

Mental Health and Well-Being: Exploring Friendship Through the Reading of Picture Books (Primary)

Note:

The interest levels listed in this bibliography are those given by the publishers. Each teacher, however, needs to decide the age suitability for their own students.

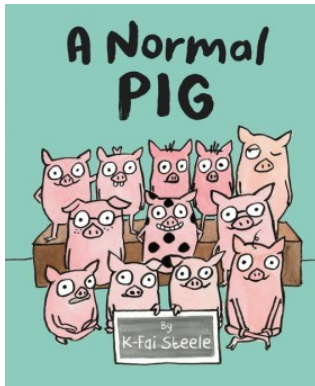
The summaries are from the publishers as well and have been included to give you a quick overview of the main themes of each title. In this way you can quickly select the titles that suit the particular social and emotional needs of your students. Some of the titles fit the theme loosely and others more tightly. The titles also range from "light-hearted" to more serious in tone.

Your school counsellor is an excellent source for suggestions on how to support students when teaching more sensitive subjects.

Joan Pearce, April 2024

Mental Health and Well-Being: Exploring Friendship (Primary)

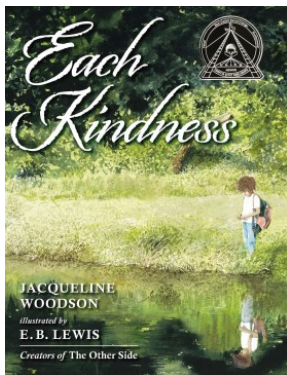
Compiled by Joan Pearce
Picture Book Format



A Normal Pig

by K-Fai Steele, c2019 (IL: K-3, RL: 2.2)

"Pip is a normal pig who does normal stuff: cooking, painting, and dreaming of what she'll be when she grows up. One day a new pig comes to school and starts pointing out all the ways in which Pip is different. Suddenly she doesn't like any of the same things she used to...the things that made her Pip" - Pub.



Each Kindness

by Jacqueline Woodson, c2012 (IL: K-3, RL: 3.1)

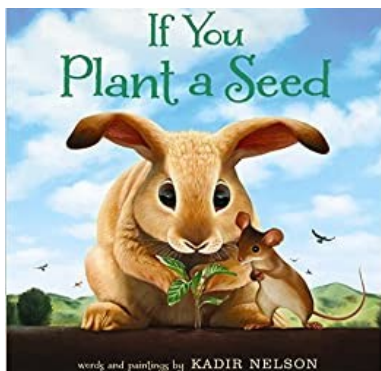
"When Ms. Albert teaches a lesson on kindness, Chloe realizes that she and her friends have been wrong in making fun of new student Maya's shabby clothes and refusing to play with her." - Follett



Being Wendy

by Fran Drescher, c2011

"In this delightful picture book, we meet Wendy, a girl who lives in an odd town where everyone has to wear a box. These boxes are labeled with what each person does. The teacher wears a TEACHER box. The baker wears a BAKER box. Even the doctor wears a DOCTOR box! These boxes are worn for life and Wendy has to choose hers soon. How will she ever decide on just one box? She's interested in so many things! Wendy's moxie makes her break out of her box..." - Amazon.ca



If You Plant a Seed

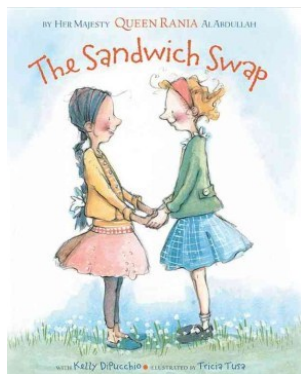
by Kadir Nelson, c2015 (IL: K-3, RL: 5.5)

"If you plant a carrot seed...a carrot will grow. If you plant a cabbage seed...cabbage will grow. But what happens if you plant a seed of kindness...or selfishness?"

With spare text and breathtaking oil paintings, If You Plant a Seed demonstrates not only the process of planting and growing for young children but also how a seed of kindness can bear sweet fruit." - Amazon.ca

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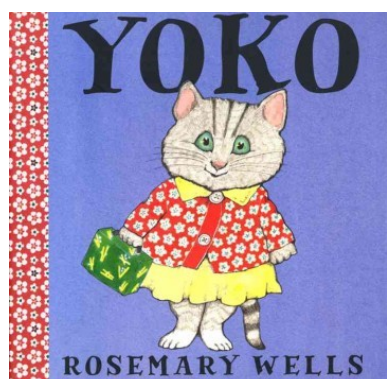
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The Sandwich Swap

by Queen Raina of Jordan, c2010 (IL: K-3, RL: 3.3)

"Lily and Salma are best friends. They like doing all the same things, and they always eat lunch together. Lily eats peanut butter and Salma eats hummus-but what's that between friends? It turns out, a lot. Before they know it, a food fight breaks out. Can Lily and Salma put aside their differences? Or will a sandwich come between them? The smallest things can pull us apart-until we learn that friendship is far more powerful than difference. - Pub.

