



Picture Books are a valuable resource in Peace Education because they introduce topics through storytelling and imagery that may be hard to comprehend through words alone. Picture books can foster empathy by introducing diverse perspectives. Through relatable stories, conversations about social justice issues are ignited and critical thinking is encouraged. You can become familiar with these titles by viewing read-alouds of children's books on platforms such as YouTube.com.

## Agency, Identity, and Self-Awareness

***Be Kind*** written by Pat Zietlow Miller and illustrated by Jen Hill.

The book presents the powerful message that small acts of kindness matter, and that they can build with other acts of kindness to make a difference.

***Big*** written and illustrated by Vashti Harrison.

"This book resonates with a potential emotional impact that is immense... This inspiring and highly relatable title could be used with readers of any age to discuss topics of body image and self-love." — School Library Journal.

This simple story has a powerful message about our right to take space, fit in or stand out & that children are children in any body.

***How Kind!*** written and illustrated by Mary Murphy.

A lesson in kindness and friendship with simple illustrations that express emotion. The words are direct and the repetition of "How kind!" reinforces the barnyard animals' actions.

***I Walk With Vanessa: A Story About a Simple Act of Kindness*** (no text) illustrated by Kerascoet.

The story of one girl who inspires a community to stand up to bullying. Inspired by real events, this book explores the feelings of helplessness and anger that arise in the wake of seeing a classmate treated badly, and shows how a single act of kindness can lead to an entire community joining in to help.

***Just Ask!*** written by Justice Sonia Sotomayor and illustrated by Rafael López.

"A beautiful story about understanding differences and celebrating what makes us unique." — Miguel Cardona, U.S. Secretary of Education.

Feeling different, especially as a kid, can be tough. But in the same way that different types of plants and flowers make a garden more beautiful and enjoyable, different types of people make our world more vibrant and wonderful. As the children work together to build a community garden, they ask questions of each other that lead to celebrating their unique abilities.

**Same, Same but Different** by Jenny Sue Kostecki-Shaw.

“Purposeful, but saved from didacticism by the sheer exuberance of the illustrations; the accessible text introduces the idea of traditional two-way communication and demonstrates just how small our world can be.” — Kirkus Reviews

Two boys living an ocean apart discover that although their worlds may look different, they have more similarities than expected.

**Stand Tall, Molly Lou Melon** written by Patty Lovell and illustrated by David Catrow.

“Leave it to Molly to transform all her ‘faults’ into marvelous talents. Catrow’s pictures fill the pages with wild perspectives, goofy-looking kids, and hilarious details... leaves readers with the feeling that anything can be accomplished if you are the best person you can be and make the most of your gifts.” — Kirkus Reviews.

If you fall in love with the goofy illustrations and confident Molly Lou, there are follow up books: Have Fun, Molly Lou Melon and Speak Up, Molly Lou Melon!

**When We Are Kind — Nihá’ ádaahwiineít’ígo** written by Monique Gray Smith, illustrated by Nicole Neidhardt (English and Diné).

The words inspire questions and memories about being kind in the world, and with family and friends

## Emotional Regulation and Self-Management

**Jabari Jumps** written and illustrated by Gaia Cornwall.

“Anyone who has hesitated on the brink of something daunting — a brave act or a big decision — will feel a rush of kinship with the small protagonist of Gaia Cornwall’s picture book “Jabari Jumps.” — The Wall Street Journal.

What does it take to overcome your fear, take the leap toward your goal? Jabari’s sweet story encourages young readers to dig deep for their courage. Cornwall’s follow up, Jabari Tries is a great book for introducing problem-solving and perseverance.

**The Rabbit Listened** written and illustrated by Cori Doerrfeld

“In addition to validating feelings of anger and disappointment, this book is a fine vehicle for group discussion of ways to help others deal with these emotions. Sometimes just listening is best of all.” — School Library Journal.

