



## Book List for Early Childhood Parents, Providers and Educators

### ***Promoting Sensory-Emotional Literacy and Body Awareness and Managing Big Emotions***

**Listening to My Body** by Gabi Garcia

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-B6Rik-TA-Q>

Help your child build on their capacity to engage more mindfully, self-regulate, and develop emotional resilience. *Listening to my Body* is an engaging and interactive book that guides children through the practice of naming their feelings and the physical sensations that accompany them. From wiggly and squirmy to rested and still, *Listening to My Body* helps children develop a sensations vocabulary so that they can express what they are experiencing. Includes kid-friendly mindfulness activities woven throughout the book to reinforce the teachings. *Listening to My Body* is a wonderful social-emotional tool for parents, counselors and teachers! FREE resources to accompany this book can be found at <http://bit.ly/gabigarciabooks>. (Available in Spanish as Escuchando a Mi Cuerpo.)

**Calm Down Time** by Elizabeth Verdick

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j6lk72R2rjc>

Every parent, caregiver—and young child—knows the misery that comes with meltdowns and toddlers’ temper tantrums. Through rhythmic text in both English and Spanish and warm illustrations, this gentle, reassuring book offers toddlers simple tools to release strong feelings, express them, and calm themselves down. After a break, toddlers will feel like new—and adults will, too. Free downloadable:

<https://www.elizabethverdick.com/books/calm-down-time/>

**Understanding My Brain: Becoming Human(E)!** by Julie Kurtz (Ages 4-8 or 5-10) English and Spanish

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-pTCQ1Fj06s&t=1s> (age 5-10 video read)

When children learn about how their brain works, it enables better decision making and choices to help them feel safe, find calm and to build social-emotional skills. Tips for Adults Using This Book with Their Children: Think of this as a science book for children ages 4-8 and 5-10, made fun through the lens of four animals. Lizzie the Lizard Plays the Hindbrain, Malcolm the Meerkat Plays the Amygdala, Elsie the Elephant Plays the Limbic Brain and Ozzie the Owl Plays the Prefrontal Cortex! Complex topics are broken down to help your child understand the science behind their brain and their behavior. Through learning and exploring, they will have increased self-awareness and the tools to stay healthy, safe and calm – socially and emotionally. What better way to help children learn to identify their emotions and sensations, the size of their emotions/sensations and to promote practices for self-regulation. This book is designed to be read with your child/children over time. Depending on your child’s developmental age, some may grasp the concepts faster while others may need more time. The most important thing is to create an enjoyable learning experience for you and your child together. Take their lead!



## Book List for Early Childhood Parents, Providers and Educators

If they continue to be interested, then keep reading. If they show signs they are finished for now, listen to those cues and transition to another activity. Offer moments of pause and reflection throughout the book where you can each talk about how you have experienced the part of the brain you are learning about. Remember when you “teach children” (lecture), they may remember but when you “involve them and have fun” (engage them in a two-way interactive conversation building on their interests) they will learn. (Quote adapted by Benjamin Franklin) About the Author: Julie Kurtz is an author, national speaker and parent coach consulting and training on trauma, social-emotional skills and resilience. She promotes the concept of optimal brain integration to maximize the human growth potential. Julie is the Founder and CEO for the Center for Optimal Brain Integration®. Julie Kurtz is the creator of the phone/tablet Application Trigger Stop: Sensory and Emotional Check-in designed specifically for children (ages 3-8) to promote sensory and emotional literacy in support of self-regulation.

Learn more at [www.optimalbrainintegration.com](http://www.optimalbrainintegration.com). Purchase on amazon:

- 4-10 <https://a.co/d/i1R2uGB>
- Spanish <https://a.co/d/115qVo4>

Additional: Puppets that go with the book can be found on etsy made specifically for this book: <https://www.etsy.com/listing/1105680256/finger-puppet-set-with-safari-woodland>

**Alexander and the Terrible No Good Bad Day** by Judith Viorst

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h6rp0SZX7lg>

Alexander could tell it was going to be a terrible, horrible, no good, very bad day. He went to sleep with gum in his mouth and woke up with gum in his hair. When he got out of bed, he tripped over his skateboard and by mistake dropped his sweater in the sink while the water was running. He could tell it was going to be a terrible, horrible, no good, very bad day.

It was a terrible, horrible, no good, very bad day. Nothing at all was right. Everything went wrong, right down to lima beans for supper and kissing on TV.

What do you do on a day like that? Well, you may think about going to Australia. You may also be glad to find that some days are like that for other people too.