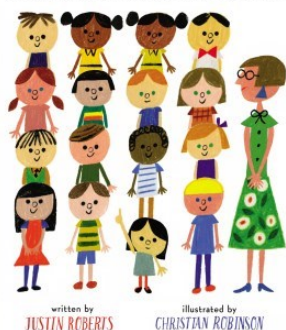


Yoko

by Rosemary Wells, c1998 (IL: K-3, RL: 2.9)

"When Yoko brings sushi to school for lunch, her classmates make fun of what she eats—until one of them tries it for himself." - Follett

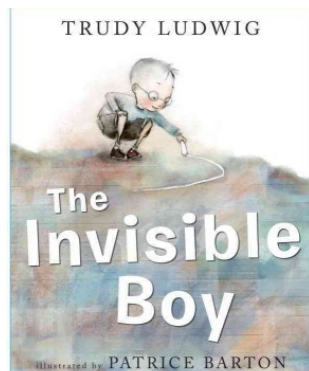
THE SMALLEST GIRL IN THE SMALLEST GRADE



The Smallest Girl in the Smallest Grade

by Justin Roberts, c2014 (IL: K-3, RL: 3.5)

"Hardly anyone noticed young Sally McCabe. She was the smallest girl in the smallest grade. But Sally notices everything--from the twenty-seven keys on the janitor's ring to the bullying happening on the playground. One day, Sally has had enough and decides to make herself heard. And when she takes a chance and stands up to the bullies, she finds that one small girl can make a big difference." - Pub.



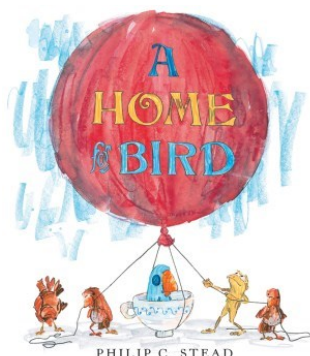
The Invisible Boy

by Trudy Ludwig, c2013 (IL: K-3, RL: 2.9)

"A simple act of kindness can transform an invisible boy into a friend... Meet Brian, the invisible boy. Nobody ever seems to notice him or think to include him in their group, game, or birthday party...until, that is, a new kid comes to class. When Justin, the new boy, arrives, Brian is the first to make him feel welcome. And when Brian and Justin team up to work on a class project together, Brian finds a way to shine. - Pub.

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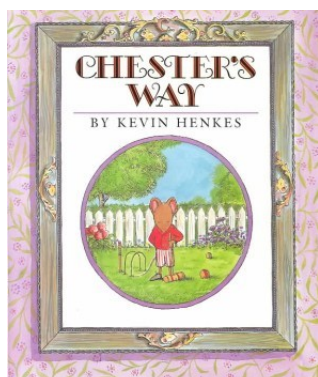
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A Home for Bird

by Philip C. Stead, c2012 (IL: K-3, RL: 2.1)

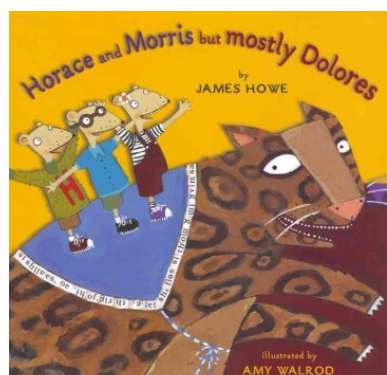
"While out foraging for interesting things, Vernon the toad finds a new friend - a small blue bird who is curiously silent. Vernon shows Bird the river and the forest and some of his other favorite things, but Bird says nothing. Vernon introduces Bird to his friends, Skunk and Porcupine, but Bird still says nothing. "Bird is shy," says Vernon, "but also a very good listener." - Pub.



