

Exploring Social-Emotional Learning Through Nature-Focused Children's Literature

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PLANTS.PEOPLE.PLANET.

Emma Walter, M.Ed in Early Childhood Education
Chicago Botanic Garden Nature Preschool



Agenda



- Introduction of presenter
- Overview of emergent curriculum and social-emotional learning (SEL)
- Slide show of high-quality, nature and social-emotional books
- Case studies
- Takeaway points to remember
- Thank yous and contact information!



Objectives

- Explore the connection between emergent, seasonal curriculum and emerging social-emotional classroom dynamics
- Learn about high-quality children's books that combine nature and SEL
- Practice applying an SEL lens to nature-themed books through classroom scenarios



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Hi, I'm Emma!





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Why is this topic near and dear to my
heart?



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Teachers

Museum
Educators

Parents

Tell me about yourselves!

Interpreters

Camp Instructors

Nature Educators

What is an Emergent Curriculum?

- Child-directed
- Responds to your class's needs, strengths, and interests
- Developed through observation
- Directly influenced by the environment
 - Social
 - Physical
- The curriculum is always evolving



Emergent Social-Emotional Learning Skills

- All learning domains are intertwined!
- In order to learn, social-emotional needs must be met
- Building social-emotional skills in preschool leads to long-term academic success
- Different students have different needs



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Books, Books, and More Books!

Fall



Leaves

Squirrels

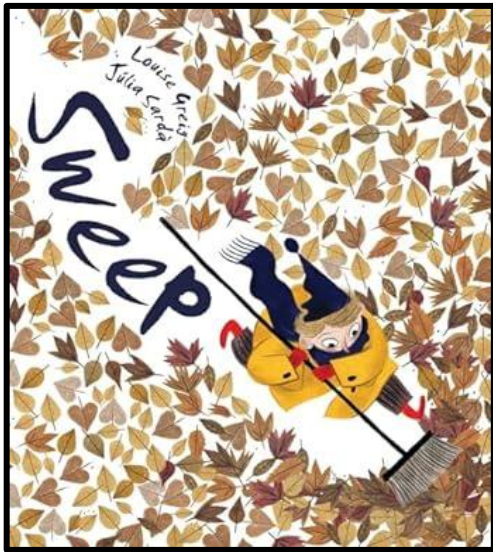
Pumpkins

Gratitude



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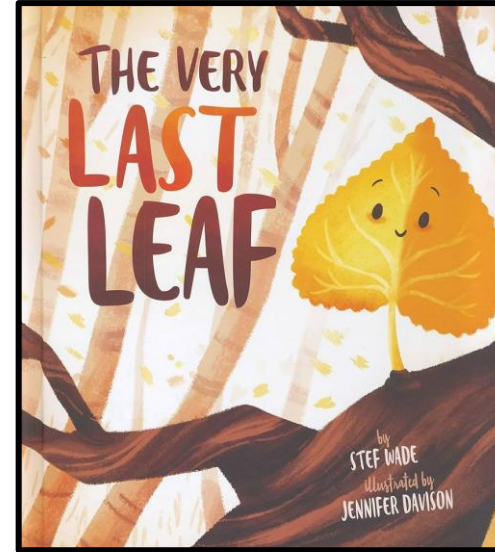
Fall Leaves



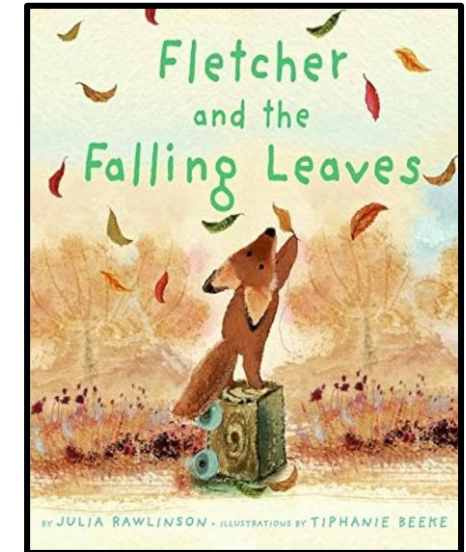
Emotion Regulation
Calm-down Techniques
Social Awareness
Relationship Skills



Empathy
Bravery
Social Awareness
Relationship Skills



Emotion Regulation
Bravery
Social Awareness
Relationship Skills

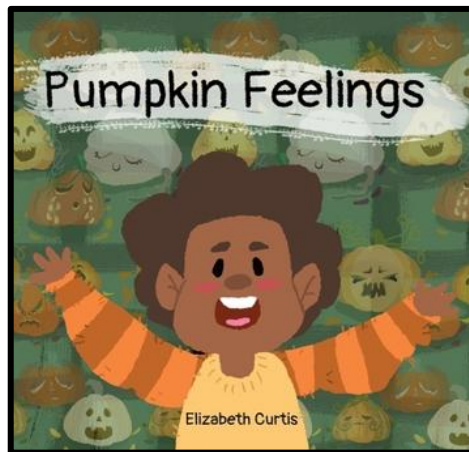


Adapting to Change
Empathy
Care for Others

Fall

Pumpkins

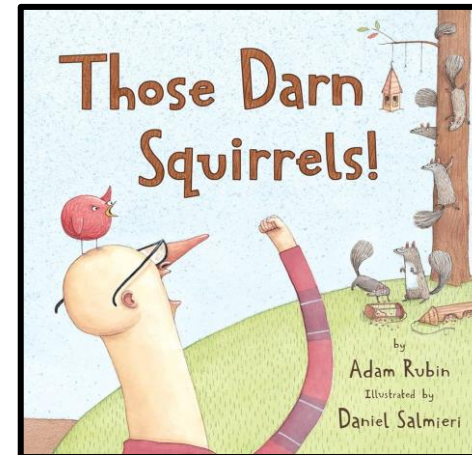
Squirrels



Identifying Emotions



Identifying Emotions



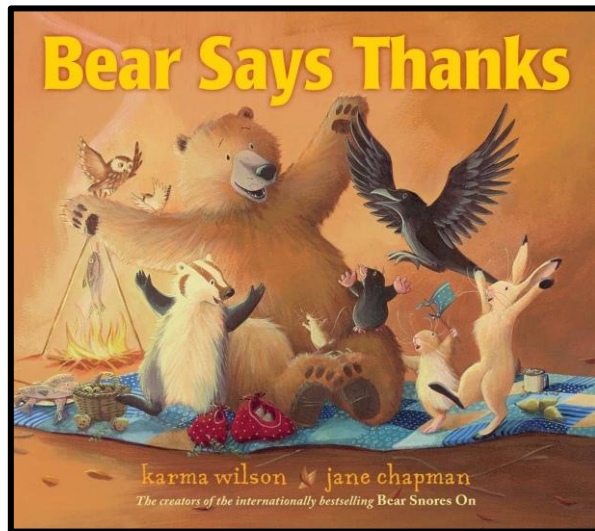
Identifying Emotions
Open-Mindedness
Perspective-Taking
Apologies & Forgiveness
Empathy