**I Can Handle It** by Laurie Wright

Your child will incorporate the idea of 'I Can Handle It' almost immediately after reading this book, even in our current uncertain times. After reading this book, they will have great ideas for how to ‘handle’ tough situations! Even if they aren't saying the words out loud, this mantra **will** become a part of their self-talk. Positive self-talk is vital for improving and maintaining strong mental health which is exactly what the world needs



## Book List for Early Childhood Parents, Providers and Educators

right now. And because parents have such a difficult and important job, this book includes updated free resources. **Simply go to [lauriewrightauthor.com/one](http://lauriewrightauthor.com/one) to get them!**

**I Believe in Myself** by Laurie Wright

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X1KeuFj8g1o>

Emotions are tricky and hard to handle when you're small, and kids need our help! Help them learn emotional regulation now, to benefit them later.

Since teachers and parents have the most difficult and important jobs, this book comes with free resources for both! Simply go to [lauriewrights.com/six](http://lauriewrights.com/six) to get them.

**I Will Be Okay** by Laurie Wright

Everyday situations can cause hard to handle feelings for kids. Kids desperately want to know they'll be *okay*, but adults just telling them **doesn't work**. Reinforce the idea that children are not helpless and can do things for themselves to help them feel 'okay' again. Start practicing the 'OK' sign with your kids as you read this book and help them realize that they WILL be okay!

**Breath Like a Bear** by Kira Willey

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B082lcZK2zc>

30 Mindful Moments for Kids to Feel Calm and Focused Anytime, Anywhere

**Mindful Kids: 50 Mindfulness Activities Cards (Ages 4-99)** by Whitney Steward and Mina Braun

This boxed card deck includes 50 creative mindfulness games, visualizations and exercises divided into 5 categories to help children feel grounded, find calm, improve focus, practice loving-kindness and relax. Whimsical full-color illustrations on both sides of the cards break down each practice into easy-to-follow steps. Tips on individual cards plus an 8-page instructional booklet show modifications that make these activities inclusive for children of all abilities.

**My Moods, My Choices Flip Book**

- Teach kids about different moods/emotions and positive actions that can be taken in a fun and educational way.
- Kids will enjoy flipping to the character that expresses their current mood, and the corresponding positive choices that can be taken.
- This is a helpful learning tool for ANY child, particularly those in preschool, kindergarten and elementary school. Also, the flipbook is helpful for children with Autism, ADHD, or special needs. It's perfect for displaying at home, school, and counseling offices.



## Book List for Early Childhood Parents, Providers and Educators

### **Moody Cow Learns Compassion** by Kerry Lee MacLean

This delightful sequel to *Moody Cow Meditates* reintroduces us to Peter (aka Moody Cow) and meet his mischievous "boys-will-be-boys" friend Bully. Along the way we meet a snake named Jaws, who also goes on to appear in Peter's terrifying dreams and watch as Bully revels in the deaths of the crickets he feeds the snake. Peter is uncomfortable with the plight of the little creatures, earning him a new nickname: "Coward Cow" because Bully thinks he's a wimp. Once again, Grandfather, the beloved old steer from *Moody Cow Meditates*, brings serenity and long-horned wisdom as he gently teaches to compassionately identify with other beings. And the story ends with everyone sharing a laugh - and even Jaws and the crickets are happy. This book also includes two activities - compassionate cricket release and compassionate worm rescue - for parents and children to do together.

### **Moody Cow Meditates** by Kerry Lee Maclean

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IP1x\\_NI9Bz4](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IP1x_NI9Bz4)

Children can develop greater joy and concentration through the practices of mindfulness and meditation, and *Moody Cow Meditates* is the perfect way to introduce them. This vibrant and funny children's book is a playful way to introduce children to the power of meditation. **With full color illustrations by the author, *Moody Cow Meditates* is a wonderful book for parents and children to share together.**

- Teaches kids how to handle their negative emotions
- Encourages mindfulness and meditation
- Is funny and easy-to-read
- Has full-color illustrations by the author throughout
- Includes exercises to make your own meditation jar at home

### **Yoga Pretzels: 50 Fun Yoga Activities for Kids and Grownups** by Tara Guber

Practice bending, twisting, breathing, relaxing and more with Yoga Pretzels, a vibrant and colorful set of illustrated cards that provide a healthy dose of fun and education while teaching all the basics of yoga to help your head and heart.

### **You are Not Your Thoughts** by Brian Despard

'You Are Not Your Thoughts' was written to help children and parents become more aware of the present moment and to foster an environment of compassion and loving-kindness between all human beings. Mindfulness reconnects people to their senses, bringing them into moment-to-moment awareness.

