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Parenting Isn't Easy: Parent Newsletters for Social/Emotional Learning in Early Childhood

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Parenting Isn't Easy



Newsletters for Social/Emotional Learning in Early Childhood

Resources

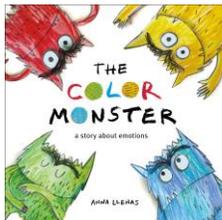
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2022). Communicating with Your Child: Responding to Behavior.

<https://www.cdc.gov/parents/essentials/communication/index.html>

PACER Center, Inc. (2022). Children's Mental Health and Emotional or Behavioral Disorders Project: Understanding Challenging Behaviors.

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Good Read



Book Title: The Color Monster

Author: Anna Llenas

Illustrator: Anna Llenas

Brief Summary: The Color Monster is a wonderful and colorful pop-up book about feelings. The Color Monster wakes up feeling very confused. His emotions are all over the place, he is feeling angry, happy, calm, sad, and scared all at the same time. There is a little girl in the story that helps him sort and work through his feelings with different colors.

Teaching Connections: This story would be great for supporting self-awareness of one's own emotions, and it could be linked to Zones of Regulation.

Understanding the Meaning of Your Child's Challenging Behavior

Challenging behaviors can be very difficult for a parent or caregiver. It is very important to take the time to really understand what it is that your child is really trying to tell you. For example: It is 6:30 PM on a Sunday evening and you have just gotten home from being gone all weekend. There is a mess all over the kitchen, there is no milk left in the fridge, and both children are crying because they are hungry and want milk. You are scrambling to make dinner with whatever you have on hand to make, and by the time you finish both children are almost asleep. The children were mostly liking crying because they were hungry, but overly tired as well.

In this situation, most parents feel frustrated when it comes to managing their child's behaviors. For many parents, it is very common to raise their voice in order to "handle the situation" or to respond in a negative way that isn't effective. When it comes to understanding challenging behaviors in young children, we can never make assumptions. As a parent, there is so much that can be done in order to make the challenging situation more positive.

There is always a reason behind the behavior. The child could be trying to get something, such as an adult's attention. There is meaning behind the behavior, and it is possible that the child is attempting to try and communicate those wants/needs. Also, a lot of the time the behaviors could be seen as negative because the child is seeking help, and doesn't know how to appropriately ask. With that being said, oftentimes we also see challenging behaviors for parents and caregivers because of the trusting and established relationship that they have with their child. The safer the children feel with the caregiver; the more challenging behaviors they may show for that individual. (*Centers for Disease Control and Prevention., 2022*)

In order to change these behaviors, it is important for the parent to first figure out what is causing the behavior. Once the cause of the behavior is established, the child can begin to understand and learn the positive and/or preferred replacement behavior.

What Caregivers/Parents Can Try at Home

- Talk about situations before they happen: sometimes a simple plan or expected routine is all a child needs to be reminded of in order to feel less overwhelmed about a certain situation.
- Read books: children should be read to daily, and there are so many books out there that can help children work through some of these challenging behaviors.
- Teach children by role playing or using social stories: show children a video/story of whatever challenging behavior they are experiencing so they can see how the similar situation can work itself out.
- Pay attention: pay careful attention to what is happening when your child is experiencing these challenging behaviors in order to see any possible patterns or similarities.

(*PACER Center, Inc., 2022*)

What Teachers Can Do at School

Teachers should work with parents and caregivers in order to come up with a solution to use at school when challenging behaviors arise as well. It is important that there is consistency between home and school, especially if a child is receiving some kind of extra support or services for such challenging behaviors. When children are experiencing these challenging behaviors, teachers can follow the same guidelines as parents do at home by talking about situations before they happen, reading books to share with the class, role playing, and overall just being proactive in the child's life.



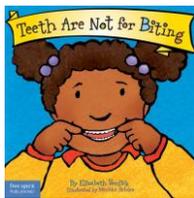
Resources

National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). (1999). Understanding and Responding to Biting, In Classroom Strategies to Promote Children's Social and Emotional Development, 135-138.

<https://www.naeyc.org/our-work/families/understanding-and-responding-children-who-bite>O'Donnell, Lauren. (2018). KidsHealth: Biting.

<https://kidshealth.org/en/parents/stop-biting.html>

Good Read



Book Title: Teeth Are Not for Biting

Author: Elizabeth Verdick

Illustrator: Marieka Heinlen

Brief Summary: Teeth are strong and sharp! Teeth can help you chew, but teeth are not for biting. Almost all young children go through a stage where they bite someone. This book is positive and colorful, yet hopefully can prevent biting from happening/continuing and teaches children positive alternatives to biting.

