

# Mental Health and Well-Being: Exploring Worries and Feeling Nervous 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*

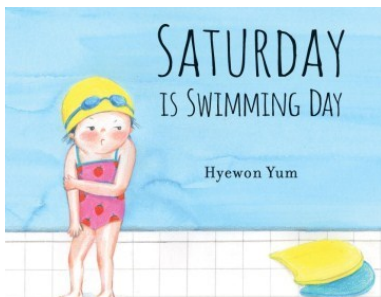
# Mental Health and Well-Being: Exploring Worries and Feeling Nervous (Primary)

Compiled by Joan Pearce  
Picture Book Format



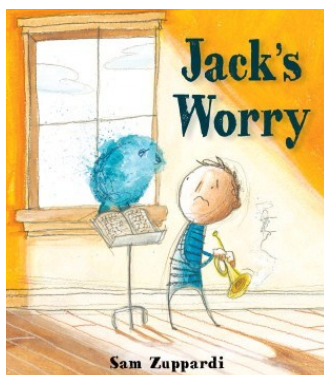
## Don't Worry, Little Crab by Chris Haughton, c2019 (IL: K-3)

"In the rockpool above the sea, live two crabs: Big Crab and Little Crab. Today, they're going for a dip in the sea. 'This is going to be so great!' says Little Crab. But then Little Crab catches a first glimpse of the water. Oh. The waves! They're enormous. 'Jeeppers!' Will Little Crab be brave enough to go in?" - OCLC



## Saturday Is Swimming Day by Hyewon Yum, c2018 (IL: K-3, RL: 2.9)

"Swimming lessons are on Saturdays, and every Saturday one little girl has a stomach ache. When she gets to the pool it's loud, the floor is wet and slippery, and her swim cap is too tight. Her swimming instructor, Mary, says it's OK to sit by the edge if she doesn't want to get in the water this week. The next Saturday the girl has a stomach ache again, but with Mary's gentle encouragement, she eventually manages to make it into the pool..." - Pub.



## Jack's Worry by Sam Zuppardi, c2016 (IL: K-3, RL: 2.7)

"Jack loves playing the trumpet. For weeks he's been looking forward to playing in his first-ever concert. But on the morning of the big day, Jack finds he has a worry. From the creator of "The Nowhere Box" comes a...story about the jitters associated with first experiences—and the satisfaction that comes with conquering your fears." - Pub.

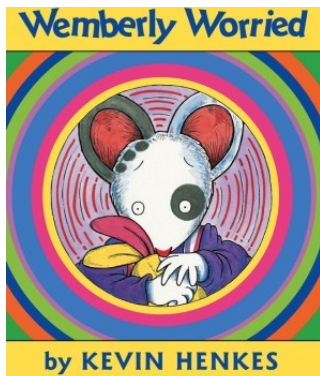


## Scaredy Squirrel by Mélanie Watt, c2006 (IL: K-3, RL: 3.6)

"Scaredy Squirrel is afraid to leave his nut tree, but when he is finally one day forced out of his home, he discovers some interesting things about the great unknown." - Follett

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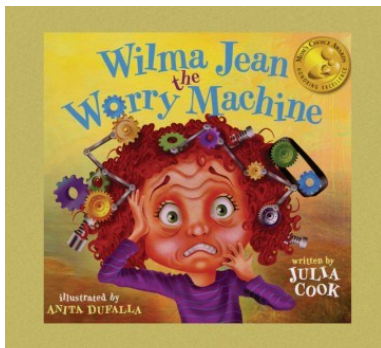
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## Wemberly Worried

by Kevin Henkes, c2000 (IL: K-3, RL: 2.8)

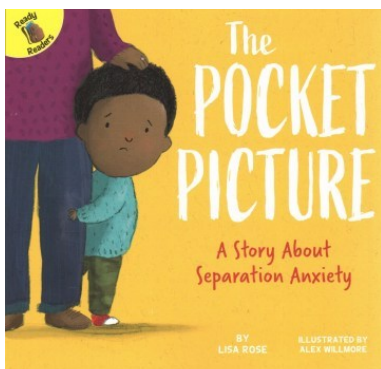
"A mouse named Wemberly, who worries about everything, finds that she has a whole list of things to worry about when she faces the first day of nursery school." - Follett