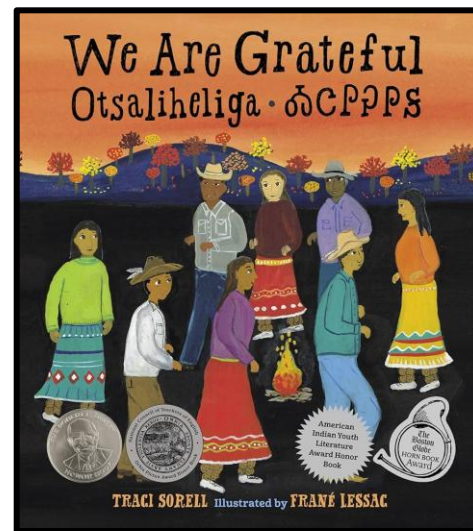
Adapting to Change
Calm-Down Techniques
Listening to Others

Fall

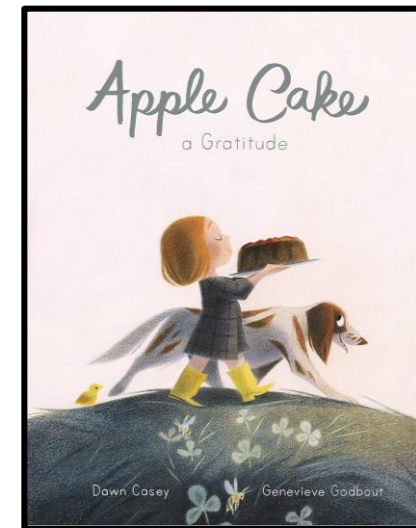
Gratitude



Social Awareness
Relationship Skills
Inclusivity
Celebrating Differences



Empathy
Celebrating Differences
Inclusivity



Empathy
Relationship Skills



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Winter

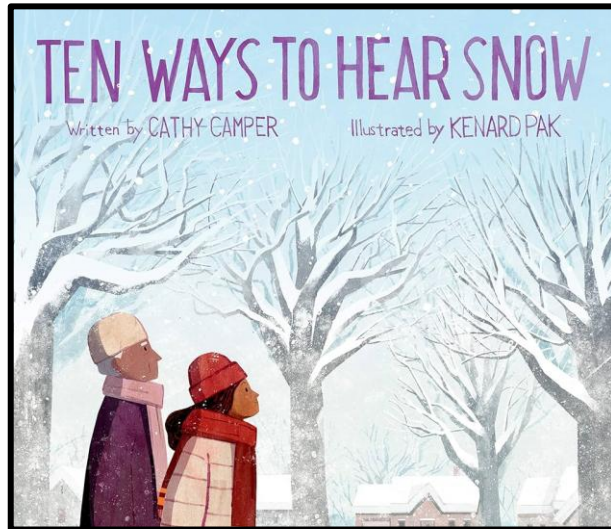
Snow

Animals/Plants in Winter

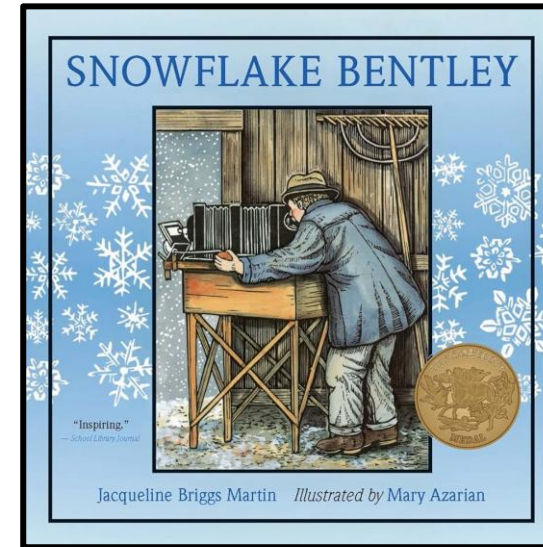
Giving

Winter Activities

Winter Snow

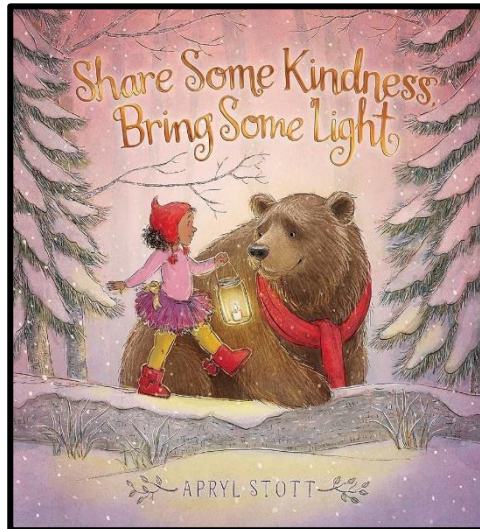


Mindfulness
Relationship Skills
Independence

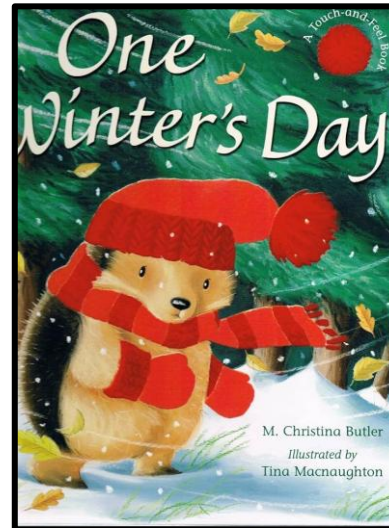


Perseverance
Self-Expression
Following Curiosity

Winter Giving



Celebrating Differences
Inclusivity
Open-Mindedness
Friendship
Empathy



Helping Others
Empathy
Sharing



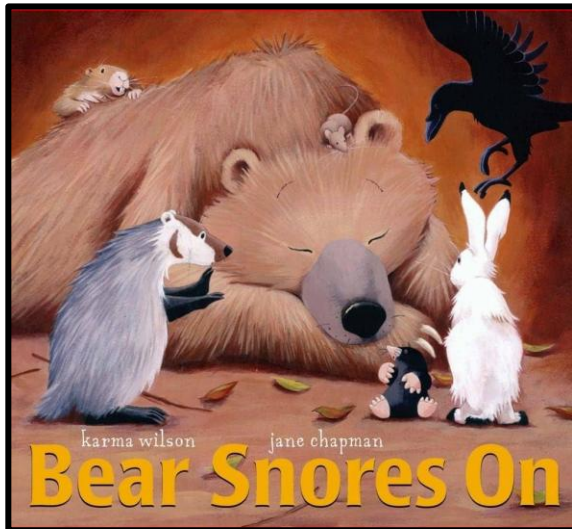
Helping Others
Empathy
Sharing
Perspective-Taking



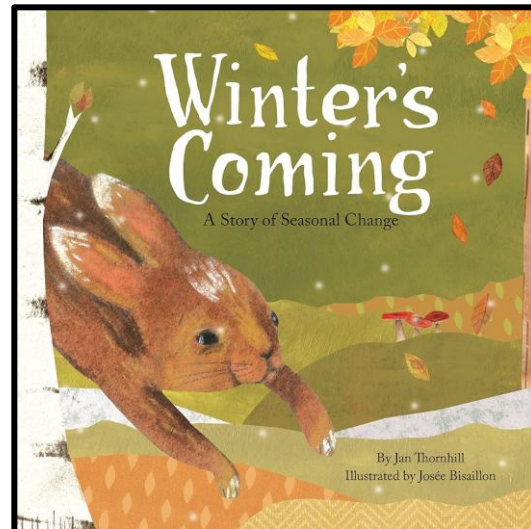
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Winter