An excellent addition to any emotional-intelligence shelf and It’s perfect for kids to learn about time, respect space, and listen without expecting anything in return. The child knocks down a tower they’ve been working hard on. Each animal comes with their own “helpful” reaction that doesn’t actually help until the rabbit comes in and just listens quietly, staying close by.

This lovely book helps young readers think about where they can turn when they are feeling sad, and what they can do when they have a sad friend or family member. It helps teach that feelings aren’t permanent. They come and go, and our difficult feelings don’t need to be fixed. Talking about them or allowing ourselves to experience them helps them pass.

*The Way I Feel* written and illustrated by Janan Cain.

Naming and claiming emotions can be challenging even as an adult. This book is a fantastic introduction to our ever-changing emotions and supports children's understanding of a variety of emotions through words, dynamic illustrations and body language of the characters. Have the children guess the emotion based on the words or the image as they scan through the pages and point out how they are feeling in the moment.

## Cognitive Regulation and Responsible Decision Making

*Too Many Toys* written and illustrated by David Shannon.

Spencer knows his house is overflowing with toys, and yet he finds it hard to part with his old playthings and box them up. In the end, he discovers his favorite toy of all is the box itself. Isn't that always the case?! This story will encourage kids to consider the value of giving away what they no longer play with or need.

This book also takes an explicit approach to addressing executive functioning skills (as so many David Shannon books do!). We often see books that solely focus on respecting others with our words, which is important. This picture book takes it one step further and teaches, through clear illustrations and text, how respecting and taking care of items and our surroundings is also a way of respecting people.

*We Don't Eat Our Classmates* written and illustrated by Ryan T. Higgins.

"For the times when students struggle to understand one another and when impulse control needs a little strengthening, pair this winner with Mo Willems's *Edwina, the Dinosaur Who Didn't Know She Was Extinct*. An appealing read-aloud selection." — School Library Journal.

Penelope Rex is a dinosaur who goes to school with children and has trouble making friends because she wants to eat the children. Eventually, Penelope learns how to have self-control and makes friends. This is a good book to discuss self-control and potential consequences.

Ryan T. Higgins has other books in the Penelope Rex series but also check out his *Mother Bruce* books! He has a way of illustrating that turns potentially scary animals lovable and endearing — perfect for those children who might feel misunderstood.

*When the Fog Rolls In* written and illustrated by Pam Fong.

"Unexpectedly separated from its colony, a puffin finds itself alone and directionless as a dense fog rolls in. As the puffin encounters obstacles both real and imagined, it nevertheless perseveres until it eventually finds its way back to safety and familiarity... An effective jumping-off point for discussions about fear, anxiety, and obstacles. A simple but poignant tale about navigating difficulties with courage and patience." — Kirkus Reviews.

Pam Fong's other books are also worth including in your practice. *A Spark In The Dark* goes in to dealing with difficult emotions. *Little Cloud* helps us remember to enjoy the moment and beauty around us. *Once Upon A Forest* is a wordless picture book that shows resilience after disaster, the value of nature and how far care and hope can go.

## Friendship

**[A Friend for Henry](#)** written by Jenn Bailey, illustrated by Mika Song.

Inspirational book about making friends and celebrating diversity and inclusion. [Autism awareness books for kids] With insight and warmth, this heartfelt story from the perspective of a boy on the autism spectrum celebrates the everyday magic of friendship.

**[Hippos Go Berserk!](#)** written and illustrated by Sandra Boynton.

This board book begins with a relatable character, lonely and desiring something more in his life. It is this thirst for adventure that so magnificently drives him to summon his friends in hopes of excitement. Fun counting book.

**[Mole Is Not Alone](#)** written and illustrated by Maya Tatsukawa.

This is relatable to children who might have social anxiety and helps the child realize that these are normal feelings. Tatsukawa brings this tale to satisfying conclusion that lets young introverts know they can have fun on their own terms.

