

Books to Read with Your Child

The books listed in this section tell stories or present situations about taking initiative, expressing or handling feelings, and building relationships. Reading can be a fun way to learn more about one another and how to deal with life. When you read stories that interest your child, she thinks reading is fun. Reading can happen throughout the day—while waiting for the bus, before bedtime, or even at the park. While reading, learn about your child's thoughts by asking questions:

- I wonder what might happen next?
- Tell me about a time when. . .
- What else might she have done?
- How would you feel if. . .

Books about Initiative

The stories listed below share examples of children using their determination and curiosity to learn and grow.

Bunny Cakes by Rosemary Wells. Ruby is determined to bake a cake for Grandma, but when Max tries to help, everything goes wrong.



Max finally discovers a creative way to ask for what he needs and to feel success with his baking project.

Cleversticks by Bernard Ashley. Ling Sung struggles to find what makes her special. When she discovers her own strengths, she feels empowered to teach her special skill to others.

Chrysanthemum by Kevin Henkes. Chrysanthemum loves her name until her classmates poke fun at her. It takes a caring teacher and confidence on Chrysanthemum's part to help her realize it is OK to be different.

Good Job, Little Bear by Martin Waddell. Little Bear is curious. He explores ahead of Big Bear until he stumbles and gets into trouble. He and Big Bear work through the problem and help restore Little Bear's confidence and sense of adventure.

Harold and the Purple Crayon by Crockett Johnson. Harold uses his purple crayon to draw whatever he needs—a moon, a path, anything his imagination desires!

I Ain't Gonna Paint No More by Karen Beaumont. Sing-songy and catchy lyrics accompany a theme of creativity without boundaries. Painting everything he can see, including himself, this little artist's ambition shines through—that is, until his Mama catches him!



I Like Me! by Nancy Carlson. This pig is full of self-love and self-esteem. From her curly little tail to her tiny little feet, she shares the reasons that she is her own best friend.

I'm Gonna Like Me: Letting Off a Little Self-Esteem by Jamie Lee Curtis. Two children, one boy and one girl, tell the story of how and why we like ourselves for the people we are.

Pete the Cat: I Love My White Shoes by Eric Litwin. Pete the Cat can take on any new challenge or situation because he's got his rockin' white shoes!

Stand Tall, Molly Lou Melon by Patty Lovell. Molly Lou Melon may be different from the other children, but she learns to have confidence, mainly because she and her loving grandmother both believe in her.

The Listening Walk by Paul Showers. Revised since the original 1961 version, a father and child walk together and practice listening as they walk. It's time to use imagination and spend time with someone you love.

The Skin You Live In by Michael Tyler. Beautifully simple and lyrically delivered, this book shares a message of friendship, differences, and acceptance in a way even the youngest child can appreciate.





How Full Is Your Bucket? by Tom Rath and Mary Reckmeyer. This important, grown-up idea of how we all can affect each other's lives is delivered in a kid-friendly, fun way. Felix and his family and friends all interact and learn with and through each other about the importance of doing kind things and "filling each other's buckets."

Books about Self-Regulation

The stories listed here share examples of children expressing and managing their feelings and dealing with everyday conflicts.

Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day by Judith Viorst. Alexander's day starts off bad (gum in his hair) and gets worse (the wrong shoes at the shoe store) and worse (lima beans for dinner)! His mom reassures him that everyone has a bad day, even in Australia.

Glad Monster, Sad Monster by Ed Emberley and Anne Miranda. Try on your own moods with the built-in masks in this monster book. How are you feeling? Glad, sad, silly, mad?

How Are You Peeling? by Saxton Freymann and Joost Elffers. With veggies and fruits sharing the emotions we feel, this rhyming text will help children understand a variety of feelings in a fun, healthy way.

Lily's Purple Plastic Purse by Kevin Henkes. Lily loves school. She loves Mr. Slinger. And she loves her purple plastic purse with the jingly coins inside. But when Mr. Slinger asks her to keep her special purse quiet and hidden until sharing time, Lily uses some behaviors she is later sorry for. Read how she makes amends and learns about respect.

Mean Soup by Betsy Everitt. Horace finds that sometimes when your foot gets stepped on, you get picked up late, and you get a love letter from Zelda, the only thing to fix it all is making Mean Soup alongside someone you love.

My Many Colored Days by Dr. Seuss. This book helps children express how they feel using animals, colors, and creative rhymes that are classic Dr. Seuss.

