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[Classroom Ideas \(https://www.weareteachers.com/category/teaching-strategies/\)](https://www.weareteachers.com/category/teaching-strategies/)

50 Must-Have Picture Books to Teach Social Emotional Skills

These social-emotional books will encourage empathy, kindness, and help kids think about grief and anger.



[\(https://www.weareteachers.com/author/kagmoran/\)](https://www.weareteachers.com/author/kagmoran/) Kimberley Moran

[\(https://www.weareteachers.com/author/kagmoran/\)](https://www.weareteachers.com/author/kagmoran/) on July 12, 2017



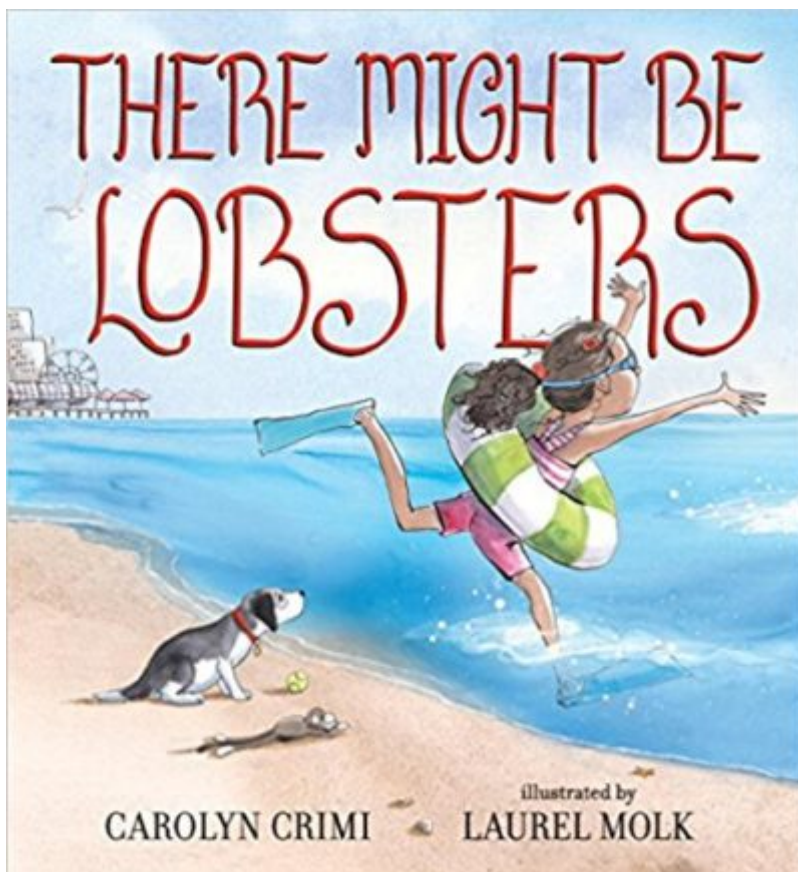


All teachers care about helping our students become caring, considerate, confident citizens of the world. Picture books about emotion and social-emotional issues can help kids think deeply about feelings and social issues.

Here are 50 books that you can share with kids of any age that will help them develop empathy, talk about their feelings, and identify with others.

Books About Fear

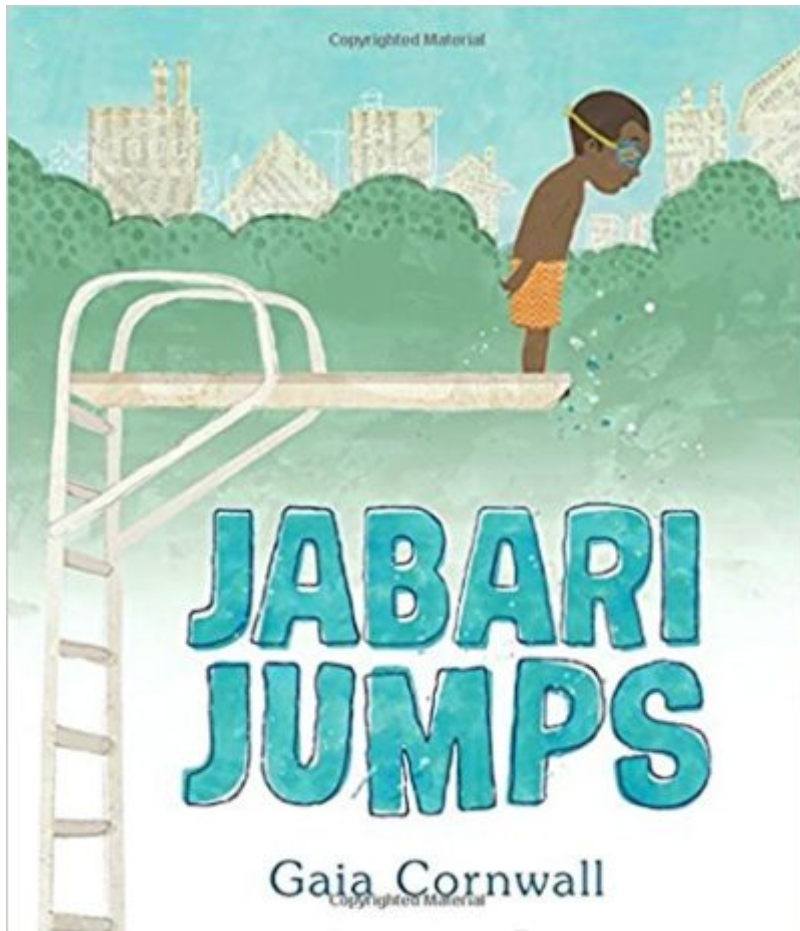
1. *There Might Be Lobsters* (<http://amzn.to/2ueJmEj>) by Carolyn Crimi



Lots of things at the beach scare Sukie. Lots. Because she is just a small dog, and the stairs are

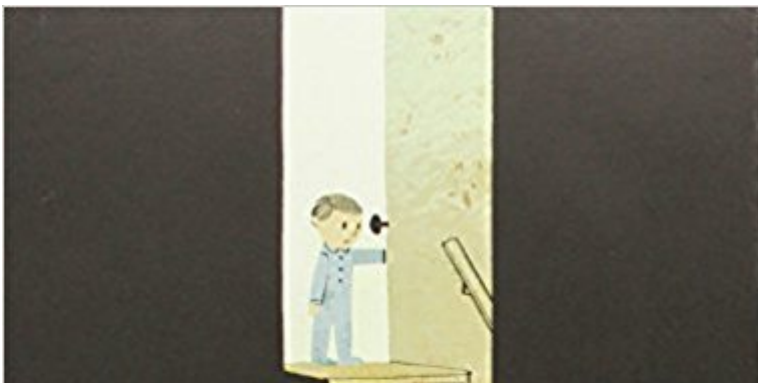
big and sandy, and the waves are big and whooshy, and the balls are big and beachy.

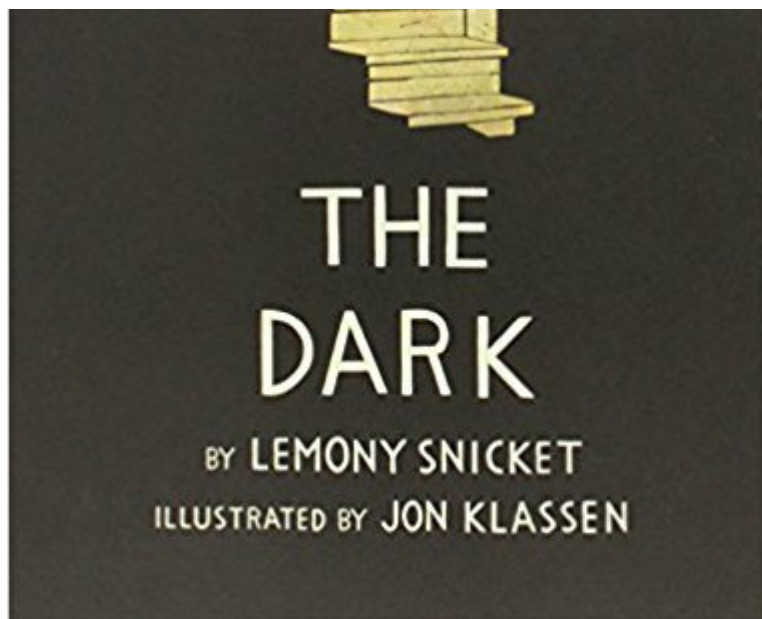
2. *Jabari Jumps* (<http://amzn.to/2taXSYN>) by Gaia Cornwall



Jabari is definitely ready to jump off the diving board. He's finished his swimming lessons and passed his swim test, and he's a great jumper, so he's not scared at all.

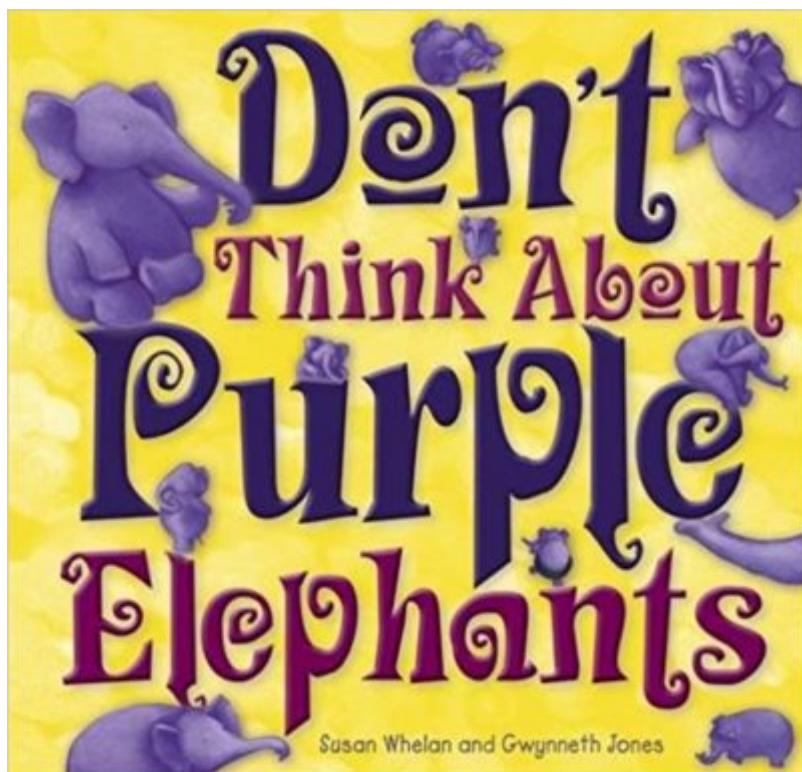
3. *The Dark* (<http://amzn.to/2v9niHH>) by Lemony Snicket





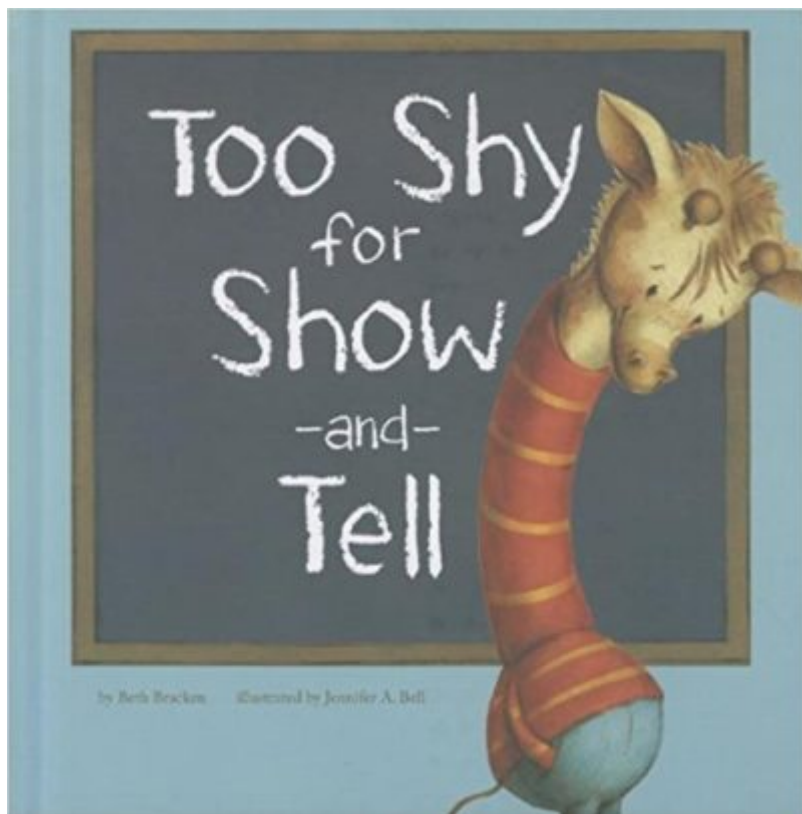
Laszlo is afraid of the dark. The dark lives in the same house as Laszlo. Mostly, though, the dark stays in the basement and doesn't come into Laszlo's room. But one night, it does.

4. *Don't Think About Purple Elephants* (<http://amzn.to/2uNSugi>) by Susanne Merritt



Sometimes Sophie worries — not during the day when she is busy with family and friends, but at night when everything is calm and quiet.