## Wilma Jean the Worry Machine

by Julia Cook, c2011 (IL: K-3, RL: 2.2)

"Follows Wilma Jean at home and at school as she learns to cope with her anxieties." - Follett



## The Pocket Picture: A Story About Separation Anxiety

by Lisa Rose, c2019 (IL: K-3, RL: 1.2)

"Jacob learns to get over his fear of leaving his family while at school by drawing a picture of his family and keeping it in his pocket." - Follett



## Violet Shrink

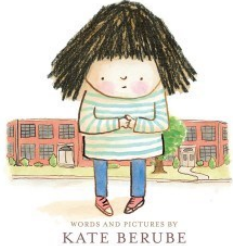
by Christine Baldacchino, c2020 (IL: K-3, RL: 4.5)

"Violet's natural introversion and feelings of social anxiety are normalized when she and her father reach a solution together" - Amazon.ca

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## MAE'S FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL



### Mae's First Day of School

by Kate Berube, c2018 (IL: K-3, RL: 2.1)

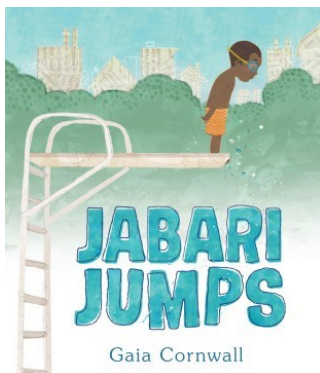
"As Mae's first day of school approaches she decides she IS. NOT. GOING. School is scary! What if the other kids don't like her? Or what if she's the only one who doesn't know how to write? Or what if she misses her mom? Mae's anxiety only builds as she walks to school. But then she meets Rosie and Ms. Pearl. Will making new friends show her that they can conquer their fears together?" - Pub.



### Lena's Shoes are Nervous: A First-Day-Of-School Dilemma

by Keith Calabrese, c2018 (IL: K-3, RL: 2.0)

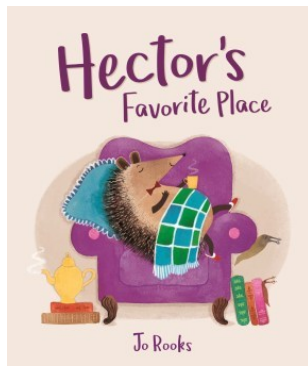
"Lena is excited about starting kindergarten but her favorite shoes are not until, with the help of her father and a very special headband, she convinces the shoes—and herself—to be brave." - Follett



### Jabari Jumps

by Gaia Cornwall, c2017 (IL: K-3, RL: 2.2)

"Jabari is definitely ready to jump off the diving board. He's finished his swimming lessons. He's passed his swim test. It's just... maybe he should do some stretches first. 'Looks easy,' says Jabari, watching the other kids take their turns. But when his dad squeezes his hand, Jabari squeezes back." - Pub.



### Hector's Favorite Place

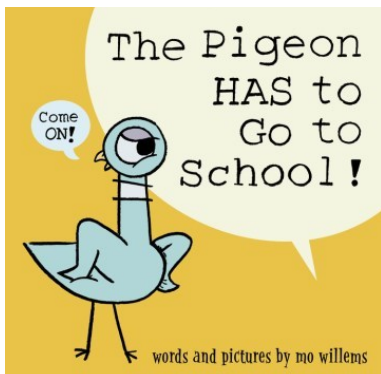
by Jo Rooks, c2018 (IL: K-3, RL: 2.5)

"Hector loves his home! It's comfy, snuggly, and safe. But sometimes Hector relies on the safety of his home too much—he's invited to play outside with his friends, but he worries about the potential problems he might encounter. Soon Hector realizes that his worries are keeping him from enjoying himself, so he needs to learn to be brave and try new things. Includes a 'Note to Parents and Caregivers' about encouraging kids to step outside their..." - Amazon.ca



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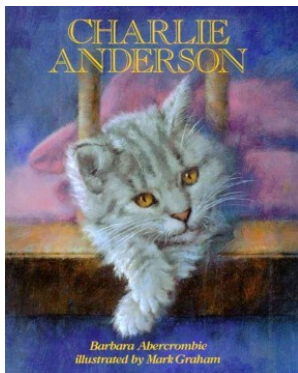
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## **The Pigeon Has to Go to School!**

by Mo Willems, c2019 (IL: K-3, RL: 1.9)