Teaching Connections: The author of this book suggests positive alternatives children can do instead of biting, for example: chew a chewy toy, drink a cold drink, get a hug, or tell a grown-up. This book also includes helpful tips for parents and

Help Your Child Stop Biting

It is pretty typical for a child to bite someone at some point, but often it is a behavior that is seen in infants, toddlers, and 2-year olds (National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), 1999). When children do not have the necessary skills or vocabulary to express a situation or the way in which they are feeling, a toddler might engage in a behavior such as biting because it is a way in which they are trying to tell another how they feel. As children learn and grow, they develop self-control and other problem solving skills which they use to replace the biting behaviors.

Children might bite others for a variety of reasons, and biting can be very upsetting for the individual that is getting bit. It is best practice to let the child know that biting is not ok from the very first time that they show the behavior. As a parent, it is best to respond to this type of situation appropriately in hopes that the behavior will not continue.

A child could bite because another child took something away from them, and they are unable to communicate. They could also be biting because they are teething and it feels good to chew on something. As children begin to understand cause and effect, they might also bite a person in order to see what their reaction is. Some children need to satisfy their oral-motor stimulation and might bite or chew on their clothing or others. Biting is slightly more common in boys and often happens more in their first/second years, but as language improves the biting tends to lessen (O'Donnell, Lauren., 2018). Whatever the reason, it is important for the caregiver to remain calm in the situation and try not to overreact. This can be hard especially if your child bites you unexpectedly, but first try and figure out why the child bit and what the potential reasoning was? Once you understand the reason as to why the child bit in the first place, you are able to respond in a more positive way. Sometimes the biting phase can last for a while, but continue to have patience and teach your child a positive yet alternative way in which they are able to express their feelings and wants/needs.

What Caregivers/Parents Can Try at Home

Here are some things to think about:

- If your child is biting out of frustration or because another child took something from them, it is important as a parent to validate their feelings and give them the words they need in order to help themselves through the situation. For example: "Did your sister take that toy from you?" "I can see you are upset about that, but we do not bite our sister." "We use our words instead of biting, so tell sister please give that back to me or please stop."
 - Sometimes children bite in order to gain the other individual's attention, either a caregiver or another child. If your child is biting to gain attention, as hard as it can be, try to remain calm and give them no reaction to their behavior if they are biting an adult. If the adult overly reacts to the child biting them, the child is being reinforced that they receive the attention they are looking for. Instead of reacting negatively, teach the child to positively gain your attention by using their words or showing you what they want/need.
 - Another reason children bite is because they are teething and they are in pain, or are seeking that oral-motor stimulation. If it is noticeable that the child is biting because they are teething, give them something to relieve their pain like a cool washcloth, frozen/chilled teether, or something to snack on.
 - If you notice your child biting when they are feeling angry, frustrated, or overwhelmed try to offer them activities that allow them some relaxation or less over stimulation. Some of these activities could include deep breathing, soft music, bubbles, or kid's relaxation yoga. Give your children options and always use positive guidance strategies in order for your child to feel in control and to develop their own self-control.
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caregivers reading to their child.

What Teachers Can Do at School

Oftentimes when a child is bit at school the childcare provider and/or teacher will direct their attention to the child that has been bit, and potentially give the child who bit a negative reaction or consequence. It is best to immediately focus on the child that has been bit because then there is no attention from the teacher on the child that just bit. Even though the negative behavior occurred, the child does not need an immediate reaction let alone a consequence. If the child has no reaction from the caregiver, that is consequential enough for them. Once the situation has calmed down, bring the child that bit over to the child that has been bit and have them “help” in caring for the hurt child. Show the child what happened to the other child, and have them offer them a hug or an icepack. By having the child help care for the injured child, they can begin to understand what happens when they bite other children. This would be a good time to incorporate books like “Teeth Are Not for Biting” within the classroom.

Resources

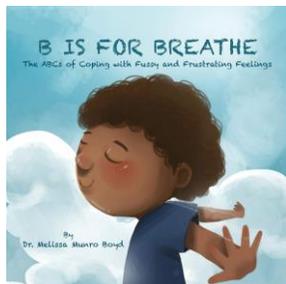
Parlakian, R., & MacLaughlin, S. (2018). *Zero to Three: How to Cope (and Help!) When Your Child Whines*.