### **The Way I Feel** by Janan Cain

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ITPUxVQ6UIk>



## **Book List for Early Childhood Parents, Providers and Educators**

Our most popular children's book, now with 1.2 million copies in print. Praised by parents, who say it's especially valuable when getting children to talk about the day's triumphs and troubles, and by professionals, who use it in pediatric clinics and for children with developmental delays and behavior challenges.

**Lots of Feelings** by Shelley Rotner

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EyROOM2BuxQ>

A face can tell you what someone is feeling. In this expressive photo-essay, simple text and photographs introduce basic emotions – happy, grumpy, thoughtful, and more – and how people show them. Can you help children guess the feelings by looking at the faces?

**On Monday When It Rained** by Cherryl Kachenmeister

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3B1tqy7a6w8>

In simple, straightforward text and marvelously expressive pictures, the author and photographer have captured the thoughts and feelings of one small boy. Whether he is proud or scared, lonely or excited, the boy's face mirrors his emotion with the wonderful directness of childhood.

**Mind Bubbles** by Heather Krantz

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ww\\_kSK5iUpY](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ww_kSK5iUpY)

Children today are engaged in a fast-paced, media driven, competitive society that can lead to increased stress and stress-related problems such as anxiety and depression. Mindfulness is a way to deal with this stress and can help children calm themselves and focus their attention. Mind Bubbles presents an easy way for young children to work with their breath while noting thoughts and feelings passing and popping like bubbles. The book is a clear, concise, and secular explanation of mindfulness that children ages 4-8 will understand and want to try for themselves. It may be read by or to young children and includes a guided mindful breathing script for teachers and parents to read so everyone can practice their new skills.

**Today I Feel: An Alphabet of Feelings** by Madelena Moniz

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ztxMRBWNwjE>

Beautifully illustrated by Madalena Moniz's subtle watercolors, *Today I Feel . . .* follows a child through a whole range of emotions, from adored to curious to strong. Not all of the emotions are positive and not all of them are simple, but they are all honest and worthy of discussion with a young child.

**I am Peace: A Book of Mindfulness** by Susan Verde

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hXA3837uv3w>



## Book List for Early Childhood Parents, Providers and Educators

Mindfulness means being fully in the present moment. Children can learn how to manage their emotions, make good choices, and balance their busy lives by learning to be mindful, express emotions through speech, find empathy through imagination, and wonder at the beauty of the natural world. Includes a guided meditation.

**Little Meerkat's Big Panic: A Story About Learning New Ways to Feel Calm** by Izzy Bean  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mtqXE5wlfMo>

Once upon a time there was a Little Meerkat with a very important job to do. Today was the day when Little Meerkat finally took a turn at being the lookout meerkat - watching for dangers to protect the meerkat gang. It was all going well until Little Meerkat fell asleep and woke up to find everyone had disappeared! This sent Little Meerkat into one very big panic. With help from Small Elephant and Mini Monkey, can Little Meerkat calm down and find the missing meerkats? This playful full-color storybook shows children aged 2-6 easy ways for them to calm their body and brain when feeling anxious. It also includes guidance for parents or professionals on the neuroscience behind the strategies, and how they can use the book to help children.

**My Magic Breath: Finding Calm Through Mindful Breathing** by Nick Ortner  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NjQzFfv5HXs>

*Do YOU have the magic breath? Let's see...Take a deeeeeeep breath in...and BLOW it out.....and like magic, you can feel better just by breathing! Sometimes it's hard to feel happy. But with this interactive picture book, children breathe along as they learn how to make angry or sad thoughts disappear. My Magic Breath will help steer children into a serene space of mindfulness, self-awareness, and balance.*

**What Should Danny Do? School Day - The Power to Choose Series** by Adir Levy  
With 9 Stories in 1, the fun never ends! What Should Danny Do? is an innovative, interactive book that empowers kids with the understanding that their choices will shape their days, and ultimately their lives into what they will be. Written in a "Choose Your Own Story" style, the book follows Danny, a Superhero-in-Training, through his day as he encounters choices that kids face on a daily basis. As your children navigate through the different story lines, they will begin to realize that their choices for Danny shaped his day into what it became. And in turn, their choices for themselves will shape their days, and ultimately their lives, into what they will be.