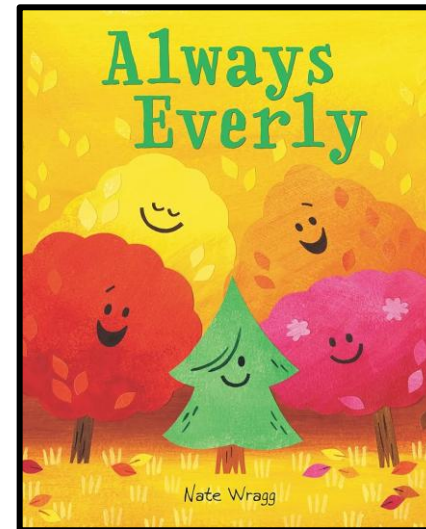
Animals/Plants in Winter



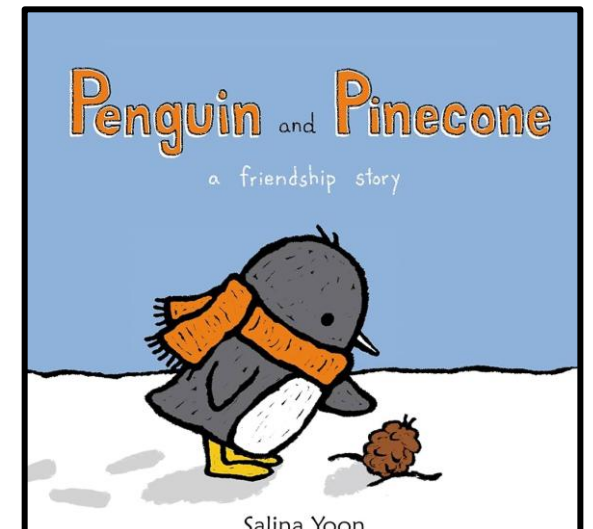
Expressing Emotions
Empathy
Inclusivity



Expressing Emotions
Bravery
Adapting to Change
Individuality



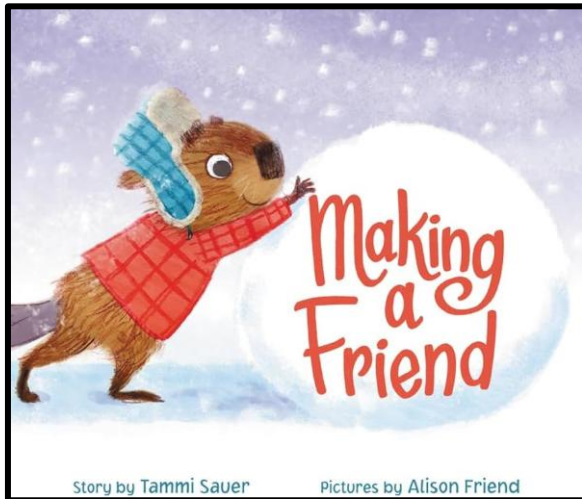
Self-Expression
Individuality
Acceptance
Celebrating Differences



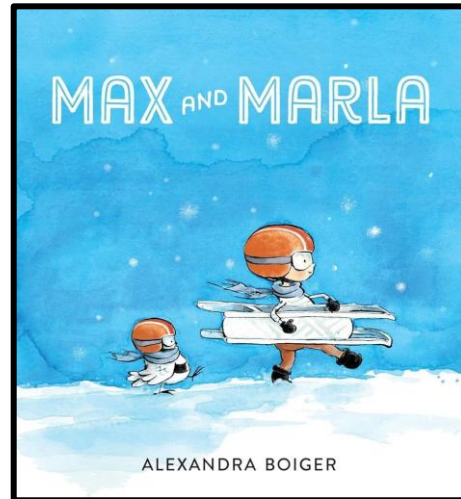
Friendship
Empathy
Kindness
Sharing

Winter

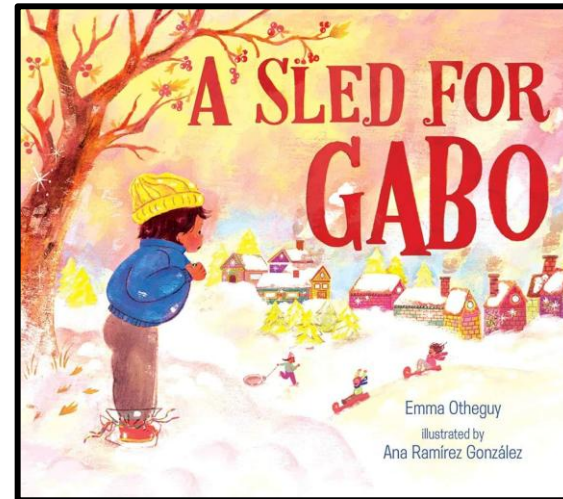
Winter Activities



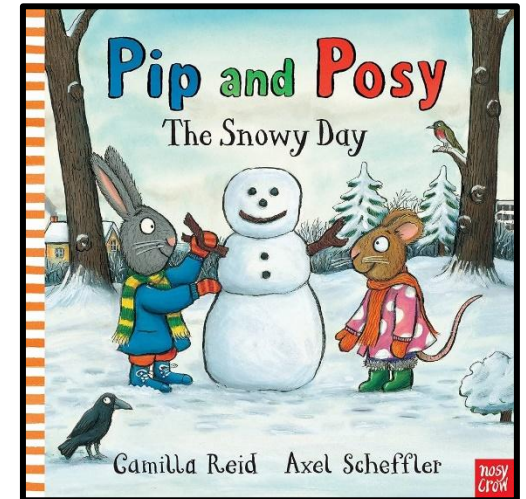
Friendship
Relationship Skills
Inclusivity



Relationship Skills
Developing Friendships
Resilience
Perseverance
Managing Emotions