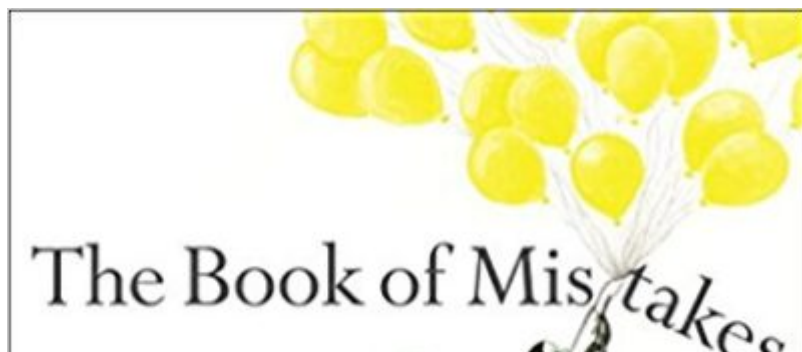
5. *Too Shy for Show-and-Tell* (<http://amzn.to/2u5GysS>) by Beth Bracken



Sam is a quiet little boy who hates show-and-tell. Just thinking about it makes his stomach hurt. Sam must find a way to conquer his fear of show-and-tell.

Books about Risk-Taking

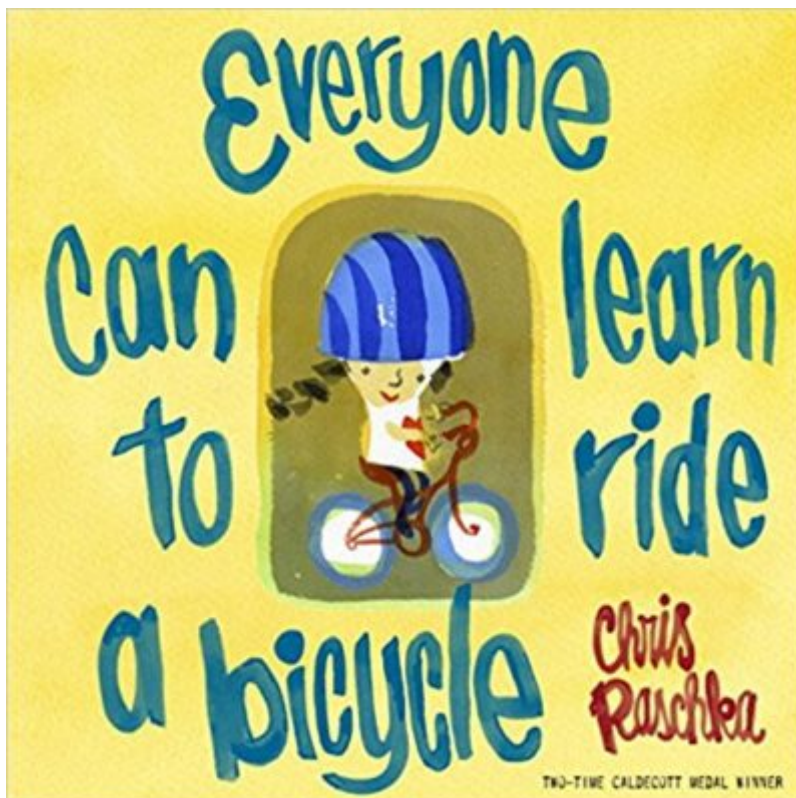
6. *The Book of Mistakes* (<http://amzn.to/2taWLRy>) by Corinna Luyken





Zoom meets Beautiful Oops! in this book about the creative process, and the way in which “mistakes” can blossom into inspiration

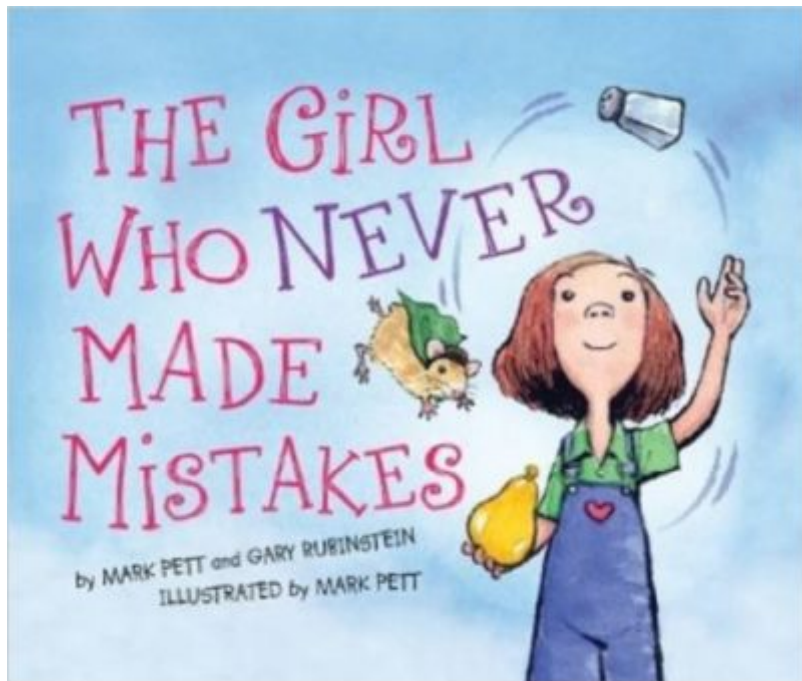
7. Everyone Can Learn to Ride a Bicycle **(<http://amzn.to/2u5on6G>) by Chris Raschka**



Learning to ride a bike is one of the most important milestones of childhood, and this

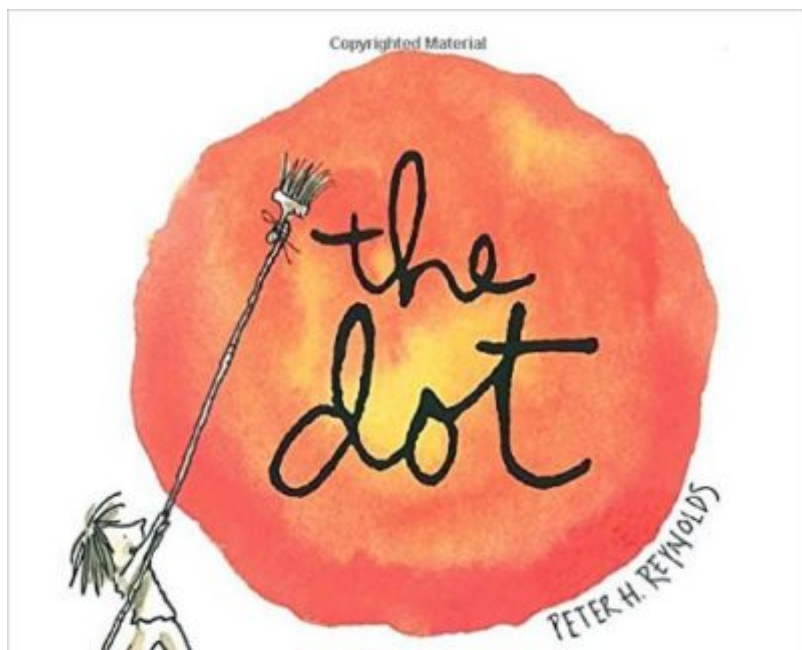
book captures the emotional ups and downs of the experience.

8. *The Girl Who Never Made Mistakes* (<http://amzn.to/2ueNAvP>) by Mark Pett



Meet Beatrice Bottomwell: a nine-year-old girl who has never (not once!) made a mistake.

9. *The Dot* (<http://amzn.to/2sMu995>) by Peter H. Reynolds

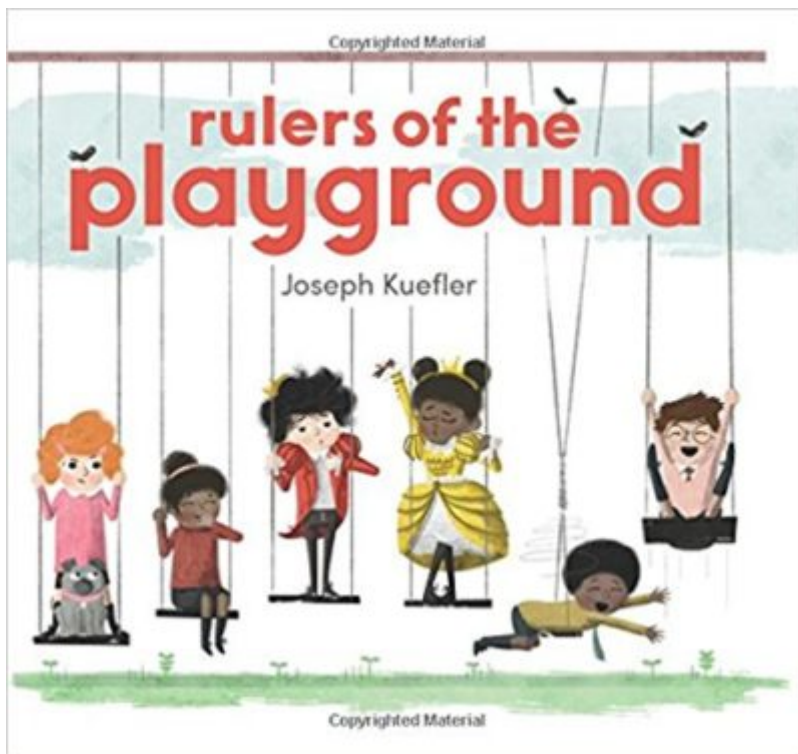




The words of her teacher are a gentle invitation to express herself. But Vashti can't draw – she's no artist.

Books about Friendship

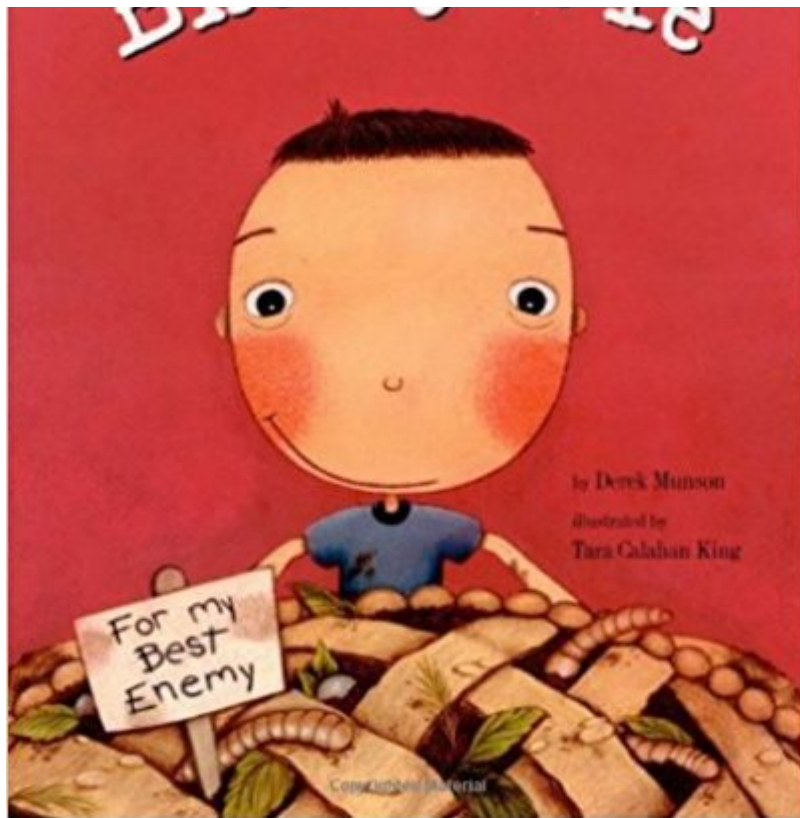
10. *Rulers of the Playground* (<http://amzn.to/2taGuU7>) by Joseph Kuefler



One morning, Jonah decided to become ruler of the playground. Everyone agreed to obey his rules to play in King Jonah's kingdom ... Everyone except for Lennox ... because she wanted to rule the playground, too.