**Mindful Moves** by Nicole Cardoza

Mindfulness is proven to boost children's physical, mental, and socio-emotional development, but establishing the practice requires making it a part of daily life. With delightful illustrations and kid-friendly language, *Mindful Moves* introduces kids to simple mindfulness activities that are fun, easy to remember, and available for kids to turn to any time the need arises, no matter where they are. Check Your Inner Weather encourages children to tune into how they feel in the moment and accept their feelings



## **Book List for Early Childhood Parents, Providers and Educators**

without judgement. Pose like a Superhero helps fill kids with inner strength and confidence, while Breathe like a Walrus helps them channel frustration or anger through breath and facial relaxation. Each of the meditation, mindfulness, yoga, and movement activities is designed to help kids stay calm, be present, and feel focused and happy. Whether it's before a busy day at school, in the backseat of the car, during a test, or heading off to bed, this is a guide kids can refer to again and again!

**B is for Breath** by Melissa Munro Boyd

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sEmIKSIzZNo>

From the letter A to the letter Z, B is for Breathe celebrates the many ways children can express their feelings and develop coping skills at an early age. Fun, cute, and exciting illustrations, this colorful book teaches kids simple ways to cope with fussy and frustrating emotions. This book will inspire kids to discuss their feelings, show positive behaviors, and practice calm down strategies.

**The Color Monster** by Anna LLenas

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W6wIEp-M4tg>

One day, Color Monster wakes up feeling very confused. His emotions are all over the place; he feels angry, happy, calm, sad, and scared all at once! To help him, a little girl shows him what each feeling means through color. As this adorable monster learns to sort and define his mixed-up emotions, he gains self-awareness and peace as a result. Everyone will enjoy sharing this concept book that taps into both socio-emotional growth and color concepts in a simple, friendly way.

### ***Books for Children who Have Been Through Scary Things***

**Once I was Very, Very Scared** by Chondra Ghosh Ippen

<https://piploproductions.com/stories/once/> (FREE downloadable versions in many languages)

A little squirrel announces that he was once very, very, scared and finds out that he is not alone. Lots of little animals went through scary experiences, but they react in different ways. Turtle hides and gets a tummy ache, monkey clings, dog barks, and elephant doesn't like to talk about it. They need help, and they get help from grown-ups who help them feel safe and learn ways to cope with difficult feelings. This story was written to help children and grown-ups understand how stress can affect children and ways to help them.

**Alex and the Scary Things** by Melissa Moses

Alex is an alligator who has experienced 'scary' things. In this charmingly illustrated story, he talks about how this affects him and how he copes. By reading about the different parts of Alex that come out because of the scary things he has experienced, such as The Destroyer when he is angry, Spacey when he dissociates, and Puddles when





## Book List for Early Childhood Parents, Providers and Educators

he is sad, children will learn to recognize when they experience these emotions themselves and find solutions for overcoming them. Alex talks about the different coping strategies he uses to get back to being himself, such as breathing techniques, a counting game, painting, and finding a safe space he can go to, encouraging children to think about when they can do to help themselves handle difficult feelings. An essential resource for professionals working with children who have experienced trauma, including social workers, counsellors, therapists, and child psychologists, as well as for parents and foster carers. Suitable for children aged approximately 4 to 8 years.

### **The Kissing Hand** by Audrey Penn

During the last 20 years, parents and teachers have passed along the secret of the Kissing Hand to children facing first days of kindergarten, first grade, and other separations. Now younger children can get in on Mama Raccoon's secret and find comfort in *A Kissing Hand for Chester Raccoon*, a board-book adaptation of the original picture book. Chester could feel his mother's kiss leap straight into his heart. "With a Kissing Hand," said Chester's mom, "We'll never be apart." "Just press your hand upon your cheek and feel that loving glow. It's Mommy saying, 'I love you,' wherever you may go." The Kissing Hand has become a children's classic that has touched the lives of millions of children and their parents. *A Kissing Hand for Chester Raccoon* conveys the heart of the story in rhyming verse, perfect for read-aloud and easy for even the little ones to remember and recite. With illustrations by Barbara Gibson that capture the warmth and beauty of the original artwork, toddlers now share in the benefits from Mrs. Raccoon's secret for making a child feel safe and secure.

### **A Terrible Thing Happened** by Margaret Holmes

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qFgixM4nTg0>

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.

## **Death or Loss**

### **When Dinosaurs Die** by Laurie Krasny Brown and Marc Brown

**You Tube Video:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fs7xcqFwNuo>

- Straightforward and comprehensive, this indispensable book is a comforting aid to help young kids and families through a difficult time in their lives. No one can really understand death, but to children, the passing away of a loved one can be especially perplexing and troublesome. This is true whether the loss is a family member, friend, or pet. Here to offer advice and reassurance are the wise dinosaurs from the bestselling *Dino Tale* series. This succinct and thorough guide





## Book List for Early Childhood Parents, Providers and Educators

helps dispel the mystery and negative connotations associated with death, providing answers to kids' most-often asked questions.