Social Awareness
Relationship Skills
Inclusivity



Friendship
Sharing
Conflict Resolution



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Spring/Summer

Insects

Nature Exploration

Birds

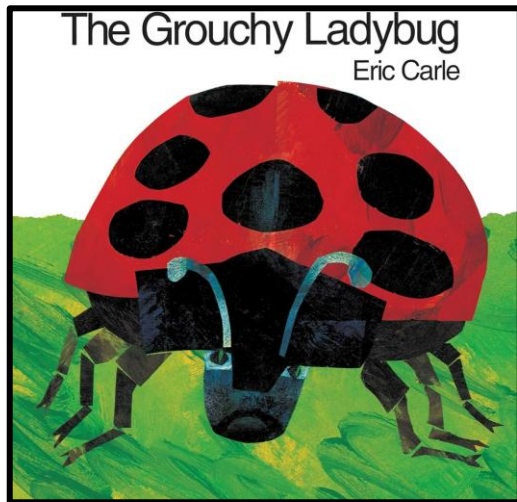
Rainy Weather

Gardening/Planting

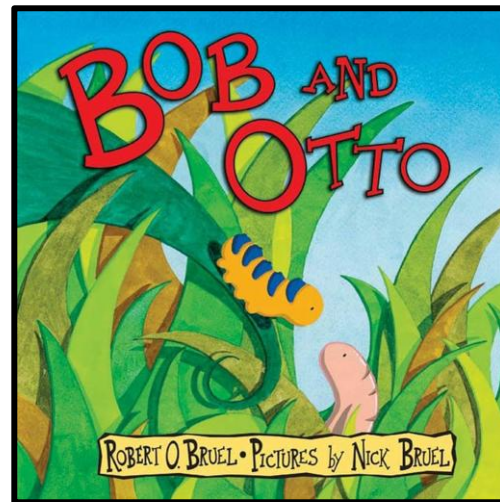


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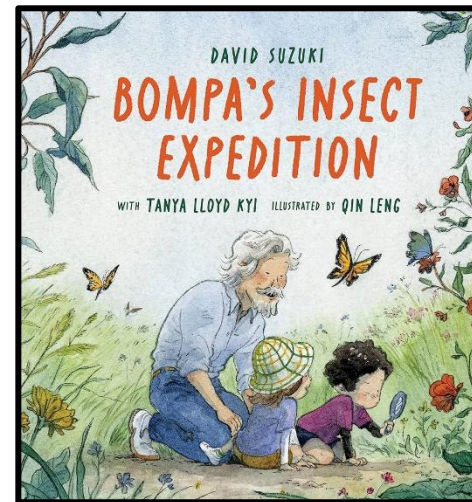
Spring/Summer Insects



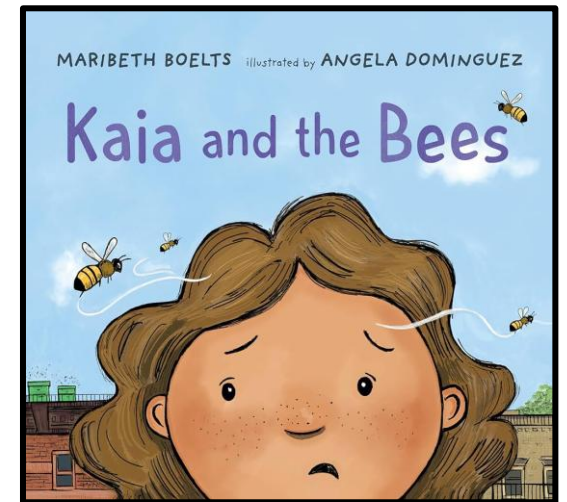
Sharing
Expressing Emotions
Empathy
Self-Advocacy



Friendship
Celebrating Differences



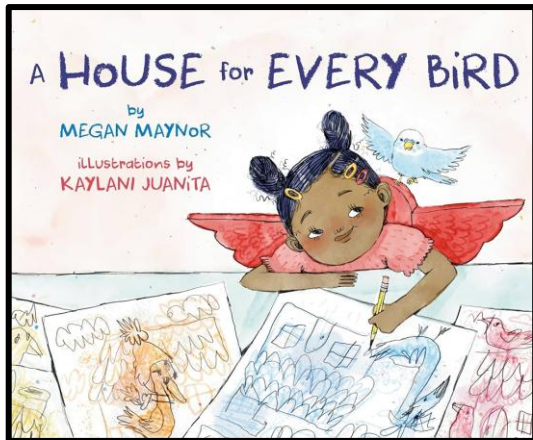
Managing Disappointment
Positive Mindset



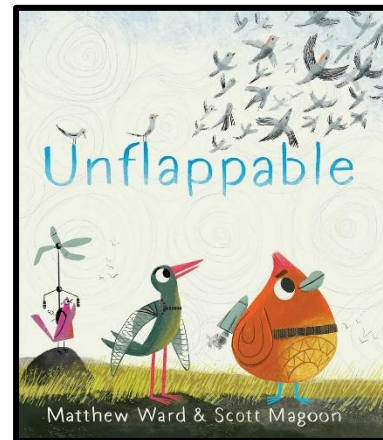
Bravery
Respecting & Setting Boundaries
Perseverance

Spring/Summer

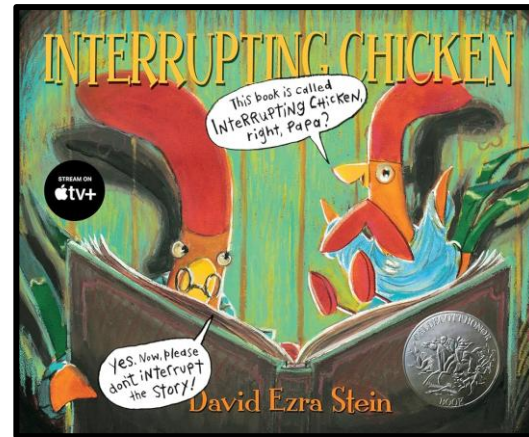
Birds



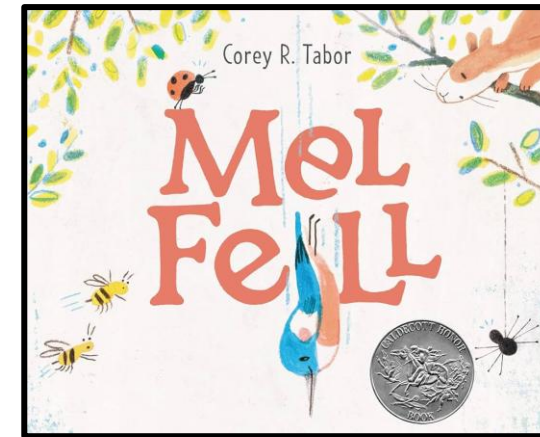
Listening to Others
Perspective-Taking
Compromise