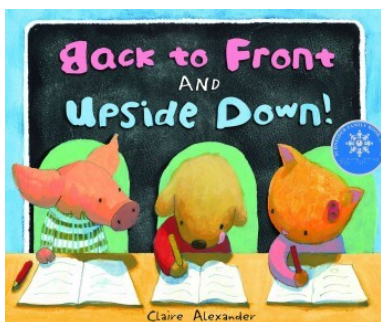
"Why does the Pigeon have to go to school? He already knows everything! And what if he doesn't like it? What if the teacher doesn't like him? What if he learns TOO MUCH!?! Ask not for whom the school bell rings; it rings for the Pigeon!" - Pub.



## **Charlie Anderson**

by Barbara Abercrombie, c1990 (IL: K-3, RL: 1.9)

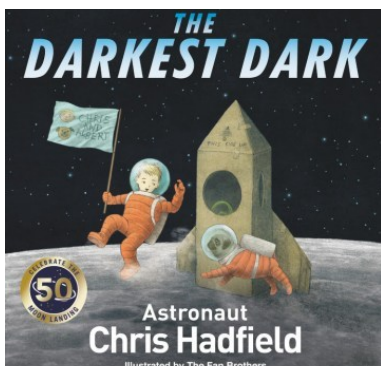
"A cat comes out of the night to steal the hearts of two sisters who look forward to his sleeping on their beds, until one day Charlie doesn't come home and they learn a surprising secret about him." - Follett



## **Back to Front and Upside Down!**

by Claire Alexander, c2012 (IL: K-3, RL: 2.2)

"It's the principal Mr. Slipper's birthday, and while the rest of the class gets busy writing cards for the occasion, Stan becomes frustrated when his letters come out all in a muddle. Stan is afraid to ask for help, until a friend assures him that nobody's good at everything. And after lots and lots of practice, Stan's letters come out the right way round and the right way up..." - Pub.



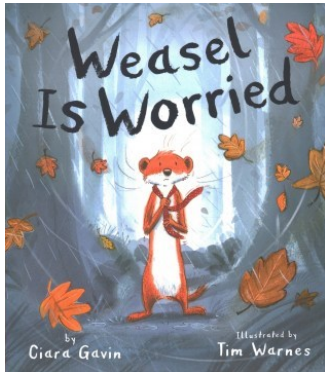
## **The Darkest Dark**

by Chris Hadfield, c2016 (IL: K-3, RL: 3.0)

"Young Chris loves pretending he's a brave astronaut, exploring the universe. Only one problem—at night, he's afraid of the dark. Only when he watches the moon landing on TV does he realize how exciting the unknown can be. Inspired by the childhood of real-life astronaut Chris Hadfield" - Pub.

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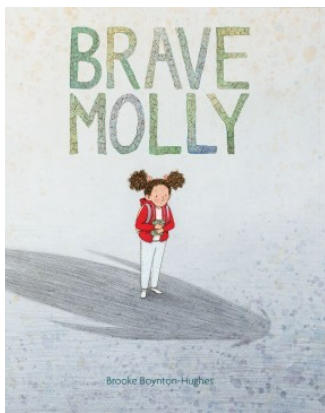
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## Weasel is Worried

by Giana Gavin, c2020 (IL: K-3)

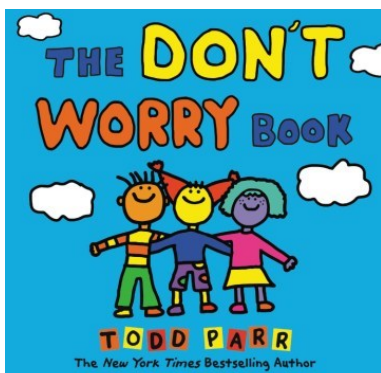
"When Weasel is caught in a storm, he builds a fortress to hide in. But then he meets Mole, who loves to play in the wind and splash in the rain. Can Weasel learn to overcome his fears and find joy, whatever the weather?" - Pub.