- Topics covered include: What Does Alive Mean? \* Why Does Someone Die? \* What Does Dead Mean? \* Feelings about Death? \* Saying Goodbye \* Keeping Customs \* What Comes After Death? \* Ways to Remember Someone

### ***Scared at Night of Monsters***

**Go Away Big Green Monster!** by Ed Emberley

You tube video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rPmLZLp-oec&app=desktop>

Caldecott Award-winner Ed Emberley has created an ingenious way for children to overcome bedtime frights. As kids turn the die-cut pages of this vibrantly illustrated book, they'll watch the Big Green Monster grow before their very eyes. Then, when they're ready to show him who's in charge, they'll turn the remaining pages and watch him disappear!

### ***Anti-Racism and Anti-Bias***

**Hair Love** by Matthew A. Cherry

"I love that *Hair Love* is highlighting the relationship between a Black father and daughter. Matthew leads the ranks of new creatives who are telling unique stories of the Black experience. We need this." - Jordan Peele, Actor & Filmmaker

It's up to Daddy to give his daughter an extra-special hair style in this ode to self-confidence and the love between fathers and daughters, from Academy-Award winning director and former NFL wide receiver Matthew A. Cherry and *New York Times* bestselling illustrator Vashti Harrison.

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.

**Enough! 20+ Protesters Who Changes America** by Emily Easton

Change takes courage. Introduce your young activist to America's most influential protesters in this lushly illustrated picture book. Stand beside contemporary groundbreakers like Colin Kaepernick and transgender teen Jazz Jennings, and march in the footsteps of historical revolutionaries such as Harriet Tubman and Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. This moving text opens with a foreword from a Parkland shooting survivor and is perfect for those not quite ready for *Little Leaders* and *She Persisted*.

America has been molded and shaped by those who have taken a stand and said they have had enough. In this dynamic picture book, stand alongside the nation's most iconic civil and human rights leaders, whose brave actions rewrote history. Ages 5-8

**Big Hair, Don't Care** by Crystal Swain-Bates



## Book List for Early Childhood Parents, Providers and Educators

Designed to build confidence, this beautifully illustrated diverse children's book encourages African-American children to take pride in their hair. In this fun rhyming African-American children's book "Big Hair, Don't Care", main character Lola has really really REALLY big hair, much bigger than the other kids at her school. As the reader follows Lola throughout the day, her hair gets in the way from time to time (it's hard to play hide and seek when your hair is so big!) and she gets lots of stares from other kids, but that doesn't stop her from confidently telling anyone who will listen just how much she LOVES her big, beautiful hair! Don't be surprised if by the end of the book, your child can't stop saying big hair, don't care!

### **Anti-Racist Baby** by Ibram X. Kendi

Take your first steps with Antiracist Baby! Or rather, follow *Antiracist Baby's* nine easy steps for building a more equitable world. With bold art and thoughtful yet playful text, *Antiracist Baby* introduces the youngest readers and the grown-ups in their lives to the concept and power of antiracism. Providing the language necessary to begin critical conversations at the earliest age, *Antiracist Baby* is the perfect gift for readers of all ages dedicated to forming a just society.

### **I am Enough** by Grace Byers

This gorgeous, lyrical ode to loving who you are, respecting others, and being kind to one another comes from *Empire* actor and activist Grace Byers and talented newcomer artist Keturah A. Bobo. *We are all here for a purpose. We are more than enough. We just need to believe it.*

### **A is for Activist** by Innosanto Nagara

*A is for Activist* is an ABC board book written and illustrated for the next generation of progressives: families who want their kids to grow up in a space that is unapologetic about activism, environmental justice, civil rights, LGBTQ rights, and everything else that activists believe in and fight for. The alliteration, rhyming, and vibrant illustrations make the book exciting for children, while the issues it brings up resonate with their parents' values of community, equality, and justice. This engaging little book carries huge messages as it inspires hope for the future, and calls children to action while teaching them a love for books.

### **The Colors of Us** by Karen Katz

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a8-Whdbu-ak>

A positive and affirming look at skin color, from an artist's perspective. Seven-year-old Lena is going to paint a picture of herself. She wants to use brown paint for her skin. But when she and her mother take a walk through the neighborhood, Lena learns that brown comes in many different shades. Through the eyes of a little girl who begins to see her familiar world in a new way, this book celebrates the differences and similarities



## Book List for Early Childhood Parents, Providers and Educators

that connect all people. Karen Katz created this book for her daughter, Lena, whom she and her husband adopted from Guatemala six years ago.