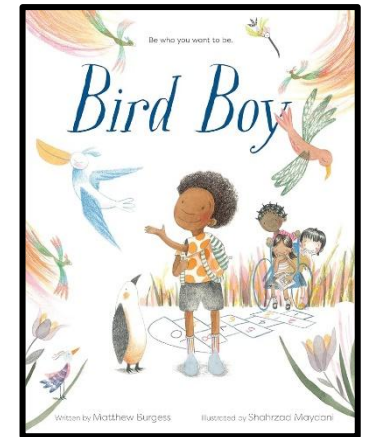
Growth Mindset
Perseverance



Listening to Others
Respect

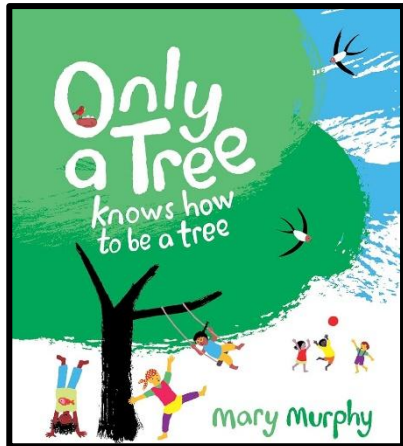


Bravery
Self-Confidence

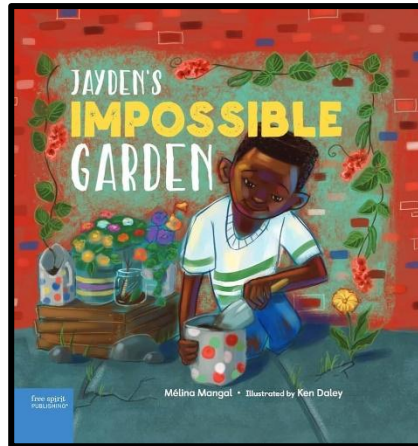


Being Yourself
Kindness
Inclusivity
Friendship

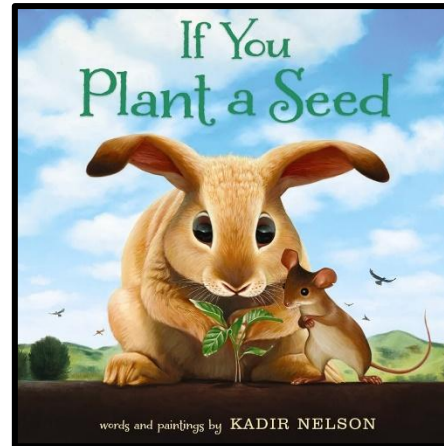
Spring/Summer Gardening/Planting



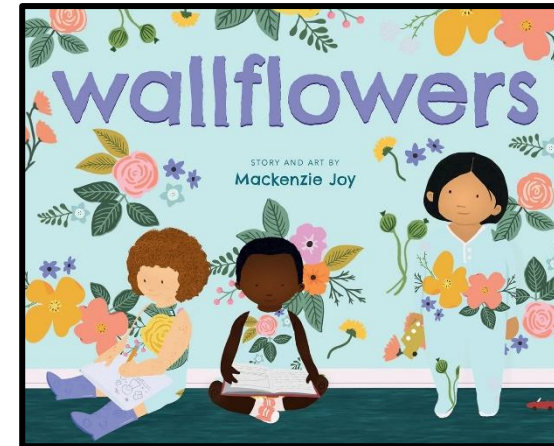
Self-Acceptance
Celebrating Differences



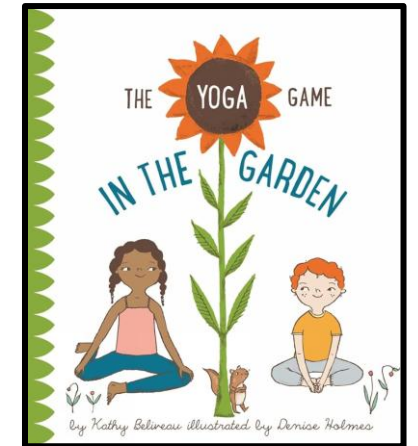
Family Relationships
Friendship
Connection
Community
Perseverance



Kindness
Sharing
Conflict Resolution
Helping Others



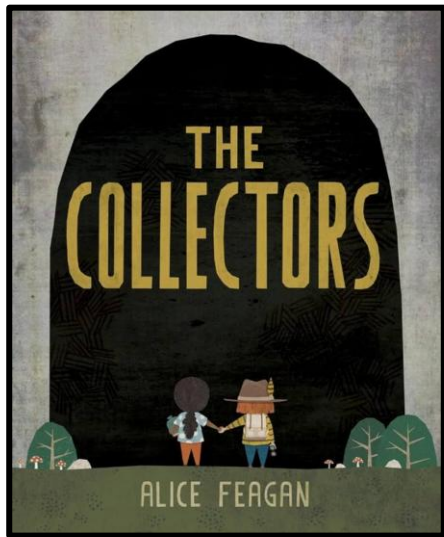
Self-Acceptance
Self-Love
Celebrating Differences



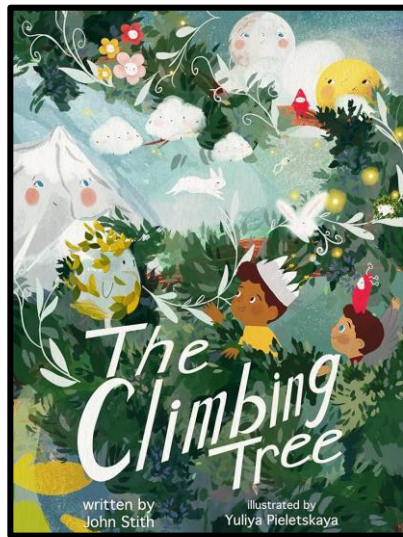
Mindfulness
Body Awareness

Spring/Summer

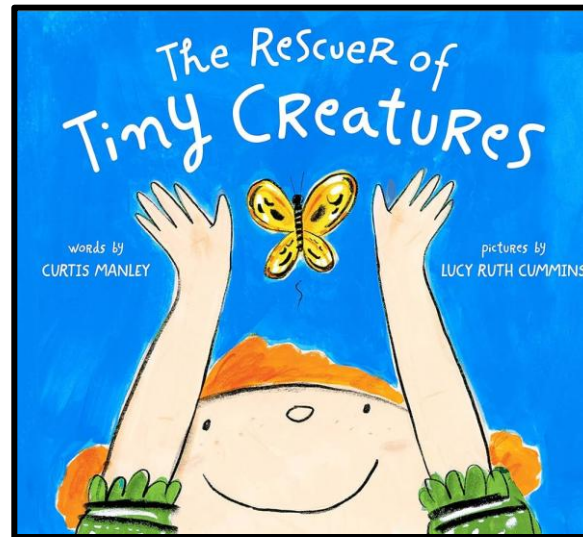
Nature Exploration Pt. 1



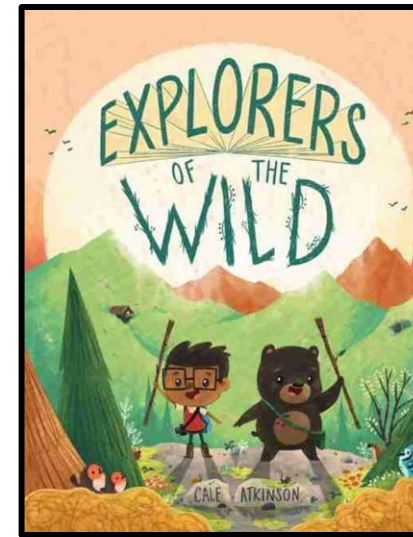
Managing Disappointment
Processing Failure
Positive Mindset
Friendship



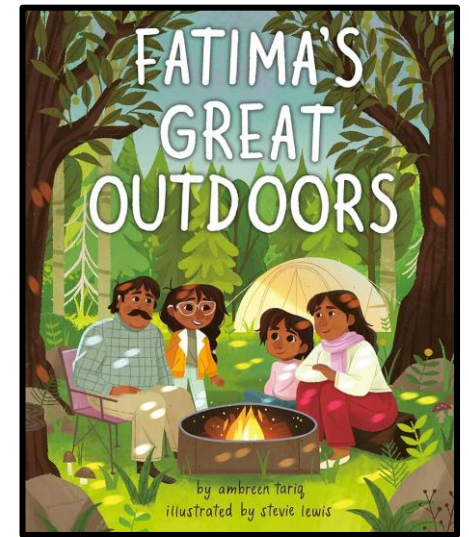
Empathy
Inclusivity
Overcoming Fear
Expressing Emotions