**[Owen & Mzee: Best Friends](#)** written by Isabella Hatkoff, Craig Hatkoff, Dr. Paula Kahumba, photos by Peter Greste.

The true story of a baby hippo named Owen and a giant tortoise named Mzee. In December 2004 a frightened young hippo, separated from his family by the devastating tsunami in Southeast Asia, adopted an 130-year-old tortoise as his "mother." And the tortoise remarkably accepted the baby hippo as his own.

**[Rock in My Throat](#)** by Kao Kalia Yang, illustrated by Jiemei Lin.

In this moving true story, Kao Kalia Yang shares her experiences as a young Hmong refugee navigating life at home and at school. Having seen the poor treatment her parents received when making their best efforts at speaking English, she no longer speaks at school. Kalia feels as though a rock has become lodged in her throat, and it grows heavier each day.

**[Victor: The Wolf with Worries](#)** written and illustrated by Catherine Rayner.

Victor the wolf has lots of worries. He worries that he isn't brave enough, that he isn't big enough, and that he isn't fierce enough. With Pablo's help, Victor learns even more ways to deal with those pesky worrying thoughts. And as the worries grow smaller, Victor feels a little bigger and a little braver!

## Problem Solving with Friends

**[Art & Max](#)** by David Wiesner.

Max and Arthur are friends who share an interest in painting. Arthur is an accomplished painter; Max is a beginner. Max's first attempt at using a paintbrush sends the two friends on a whirlwind trip through various artistic media, which turn out to have unexpected pitfalls. Max is courageous and a quick learner. His energy and enthusiasm bring the adventure to its triumphant conclusion.

**[Hands Are Not For Hitting](#)** by Martine Agassi, illustrated by Marieka Heinlen.

Simple words and lively full-color illustrations guide children to choose positive behaviors.

[I Really Like Slop](#) written and illustrated by Mo Willems.

Mo Willems does a great job addressing children's feelings, relationships and dilemmas from their perspective. In this case, Piggy's love of slop. Gerald doesn't like the way slop smells or looks. Piggy wants her best friend Gerald to try it.

[I Really Want to Win](#) written by Simon Philip, illustrated Lucia Gaggiotti.

The values it touches are: strong female self-concept, acceptance of failure, willingness to try many activities of all types, and in the end achieving victory!

[There Might be Lobsters](#) by Carolyn Crimi, illustrated by Laurel Molk.

A story about facing anxiety told from the perspective of a little dog. Sukie is afraid of lobsters and that makes the beach a very scary place. Her friend, Eleanor, tries to encourage Sukie to walk on the sand and go into the water, but what if there are lobsters?

[We Are \(Not\) Friends](#) by Anna Kang, illustrated by Christopher Weyant.

This is a children's storybook about the complications of friendship when a new friend tries to enter the picture. It has a good message about being inclusive in relationships and not leaving others — who may also need a friend—on the outside looking in.

## Consent

[Can I Give You a Squish?](#) written and illustrated by Emily Neilson.

An underwater tale on the importance of consent and personal space. Kai goes around squishing everyone and everything. He squishes a puffer fish who is upset by this. It's a great intro to the idea of consent and playing gently.

[Don't Hug Doug \(He Doesn't Like It\)](#) by Carrie Finison, illustrated by Daniel Wiseman.

Doug doesn't like hello hugs or goodbye hugs, game-winning home run hugs or dropped ice cream cone hugs, and he definitely doesn't like birthday hugs. He'd much rather give a high five. A great starting point for a conversation about boundaries and how to set them.

## Perspective Taking

[Giraffes Can't Dance](#) by Giles Andrede, illustrated by Guy Parker-Rees.

The story follows Gerald, a giraffe with a unique challenge, as he discovers his own rhythm and learns to dance to his own tune. The book imparts valuable lessons about self-acceptance and the beauty of diversity.

[They All Saw A Cat](#) written and illustrated by Brendan Wenzel.