### **Woke Baby** by Mahogany L. Browne

Woke babies are up early. Woke babies raise their fists in the air. Woke babies cry out for justice. Woke babies grow up to change the world. This lyrical and empowering book is both a celebration of what it means to be a baby and what it means to be woke. With bright playful art, *Woke Baby* is an anthem of hope in a world where the only limit to a skyscraper is more blue.

### **The Name Jar** by Yangsook Choi

Being the new kid in school is hard enough, but what about when nobody can pronounce your name? Having just moved from Korea, Unhei is anxious that American kids will like her. So instead of introducing herself on the first day of school, she tells the class that she will choose a name by the following week. Her new classmates are fascinated by this no-name girl and decide to help out by filling a glass jar with names for her to pick from. But while Unhei practices being a Suzy, Laura, or Amanda, one of her classmates comes to her neighborhood and discovers her real name and its special meaning. On the day of her name choosing, the name jar has mysteriously disappeared. Encouraged by her new friends, Unhei chooses her own Korean name and helps everyone pronounce it—*Yoon-Hey*.

## **Books on Gender Diversity**

### **They Call Me Mix/Me** by Llan Maestre

*They Call Me Mix* is a bilingual (English and Spanish) Children's book geared towards Kinder-2nd grade age students about what it means to be a transgender person of color.

The story starts with Lourdes recalling childhood and noticing how gendered everything about existence is since before we're even born. Lourdes points out how people create categories to make life easier but when it comes to people, gender categories can make life so difficult - restrooms, clothing stores, toy stores, sports teams, fitting rooms. They have a hard time even imagining where they'll ever fit in.

Then they find queer and trans community where they feel empowered to reinvent language that works for them and we see them doing fun everyday things with friends like play games, watch movies, build bonfires, etc. It ends with the message that people who identify as non-binary look, dress, and sound all kinds of different ways and that gender is something everyone can decide for themselves at any moment in time.

### **They, She, He, Easy as ABC** by Maya Christina Gonzales

*They, She, He easy as ABC* shows that including everyone is all part of the dance. Fast-paced rhyming keeps the flow of text upbeat and rhythmic, and naturally models how to



## Book List for Early Childhood Parents, Providers and Educators

use a wide range of pronouns. There's no room for stereotypes on THIS dance floor with spirited imagery that keeps names, clothes, hair and behavior fresh and diverse. The combination creates a playful and effortless practice to expand ideas about gender while learning the alphabet and makes being inclusive as easy as A-B-C. This book continues the work started in *They She He Me: Free to Be!*, also by Maya & Matthew, and what School Library Journal called "a gorgeous and much-needed picture book about pronouns and gender fluidity." Both books provide a way to build on gender inclusive practices, and help interrupt the formalization of gender stereotypes and assumptions.

### **Sparkle Boy** by Leslea Newman

Casey loves to play with his blocks, puzzles, and dump truck, but he also loves things that sparkle, shimmer, and glitter. When his older sister, Jessie, shows off her new shimmery skirt, Casey wants to wear a shimmery skirt too. When Jessie comes home from a party with glittery nails, Casey wants glittery nails too. And when Abuelita visits wearing an armful of sparkly bracelets, Casey gets one to wear, just like Jessie. The adults in Casey's life embrace his interests, but Jessie isn't so sure. Boys aren't supposed to wear sparkly, shimmery, glittery things. Then, when older boys at the library tease Casey for wearing "girl" things, Jessie realizes that Casey has the right to be himself and wear whatever he wants. Why can't both she and Casey love all things shimmery, glittery, and sparkly? Here is a sweet, heartwarming story about acceptance, respect, and the freedom to be yourself in a world where any gender expression should be celebrated. Sparkly things are for everyone to enjoy!

### **I am Jazz** by Jessica Herthel

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BF5D2IsPfsU>

"This is an essential tool for parents and teachers to share with children whether those kids identify as trans or not. I wish I had had a book like this when I was a kid struggling with gender identity questions. From the time she was two years old, Jazz knew that she had a girl's brain in a boy's body. She loved pink and dressing up as a mermaid and didn't feel like herself in boys' clothing. This confused her family, until they took her to a doctor who said that Jazz was transgender and that she was born that way. Jazz's story is based on her real-life experience and she tells it in a simple, clear way that will be appreciated by picture book readers, their parents, and teachers.

### **All are Welcome** by Alexandra Penfold

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vc8IEcr1Uwc>

Discover a school where—no matter what—young children have a place, have a space, and are loved and appreciated. Follow a group of children through a day in their school, where everyone is welcomed with open arms. A school where students from all backgrounds learn from and celebrate each other's traditions. A school that shows the



## Book List for Early Childhood Parents, Providers and Educators

world as we will make it to be.