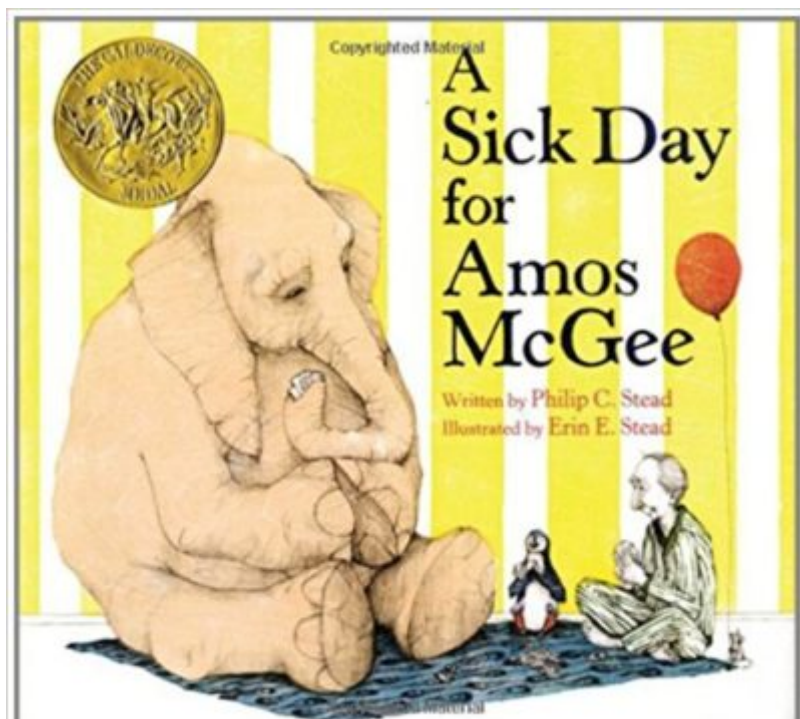
11. *Enemy Pie* (<http://amzn.to/2uaHAMZ>) by Derek Munson





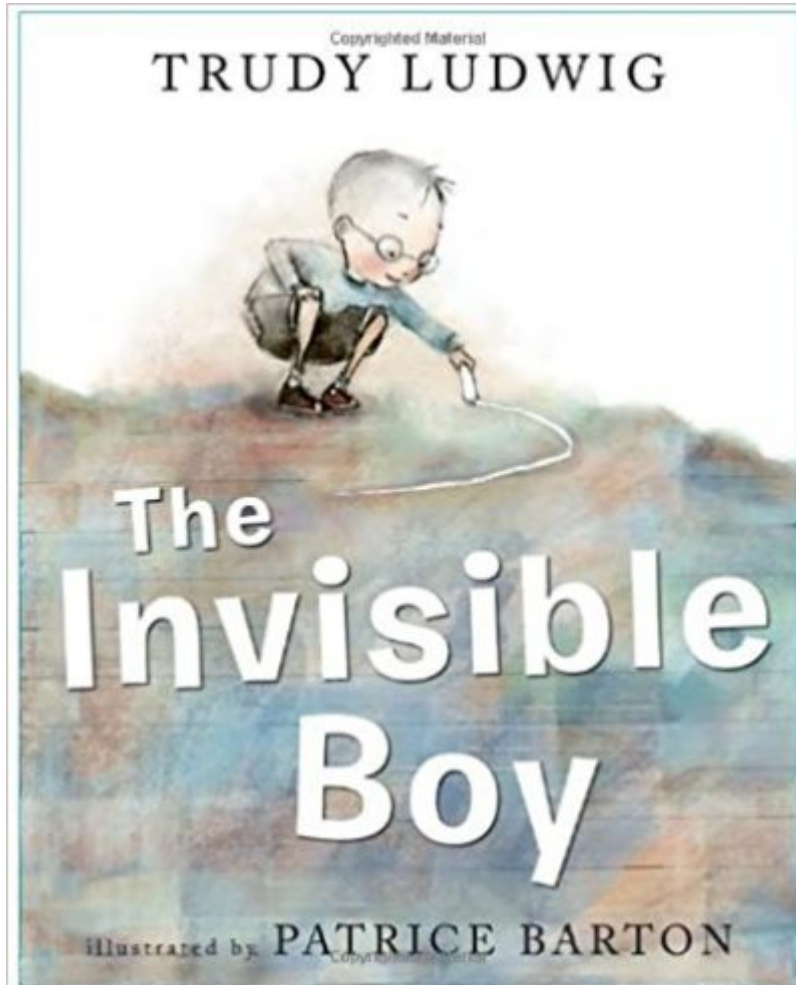
It was the perfect summer. That is until Jeremy Ross moved into the house down the street and became neighborhood enemy number one.

12. *A Sick Day for Amos McGee* (<http://amzn.to/2ueQrVz>) by Philip C. Stead



Friends come in all sorts of shapes and sizes. In Amos McGee's case, all sorts of species, too!

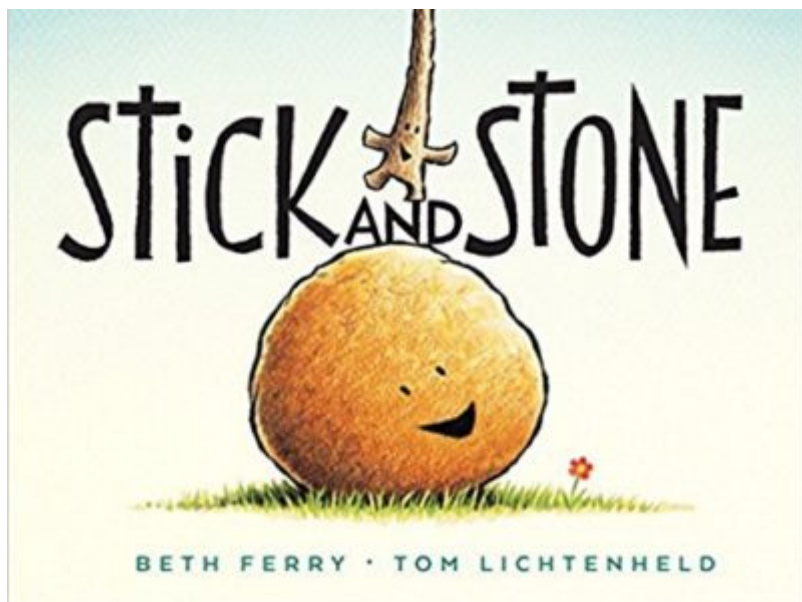
13. *The Invisible Boy* (<http://amzn.to/2v93DaL>) by Trudy Ludwig



Meet Brian, the invisible boy. Nobody ever seems to notice him or think to include him in their group, game, or birthday party ... until a new kid comes to class.

14. *Stick and Stone* (<http://amzn.to/2sMLVJm>) by Beth Ferry

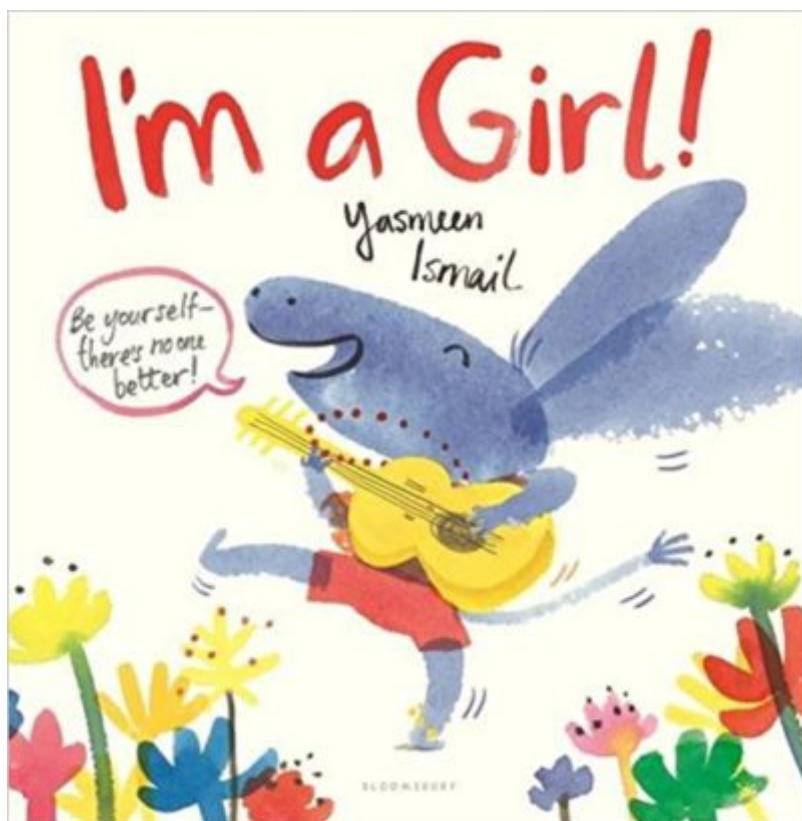




When Stick rescues Stone from a prickly situation with a Pinecone, the pair becomes fast friends. But when Stick gets stuck, can Stone return the favor?

Books about Identity

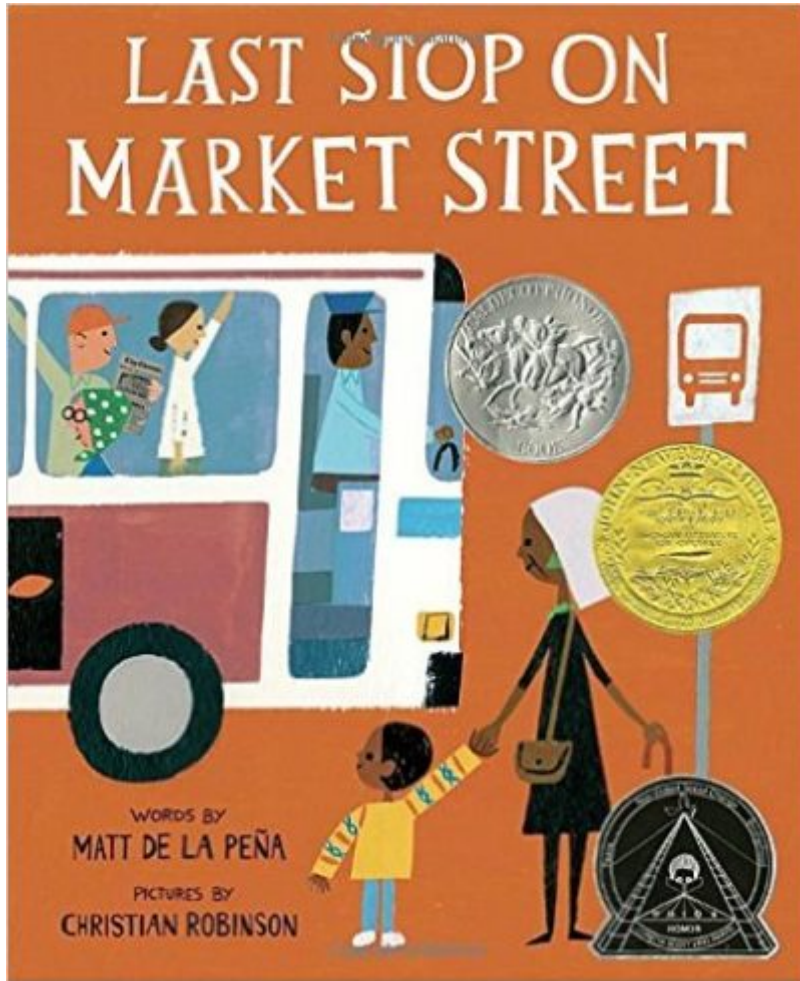
15. *I'm a Girl!* (<http://amzn.to/2ueEVtc>) by Yasmeen Ismail



Meet a little girl who's spontaneous, fast, and strong and loves winning. Sometimes she's

mistaken for a boy, but she definitely isn't one!

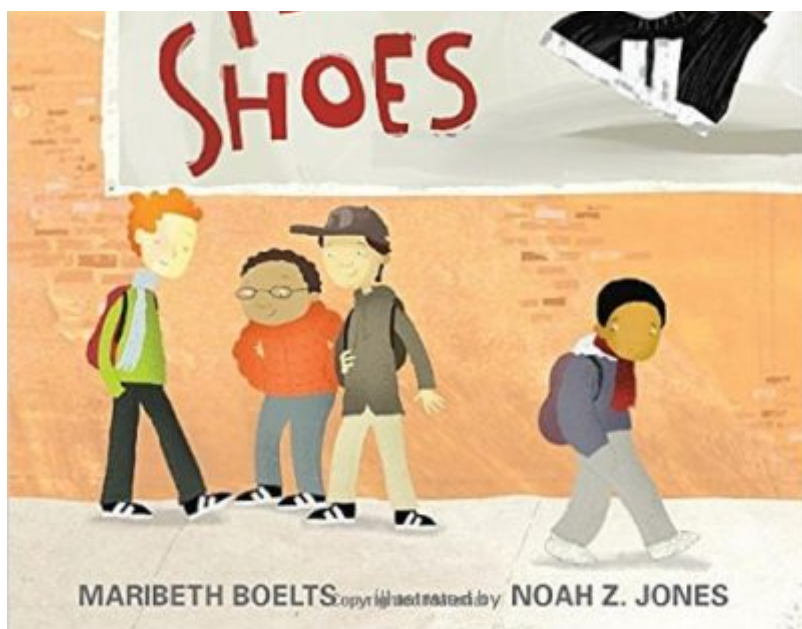
16. *Last Stop on Market Street* (<http://amzn.to/2u5iUwD>) by Matt de la Peña



Every Sunday after church, CJ and his grandma ride the bus across town. But today, CJ wonders why they don't own a car like his friend Colby. Why doesn't he have an iPod like the boys on the bus? How come they always have to get off in the dirty part of town?

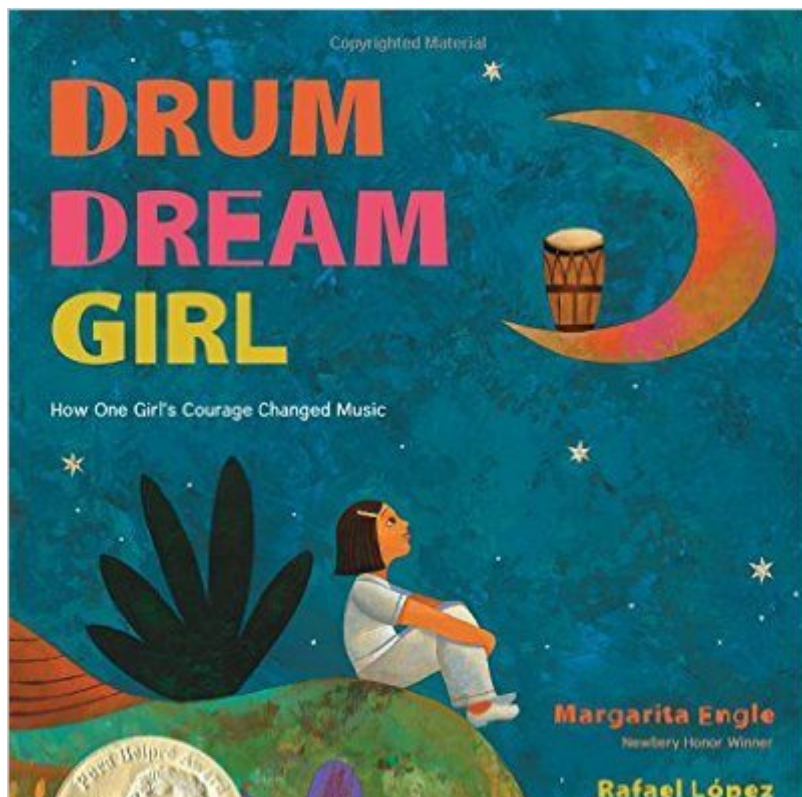
17. *Those Shoes* (<http://amzn.to/2sMuLfe>) by Maribeth Boelts





All Jeremy wants is a pair of those shoes, the ones everyone at school seems to be wearing. Though Jeremy's grandma says they don't have room for "want," just "need," when his old shoes fall apart at school, he is more determined than ever to have those shoes, even a thrift-shop pair that is much too small.