<https://www.zerotothree.org/resources/251-how-to-cope-and-help-when-your-child-whines>

Positive Parenting Solutions, Inc. (2022). *Why Do Kids Whine: How Can You Make the Whining Stop?*

<https://www.positiveparentingsolutions.com/parenting/why-do-kids-whine>

Good Read



Book Title: B Is For Breathe: The ABCs of Coping with Fussy and Frustrating Feelings

Author: Dr. Melissa Munro Boyd

Illustrator: Dr. Melissa Munro Boyd

Brief Summary: When you are feeling frustrated or fussy and want something to do, try a new coping skill: A is for Art, B is for Breath, C is for Count to 10, etc.

Teaching Connections: The teaching connections that would go well with this story are talking about feelings, and ways to cope when feeling certain ways.

Helping Your Child Communicate and Stop Whining

As a parent myself, I find very few behaviors that are more frustrating than when my child starts whining. Whining seems like it is more of a toddler's way of communication, but whining can happen at many different ages. My son is six years old, and when he begins to whine I instantly lose patience.

Oftentimes there is actually a reason for a child's whining. When children get upset, whether it is about something understandable or something that seems silly, it is important to remember to label and/or validate their feelings. For example: I can see you are upset, please do not whine, how can I help you fix the problem. Young children are still learning and trying to make sense of big emotions and feelings. They need to know that they are being taken seriously, so it helps for them to hear you showing them that you are listening and that you care. This simple validation can help defuse a potentially big tantrum, and show the child how they could respond the next time they are upset or overwhelmed about a certain situation.

Children whine for a number of other reasons as well like they are unable to complete a certain task, maybe they are hungry, tired, or they don't feel well. In general, children whine because they are lacking the necessary skills to ask for help or simply because they want to. If you do not address the whining behavior with your child, they will continue to whine until they are taught the necessary skills in order to communicate without whining. It is very important to not give into the whining and other behaviors that occur when children put their caregivers on the stop, because if you give into the whining and other behaviors you are teaching the children that this type of behavior is ok. When the child wins the standoff/argument, they will likely continue the negative behavior. (*Positive Parenting Solutions, Inc., 2022*)

Whining is a very common way for a child to attempt to tell you that they might need help in some way. Unless the child has been taught that whining is not a way to properly communicate their wants/needs, they might continue to whine in order to get your attention. Even if the child is getting your negative attention, they are still gaining your attention. It is important to model and teach your child to use their words in order to talk about how they are feeling, and work together so they feel supported and confident.

What Caregivers/Parents Can Try at Home

Here are some things to think about:

- If your child often whines and gets upset when they are tired, always work around their schedule. I know it is hard to stick to a consistent routine, but if it helps the overall flow of the day, stick to it. If something happens where the normal daily routine gets mixed up or needs to change, be sure to make the best decision for the child's schedule. They have a harder time "going with the flow."
- Sometimes whining can happen because a child is hungry. If your child often whines when they are hungry, always be prepared with having extra snacks on hand. It might be more beneficial for your child to have healthy snacks that keep them satisfied longer, for example something easy but high in protein.
- Talk about whining when your child is in a good mood and is positively communicating their wants and needs. It is always better to communicate in any situation when it is positive versus negative. Let your child know it makes you happy when they are able to use their words and communicate whatever it is that they want with you instead of whining.
- If needed, create a role playing type of a game that involves different situations and responses. Have the child pretend to be the parent and have the parent pretend to be the child. That way the child can actually see what their whining response might look like, and they are able to independently work at positively changing their response. (*Parlakian, R., & MacLaughlin, S., 2018*)

What Teachers Can Do at School

Most of the time children act much differently at school than they do at home. However, if this is a skill that you are working on at home with your child it is important that the teachers know, in order to stay consistent with the child both at school and at home. Children are always encouraged to use their words at school, and most of the time if they are not able to do that, they do not get what they want. Teachers are good about focusing their attention on positive behavior and completely ignoring the negative. Believe it or not, children catch on to the fact that negative behavior doesn't fly at school like it might at home.

Resources

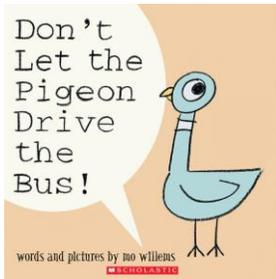
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<https://childmind.org/topics/behavior-problems/>

National Center for Pyramid Model Innovations. (2021). The Pyramid Model: Challenging Behaviors.