### **My Two Mommies** by Tierra Williams

This story is about a little boy who describes his day-to-day experiences with his two mommies. It's a great read! The story has a rhyme scheme, making it more attractive and enjoyable for young children. This book shares the experiences of a non-traditional family structure, which are reflective of the traditional family structure--there's no difference! Love is love! This book is designed to give children of same sex relationships the feeling of inclusion and validation that all children and families deserve.

### **When Aidan Became a Brother** by Kyle Lukoff

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8F2\\_UR4y0iw](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8F2_UR4y0iw)

When Aidan was born, everyone thought he was a girl. His parents gave him a pretty name, his room looked like a girl's room, and he wore clothes that other girls liked wearing. After he realized he was a trans boy, Aidan and his parents fixed the parts of his life that didn't fit anymore, and he settled happily into his new life. *When Aidan Became a Brother* is a heartwarming book that will resonate with transgender children, reassure any child concerned about becoming an older sibling, and celebrate the many transitions a family can experience.

### **Love Makes a Family** by Sophia Beer

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8iqJOVpjEpE>

In this exuberant board book, many different families are shown in happy activity, from an early-morning wake-up to a kiss before bed. Whether a child has two moms, two dads, one parent, or one of each, this simple preschool read-aloud demonstrates that what's most important in each family's life is the love the family members share.

## **First Day of School**

### **Not This Bear: A First Day of School Story** by Alyssa Satin Capucilli

The title gives you an idea of what this story is about. Bear is about to start his first day of school, but he's not feeling ready to go. After a little encouragement, this young bear finds the courage to give school a try.

## **Divorce or Parent Separation**

### **It is Not Your Fault, Koko Bear** by Vicki Lansky

The story of a lovable bear who doesn't want to have two homes, this book reassures children that their feelings are natural, their parents will still love and care for them, and the divorce is not their fault. Each page also contains bullet points giving parents advice for understanding and responding to what their children are experiencing.



## Book List for Early Childhood Parents, Providers and Educators

### **Two Homes** by Claire Masurel

Alex has two favorite chairs: a rocking chair at Daddy's and a soft chair at Mommy's. Through small details like these, "Two Homes" focuses on what is gained rather than what is lost. It conveys that no matter which parent he's with, Alex knows that he is safe and loved. Even the illustrations are comforting and warm.

### **The Invisible String** by Patrice Karst

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=\\_cO2LBBBtAI](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_cO2LBBBtAI)

This book addresses feelings of separation anxiety, something that many children experience in the midst of a transition that impacts their time with loved ones. In the story, a mother describes to her children that they are all connected by "An Invisible String made of love."

Applicable to any type of separation or loss, this heartwarming picture book is about the invisible and unbreakable bonds that connect us to our loved ones, no matter where they are.

### **Dinosaur Divorce** by Marc Brown

This timely, reassuring picture book is the perfect resource to help young children and their families deal with the confusion, misconceptions, and anxieties apt to arise when divorce occurs.

### **You Weren't with Me** by Chandra Ghosh Ippen

This story was designed to help parents and children talk about difficult separations, reconnect, and find their way back to each other. **The book may be helpful for families experiencing . . .***(Available in English and Spanish)*

- Divorce or caregiver separation
- Caregiver work-related separations
- Military service related separations
- Immigration related separations
- Child welfare related separations
- Parental incarceration
- Parental substance use related separations

### **New Baby**

#### **You Were the First** by Patricia McLachlan

*"You were the first to teach us how to be parents."* A touching celebration of firstborn children, this book walks your child through the milestones of babyhood while reassuring him that no matter who else comes along, he will always be the first.



## **Book List for Early Childhood Parents, Providers and Educators**

**Babies Don't Eat Pizza: A Big Kid's Book about Baby Brothers and Sisters** by Dianne Danzig

This book blends matter-of-fact information with kid-friendly humor to answer all the questions new big siblings have. The book refers to the new sibling as “your baby” and frequently references readers’ own babyhood. Practical tips for parents are included, too.

**One Special Day: A Story for Big Brothers and Sisters** by Lola M. Schaefer: This beautifully illustrated story focuses on Spencer, who is silly and strong. When the new baby arrives, he also learns to be gentle. It’s less about the new baby and more about how exciting it is to become an older sibling. With no reference to pregnancy or birth, it’s also perfect for adoptive and foster families.