18. *Drum Dream Girl: How One Girl's Courage Changed Music* (<http://amzn.to/2u55tfW>) by Margarita Engle





Girls cannot be drummers. Long ago on an island filled with music, no one questioned that rule —until the drum dream girl. In her city of drumbeats, she dreamed of pounding tall congas and tapping small bongós. She had to keep quiet.

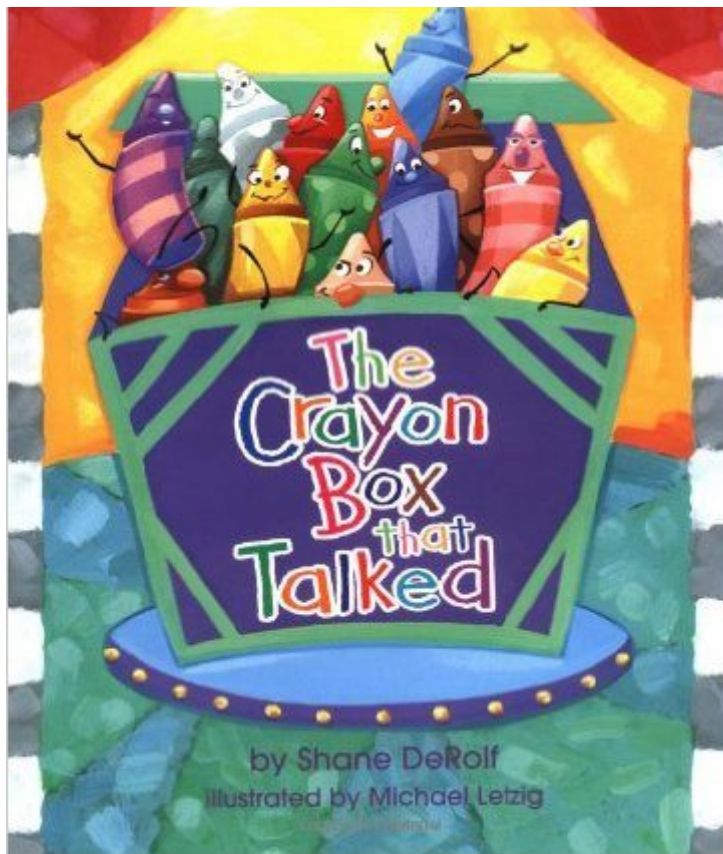
19. *My Very Own Space* (<http://amzn.to/2tb1Kcn>) by Pippa Goodhart



A little rabbit is trying to read his book in peace, but there's so much going on around him! Maybe he needs some space just for himself ...

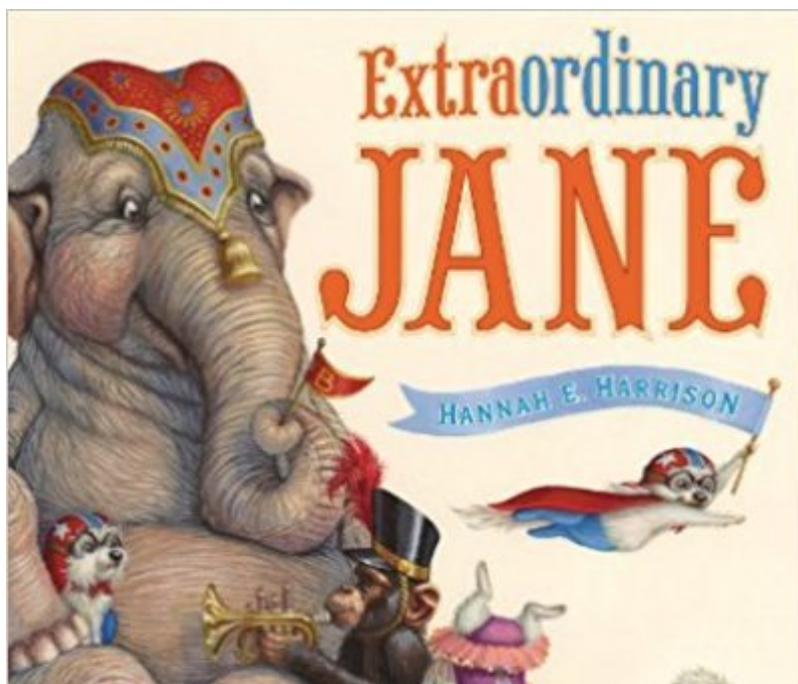
20. *The Crayon Box that Talked* (<http://amzn.to/2uO3dY4>) by Shane Derolf





“While walking through a toy store, the day before today, I overheard a crayon box with many things to say...”

21. *Extraordinary Jane* (<http://amzn.to/2v988SO>) by Hannah E. Harrison





Jane is an ordinary dog in an extraordinary circus. She isn't strong, graceful, or brave like her family. When she tries to be those things, Jane just doesn't feel like herself, but she also doesn't feel special.

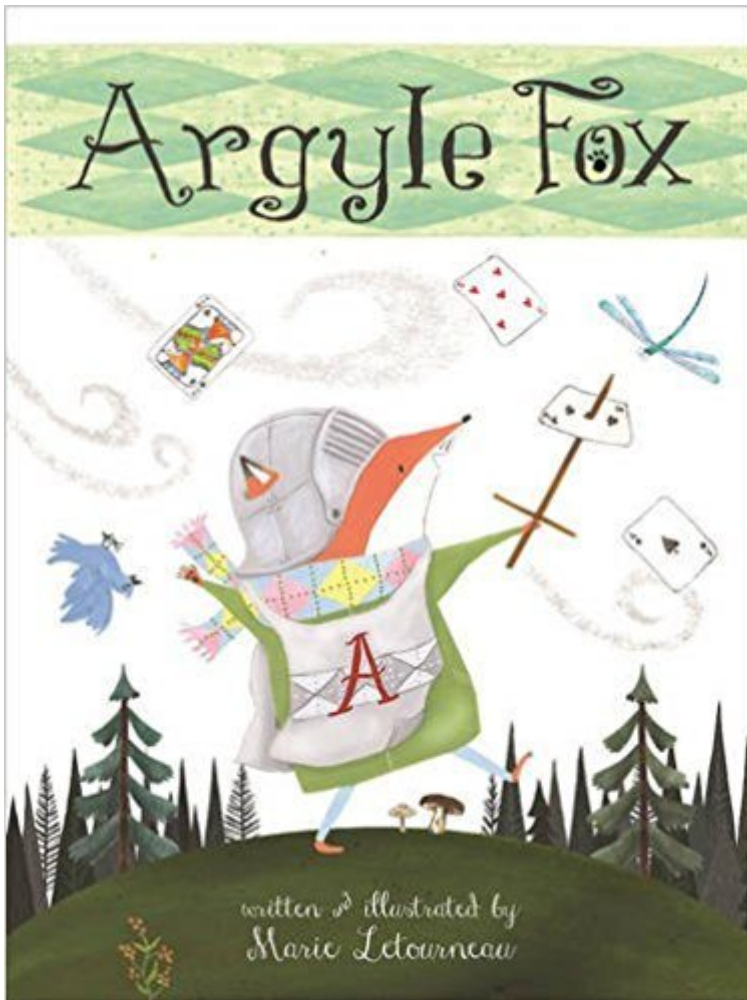
22. *Millie Fierce* (<http://amzn.to/2uNLIHj>) by Jane Manning



Millie is quiet. Millie is sweet. Millie is mild. But the kids at school don't listen to her.

Books about Overcoming Challenges

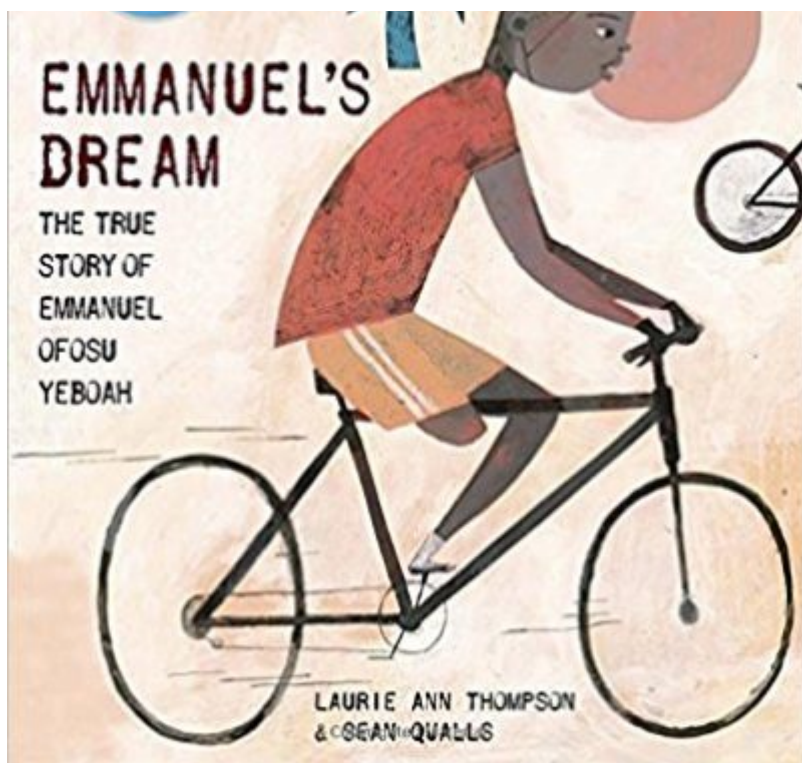
23. *Argyle Fox* (<http://amzn.to/2uaF5RI>) by Marie Letourneau



Argyle Fox, with his signature style, wants to play outside on a springtime day, but the wind is wreaking havoc with his fun and games. As soon as he builds a card tower, climbs into a giant spider web, or takes up his pirate sword, here comes the wind: Woosh!

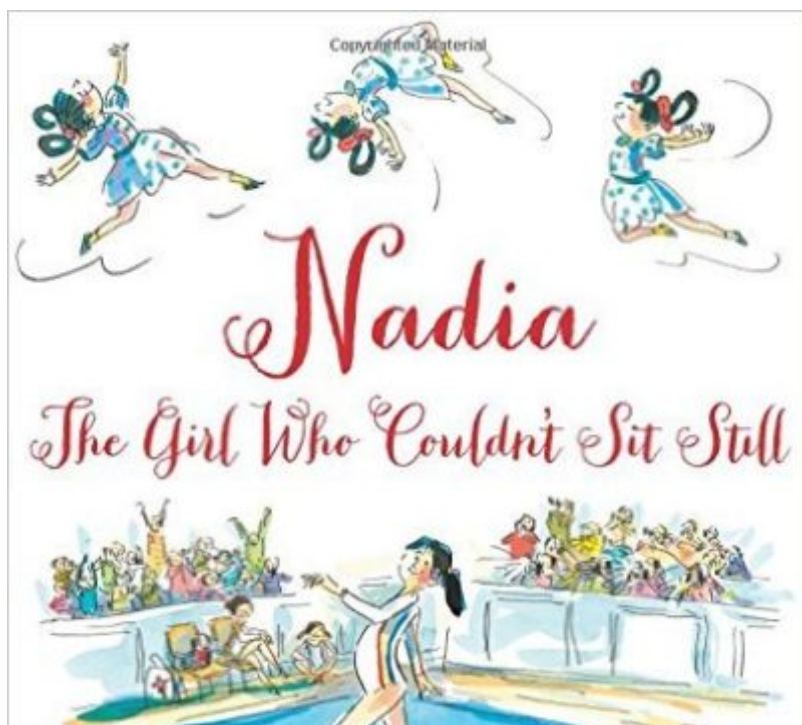
24. *Emmanuel's Dream: The True Story of Emmanuel Ofosu Yeboah* (<http://amzn.to/2tF4Ety>) by Laurie Ann Thompson





Emmanuel Ofosu Yeboah's inspiring true story is nothing short of remarkable. Born in Ghana, West Africa, with one deformed leg, he was dismissed by most people—but not by his mother, who taught him to reach for his dreams.