## Brave Molly

by Brooke Boynton-Hughes, c2019 (IL:K-3)

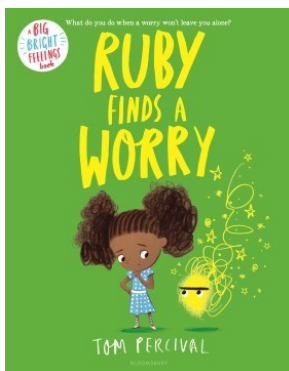
"What do you do when no one can see your monsters but you? At first, Molly runs from them. But they follow her down the sidewalk, getting in the way when she tries to make a new friend, popping up unexpectedly out of shadows, and multiplying. Until finally...Molly faces her fears." - Pub.



## The Don't Worry Book

by Todd Parr, c2019 (IL: K-3, RL: 2.0)

"Todd Parr brings his trademark bright colors and bold lines to his new book about things that might make kids worry—from loud news, to loud neighbors, or a big day at school. With his signature humor and instantly recognizable style, Todd speaks out to kids who are feeling the weight of their world, offering solutions



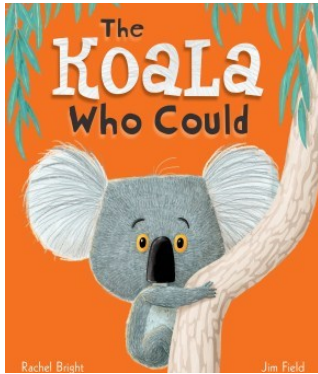
## Ruby Finds a Worry

by Rom Percival, c2019 (IL: K-3, RL: 1.9)

"A young girl's sense of adventure and exploration vanishes when she discovers a Worry that grows and grows until she learns how to get rid of it." - Follett

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## **The Koala Who Could**

by Rachel Bright, c2017 (IL: K-3, RL: 2.3)

"Kevin is a koala who clings to his tree, and never comes down to play with the other animals--until one day his tree falls down, and Kevin learns that the ground is not as scary as he believed." - Follett



## **The Orange Shirt Story**

by Phyllis Webstad, c2018 (IL: K-3, RL: 3.5)

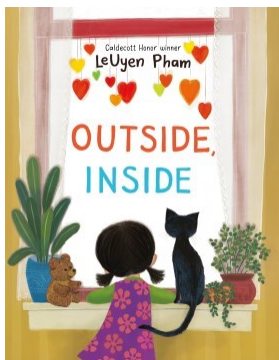
"When Phyllis Webstad (nee Jack) turned six, she went to the residential school for the first time. On her first day at school, she wore a shiny orange shirt that her Granny had bought for her, but when she got to the school, it was taken away from her and never returned. This is based on the true story of Phyllis and her orange shirt. It is also the story of Orange Shirt Day (an important day of remembrance for First Nations and non First Nations Canadians.)" - Follett



## **The Rhino Suit**

by Colter Jackson, c2022 (IL: K-1)

"A little girl feels everything too deeply and she does not know how to be okay with all the sadness she sees, so she makes a "rhino suit" to keep herself safe from pain--only to discover that inside the suit she is shutting out not only the pain, but the beauty and love in the world as well." - Follett



## **Outside Inside**

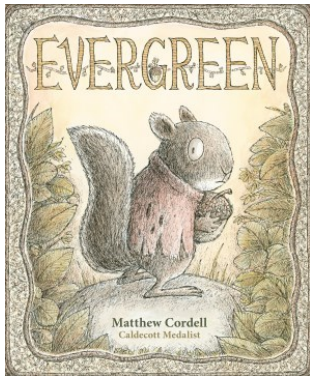
by LeUyen Pham, c2021 (IL: K-1, RL: 2.0)

"A picture book that describes the impact of COVID-19 on communities and why some essential workers could not quarantine." - Follett



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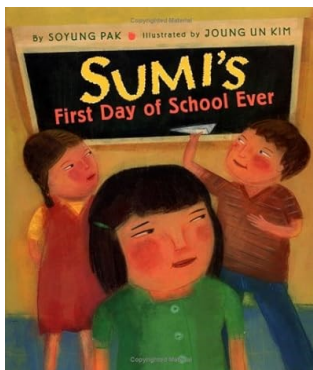
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## Evergreen

by Matthew Cordell, c2023 (IL: K-1, RL: 2.4)

"To deliver her mother's delicious soup to her sick Granny Oak, Evergreen the squirrel must face her fears and make the journey, during which she meets other forest dwellers, including some who want to get their hands on her soup!" - *Follett*