<https://challengingbehavior.cbcs.usf.edu/Pyramid/pbs/index.html>

Good Read



Book Title: Don't Let the Pigeon Drive the Bus!

Author: Mo Willems

Illustrator: Mo Willems

Brief Summary: The bus driver is leaving for a little while and has one simple request for all of the readers. That one simple request for all of you is that you do not let the pigeon drive the bus. It will not be an easy task, because the bird is pushy and he can be very persuasive.

Teaching Connections: A great teaching connection to this story is to listen carefully to simple directions that are given to you, and follow the rules that are put into place for everyone's safety.

Giving Children Clear Directions

Listening and following directions are important skills for young children to understand and learn. One of the most important solutions to lessening challenging behaviors in children is making sure that the child is following through and understanding the information that is being given to them. There are multiple reasons why a child might not follow a direction that has been given to them. For example: the direction sounds more like a suggestion or an option to them, the child may not have been listening to you clearly at that moment in time, the direction is vague and/or unclear as to what it is you want the child to do, or the caregiver/parent gives too much information for the child to process and understand. All of these reasons can easily be addressed in order for the child to successfully follow through with the direct being given.

In order for the child to be more successful, the information may need to be presented in a way your child clearly understands, and it is certain that they hear you in order to comply. Parents often give directions when they too are distracted with another task, and most often it will reduce the chance that a child is able to follow through. More often than not, parents tell children what not to do, rather than what they should do. It is very important to try and positively state all directions in order to teach your child the expectations.

When giving clear directions it is important to be direct and straightforward. Be sure to make statements versus asking a question: "Please throw your garbage away," instead of saying "Would you please throw your garbage away?" Make sure you are close to your child, rather than calling out to them from a different room. It is helpful to be close to them, so you know they heard the direction. Another important consideration when giving clear directions to your child is speaking to them at a level that is age-appropriate. Being sure to give them a direction that is attainable for their age. For example: a younger child a simple one to two step direction is fitting. With an older child it is still important to be clear, but more direction can be given. When giving children instructions in order to follow directions, be sure to give them one step at a time and keep the explanations simple. Lastly, after you give a child an instruction, it is helpful to give them time to process what you asked them to do. That way if they have a question, they have time to gather their thoughts and ask for clarification. *(Child Mind Institute, Inc., 2022)*

What Caregivers/Parents Can Try at Home

It is very important to be sure to follow through even at home when giving your child a direction. Sometimes when it comes to being at home, it is much easier to just let things go. Yes, picking and choosing your battles is helpful in all situations, however children are smart and if they can get away with one little thing they will definitely take advantage of that! A technique that might be helpful in order to hold yourself accountable for following through when your child has difficulty complying, or following directions is Do-WAWP. *(National Center for Pyramid Model Innovations, 2021)*

- Do- State the "do" direction.
- W- Wait for compliance (silently count to 5).
- A- Ask the child to restate the direction.
- W- Wait for compliance (silently count to 5).
- P- Provide encouragement or help (helping will ensure success).

What Teachers Can Do at School

At school, children usually follow directions from teachers and staff far better than they do for their own parents at home. It just kind of happens that way, and the expectations are overall higher for children at school as well. They often lead by example and have a classroom of peers to follow. Teachers have several different kinds of methods in order to give directions and help children understand the expectations of the school environment. Some of these methods can include: social stories, picture schedules, transitional songs, sand and/or digital timers for telling time, and even simple hand movements or gestures that have been pre-taught to the class. When children are at school, they have more opportunities to practice following directions even when they might not think that is actually what they are doing. It is most helpful when teachers pair sounds or cues to expectations that the children eventually can independently follow without having to be verbally told.

Resources

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2022). Essentials for Parenting Toddlers and Preschoolers: Creating Structure and Rules.

<https://www.cdc.gov/parents/essentials/structure/index.html>

PBS Kids for Parents. (2002). Emotions and Self-Awareness: Self-Control.

<https://www.pbs.org/parents/learn-grow/age-4/emotions-self-awareness/self-control>

Good Read



Book Title: The Kissing Hand

Author: Audrey Penn

Illustrator: Ruth E. Harper and Nancy M. Leak

Brief Summary: School is starting in the forest, but Chester Raccoon does not want to go. To help ease Chester's fears, Mrs. Raccoon shares a family secret called the Kissing Hand to give him the reassurance of her love any time his world feels a little scary.

Teaching Connections: A good teaching connection would be to read this story on the first day of school, in order to show children everyone is unsure about their feelings at times.