Chester's Way

by Kevin Henkes, c1988 (IL: K-3, RL: 3.4)

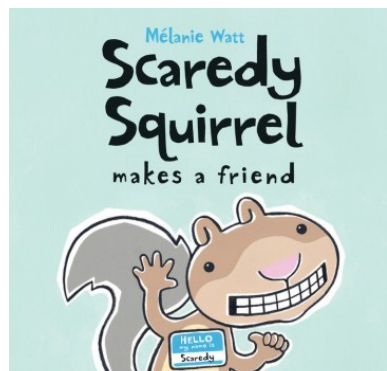
"Chester and Wilson share the same exact way of doing things, until Lilly moves into the neighborhood and shows them that new ways can be just as good." - Follett



Horace, Morris and Mostly Dolores

by James Howe, c1999 (IL: K-3, RL: 2.0)

"Will their friendship ever be the same? Horace, Morris, and Dolores have been best friends forever. They do everything together—from sailing the seven sewers to climbing Mount Ever-Rust. But one day Horace and Morris join the Mega-Mice (no girls allowed), and Dolores joins the Cheese Puffs (no boys allowed). Is this the end? Or will Horace and Morris but mostly Dolores find a way to save the day—and their friendship?" - Pub.



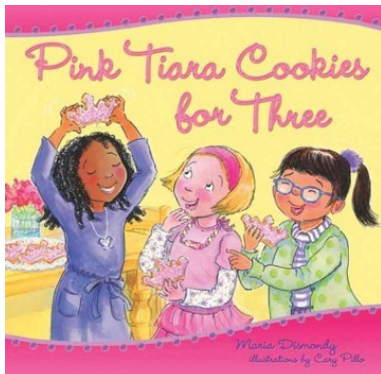
Scaredy Squirrel Makes a Friend

by Mélanie Watt, c2011 (IL: K-3, RL: 3.0)

"In his latest adventure, Scaredy Squirrel sets out to make The Perfect Friend. And once he's spotted a perfectly safe candidate (with no teeth), Scaredy's ready. Armed with a name tag, mittens, a mirror and a lemon, he's prepared to make The Perfect First Impression. But just when every detail is under control, Scaredy's Action Plan takes a surprising—and "toothy" - turn. Will he survive this ordeal? Will he find his kindred spirit? Will he discover the true meaning of friendship?" - Pub.

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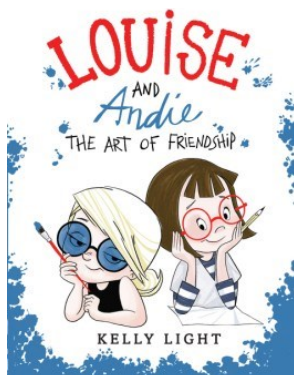
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Pink Tiara Cookies for Three

by Maria Dismody, c2011 (IL: K-3, RL: 2.1)

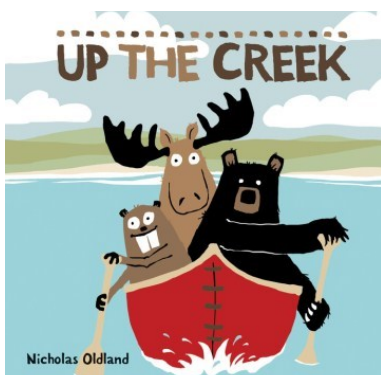
"Sami and Stella are best friends and neighbors. When Jasmine moves in across the street, a friendship triangle begins. The girls learn how to adjust and make room for one more." - Pub.



Louise and Andie and the Art of Friends

by Kelly Light, c2016 (IL: K-3, RL 1.4)

"Louise loves art more than anything. Imagine her delight when a new neighbor, Andie, moves in . . . and she loves art too. It's the best day ever. But liking the same thing doesn't always mean you agree on it. Can they overcome their creative differences? Sometimes friendship, like art, can require collaboration." - Pub.



Up the Creek

by Nicholas Oldland, c2017 (IL: K-3, RL: 4.2)

"A bear, a moose, and a beaver, who are best friends but often disagree, have a trying adventure when they decide to take a canoe trip together." - Follett



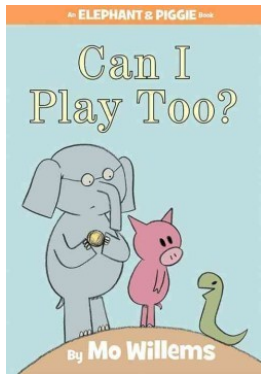
Big Friends

by Linda Sarah, c2016 (IL: K-3, RL: 2.1)

"Birt and Etho are best friends. Together they play outside in big cardboard boxes. Sometimes they're kings, soldiers, astronauts. Sometimes they're pirates sailing wild seas and skies. But always, always they're Big friends. Then one day a new boy arrives, and he wants to join them. Can two become three?" - Pub.