## Sumi's First Day of School Ever

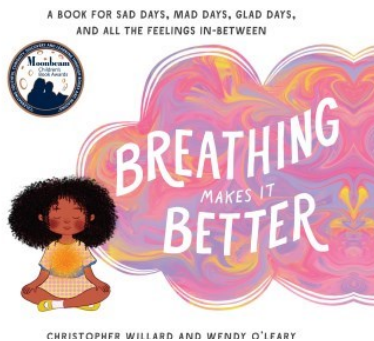
by Soyung Pak, c2003

"The first day of school can be lonely and scary, especially when you don't speak the same language as everyone else. Sumi only knows one phrase in English, "Hello, my name is Sumi." This doesn't seem nearly enough to prepare her for a big school with wide stairs, noisy children, and a mean classmate." - *Amazon*



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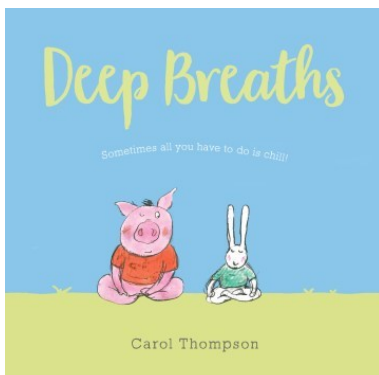
Compiled by Joan Pearce  
Picture Book Format-Strategies



## **Breathing Makes It Better**

by Christopher Willard, c2019 (IL: K-3, RL: 2.3)

"Read aloud and breathe along with this sweet story teaching children how to navigate powerful emotions like anger, fear, sadness, confusion, anxiety, and loneliness...Simple guided practices, like imagining you are a tree blowing in the wind, follow each story to teach children how to apply mindfulness techniques when they need them the most." - Pub.

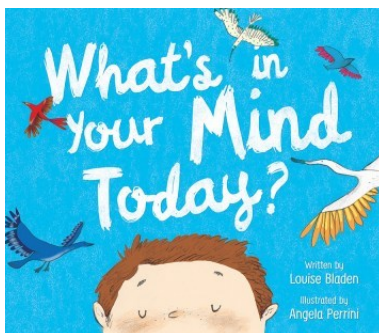


## **Deep Breaths**

by Carol Thompson, c2019 (IL: K-3, RL: 2.0)

"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!

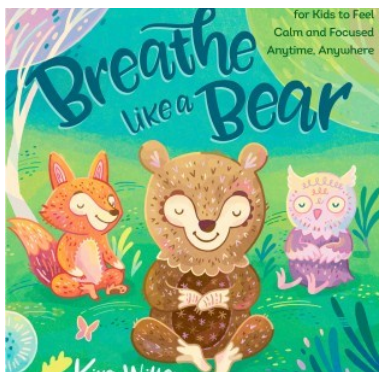
Both hilarious and instructive, *Deep Breaths* is a refreshing picture-book portrait of real friendship, and sets an example of how to manage strong emotions and resolve differences through simple mindfulness and meditation techniques." - Pub.



## **What's In Your Mind Today?**

by Louise Bladen, c2020 (IL: K-3, RL: 1.5)

"Children who struggle with negative thoughts may wonder how to make them go away. In this guided, illustrated meditation for kids, author Louise Bladen offers a simple mindfulness practice, not to banish bad thoughts, but to feel calm in the midst of thoughts that come and go. Children will learn how to breathe and center themselves in their bodies, find different ways to think about their positive and negative thoughts, and ultimately learn that they have the ability to feel calm and at peace no matter what kinds of thoughts..." - Pub.



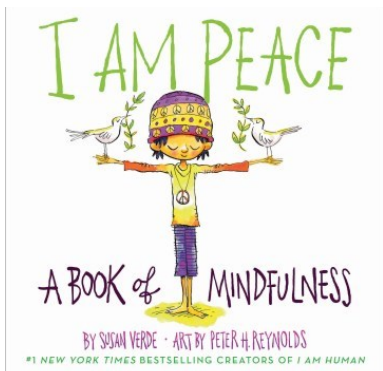
## **Breathe Like a Bear (Mindful Moments for Kids)**

by Kira Willey, c2019 (IL: K-3, RL:1.3)

"Introduces mindfulness exercises to children to help them become relaxed, focused, and energized. Shows young readers how to get their "grumpies" out, become a cloud, stretch like a kitty cat, and more." - Follet