It shows how the same cat is seen by all these different animals like a dog or a boy or a snake or a bee or a bat and how although each entity is seeing the same cat, none of them are getting the same picture of what the cat looks like, especially the mouse.

## Community Building

**All Are Welcome** written by Alexandra Penfold, illustrated by Suzanne Kaufman.

Discover a school where all young children have a place, have a space, and are loved and appreciated. A school where students from all backgrounds learn from and celebrate each other's traditions.

"Celebrate a school community as a great common ground where families of all kinds connect and share in their children's educational journey the book's refrain of "All are welcome here" feels both deeply reassuring and almost radical in our polarized time." —Publishers Weekly.

**The Day the Crayons Quit!** written by Drew Daywalt, illustrations by Oliver Jeffers.

Duncan's crayons have gone on strike due to various grievances, which include overwork, boredom and professional jealousy. In the end, a solution is reached that makes everyone happy. This funny story shows that part of leading is about understanding the perspectives and feelings of others.

If you wish to go farther down this path, Click, Clack, Moo by Doreen Cronin is a favorite book to introduce collective action and workers' rights.

**One** written and illustrated by Kathryn Otoshi.

Blue is a quiet color. Red is a hothead who picks on Blue. When no one speaks up, things get out of hand — until One comes along and shows all the colors how to stand up, stand together, and count.

**Say Something** written and illustrated by Peter Reynolds.

Reynolds shows readers a variety of ways a voice can be used, listened to, and heard to make a difference... Reynolds' hand-lettered text, set in white text bubbles against a mix of bright backdrop colors and patterns, deftly works with before-and-after illustrations to show the change that children can effect. This book's encouragement to kids to find their voices can also be used to start a conversation about how they can make a difference in their world." — Kirkus Review.

**Swimmy** by Leo Lionni.

Swimmy is different than the other fish in his school. But when the other fish are scared of the dangers in the deep water, he learns how to combine his uniqueness with a little bravery, ingenuity.

**Extra Yarn** written by Mac Barnett, illustrated by Jon Klassen.

Yarn is a metaphor for happiness. Annabelle finds the box of yarn amidst this dreary backdrop and sets about knitting sweaters for everyone. We see her kindness and joy transform the bully, Nate, and his dog and her grumpy teacher, Mr. Norman, and the rowdy class.

**Room for Everyone** written by Naaz Khan, illustrated by Mercé López.

Set in Zanzibar, this one-to-10 counting book gives us the joy of welcoming strangers into your life. With rhyming text ( including Swahili words and Arabic phrases), repetitious phrases, and playful illustrations this book reflects the cultures of the city.

**Salam Alaikum : A Message of Peace** written by Harris J. and Ward Jenkins, illustrated by Ward Jenkin.

Here is a message of peace, a song, a poem in this feel-good book with cheerful illustrations showing a diverse group of happy people.

***Sofia Valdez, Future Prez*** written by Andrea Beaty, illustrated by David Roberts.

This book is perfect for sharing with young readers curious about elections and ready to raise their hand and make a difference. Sofi is making her community better by showing that good will prevail. Well done showing multiculturalism and inclusive messages in this book.

***The Ugly Vegetables*** written and illustrated by Grace Lin.

When a little girl and her mother grow “ugly” vegetables, the neighbors grow beautiful flowers. Both the vegetables and the flowers bring all the neighbors together for a feast of “ugly” vegetable soup with beautiful flowers on the table. A final page features a glossary/ pronunciation guide for the vegetables’ names in Chinese as well as a soup recipe.

***The Year We Learned to Fly*** written by Jacqueline Woodson, illustrated by Rafael López.

Grandmother’s advice: “Use those beautiful and brilliant minds of yours. Lift your arms, close your eyes, take a deep breath, and believe”.

***Where Are You From?*** written by Yamile Saied Méndez, illustrated by Jaime Kim.

This is a wonderful story that teaches about heritage and culture. It offers the message of acceptance and confidence in who you are.