



Recommended Books About Empathy and Kindness

Each Second Step grade level has a curated list of recommended books that help reinforce the social-emotional skills taught in our programs. The following is a sampling of books from our Early Learning through Grade 2 lists that focus on kindness and empathy.

Early Learning Book List

Those Shoes

by Maribeth Boelts, illustrated by Noah Z. Jones

Jeremy really wants the shoes that all the kids are wearing. The problem is that his family can't afford them. Jeremy will do most anything to own a pair—including squeeze into a pair on sale that is a size too small. Jeremy soon discovers the "uncomfortable" consequences of this solution and begins to appreciate what he already has.

(caring, compassion, consequences, friendship, helping, name-calling, problem-solving, thinking of solutions)

Enemy Pie

by Derek Munson, illustrated by Tara Calahan King

With his father's help, a little boy learns an effective recipe for turning an enemy into a friend. Available in Spanish: *Pastel para enemigos*.

(feelings change, having fun with your friends, identifying feelings)

A Sick Day for Amos McGee

by Philip C. Stead, illustrated by Erin E. Stead

Amos McGee works at the zoo. Amos always finds time each day to spend in special ways with five of his animal friends. One day Amos is sick. His friends then get a chance to do something special for Amos.

(caring, compassion, empathy, feelings, helping, understanding perspectives)

Have You Filled a Bucket Today?

by Carol McCloud, illustrated by David Messing

This book helps set a positive tone for your classroom by giving children a visual way to think about kindness toward others.

(caring, compassion, empathy, friendship, helping, kindness, welcoming)

Hey, Little Ant

by Phillip Hoose and Hannah Hoose, illustrated by Debbie Tilley

An ant pleads with a boy not to squash him. (Comes with musical notation.)

Available in Spanish: *Oye, Hormiguita*.

(similarities and differences)

Kindergarten-Grade 2 Book List

Be Kind

by Pat Zietlow Miller, illustrated by Jen Hill

"Be kind" is nice advice, but how do you do it? A child navigates her school day trying, and sometimes failing, to be as kind as possible.

(being assertive, compassion, empathy, feelings, friendship, problem-solving, understanding perspectives)

Come With Me

by Holly McGhee, illustrated by Pascal Lemaître

A little girl, frightened by what she sees in the news, asks her parents what she can do. Their simple, perfect solution is to say, "Come with me." Hand in hand, they face the world.

(compassion, empathy, understanding perspectives)

Each Kindness

by Jacqueline Woodson, illustrated by E. B. Lewis

Chloe and her friends tease Maya, the new girl, for her old clothes and toys. One day, Maya's seat in class is empty, and Chloe learns a harsh lesson in missed opportunity.

(compassion, consequences, understanding perspectives)

A Sick Day for Amos McGee

by Philip C. Stead, illustrated by Erin E. Stead

Amos McGee works at the zoo. Amos always finds time each day to spend in special ways with five of his animal friends. One day Amos is sick. His friends then get a chance to do something special for Amos.

(caring, compassion, empathy, feelings, helping, understanding perspectives)

The Invisible Boy

by Trudy Ludwig, illustrated by Patrice Barton

Brian is a quiet kid, and he feels invisible. But the new kid in class might have it worse—he gets teased on his first day. Brian draws him a picture, and that little act of kindness changes everything.

(empathy, feelings, friendship, problem-solving, understanding perspectives)

Last Stop on Market Street

by Matt de la Peña, illustrated by Christian Robinson

CJ complains about the rain, taking the bus, and not having the same cool toys other kids have. But with some gentle humor and encouragement from his grandmother, he begins to see the beauty all around him.

(compassion, feelings, understanding perspectives)

Most People

by Michael Leannah, illustrated by Jennifer E. Morris

When the world looks scary, it's reassuring to remember that most people want to be kind, helpful, loving, and funny. This book meanders through a busy city, showing all kinds of people helping, playing, and sharing.

(compassion, feelings)