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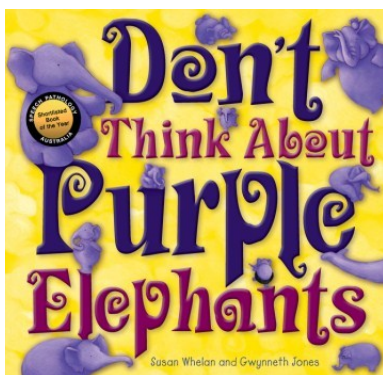
## I Am Peace: A Book of Mindfulness by Susan Verde, c2017 (IL: K-3, RL: 2.2)

"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...a gentle expression of the tenets of mindfulness, encouraging children to breathe, taste, smell, and be present in the here and now." - Amazon.ca



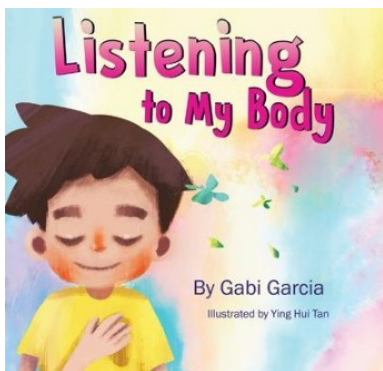
## Take the Time: Mindfulness for Kids by Maud Roegiers, c2010 (IL: K-3, RL: 2.3)

"What do you notice when you take the time to stop, listen, and experience? This book encourages children to slow down and become deliberate with their day-to-day actions and thoughts. With gentle rhythms and soothing imagery, it guides kids toward a quiet self-awareness and mindfulness." - Pub.



## Don't Think About Purple Elephants by Susan Maree Whelan, c2015 (IL: K-3, RL: 4.2)

"Sometimes Sophie worries—not during the day when she is busy with family and friends, but at night when everything is calm and quiet. Her family all try to help, but somehow they just make her worries worse. Until her mother thinks of a new approach ... that might just involve an elephant or two! But wait, don't think about purple elephants, whatever you do! Whimsical and humorous, this little girl's story of finding a way to ease her worry will resonate with children and parents everywhere." - Pub.

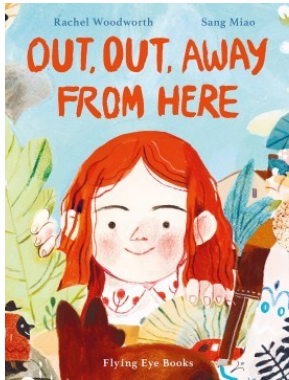


## Listening to My Body: A Guide to Helping Kids Understand the Connection Between Their Sensations and Feelings by Gabi Garcia, c2017 (IL: 3-6)

"This engaging and interactive book 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. Easy, kid-friendly mindfulness activities are woven throughout to reinforce the teachings." - Pub.

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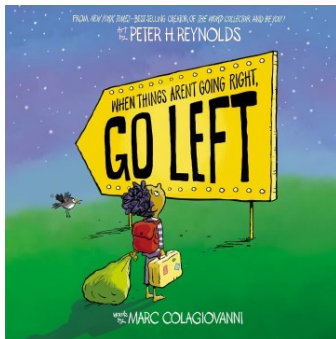
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Picture Book Format-Strategies



## Out, Out, Away From Here

by Rachel Woodworth, c2018 (IL: K-3, RL: 1.6)

"Some days I feel mad. Some days I feel sad. Some days I feel smiling-ear-to-ear glad...Emotions can be strange, sudden, and even overwhelming at times. Through thoughtful words and expressive images, this book guides us on a journey through our imagination... to a place where everything feels calm again." - Pub.



