

Where the Wild Things Are

by Maurice Sendak

The Story

The story is about a boy named Max. Max is angry after being sent to his room for making mischief. The story can help you to discuss strong feelings and ways to calm down with your child. Max manages his strong feelings by going on a journey in his imagination. This models one way to calm down—thinking about something else. The story can also help you discuss changing feelings and coping with loneliness.

Reading 1

Talking About Social and Emotional Skills

Ask at least six of these questions as you read with your child. Stop on the page indicated, and after you have asked the question(s) give your child lots of time to think about the answer and tell you what he or she is thinking. Questions that are grouped together in a paragraph should be asked together.

Cover:

(Hold up the book and show the cover.)

Look at the front cover of the book.

What do you see?

What do you think?

What do you wonder?

Page 5:

Why does Max say “I’ll eat you up!”?

How do you think Max might feel?

What could Max do to calm down?

Page 10:

How do you think Max might feel now? His feelings have changed.

Why do you think his feelings changed?

Page 16:

What is Max imagining in this picture?

Do you ever imagine things to help you feel better when you are angry or sad?

Page 26:

Max is having fun with his friends. What do you do with your friends to have fun?

Page 28:

Look closely at the picture. How do you know they are all having fun?

Page 29:

Why does Max tell the wild things to stop?

Who loves Max best of all?

Who do you want to be with when you are lonely?

Page 32:

The wild things don’t want Max to leave.

Have you ever had a hard time saying good-bye to a friend? Tell us about it.

After the reading, show your child page 6:

Max is very angry here.

Then show page 36: Max is calm here.

How did Max calm down?

How do you like to calm down?

Reading 2

Your Child as Storyteller

Look through the book and choose some pages with important events to have your child talk about. For younger children, choose three or four pages. For older children, choose between six and nine pages. Use the following questions to encourage your child to talk about the story.

What happens next?

Has this ever happened to you?

What is happening on this page?

How does _____ (fill in with character's name) feel? Why?

When have you felt this way?

What do you remember about this page?

Why did _____ (fill in with a detail from the story)?

What is _____ (fill in with character's name) doing?

What would you tell _____ (fill in with character's name)?

What does this story remind you of?