Help Your Child with Transitions

Many children struggle when it comes to change or making a transition from one thing to another. If you think about how many transitions happen in one day that is a lot of change, especially for a child. A lot of times there can be strong behaviors associated with transitions, for example: tantrums, whining, crying, and even biting. Change can be overwhelming and hard to predict for young children, especially when they are disrupted from their own play or activity and have to move on to something that is less preferred. Thinking about the transitions that a child makes during the day is overwhelming even for an adult. Children not only go multiple places a day, but make several transitions between activities throughout the day as well. Even if a child stays at home with a parent throughout the day, they might go to multiple stores in one day and/or transition between many activities just at home. Most times transitions are initiated by the teacher/caregiver. It is less likely for a child to show challenging behaviors when they are able to make transitions on their own. As a parent, you are able to help your child prepare themselves for making transitions successfully.

Children with sensory processing issues, anxiety, and autism can really struggle with making transitions, so it is important for parents to use strategies that are helpful for their children in order to be successful (*Centers for Disease Control and Prevention., 2022*). One of the more basic, yet successful, strategies in helping with transitions is creating a daily routine/schedule. A simple daily routine can eliminate challenging behaviors when it comes to making transitions because children can always predict exactly what to expect each and every day. Most families could benefit from having a basic day to day schedule, and it really can be helpful for all ages (*PBS Kids for Parents, 2022*). Another strategy that can be helpful is giving your child a "countdown" or a "warning" that a transition is going to be happening, for example: "We are going to be leaving soon. This is your five-minute warning!" An additional idea is giving your child a preview of the day, so every morning let them know what the whole day will look like (if they can handle all of that, otherwise small previews at a time).

In my experience, it seems to work best when helping children work through making transitions to get down at their level and make sure that they know and fully understand the transition that is about to happen. It is helpful to be sure to have the child's attention before the transition occurs in order to avoid unnecessary challenging behaviors. Be sure to praise your child and be positive when a transition goes well as they are learning.

What Caregivers/Parents Can Try at Home

- **Set a Timer:** setting a timer can be very helpful for children when it comes to making a transition. They are able to physically see a countdown happening, and they can better prepare themselves for the change to occur. It is still helpful to give them a warning as the countdown is happening, or give them the job to announce the countdown.
- **Use Rewards:** rewards can be things like stickers, snacks, book marks, coloring sheets, or some kind of a point system that leads to a desired reward. If transitioning is difficult, use the rewards quickly but over time try to fade them out.
- **Offer a Transitional Item:** sometimes children can transition easier when they have the choice of bringing a small lovey or toy with them, especially if the transition is from home to school.
- **Visual Schedule:** visual schedules can be very useful for children to see each step of their day. It can also be helpful if the pictures are removable, so changes can be made.

What Teachers Can Do at School

There are many things teachers can do at school in order to follow through with what is happening at home as far as transitions go, but oftentimes each classroom has their own tips and tricks for making transitions more successful as well. For example:

- **Transitional Signals:** give each transition that happens in the classroom a song/signal, and before you know it the children will catch on to what is happening next. For example: ring a bell to get the children's attention and then begin a clean-up song.
- **Give Certain Children a Specific Job:** the children that struggle with following directions when it comes to

cleaning up or making a transition can be the designated “helper.” They can help clean tables and set up for snack while the other children are helping clean up. That way everyone is working on different classroom tasks.

- **Daily Visual Schedule/Visual Cues:** visual schedules can be very useful both at home and at school. Many children benefit from visual cues like a chart with pictures that show what is happening with each transition.
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Book List

1. Book Title: Llama Llama Misses Mama

Author: Anna Dewdney

Illustrator: Anna Dewdney

Brief Summary: Llama is excited to start Preschool, but is nervous about meeting his new friends and teacher. When Mama Llama leaves, he worries about her coming back. Llama is a little shy and sad throughout the story, but ends up enjoying the day at school. He is very excited when Mama Llama comes back!

Teaching Connections: The story could help children feel more comfortable in their new environment, and confirm their own feelings to others. New experiences can be unsure and scary, but they can also be fun!

2. Book Title: The Color Monster

Author: Anna Llenas

Illustrator: Anna Llenas

Brief Summary: The Color Monster is a wonderful and colorful pop-up book about feelings. The Color Monster wakes up feeling very confused. His emotions are all over the place, he is feeling angry, happy, calm, sad, and scared all at the same time. There is a

little girl in the story that helps him sort and work through his feelings with different colors.

Teaching Connections: This story would be great for supporting self-awareness of one's own emotions, and it could be linked to Zones of Regulation.