## When Things Aren't Going Right, Go Left

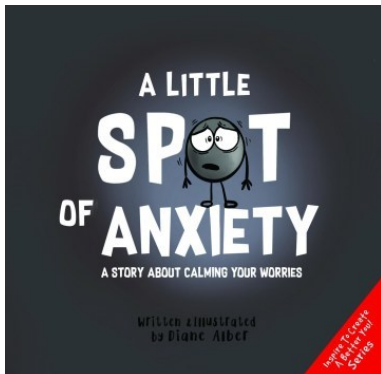
by Marc Colagiovanni, c2023 (IL: K-3, RL: 1.6)

"Reminding readers of their power to forge their own destinies, this deep and whimsical picture book creates an enduring message of strength and perseverance that is both universal and personal." - Follett



# Mental Health and Well-Being: Exploring Worries and Feeling Nervous (Primary)

Compiled by Joan Pearce  
Non-fiction



## A Little Spot of Anxiety: A Story About Calming Your Worries

by Diane Alber, c2019 (IL: K-3, RL: 4.4)

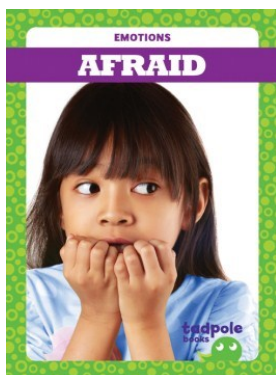
"Peaceful Spot teaches about Anxiety Spot and how to calm your worries away." - Follett



## When Your Friend is Scared (Series: You've Got a Friend)

by Allan Morey, c2020 (IL: K-3, RL: 2.3)

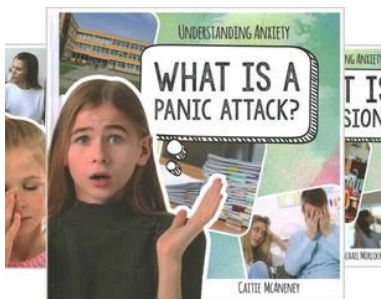
Includes index. "In this book, readers will discover how to recognize fear in others and how to best respond to it with empathy and understanding. Social and emotional learning (SEL) concepts support growth mindset throughout, while Try This! and Grow with Goals activities at the end of the book further reinforce the content. Full-color photos and . . . leveled text engage young readers as they learn more about the emotion of fear" - Pub.



## Afraid (Series: Emotions)

by Genevieve Nilsen, c2019 (IL: K-3, RL: 0.6)

Includes index. "This book helps emergent readers recognize the emotion of fear and the actions that define it while providing them with a . . . nonfiction reading experience" - Pub.



## Series: Understanding Anxiety

by PowerKid Press, c2021 (IL: 3-6, RL: 5.4-7.2)

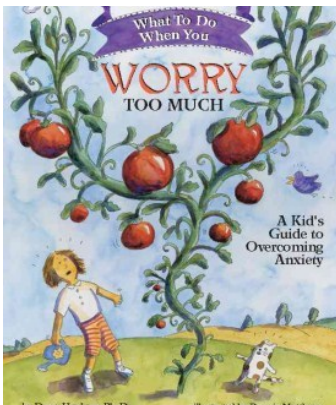
### **Titles:**

- What are Phobias?
- What is Anxiety?
- What is a Panic Attack?
- What is Depression?
- What is Social Anxiety?



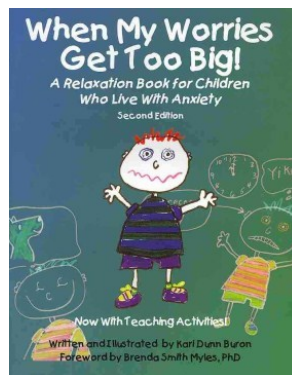
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## What to Do When You Worry Too Much: A Kid's Guide to Overcoming Anxiety

by Dawn Huebner, Ph.D., c2006 (IL: 3-6. RL: 5.3)  
"...is an interactive self-help book designed to guide 6-12 year olds and their parents through the cognitive-behavioral techniques most often used in the treatment of generalised anxiety. Engaging, encouraging, and easy to follow, this book educates, motivates, and empowers children to work towards change." - Pub.



## When My Worries Get Too Big! A Relaxation Book for Children Who Live with Anxiety,

by Kari Dunn Buron, c2013 (IL: AD)

"Engaging and easy to read, this illustrated children s book is filled with opportunities for children to participate in developing their own self-calming strategies. Children who use the simple strategies in this charming book, illustrated by the author, will find themselves relaxed and ready to focus on work or play!" - Pub.



## EASE: Everyday Anxiety Strategies for Educators: Classroom Resources

by BC Ministry of Education, 2018

"EASE is a collection of evidence-informed anxiety prevention and resilience-building resources for use with students in grades K-7. The resources use cognitive behavioural strategies to address the thoughts, feelings and behaviours associated with anxiety."

- BC Ministry of Education