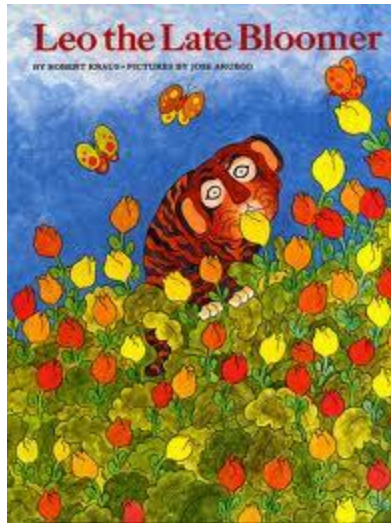
Time to Practice!

- How would you use one of these titles in your classroom?
- What social and emotional skill(s) would you highlight?
- What discussion questions could you ask?
- What extension activity could you do?



Example Titles

- *When Sophie Gets Angry, Really, Really Angry...* (Feelings)
- *It's Okay to be Different* (Self-Concept)
- *A Chair for My Mother* (Family)
- *Whoever You Are* (Diversity)
- *Yo! Yes?* (Friendship)





Engaging Families—Why Does It Matter?

- Exposure to storybooks during parent-child shared reading in K significantly related to vocabulary knowledge in K as well as time spent reading for pleasure in 4th grade (Sénéchal, 2006)
- Affective environment of home storybook reading significantly related to the amount of chapter book reading in 3rd grade, even after controlling for the frequency of storybook reading and the reading ability (Baker, Mackler, Sonnenschein, & Serpell, 2001)
- More parents and children focused on non-immediate content of book, more positive the affective environment (Baker, Mackler, Sonnenschein, & Serpell, 2001)
- Matters not just that parents spend time reading with children but how they engage them in discussion (Hassett, 2009)



Engaging Families

How can you encourage families to read like this?





Engaging Families

- Lending library of books with discussion guides
- Family literacy nights
- Talk to families about topics they'd like titles for
- Highlight a book in class newsletters

It's Okay to Be Different

Discussion Guide



- **Title:** *It's Okay to Be Different*
- **Author:** Todd Parr
- **Topic:** Self-Concept
- **Notes for Reading:**
 - Todd Parr says he wrote this book to empower children to feel good about themselves.
 - Vocabulary to talk about: **medium, embarrassed, adopted**
- **Questions to Discuss:**
 - Did you think this book was funny? What parts?
 - Do you do or like any of the same things as the characters in the story?
 - What makes you unique?
 - What are some good things about being different?
 - What are some ways that you and I are different?
- **Activity Ideas:**
 - Reread this book, allowing your child to help you read. Have them use the illustrations to give them clues about the text.
 - With your child, draw a picture or create a collage showing what makes him or her unique.



Using the Books and Discussion Guides

- Before sitting down to read to a child, read the “Notes for Reading” and look at the vocabulary words.
- Decide if these vocabulary words are appropriate. Select alternate words if you’d like.
- Introduce the book.
- Read the story, encouraging conversation throughout.
- Use the discussion questions after reading or select your own questions.
- Do at least one activity to reinforce the concepts learned in the story.



Thank You!



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