3. Book Title: Grumpy Monkey

Author: Suzanne Lang

Illustrator: Max Lang

Brief Summary: In Grumpy Monkey, Jim Panzee (the monkey) wakes up in a bad mood for no reason and can't seem to feel better. His friends tell him it's a wonderful day to try and get him to be happy or smile. Jim storms off and finds comfort in his friend Norman, who is also very grumpy, however both of them being grumpy makes them smile.

Teaching Connections: The Grumpy Monkey is a good story to share with children, it is ok to feel and be grumpy. Teachers can talk to the children about how to improve their mood, and ask questions as to what one could do if they feel this way.

4. Book Title: All By Myself

Author: Mercer Mayer

Illustrator: Mercer Mayer

Brief Summary: All By Myself is a Little Critter story, which addresses all the major issues of getting bigger and growing up. Little Critter can get out of bed, get dressed, brush his teeth, ride a bike, play with sister, etc.

Teaching Connections: Have the children do an All By Myself poster, like an All About Me poster. Mom helps me with..., Dad helps me with..., Teacher helps me with..., But I can... do what All By Myself.

5. Book Title: Be Kind

Author: Pat Zietlow Miller

Illustrator: Jen Hill

Brief Summary: Be Kind is a picture book about the power of kindness. Tanisha spills grape juice all over her new dress, her classmates think about how they can make her feel better. The remainder of the story is about what it means to be kind to each other.

Teaching Connections: A great teaching connection to this story is practicing examples of being kind, and what it means to be kind to one another.

6. Book Title: I Like Me!

Author: Nancy Carlson

Illustrator: Nancy Carlson

Brief Summary: A great book to introduce self-confidence to children and how they should appreciate themselves.

Teaching Connections: This story can be incorporated into an activity if a child is feeling like they are making mistakes or feeling lost, then the teacher could read this and explain that it is ok to make mistakes and we can always try again and improve.

7. Book Title: Bear Feels Scared

Author: Karma Wilson

Illustrator: Jane Chapman

Brief Summary: The stormy weather has Bear frightened, but his friends are there to help him in this sweet and reassuring story.

Teaching Connections: With the story Bear Feels Scared, a teaching connection could be to talk about how certain things might happen and/or make you feel.

8. Book Title: The Kissing Hand

Author: Audrey Penn

Illustrator: Ruth E. Harper and Nancy M. Leak

Brief Summary: School is starting in the forest, but Chester Raccoon does not want to go. To help ease Chester's fears, Mrs. Raccoon shares a family secret called the Kissing Hand to give him the reassurance of her love any time his world feels a little scary.

Teaching Connections: A good teaching connection would be to read this story on the first day of school, in order to show children everyone is unsure about their feelings at times.

9. Book Title: All Better!

Author: Henning Lohlein and Bernd Penners

Illustrator: Henning Lohlein and Bernd Penners

Brief Summary: Dog hurt his foot, sheep scratched her tummy, and bear got a splinter! What will make everything all better? Clean it, kiss it, and put a bandage on it.

Teaching Connections: This book would be best for younger children. They can relate to the animals getting hurt, and being able to make their owies better.

10. Book Title: Be Brave, Little Penguin

Author: Giles Andreae

Illustrator: Guy Parker-Rees

Brief Summary: Little Penguin is the smallest penguin in his family, and he is very scared to do all of the normal penguin things. The other penguins make fun of him and he doesn't have many friends. His mom encourages him to face his fears, and he learns he does not need to be afraid.

Teaching Connections: Be Brave, Little Penguin would be a great story to read to children that need a little extra encouragement on taking the plunge to maybe try something new. The teacher could talk about feelings, and suggest some strategies to overcome those scary feelings.

11. Book Title: I Like Myself!

Author: Karen Beaumont

Illustrator: David Catrow

Brief Summary: I Like Myself is a story about a little girl encouraging children to have good self-esteem and to appreciate everything about themselves even if they are different. Because no two people are the same!

Teaching Connections: A teaching connection to this story could be a partner activity where the children are giving each other compliments about what they like about one another that might be different from them. Another idea would be having children share what they like about themselves, especially if they are younger.

12. Book Title: Willow

Author: Denise Brennan-Nelson & Rosemarie Brehnan

Illustrator: Cyd Moore

Brief Summary: Miss Hawthorn's room is neat and tidy, and that is how she likes it. She likes trees that are colored green and apples that are painted red. Miss Hawthorn does not like things to be different or out of the ordinary. Willow comes into Miss Hawthorn's classroom, and she doesn't color inside the lines. She breaks crayons, and she sees pink trees and blue apples. What will Miss Hawthorn think? Magical things can happen when your imagination is allowed to run wild, and for Miss Hawthorn the notion of what is art and what is possible is forever changed.