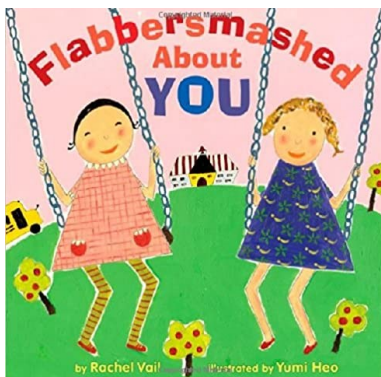
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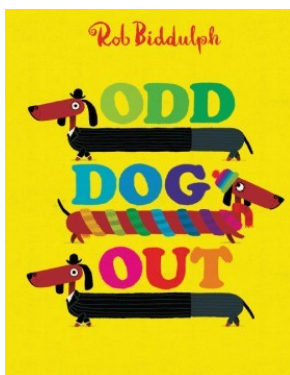
Can I Play Too? (Series: Elephant and Piggie) by Mo Willems, c2010 (IL: K-3, RL: 0.6)

"In *Can I Play Too?* Gerald and Piggie meet a new snake friend who wants to join in a game of catch. But don't you need arms to catch?" - Pub.



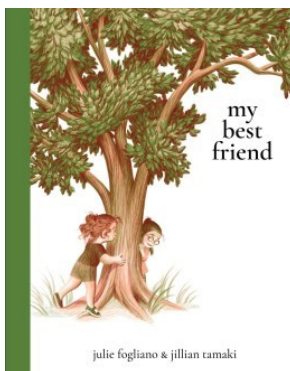
Flabbersmashed About You by Rachel Vail, c2012

"Katie is back as she deals with feeling "flabbersmashed" by her best friend, who suddenly wants to be friends with another kid. We've all been flabbersmashed by a friend--left out of an activity or secret, left to feel sorry for ourselves, or move on. Will Katie ever stop feeling left out?" - Amazon.ca



Odd Dog Out by Rob Biddulph, c2019 (IL: K-3, RL: 2.1)

"In a busy city where all the dogs act and dress in a similar fashion, what would you do if you felt like you didn't fit in? In this rhyming story about acceptance and self-esteem, a unique dog ventures out to find her place in the world, only to discover that it's okay to be different and your friends and family will love you no matter what." - Follett



My Best Friend by Julie Fogliano, c2020 (IL: K-3, RL: 2.3)

"What is a best friend, if not someone who laughs with you the whole entire day, especially when you pretend to be a pickle? This pitch-perfect picture book is a sweetly earnest, visually stunning celebration of the magic of friendship." - Pub.

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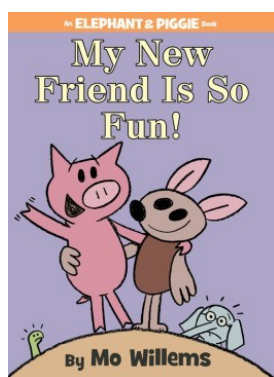
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The Buddy Bench

by B.D. Cottleston, c2019 (IL: K-3, RL: 2.3)

"On a surprisingly snowy day in Texas, a young student finds himself braving recess alone. That is until he spots a new face sitting on the school's Buddy Bench. After a quick introduction, the two spend their recess discovering fun ways to enjoy the snow. By the end of recess, both kids leave the playground with a brand new friend. This sweet story of friendship brings the Buddy Bench's purpose to life." - Pub.



My New Friend Is So Fun

by Mo Willems, c2014 (IL: K-3, RL: 1.1)

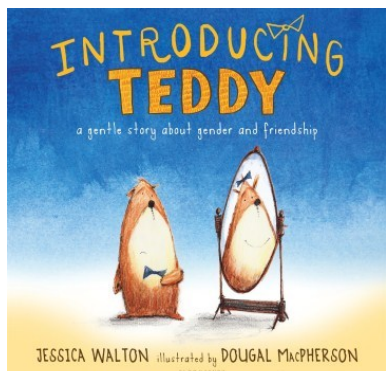
"Gerald the elephant and Snake fear that Piggie and Brian Bat will have so much fun together they will no longer need their best friends." - Follett