Empathy
Inclusivity
Friendship



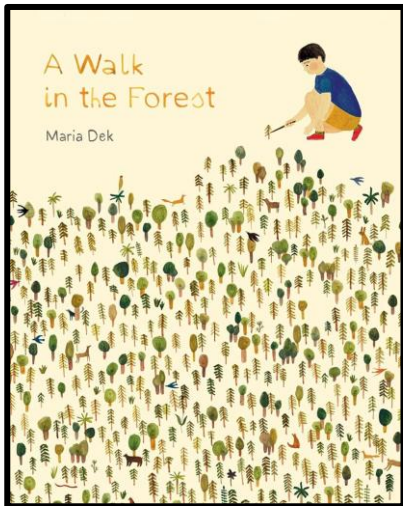
Overcoming Fear
Bravery
Friendship



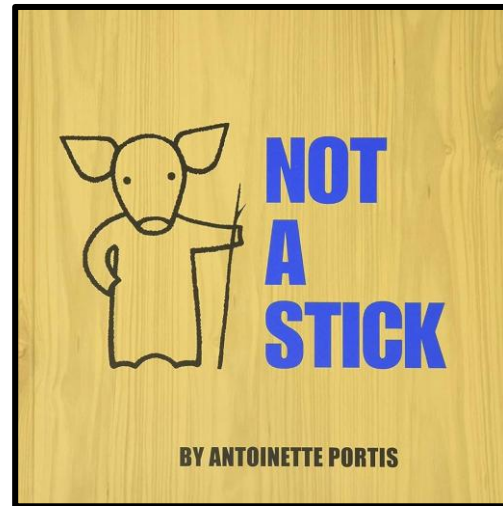
Overcoming Fear
Expressing Emotions
Family Relationships
Cultural Differences

Spring/Summer

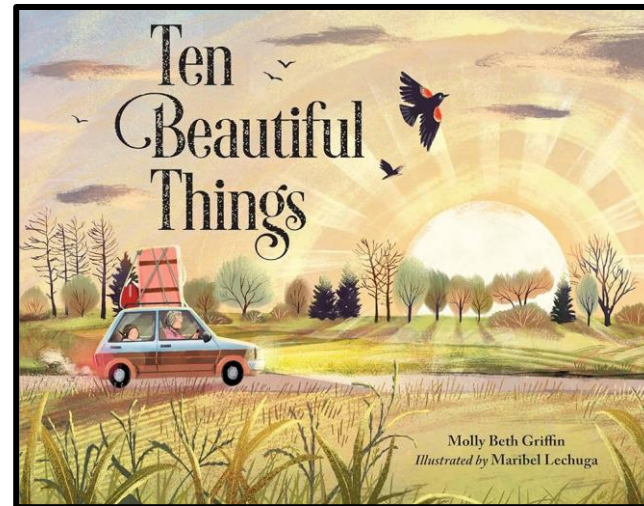
Nature Exploration Pt. 2



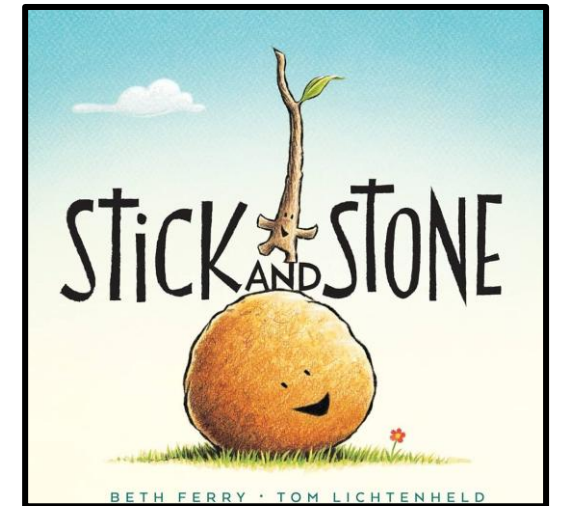
Imaginative Play
Self-Direction
Patience



Imaginative Play
Listening to Others
Respect



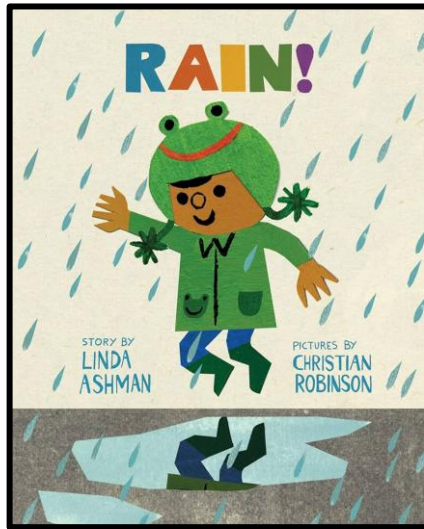
Adapting to Change
Positive Mindset
Mindfulness
Body Awareness



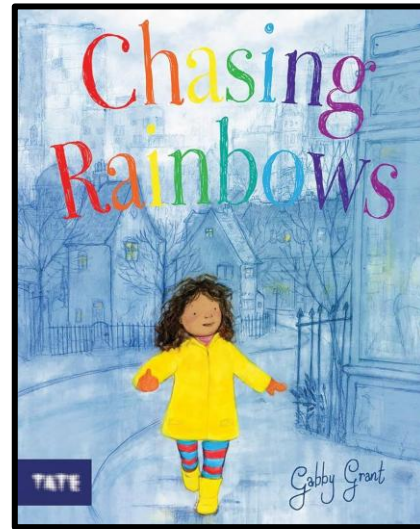
Friendship
Helping Others
Advocating for Others
Forgiveness

Spring/Summer

Rainy Weather



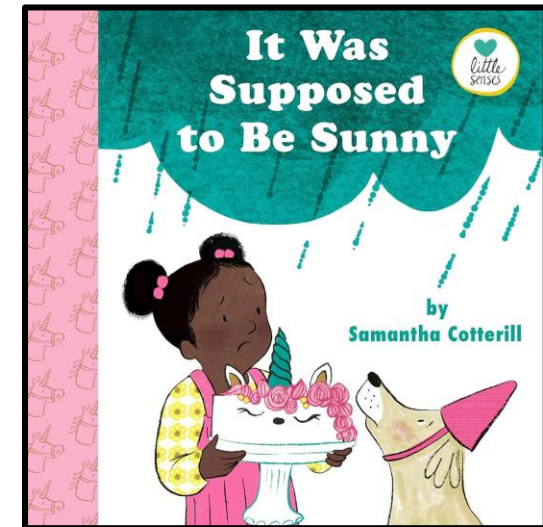
Empathy
Friendship
Positive Mindset
Helping Others