Teaching Connections: A good teaching connection to this story would be not everyone's the same, and people's differences make them unique.

13. Book Title: The Girl Who Never Made Mistakes

Author: Mark Pett & Gary Rubinstein

Illustrator: Mark Pett

Brief Summary: Beatrice has never in her life made a mistake, ever, until one day she does! She never forgets anything, everything always has to be perfect, and she often wins when she participates in activities. Her nickname is The Girl Who Never Made Mistakes.

Teaching Connections: This is the perfect book to read to children in order to show them that it is ok to make mistakes, and no one is ever perfect. It is important to own your mistakes, and make them right.

14. Book Title: The HICCUPotamus

Author: Aaron Zenz

Illustrator: Aaron Zenz

Brief Summary: This story is about a Hippopotamus who hiccups A LOT, and every time he hiccups he falls down on his bottom. His friends try to help him along the way, by suggesting ways in which he can get rid of the hiccups!

Teaching Connections: The HICCUPotamus is a cute story with lots of different kinds of animals. A fun teaching connection would be all of the friends working together in order to help one of their friends out with a problem.

15. Book Title: Truman

Author: Jean Reidy

Illustrator: Lucy Ruth Cummins

Brief Summary: Truman the tortoise lives with his best friend Sarah, high above all the business below them. He never worries about the world below them until one day when

Sarah leaves for her first day of school. Truman himself goes on an adventure across the living room and learns to be brave!

Teaching Connections: The story Truman would be a great introduction to a lesson on bravery, and first time experiences/feelings.

16. Book Title: We Don't Eat Our Classmates

Author: Ryan T. Higgins

Illustrator: Ryan T. Higgins

Brief Summary: Penelope the dinosaur starts school, but it's hard to make friends when her classmates are so delicious. All of her classmates are afraid of her, and she feels sad that no one wants to play with her.

Teaching Connections: The perfect teaching connection to this story would be treat others the way you would like to be treated. Penelope begins to realize how she is making others feel when she gets bit from the class pet.

17. Book Title: B Is For Breathe: The ABCs of Coping with Fussy and Frustrating Feelings

Author: Dr. Melissa Munro Boyd

Illustrator: Dr. Melissa Munro Boyd

Brief Summary: When you are feeling frustrated or fussy and want something to do, try a new coping skill: A is for Art, B is for Breathe, C is for Count to 10, etc.

Teaching Connections: The teaching connections that would go well with this story are talking about feelings, and ways to cope when feeling certain ways.

18. Book Title: Waiting Is Not Easy!

Author: Mo Williams

Illustrator: Mo Williams

Brief Summary: Piggie has a surprise for Gerald. A big surprise, but Gerald has to do whatever it takes to wait for the surprise. Gerald is careful and worries a lot. Piggie is not careful, and cannot help but to smile and act carefree.

Teaching Connections: The perfect teaching connection for this story is waiting, and waiting isn't always fun.

19. Book Title: Jilly's Terrible Temper Tantrums and How She Outgrew Them

Author: Martha Heinenman Pieper, Ph.D.

Illustrator: Jo Gershman

Brief Summary: Jilly is a happy little kangaroo, but has a series of terrible temper tantrums. Her parents willingly help her through feeling frustrated and upset.

Teaching Connections: Children can make a connection with this story, and feel Jilly's familiar feelings of frustration and being upset. The teacher could then suggest a few ideas a child could try before getting overly upset or feeling frustrated.

20. Book Title: Red: A Crayon's Story

Author: Michael Hall

Illustrator: Michael Hall

Brief Summary: A Blue crayon is mistakenly labeled as a Red crayon, and has a hard time understanding why he is so different from the other crayons. The story is about being true to your inner self, and following your own path despite obstacles that may come your way.

Teaching Connections: A good teaching connection to this story would be adaptability and/or flexibility.

21. Book Title: What If Everybody Did That?

Author: Ellen Javernick

Illustrator: Colleen M. Madden

Brief Summary: If you drop just one soda can out the window, it's no big deal...right? But what if everybody did that? What if everybody broke the rules...and spoke during story time, didn't wash up, or splashed too much at the pool? Then the world would be a mess.