Should I Share My Ice Cream

by Mo Willems, c2011 (IL: K-3, RL: 1.1)

"Best friends Gerald and Piggie are complete opposites but still manage to have fun together, but when Gerald takes too long to make an important decision, it may be too late to share with Piggie." - Follett



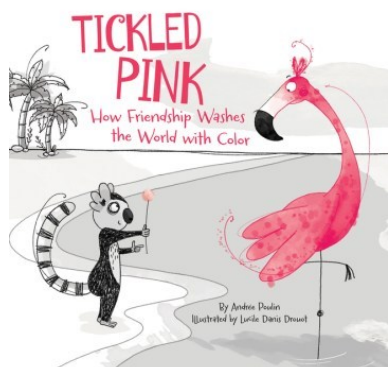
Introducing Teddy: A Gentle Story About Gender and Friendship

by Jess Walton, c2016 (IL: K-3, RL: 2.8)

"One sunny day, Errol finds that Thomas is sad, even when they are playing in their favorite ways. Errol can't figure out why, until Thomas finally tells Errol what the teddy has been afraid to say: "In my heart, I've always known that I'm a girl teddy, not a boy teddy. I wish my name was Tilly, not Thomas." And Errol says, "I don't care if you're a girl teddy or a boy teddy! What matters is that you are my friend." - Pub.

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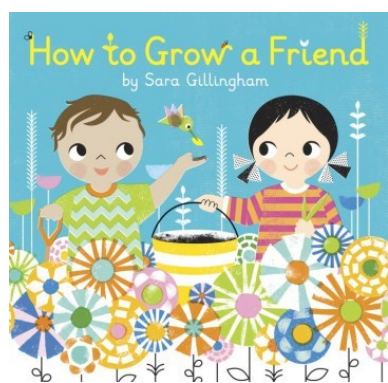
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Tickled Pink

by Andree Poulin, c2020 (IL: K-3)

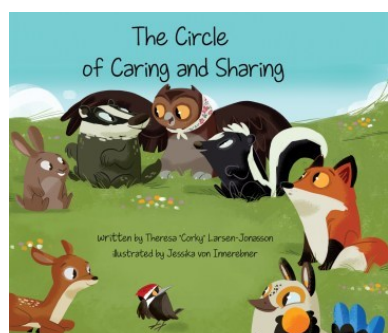
"Filippo can't help that he's pink. He's a flamingo, after all. But Zac the zebra and Poncho the panda aren't having it. They only want to play with fellow black-and-white animals. Filippo is sure he'll never be content without Zac and Poncho's friendship. But what would the world be without pink? There would be no roses, no sunsets, no strawberry ice cream. With a little love and encouragement along the way, Filippo sets out to find the value of pink--and of himself" - Pub.



How to Grow a Friend

by Sara Gillingham, c2015 (IL: K-3, RL: .8)

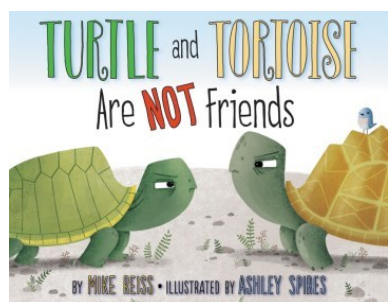
"A lovely metaphor teaches valuable lessons in how to treat others and make friendships blossom! Making a friend takes patience, care, and room to bloom—just like growing a flower. Soon your little gardeners will have their very own green thumbs for this most important of life skills." - Pub.



The Circle of Caring and Sharing

by Theresa "Corky" Larsen-Jonasson,
c2019 (IL: K-3, RL: 2.6)

"When two foxes, who are best friends, have a fight it upsets the whole community of animals. Kokom the Owl knows just what to do and brings together all the animals and holds a Sharing Circle" - Pub.



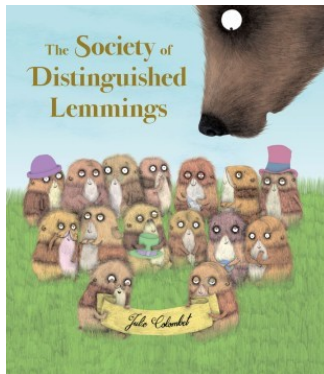
Turtle and Tortoise are NOT Friends

by Mike Reiss, c2019 (IL: K-3, RL: 2.5)

Two sworn enemies learn that they have more in common than meets the eye, and it's never too late to make a new friend—even if it takes decades! Ever since they were little hatchlings, Turtle and Tortoise decided that they'd forever be separated due to their different shells. As years and years go by, the two reptiles stay on opposite side of the pen and embark on their own adventures, while holding an everlasting grudge. Until one day, Turtle and Tortoise get into a bit of pickle and need each other's help! - Pub.