My Mouth Is a Volcano! by Julia Cook. Every child can relate to having thoughts and words just bubbling up, waiting to EXPLODE! This book deals with interrupting, as well as helping children understand when and how to show patience and respect.



No, David! by David Shannon. Join David on his journey of exploring all the things that end in “No, David!” From standing on tiptoes to reach for the cookie jar, to splashing water out of the tub, to breaking mom’s favorite vase, David learns that while the answer may be no, he is still loved.

The Feelings Book by Todd Parr. Children will relate to all the feelings this child is having. With bold and bright colors, while not always about true emotions (“I feel like camping with my dog”), this book certainly addresses the many, many things a child might be wanting or feeling!

The Way I Feel by Janan Cain. “Silly is the way I feel when I make a funny face, or wear a goofy, poofy hat that takes up lots of space . . .” This book explores jealousy, disappointment, anger, excitement, and more with colorful illustrations and fun rhymes.

Today I Feel Silly: And Other Moods That Make My Day by Jamie Lee Curtis. This book is a combination of detailed, humorous illustrations (by Laura Cornell) and right-on explanations of feelings (“My mom told my father he might be a dad, I might get a brother . . . I’m not sure I’m glad.”). The interactive feelings wheel at the end of the book is so much fun for children and adults!



When Sophie Gets Angry—Really, Really Angry by Molly Bang. This classic exploration of anger and rage helps deliver the message: soothing aspects of our lives such as nature, some moments of peace, and family are what we need to help us calm down in tough times.

Books about Attachment/Relationships

The stories listed below explore special family relationships and child friendships.

Abuela by Arthur Dorros. A little girl wishes to fly. And honestly, what child hasn't had this dream? A little girl and her grandmother travel around town on a variety of adventures that are written as beautifully as they are illustrated.

Annie Rose Is My Little Sister by Shirley Hughes. Annie's big brother Alfie shares a realistic picture of what being a big brother is like. Honest (describing siblings as "annoying") and heartwarming (affirming that they will be siblings "even until we're all grown up"), this book helps tell the true tale of having and being a sibling.

Cookies: Bite-Size Life Lessons by Amy Krouse Rosenthal. Explore social skills and friendly behaviors like cooperation, patience, respect, and more through this beautifully illustrated journey of making cookies, sharing cookies, and what happens when someone eats your cookies by accident.



Daddy, Will You Miss Me? by Wendy McCormick. A father and his son must be apart for a while, yet they stay connected in special ways until they meet up again.

Every Year on Your Birthday by Rose A. Lewis. This book helps celebrate adoption through a mother's memories of her daughter's birthdays.

Guess How Much I Love You? by Sam McBratney. Available as a board book or paperback, children of all ages will enjoy this story of Little Nutbrown Hare and his father. They take turns telling each other how much they love each other, such as "up to the moon and back!"

I'm Like You, You're Like Me: A Book about Understanding and Appreciating Each Other by Cindy Gainer. Celebrate what makes us each special with this book about all types of diversity, from variety in our bodies and appearances, to the differences in who makes up our families.

Making Friends by Fred Rogers. Making and keeping friends isn't easy for every child. This book helps children think through solutions to potential problems, like when your friend wants to play with someone else instead of you.



Mei-Mei Loves the Morning by Margaret Holloway Tsubakiyama. Mei-Mei and her grandfather explore a park in China and share fun and touching moments together. Cultural diversity is celebrated throughout with their rituals (such as rice for breakfast instead of cereal) and will help children peek into a culture that may be unfamiliar to them.

Owl Babies by Martin Waddell. Available as a board book or paperback, this book will delight all young children and their parents. Three little owls awake to find their mommy gone! They come up with ways to calm and reassure each other and are delighted to find she was simply out searching for their breakfast.

Tell Me Again About the Night I Was Born by Jamie Lee Curtis. This is the birth story of one young adopted child. Beautifully told and illustrated, the joy of becoming new parents is evident. Although this may differ from other children's birth stories, it is just as much a story of falling in love with a new baby.

The Family Book by Todd Parr. Families come in all shapes and sizes. Some are big, some are small. Some have two moms or two dads, while some have only one parent. This book focuses on acceptance and understanding that our families are all unique.



The Kissing Hand by Audrey Penn. This is a classic story of a mother and child being apart. When Chester Raccoon is heading to school, his mother plants a kiss on his palm and teaches him about The Kissing Hand, which will stay with him no matter where he goes.