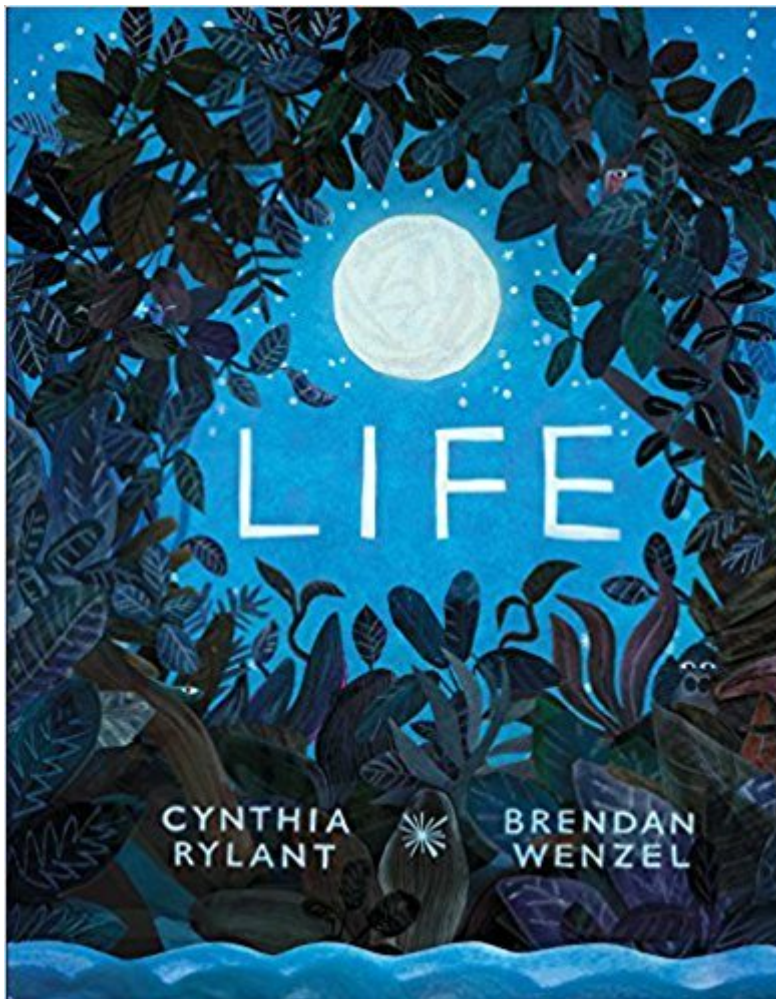
25. Nadia: The Girl Who Couldn't Sit Still **(<http://amzn.to/2v912xK>) by Karlin Gray**





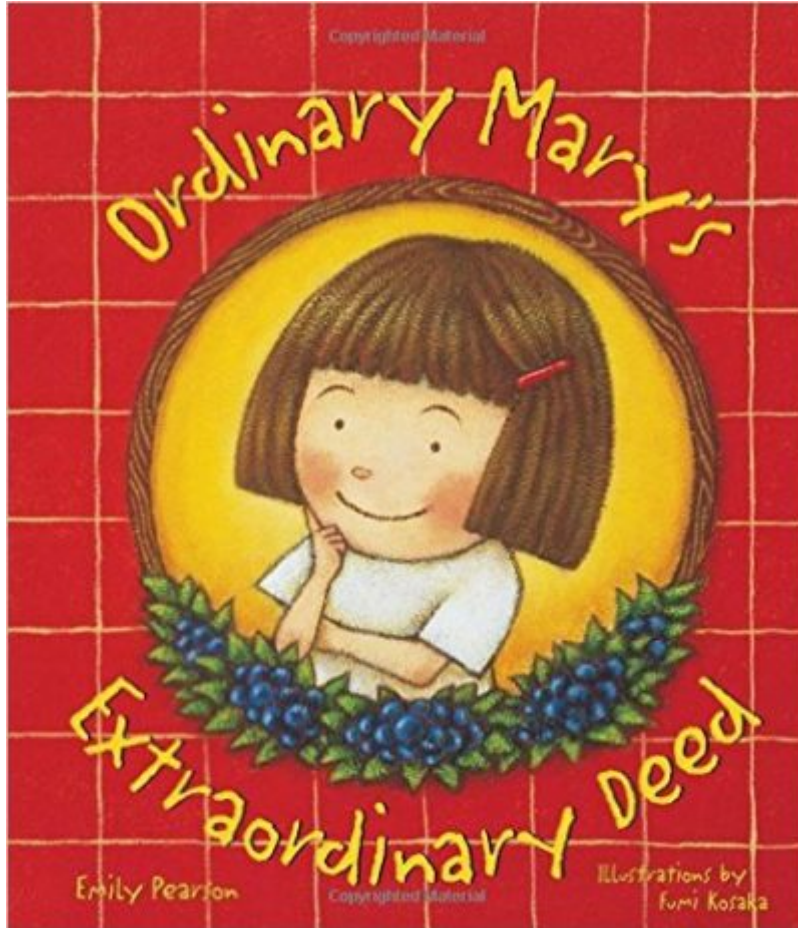
Nadia Comaneci was a feisty and fearless little girl who went from climbing trees in the forests of Romania to swinging into history at the 1976 Olympic Games, where she received an unprecedented seven perfect scores in gymnastics.

26. *Life* (<http://amzn.to/2uaMP69>) by Cynthia Rylant

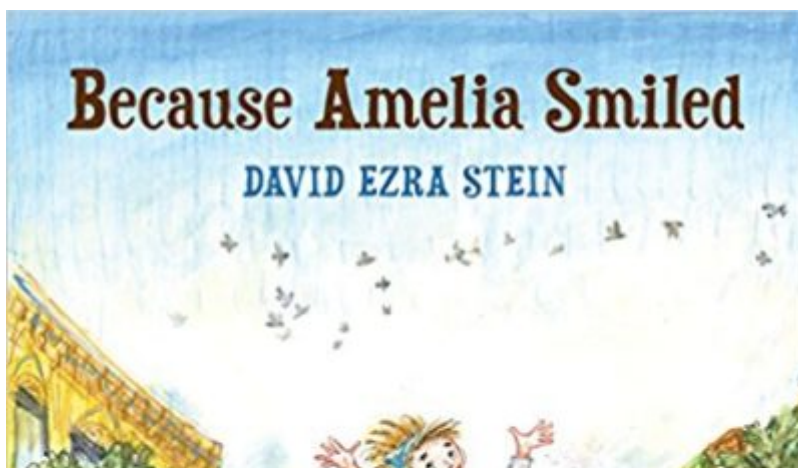


There are so many wonderful things about life, both in good times and in times of struggle.

Books about Kindness

BOOKS ABOUT KINDNESS**27. Ordinary Mary's Extraordinary Deed (<http://amzn.to/2v9h0YB>) by Emily Pearson**

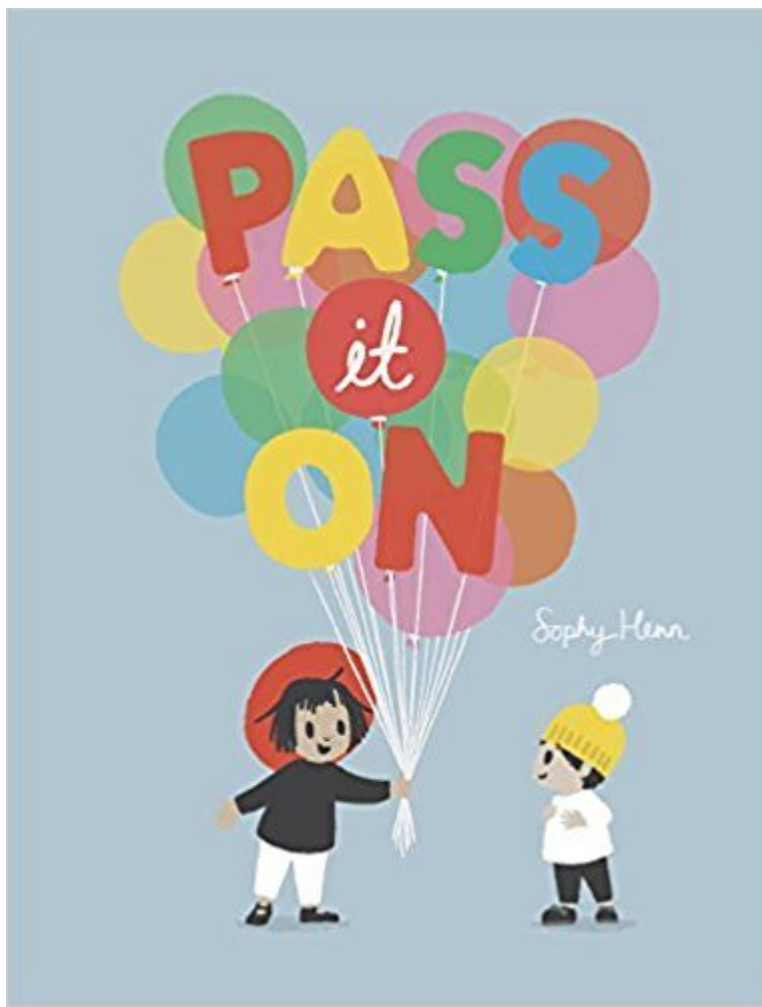
Can one child's good deed change the world?

28. Because Amelia Smiled (<http://amzn.to/2uf1OwN>) by David Ezra Stein



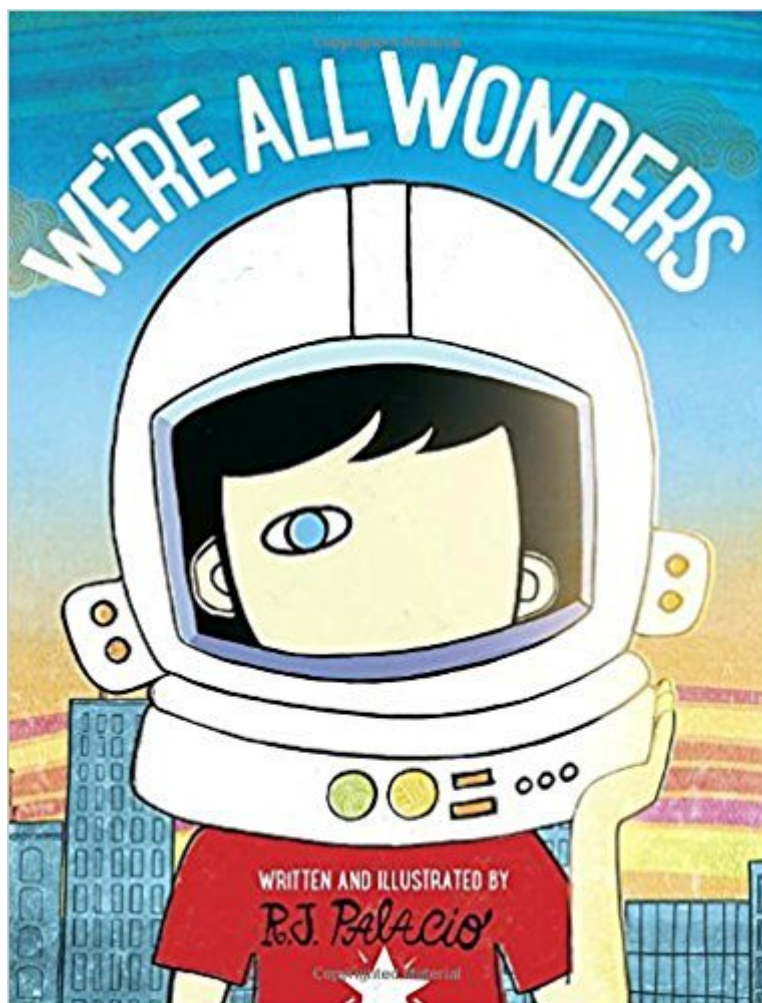
Because Amelia smiles as she skips down the street, her neighbor Mrs. Higgins smiles too and decides to send a care package of cookies to her grandson Lionel in Mexico.

29. *Pass It On* (<http://amzn.to/2sMQvrf>) by Sophy Henn



When you see something terrific, smile a smile and pass it on! If you chance upon a chuckle, hee hee hee and pass it on. Should you spot a thing of wonder, jump for joy and pass it on!

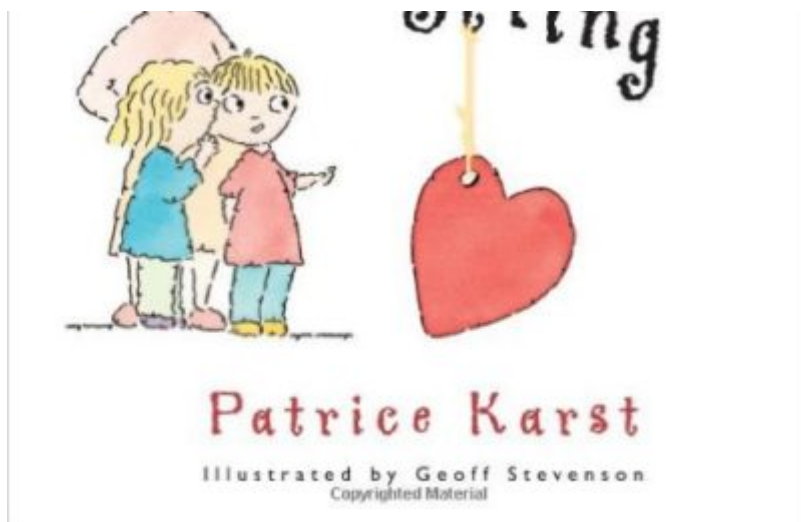
30. *We're All Wonders* (<http://amzn.to/2sMfyL2>) by R. J. Palacio



Now younger readers can meet Auggie Pullman, an ordinary boy with an extraordinary face, and his beloved dog, Daisy. Choose Kind.