Expressing Emotions
Positive Mindset
Managing Disappointment



Friendship
Expressing Emotions
Helping Others
Empathy



Adapting to Change
Calm-Down Techniques

Case Studies

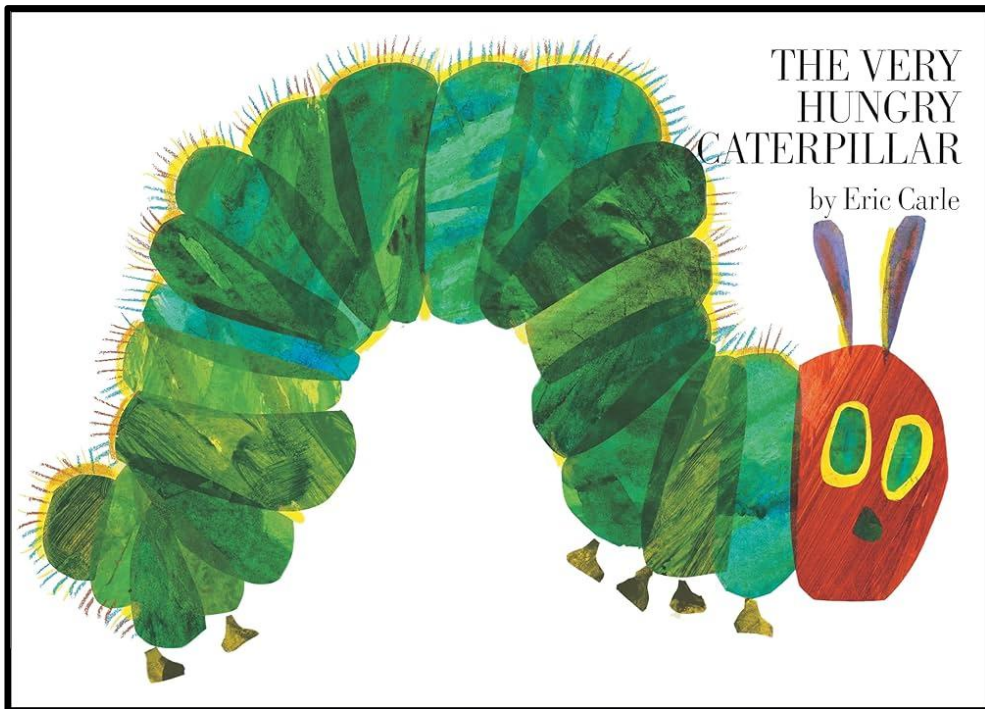
Guiding Questions

Interchangeable!

- What do my students need socially or emotionally?
- What is happening seasonally in nature?
- How can I connect what's happening seasonally to what's happening in my classroom?

Case Study #1

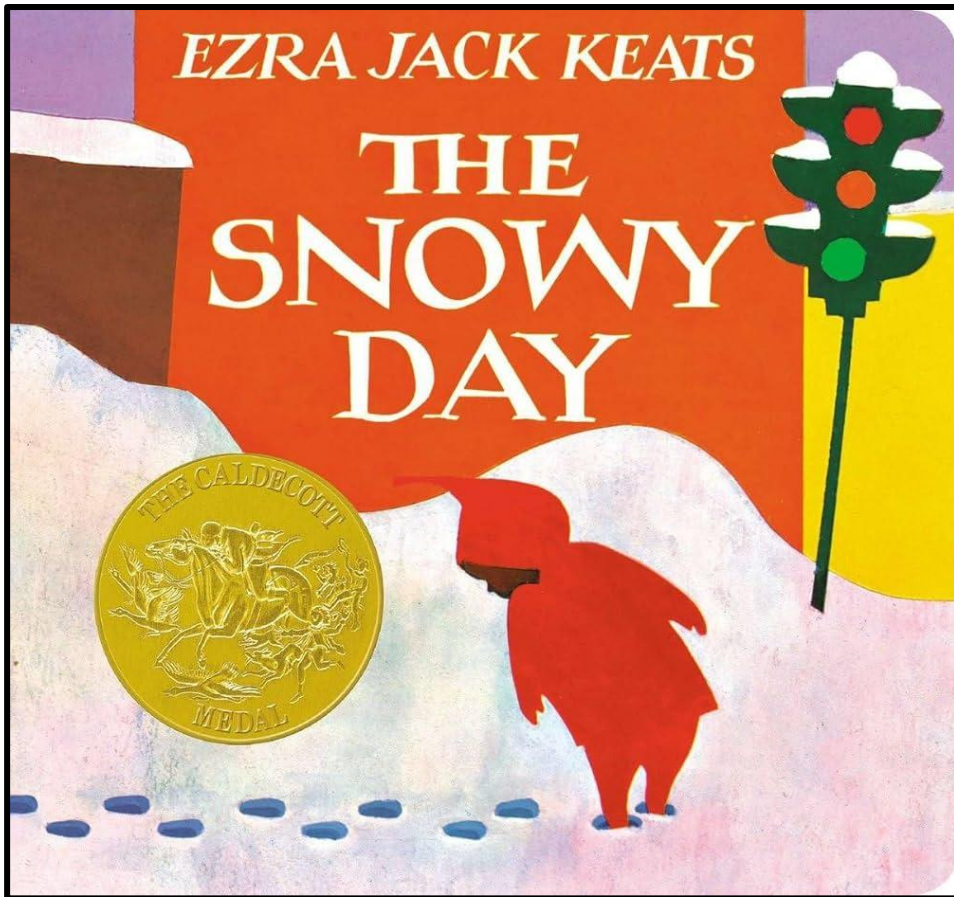
The Very Hungry Caterpillar by Eric Carle



During snack and lunch time, your class often prioritizes talking and being silly with their friends over eating their food. After meals, your students often complain of still being hungry, and their emotional responses are heightened when conflict arises.

Case Study #2

The Snowy Day by Ezra Jack Keats



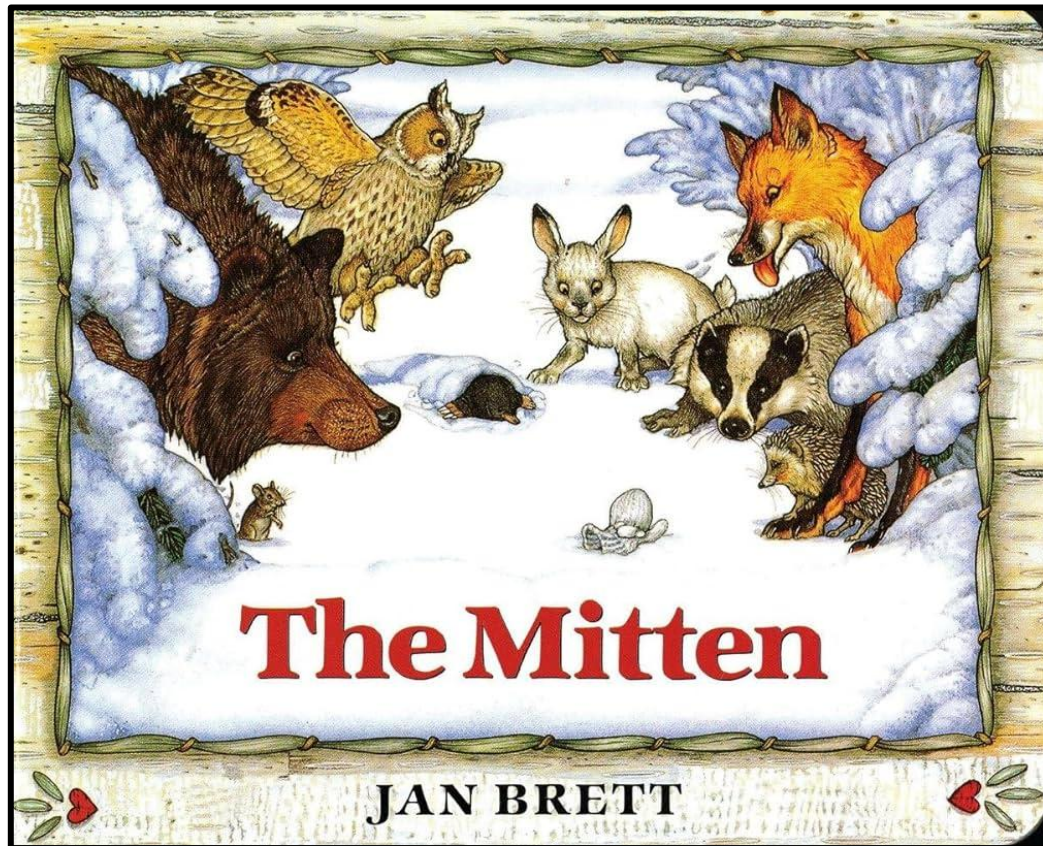
You teach a mixed-ages class, with some first-year students and some students that have been in the class for many years. You notice that many of the younger students are still involved in parallel play, while the older students are engaging in complex, dramatic play. You notice that these groups tend to stay separate, and when they do mix, the older students make all the decisions for the play plan.