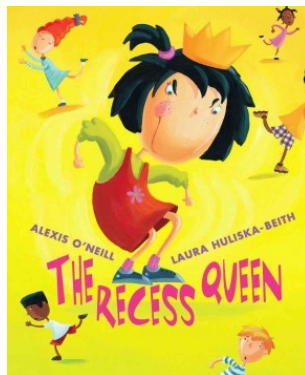
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The Society of Distinguished Lemmings by Julie Colombet, c2020 (IL: K-3, RL: 3.0)

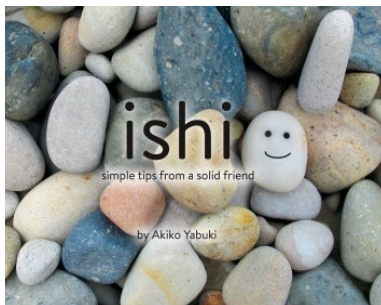
"When the lemmings encounter a bear, they are determined to help him be more "distinguished" - just like they are—but little do they realize this bear could be exactly what they need to save them from themselves." - Follett



The Recess Queen

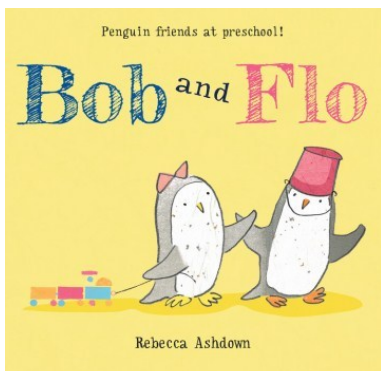
by Alexis O'Neill, c2002 (IL: K-3, RL: 3.1)
"Mean Jean is the biggest bully on the school playground until a new girl arrives and challenges Jean's status as the Recess Queen." - Follett

"A fresh & original twist on the common issue of bullying. Kids will relate, & parents & teachers will appreciate the story's deft handling of conflict resolution (which happens w/o adult intervention)"
- Pub.



Ishi: Simple Tips from a Solid Friend by Akiko Yabuki, c2016 (IL: K-3, RL: 3.5)

"An award-winning, shareable, cozy hug of a picture book featuring Ishi, an optimistic little rock who reminds readers to choose and share happiness!" - Pub.

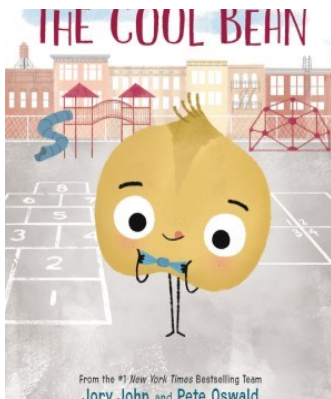


Bob and Flo

by Rebecca Ashdown, c2015 (IL: K-3, RL: 1.6)
"It's Flo's first day of preschool. She has her lunch in a bucket and a new bow—but soon her bucket disappears! Does her classmate Bob have anything to do with the bucket mystery? How two irresistible little penguins find both Flo's bucket and a new friendship makes for a preschool charmer. Bob and Flo is sure to ease any back-to-school jitters." - Pub.

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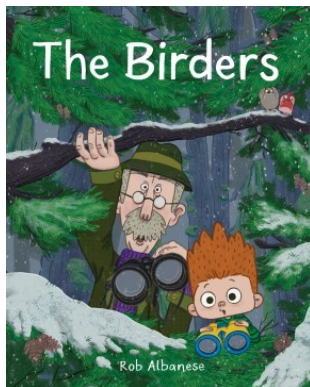
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The Cool Bean

by John Jory, c2019 (IL: K-3, RL: 1.7)

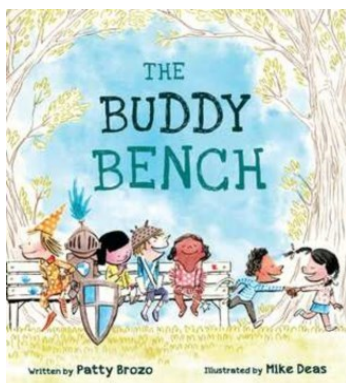
"Everyone knows the cool beans. They're sooooo cool. And then there's the uncool has-bean. Always on the sidelines, one bean unsuccessfully tries everything he can to fit in with the crowd--until one day the cool beans show him how it's done." - OCLC