31. *The Invisible String* (<http://amzn.to/2tbdk7l>) by Patrice Karst

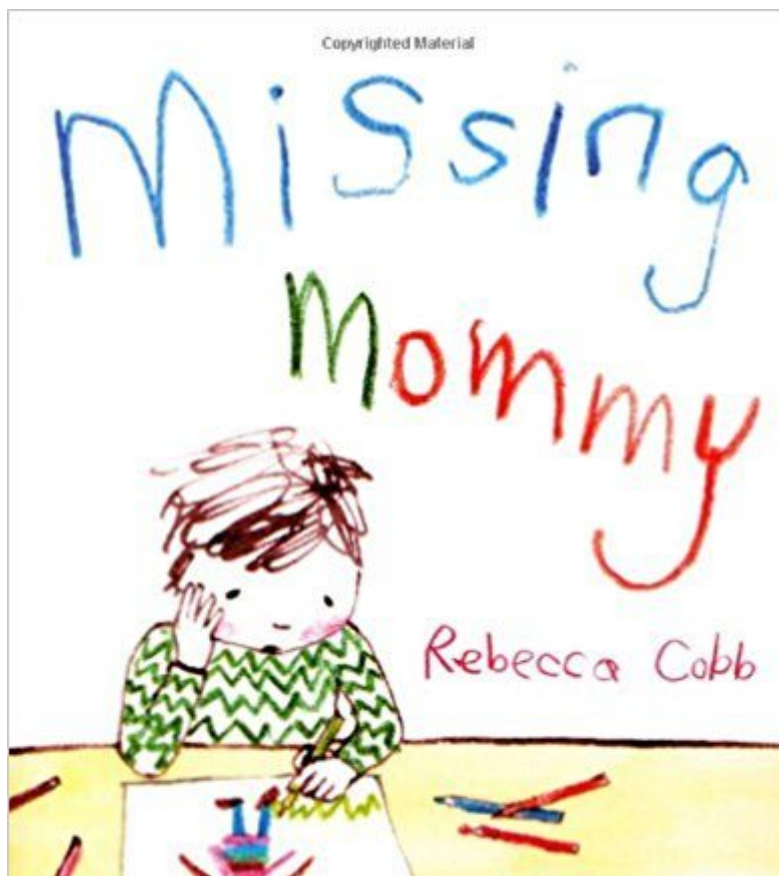




A story that teaches of the tie that really binds. The Invisible String reaches from heart to heart. Does everybody have an Invisible String? How far does it reach, anyway? Does it ever go away?

Books about Grief

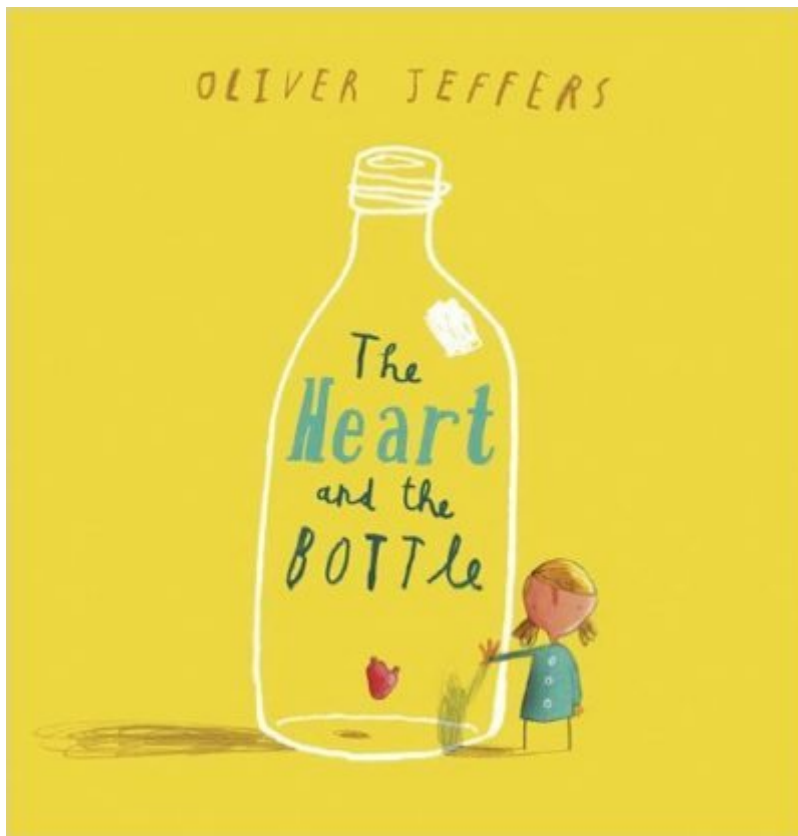
32. Missing Mommy: A Book About Bereavement (<http://amzn.to/2t1tgxW>) by Rebecca Cobb





Missing Mommy focuses on the positive—the recognition that the child is not alone but still part of a family that loves and supports him.

33. *The Heart and the Bottle* (<http://amzn.to/2ub1cam>) by Oliver Jeffers



There is a wonder and magic to childhood. We don't realize it at the time, of course . . . yet the adults in our lives do. They encourage us to see things in the stars, to find joy in colors and laughter as we play. But what happens when that special someone who encourages such wonder and magic is no longer around?

34. *The Memory String* (<http://amzn.to/2v9b1mP>) by Eve Bunting



Each button on Laura's memory string represents a piece of her family history. The buttons Laura cherishes the most belonged to her mother—a button from her prom dress, a white one off her wedding dress, and a single small button from the nightgown she was wearing on the day she died.

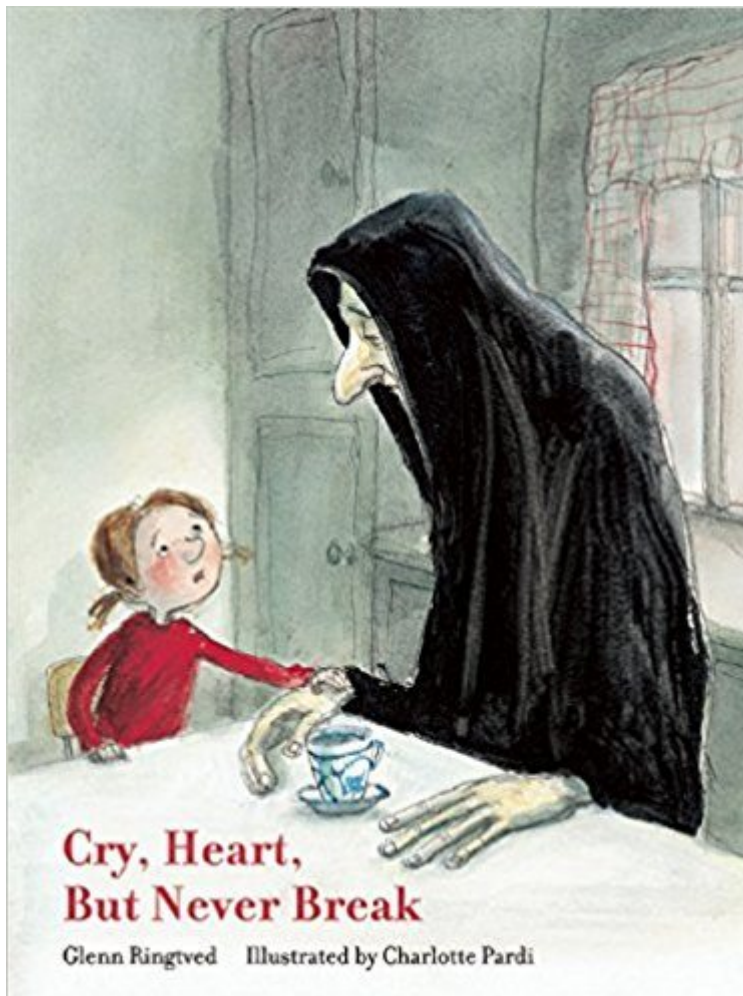
35. *Big Tree is Sick: A Story to Help Children Cope with the Serious Illness of a Loved One* (<http://amzn.to/2tKky3W>) by Nathalie Slosse





Snibbles and Big Tree are best friends! They have always hung out together, and Snibbles loves Big Tree very much. When Big Tree unexpectedly falls ill with woodworm, Snibbles is very upset and angry.

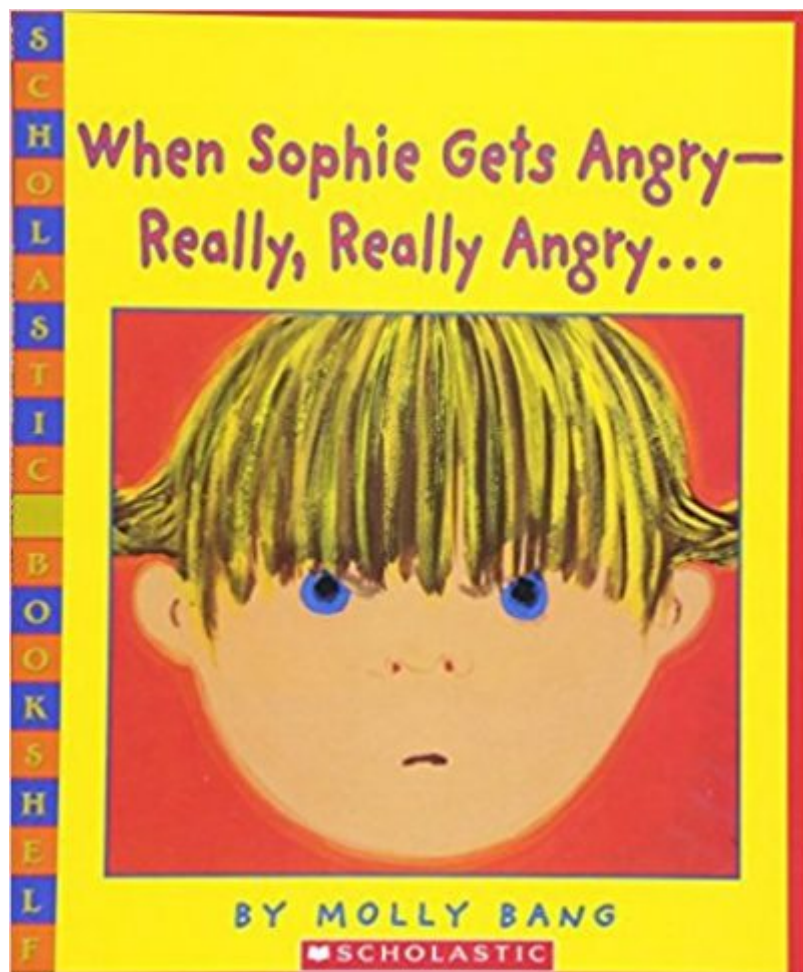
36. *Cry, Heart, But Never Break* (<http://amzn.to/2tK8rUH>) by Glenn Ringtved



Aware their grandmother is gravely ill, four siblings make a pact to keep death from taking her away. But Death does arrive all the same, as it must.

Books about Feelings

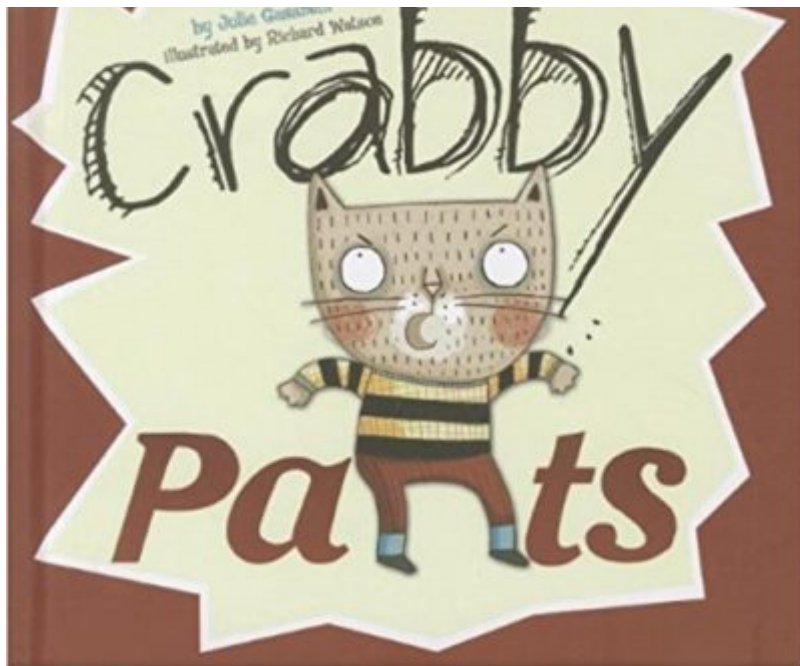
37. *When Sophie Gets Angry—Really, Really Angry*
(<http://amzn.to/2sMza1l>) by Molly Bang



Everybody gets angry sometimes.

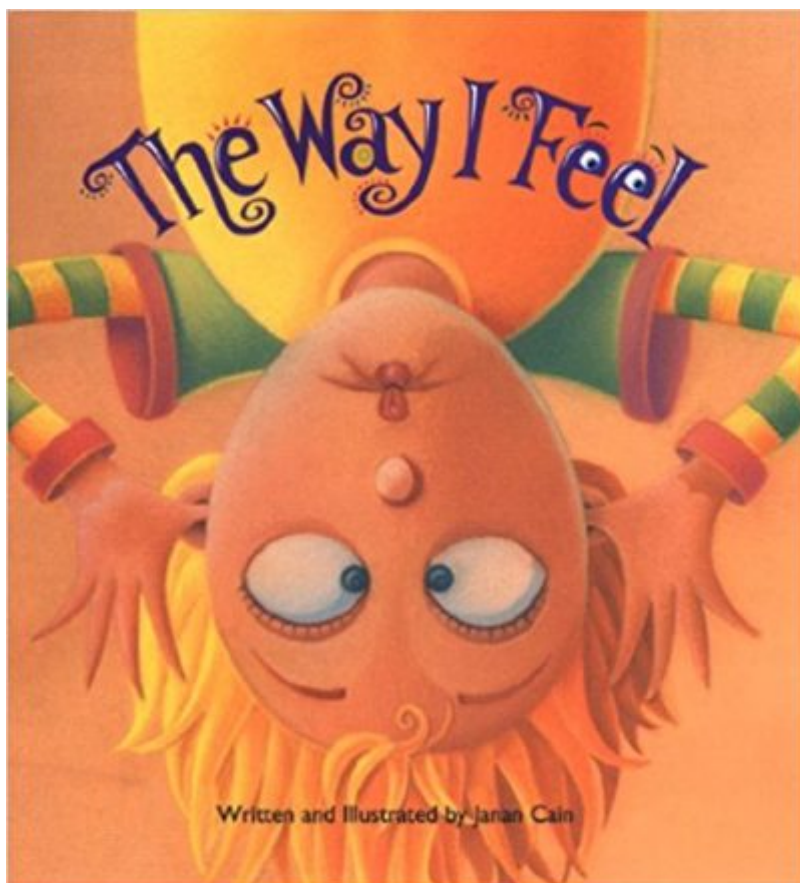
38. *Crabby Pants* (<http://amzn.to/2taENpO>) by Julie Gassman





When things don't go Roger's way, he gets crabby. However, Roger thinks he has found a solution to being such a crabby pants.