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Case Study #3

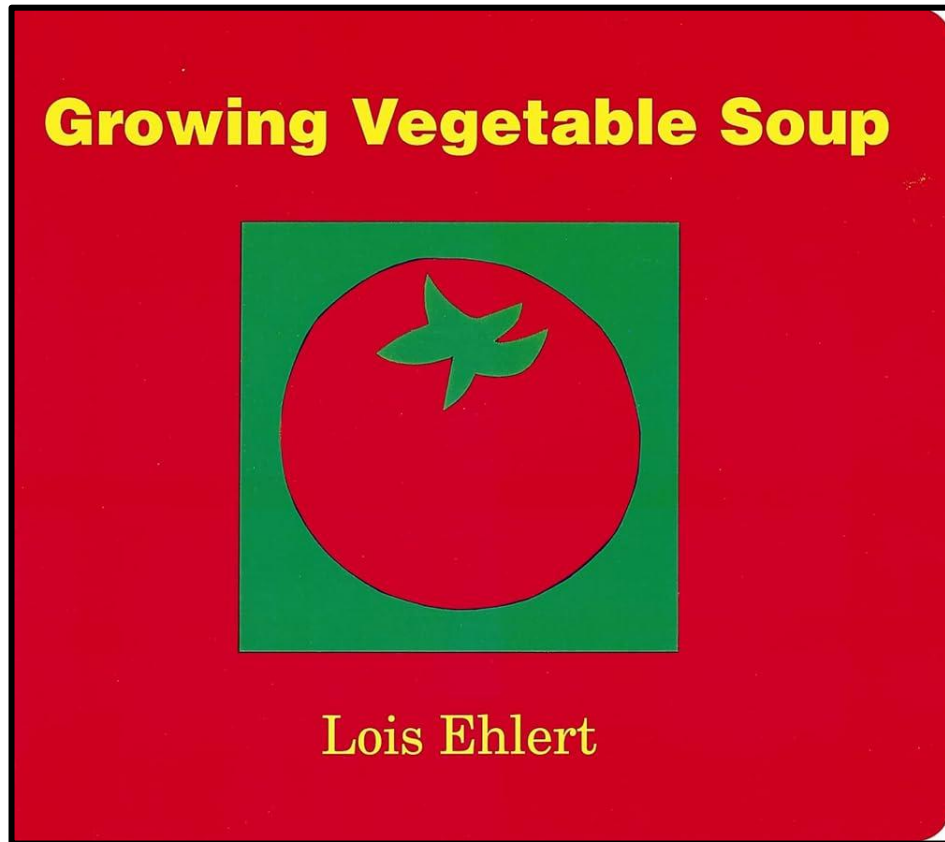
The Mitten by Jan Brett



Your class often experiences conflict during play. Many students are still working on sharing materials and experiences and taking turns. Students in your class often express their emotions through pushing, hitting, or grabbing items from other students. Your class often comes to you to resolve the conflict.

Case Study #4

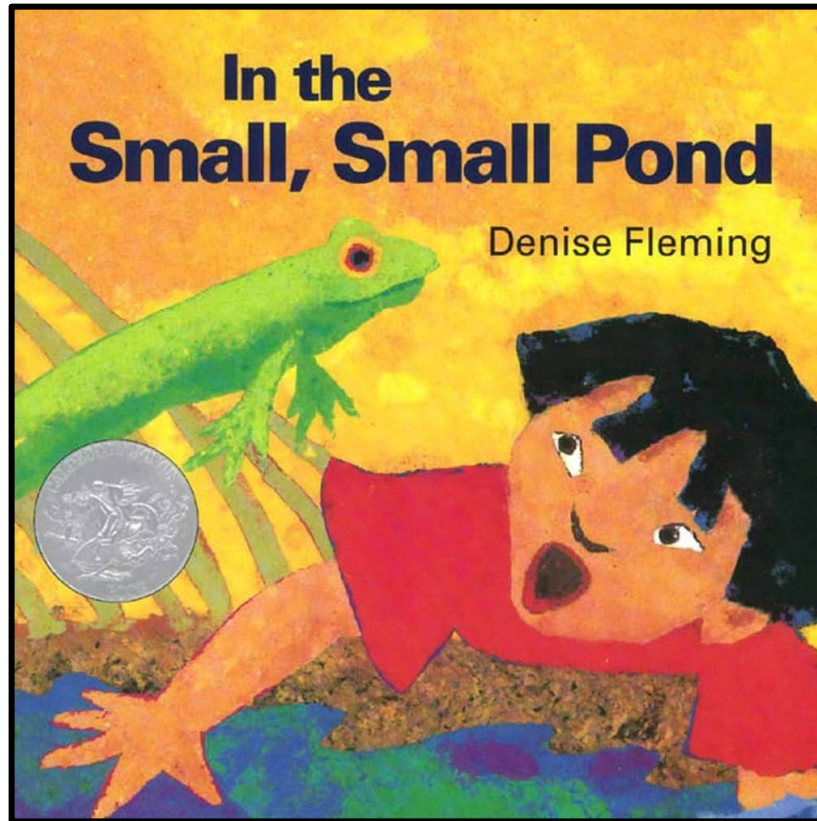
Growing Vegetable Soup by Lois Ehlert



Your class has a difficult time waiting patiently for things to happen. Your class seeks instant gratification and validation, and when things are too difficult, they ask a teacher to do things for them and may have a big emotional reaction to activities they deem too "hard." Rather than stick with challenges, your students often move on to different activities quickly.

Case Study #5

In The Small, Small Pond by Denise Fleming



You notice that your class needs a lot of gross-motor movement to regulate for circle time and other focused activities. Many in your class are still working at sustaining attention during activities and often move quickly from station to station.

Takeaways



- You know your students best!
- Consider what's emerging, both socially, emotionally, and seasonally
- When you start looking at all books through a social-emotional lens, you might be surprised that almost any book can address these topics

Thank you!



ewalter@chicagobotanic.org