The Birders

by Rob Albanese, c2022 (IL: K-4)

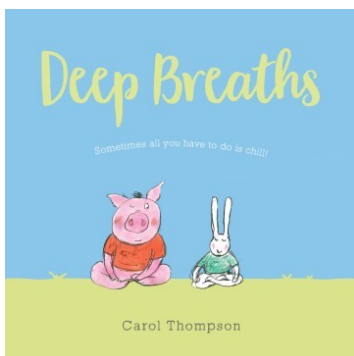
"A story about the beginning of a friendship between two different generations (a young boy and his elderly neighbor) and looks at what each has to teach the other during an outing to document a snowy owl in the woods behind their houses." - Pub



The Buddy Bench

by Patty Brozo, c2019 (IL: K-5, RL: 1.7)

"When it's time for recess, Miss Mellon's students swarm over the playground. They fly make-believe planes, tame dragons, and ride elephants. But wait, why are there a few kids standing alone and watching? Why aren't they joining in? Why do they look so forlorn? They all have their reasons, but all they really need is a little encouragement. They need a kind word. They need a buddy bench." - Follett



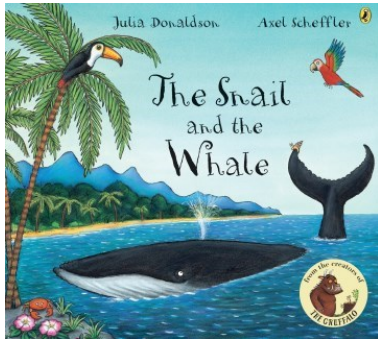
Deep Breaths

by Carol Thompson, c2019 (IL: K-2, RL: 2.0)

"Take a deep breath, and learn to manage strong emotions through mindfulness with this pair of feuding best friends, Dolly and Jack! Dolly the pig and Jack the rabbit are best friends, but even best friends don't always get along. When Dolly and Jack get into a big disagreement, they go from happy to mad, to sad...and then back to happy!" - Pub

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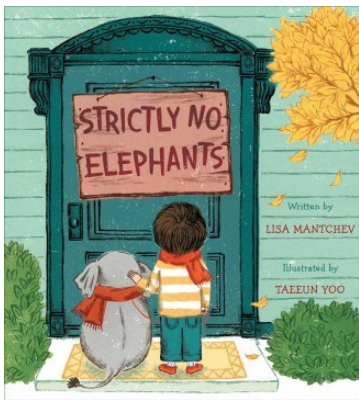
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The Snail and the Whale

by Julia Donaldson, c2006 (IL: K-2, RL: 3.9)

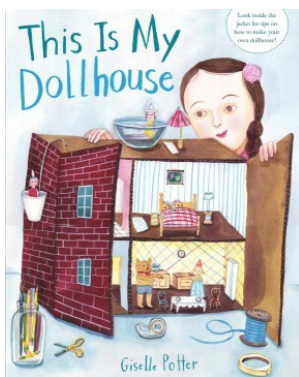
"When a tiny snail meets a humpback whale, the two travel together to far-off lands. It's a dream come true for the snail, who has never left home before. But when the whale swims too close to shore, will the snail be able to save her new friend?" - Pub



Strictly No Elephants

by Lisa Mantchev, c2015 (IL: K-3, RL: 2.6)

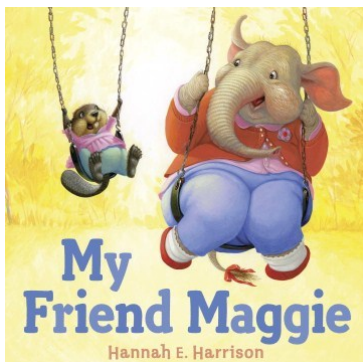
"When the local Pet Club won't admit a boy's tiny pet elephant, he finds a solution--one that involves all kinds of unusual animals in this sweet and adorable picture book." - Pub



This Is My Dollhouse

by Giselle Potter, c2016 (IL: K-3, RL: 4.8)

"A little girl who has made her own dollhouse from a box and her vivid imagination has trouble playing with her friend Sophie's perfect dolls and dollhouse, but when Sophie comes to visit she is afraid that her handiwork will not be good enough for Sophie." - Follett