### ***Moving or Saying Goodbye***

**Moving to the Neighborhood (Daniel Tiger's Neighborhood)** by Jason Fruchter

In this sweet board book, Daniel Tiger gets a new neighbor. Moving is scary at first, but the new neighbor soon feels right at home.

**A Kiss Goodbye** by Audrey Penn

Chester the raccoon, of the beloved story “The Kissing Hand,” is moving. This book walks readers through Chester’s journey of saying goodbye to his home, plus learning to embrace the exciting features of his new home.

**My Very Exciting, Sorta Scary Big Move** by Lori Attanasio Woodring

Written by a child psychologist, this story/workbook walks children ages 5-11 step-by-step through the moving process, including strategies for understanding change, managing emotions, saying goodbye and staying in touch, making new friends, and more.

These books help your child understand that he is not alone in experiencing this type of change. They also provide encouraging words, helpful advice, and the knowledge that everything will be okay in the end.

### ***Good Touch, Bad Touch***

**Where Hands Go: An Introduction to Safe and Unsafe Touch** by Krystaelynn Sanders Diggs.

<https://a.co/d/6CAFVCv>

Where Hands Go a beautiful new book written by Krystaelynn Sanders Diggs. This book is a resource for parents, teachers, therapists, and guardians who want to discuss this critical topic with younger children. It’s an excellent introduction for kids to recognize when touch can be harmful and how to talk about it with confidence and understanding. Where Hands Go will empower your child so they know they have the





## Book List for Early Childhood Parents, Providers and Educators

power to say no when unwanted touches happen. You can give your child a tool they can use their whole life to keep themselves safe from harm.

### ***Books for Children Who Feel They Don't Fit In (Self-Acceptance)***

**The Fabulous Fungi Forest by Jason Antoon** is an adventure about anxiety, self-acceptance and acceptance of others, no matter what their exterior shows. Mushrooms are weird and wonderful! And so are YOU!

#### **[LINK](#)**

Agatha the Amanita is a 9 year old who loves her doc marten boots, but hates the white dots on her red mushroom cap. With help from Floyd the Common (AKA the boring shroom), they travel through the Fabulous Fungi Forest and meet Osmond, the Old Man of the Woods, and his band of outcast mushrooms who each have their own shortcomings but have learned to accept who they are. Includes a full color glossary of all the mushrooms (and their scientific names) that appear in the story.

#### **Key Features:**

Ideal for AGES 4-10, but any age can enjoy.

Perfect for bedtime, naptime, bathtime, story time, anytime.

Kids will learn self-acceptance and acceptance of others in a fun and engaging way.

Colorful Pixar-like characters and settings come to life on each page.

Pick up a copy for you and anyone that loves the forest, mushrooms, the environment, doc marten boots, friendship, and a fantastic adventure.

### **APPS**

**Help Kids Cope** is designed to assist parents in talking to their children about different disasters. The app has 10 different disasters.

Earthquakes

Tornadoes

Extreme Weather

Tsunamis

Floods

Wildfires

Hurricanes

**Trigger Stop: Sensory and Emotional Check-In Ages 3-8** by Julie Kurtz at Center for Optimal Brain Integration®

**<https://www.optimalbrainintegration.com/app-1>**

Free 22-minute video, free downloadable version of the APP and a User Guide in English and Spanish is available

**Trigger Stop: Sensory and Emotional Check-In** Application designed for children developmentally ages 3-8 years. This smart phone/tablet APP is intended for use for children who might not be able to access their words when their emotions are intense, and they become dysregulated in the moment. Whether a result of a



## **Book List for Early Childhood Parents, Providers and Educators**

trauma trigger or emotional trigger in that moment, a child may not have access to the executive parts of their brain in charge of reasoning, logic or words. The APP can be used to help a child communicate what they are feeling, experiencing emotionally or the sensations in their body during that emotional charge.

### ***Scripted Stories***

**Scripted Stories** are written uniquely for an individual child who is having difficulty with a new life change, an expectation, facing a new situation, a new routine or that is having a hard time learning a social skill expectation. The story is written with the child's perspective and helps them identify how they feel and ways they can feel safe or follow the new routine or expectations.

<https://challengingbehavior.cbcs.usf.edu/Implementation/Program/strategies.html>

<http://csefel.vanderbilt.edu/scriptedstories/tips.pdf>

<https://www.pbisworld.com/tier-2/social-stories/>

### **Scripted Story on Emotions and Size of Emotions for Children Ages 3-8:**

<https://www.optimalbrainintegration.com/freeresources>

**Suggestions or Questions? Send them to us at [optimalbrainintegration@gmail.com](mailto:optimalbrainintegration@gmail.com)**