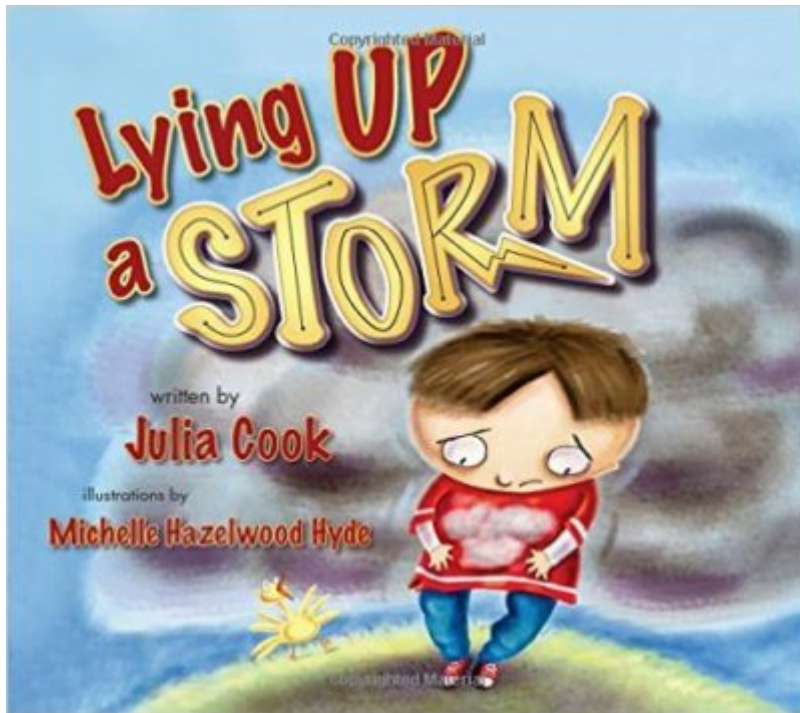
39. *The Way I Feel* (<http://amzn.to/2uau102>) by Janan Cain



Feelings are neither good nor bad, they simply are. Kids need words to name their feelings, just as they need words to name all things in their world.

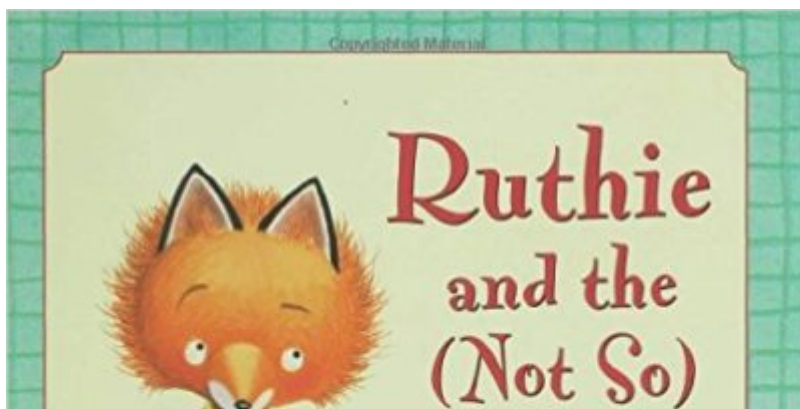
Books about Lying

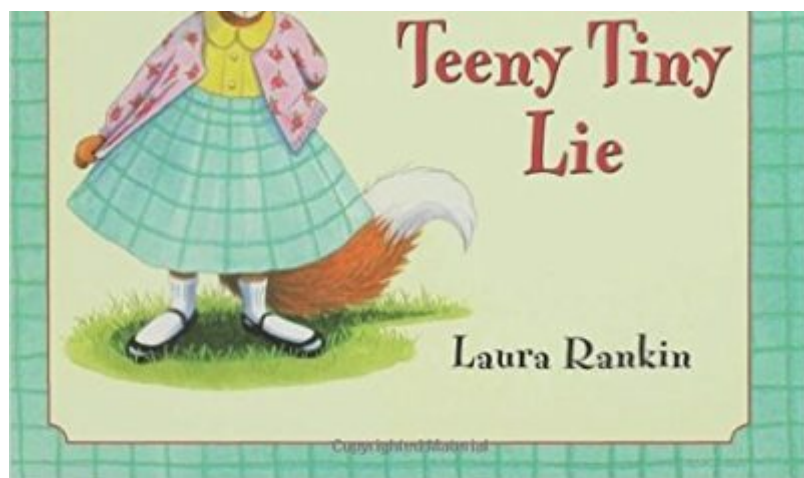
40. *Lying Up a Storm* (<http://amzn.to/2sMKzhl>) by Julia Cook



A Storm is Brewing... Whenever Levi doesn't like the truth, he kinda, sorta makes up other stuff to say.

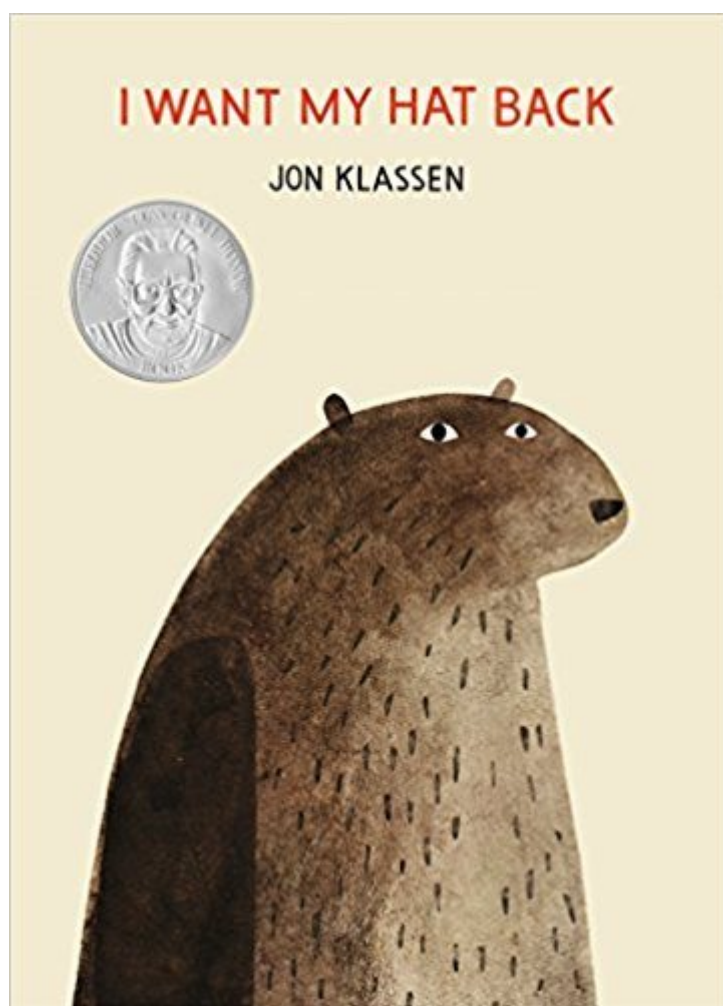
41. *Ruthie and the (Not So) Teeny Tiny Lie* (<http://amzn.to/2tKz9wn>) by Laura Rankin





Ruthie loves little things-the smaller the better. So when she finds a teeny tiny camera on the school playground one afternoon, she can hardly believe her luck. She wants to keep the camera in the worst way, but there's one little problem: It isn't hers.

42. [I Want My Hat Back](http://amzn.to/2uiP2gy) (http://amzn.to/2uiP2gy) by Jon Klassen

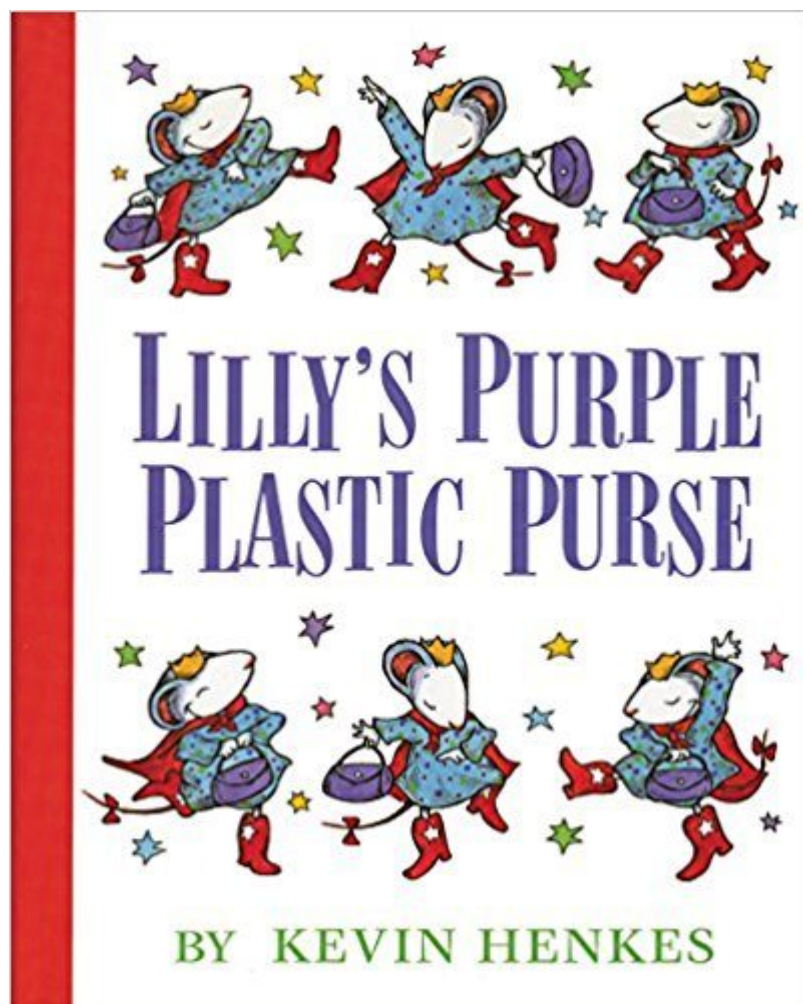


The bear's hat is gone, and he wants it back. Patiently and politely, he asks the animals he

comes across, one by one, whether they have seen it. Each animal says no.

Books about Self-Control

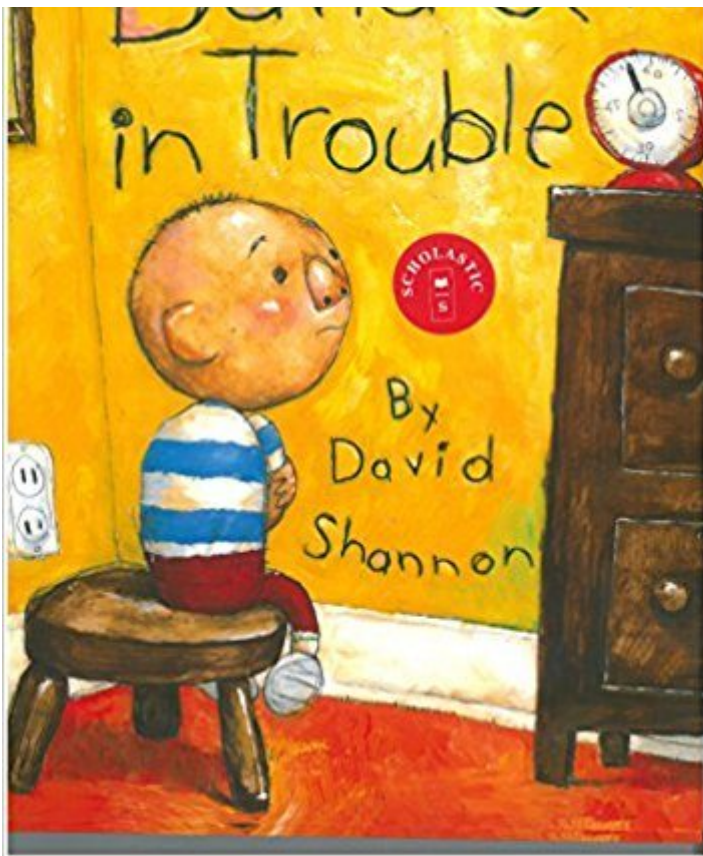
43. Lilly's Purple Plastic Purse (<http://amzn.to/2uekZWO>) by Kevin Henkes



Lilly loves everything about school, especially her cool teacher, Mr. Slinger. But when Lilly brings her purple plastic purse and its treasures to school and can't wait until sharing time, Mr. Slinger confiscates her prized possessions.