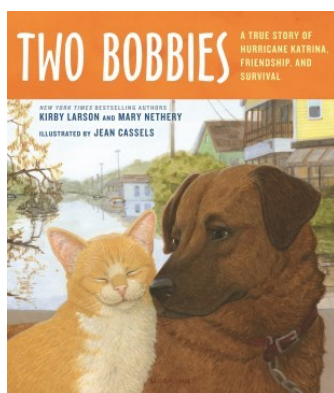
My Friend Maggie

by Hannah E. Harrison, c2016 (IL: K-3, RL: 4.8)

"Paula and Maggie are best friends until Paula starts playing with some new friends instead, but when her new playmates turn on her, it's Maggie who rushes to Paula's defense." - Pub

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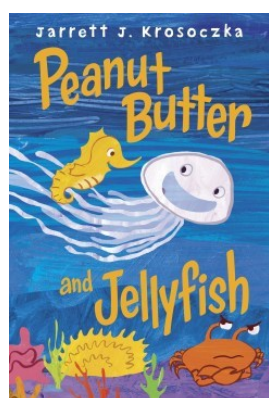
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Two Bobbies: A True Story of Hurricane Katrina, Friendship and Survival

by Kirby Larson, c2008 (IL: K-3, RL: 4.2)

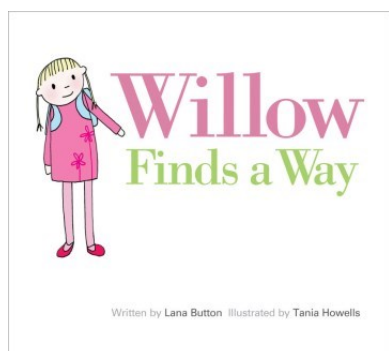
"Tells the true story of Bobbie the dog and Bob Cat, two pets who bonded together and were able to survive the devastation of Hurricane Katrina." - Follett



Peanut Butter and Jellyfish

by Jarrett Krosoczka, c2014 (IL: K-2, RL: 2.6)

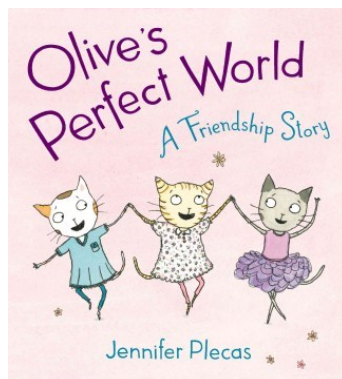
"Best friends Peanut Butter and Jellyfish are constantly being taunted by their neighbor, Crabby, until they help him out of a jam." - Follett



Willow Finds a Way

by Lana Button, c2020 (IL: K-2, RL: 3.6)

"Shy Willow silently wishes she could find a way to say no to her bossy classmate Kristabelle's demands, but the words never seem to come when she needs them. That is, until Kristabelle starts using the threat of un-inviting children from her birthday party, and Willow decides she's finally had enough. Willow steps up and bravely does something shocking, and it changes the entire dynamic of the classroom." - Pub



Olive's Perfect World: A Friendship Story

by Jennifer Plecas, c2020 (IL: K-2, RL: 3.6)

"Little kittens Olive and Emily have always been friends, ever since they were little. But now Emily has a new friend, and it makes Olive feel left out—especially when she realizes all of the things that Emily and her new friend Eva have in common." - Penguin Books

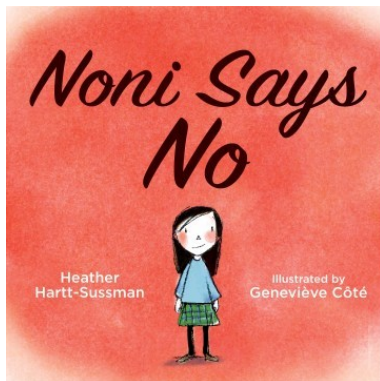
Mental Health and Well-Being: Exploring Friendship (Primary)

Compiled by Joan Pearce
Picture Book Format



Red Cat Blue Cat
by Jenni Desmond, c2014

"Every kid sometimes wants to be someone else. And so, it turns out, do some cats. Kids will relate to how hard it is for each cat to try to be like the other. They'll also love the true-to-life way that, after the fur stops flying, an unexpected change occurs, making both cats happy to be just exactly who they are." - Pub



Noni Says No
by Heather Hartt-Sussman, c2011 (IL: K-3)

"Noni can do a lot of different things except say 'no,' until one day when she is pushed too far by her friend Susie." - Pub