Teaching Connections: The perfect teaching connection to this story would be the reasoning behind the importance of rules, and why we need to have them.

22. Book Title: Baditude!

Author: Julia Cook

Illustrator: Anita DuFalla

Brief Summary: Everything in Noodle's life stinks, or so he thinks. Noodle's attitude, or "baditude," is alienating everyone around him. Can he let go of his angst and try to find the brighter side of life? With help, Noodle learns how to turn his baditude into gratitude!

Teaching Connections: How your attitude can affect others around you.

23. Book Title: The Angry Dragon

Author: Michael Gordon

Illustrator: Michael Gordon

Brief Summary: George has a pet dragon called Joe. Joe always gets angry when he doesn't get what he wants, or when things don't go his way. George tries to show his friend (the dragon) that being angry is not normal. In the end, Dragon understands that treating others with kindness is the best way to go.

Teaching Connections: A good teaching connection would be talking about emotions, and strategies to work through anger and frustration.

24. Book Title: Sorry, I Forgot to Ask!

Author: Julia Cook

Illustrator: Kelsey De Weerd

Brief Summary: R.J. is making a lot of trips to the “time-out” chair! This story is about asking for permission and making an apology.

Teaching Connections: A teaching connection to this story could be used through a Social Skills lesson, for example practicing asking for permission and making an apology. These strategies could make home life happier and school more successful.

25. Book Title: I Just want to Do It MY WAY!

Author: Julia Cook

Illustrator: Kelsey De Weerd

Brief Summary: RJ tries to find and finish all of his missing math assignments. With help from his parents and teacher, RJ learns he can save himself a lot of grief if he stays focused and does things the right way.

Teaching Connections: A good teaching connection to this story would be working on staying on task and asking for help.

26. Book Title: Clark The Shark

Author: Bruce Hale

Illustrator: Guy Francis

Brief Summary: Clark is a shark with *zing*, *bang*, and *BOOM*. Clark zooms into school, crashes through the classroom, and is rowdy at recess. Clark loves life—but when his enthusiasm is too much for his friends, Clark's teacher, Mrs. Inkydink, helps him figure out a way to tone it down.

Teaching Connections: A teaching connection that would go great with this story is self-control. Sometimes we are just too much for people, what can we do to calm our bodies in order to focus at school.

27. Book Title: ABC Look At Me

Author: Roberta Grobel Intrater

Illustrator: N/A (Real Photographs)

Brief Summary: This story teaches children about the letters in the alphabet, starting with the letter A and ending with the letter Z. It also has an emotion associated with each letter of the alphabet, as well as a real photograph of a child feeling/looking like they are experiencing that emotion.

Teaching Connections: This story would be a great way to introduce a Social/Emotional lesson about feelings and emotions, by associating the letters in the alphabet with the feelings children are expressing.

28. Book Title: Grumpy Bird

Author: Jeremy Tankard

Illustrator: Jeremy Tankard

Brief Summary: Bird wakes up feeling grumpy and nothing seems to cheer him up. His friends offer to walk with him, but he becomes even more grumpy. Little does bird know that by all the walking he has been doing, and his friends' company, he becomes less grumpy.

Teaching Connections: This story helps children understand it is ok to feel grumpy, but it usually helps to do something about the grumpiness to make yourself feel better. Also, that having good friends to keep you company can make you feel less grumpy as well.

29. Book Title: Glad Monster, Sad Monster: A Book About Feelings

Author: Ed Emberley and Anne Miranda

Illustrator: Ed Emberley and Anne Miranda

Brief Summary: All children experience a wide range of different moods and/or emotions like silly, sad, mad, and glad. This book is a fun and interactive way to explore several of the different kinds of feelings we feel.

Teaching Connections: This book will help children identify and maybe begin to understand their emotions. Children will be able to recognize words and colors that are associated with feeling, and that way children can possibly make connections to those words, colors, and/or feelings for themselves.

30. Book Title: In My Heart: A Book of Feelings (Growing Hearts)

Author: Jo Witek

Illustrator: Christine Roussey

Brief Summary: In this story readers learn about happiness, sadness, bravery, anger, and shyness. Our hearts can feel so many feelings, and it can be overwhelming. Some feelings make us feel as light as a balloon, and other feelings as heavy as an elephant. In My Heart explores a full range of emotions, and describes to readers how they might physically be feeling when these feelings are happening.

Teaching Connections: In My Heart empowers readers to practice expressing and identifying their own emotions. Once children are given the examples from the book, they too are able to better understand and/or explain just how they are feeling.