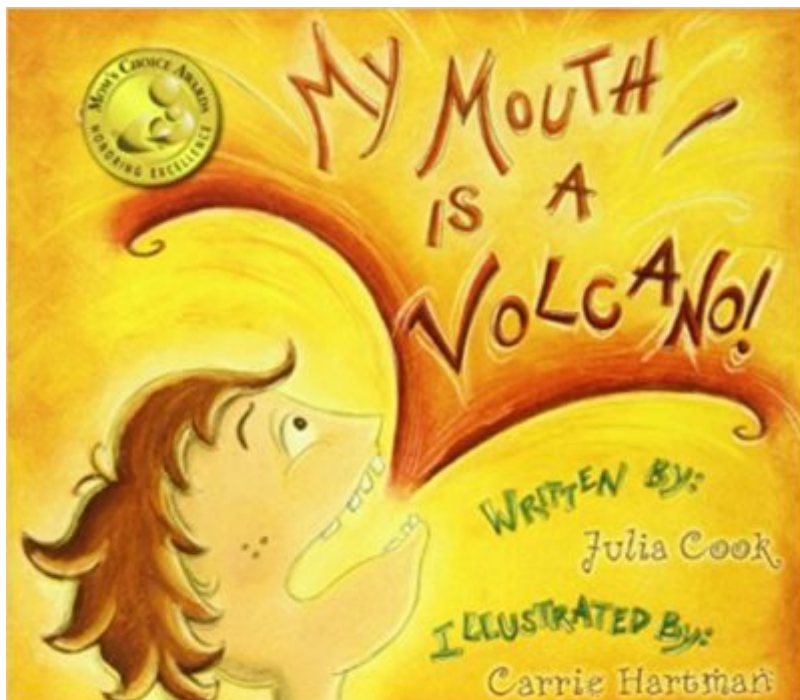
44. David Gets In Trouble (<http://amzn.to/2sQfpX2>) by David Shannon





"When David gets in trouble, he always says ... 'NO! It's not my fault! I didn't mean to! It was an accident!'"

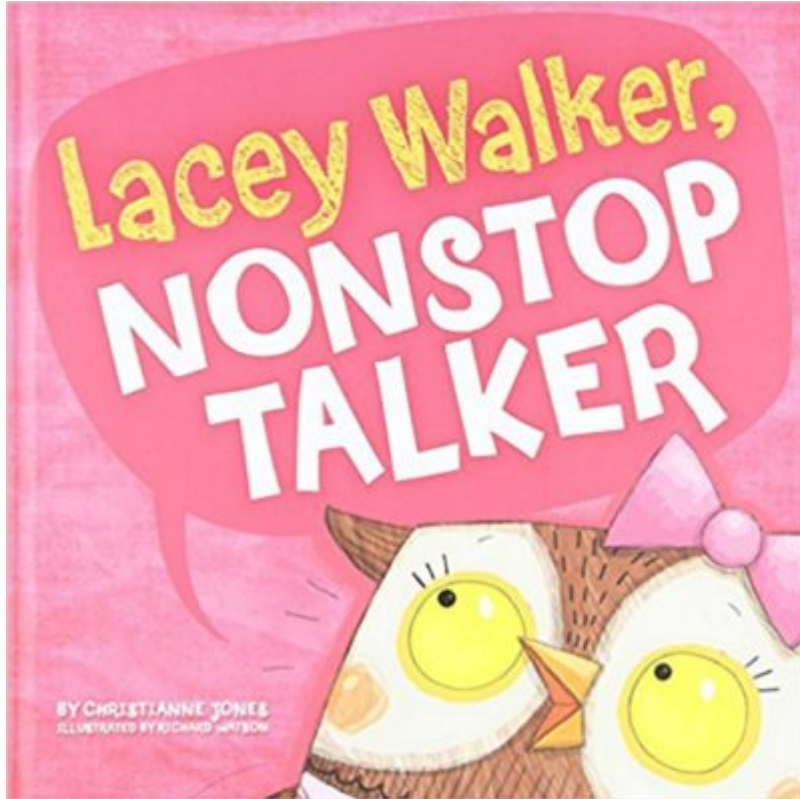
45. [My Mouth Is a Volcano!](http://amzn.to/2u92eEo) by Julia Cook



All of Louis thoughts are very important to him. In fact, his thoughts are so important to him

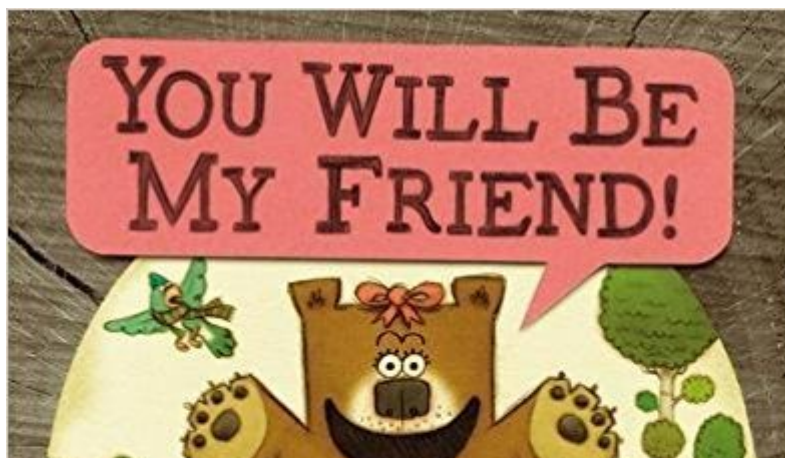
...and Lacey's thoughts are very, very important to him in fact, his thoughts are so important to him... that when he has something to say, his words begin to wiggle, and then they do the jiggle, then his tongue pushes all of his important words up against his teeth and he erupts, or interrupts others.

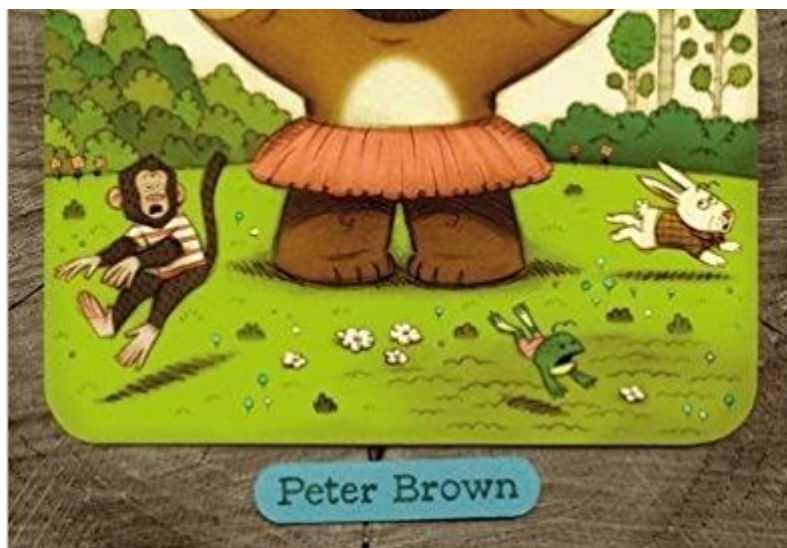
46. Lacey Walker, Nonstop Talker (<http://amzn.to/2uimfc2>) by Christianne C. Jones



Lacey Walker loves to talk. She talks all day, and sometimes all night. But when she loses her voice, Lacey learns the importance of listening.

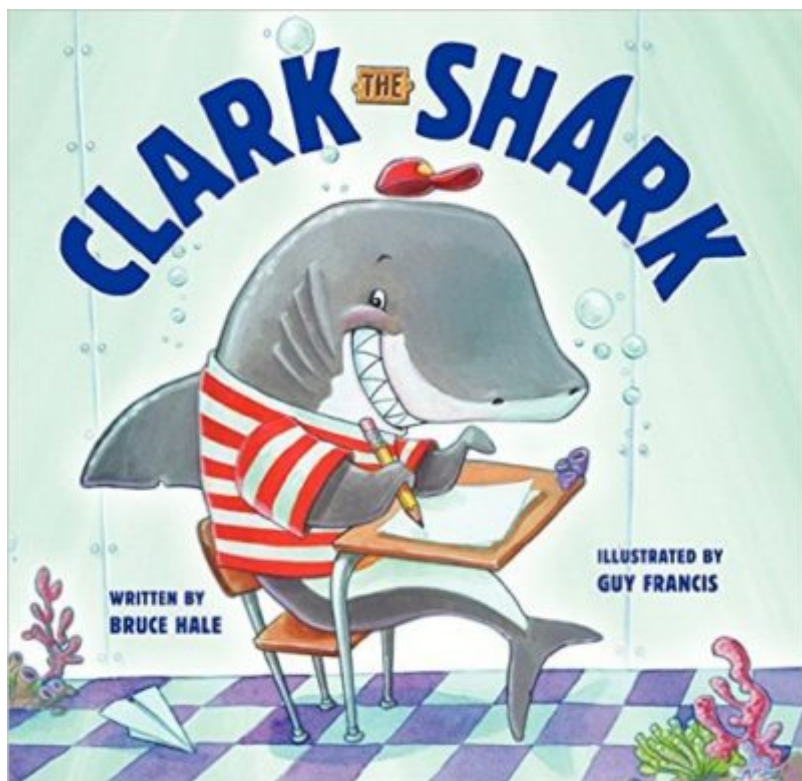
47. YOU WILL BE MY FRIEND! (<http://amzn.to/2teGmmm>) by Peter Brown





Today is the day the exuberant Lucy is going to make a new friend! But she finds it's harder than she had thought—she accidentally ruins the giraffe's breakfast and is much too big for the frogs' pond.

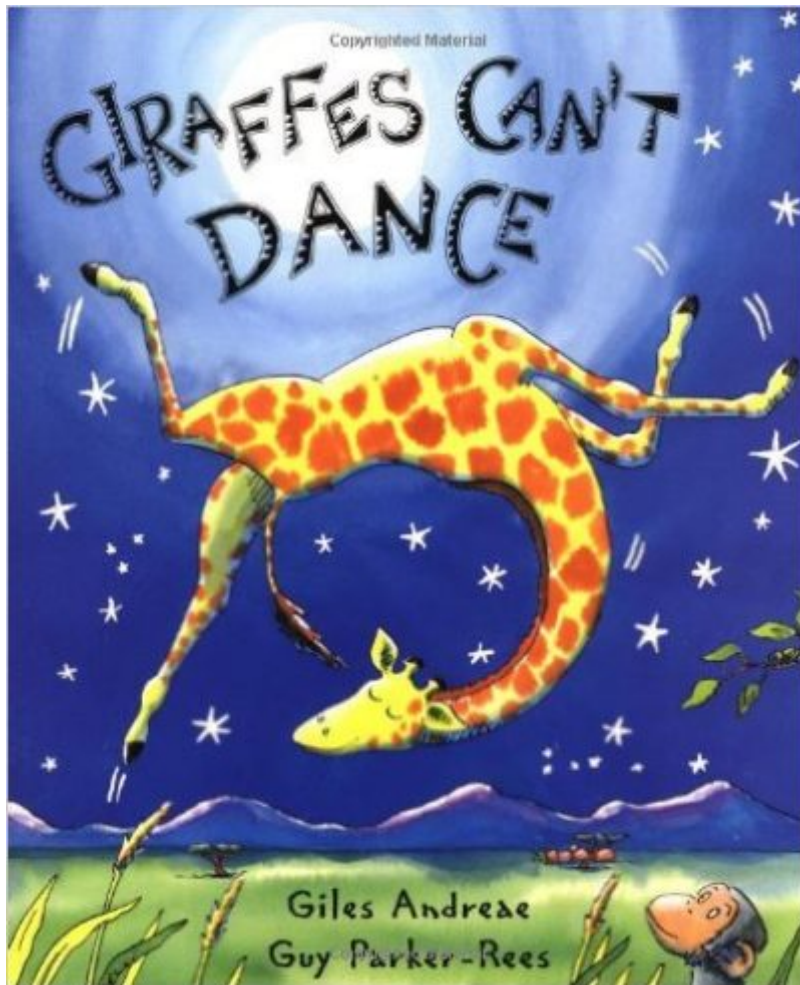
48. **Clark the Shark** (<http://amzn.to/2vcS3LQ>) by Bruce Hale



Clark is a shark with *zing*, *bang*, and *BOOM*. Clark zooms into school, crashes through the classroom, and is rowdy at recess.

Books about Resiliency

49. Giraffes Can't Dance (<http://amzn.to/2uiC42j>) by Giles Andreae



Gerald the tall giraffe would love to join in with the other animals at the Jungle Dance, but everyone knows that giraffes can't dance ... or can they?

50. Sunday Chutney (<http://amzn.to/2uevUPW>) by Aaron Blabey

The new girl at school has a glamorous life. What more could she want? Sunday Chutney is not your ordinary everyday girl. Sunday has lived everywhere and been everywhere. The only problem is this means she is always the new girl at school and she never really has a place to call home.

Use this four-step process to help reinforce the character trait featured in each story:

1. **DESCRIBE:** Talk with your students, and have them talk with one another, about what they think the main point of the story was. What character trait did the story define? How do you know? Why is it important? Can you make a connection to the story from your own life? Make a poster together, or have the students write or draw in their journals about this character trait.
2. **DEMONSTRATE:** Have a few students act out what the character trait looks like, feels like. Role playing different ways students can demonstrate this character trait will help reinforce the behavior.
3. **PRACTICE:** Plan activities where each child has to take a turn to practice the featured character trait.
4. **PROMOTE:** Promote, support, and encourage children as they initiate and engage in behavior that demonstrates the character trait. Catch them being kind, flexible, honest, confident, etc.!

Posted by Kimberley Moran

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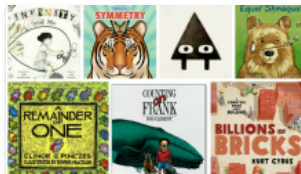
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