

## **Books for Increasing Understanding, Opening Avenues for Conversation and Healing and Increasing Connection<sup>i</sup>**

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### **Adoption/Foster/Kinship**

#### Adoption

*Adoption if for Always*, Linda Walvoord Girard

*Families Are Forever*, Deb Capone, Craig Sherman (note: as nice as the sentiment in this book is, the title/message might strike an individual placed through adoption/foster/kinship as ingenious as their first family was not “forever.”)

*A Mother for Chaco*

*All Together Now*, Anita Sherman

*How I Was Adopted*, Joanna Cole

*The Day We Met You*, Phoebe Koehler

*Let’s Talk About Adoption*, Fred Rogers

*Motherbridge of Love*, Xinran and Josee Masse

*Mommy Far, Mommy Near*, Carol Antoinette Peacock

*Little Miss Spider*, David Kirk

*Help! I’ve been Adopted*, Brenda McCreight

*A Foster Adoption Story*, Regina Kupecky

*The Mulberry Bird: An Adoption Story*, Anne Braff Brodzinsky

*Horace*, Holly Keller

#### Foster/Out of Home Placement

*Delly Duck: Why A Little Chick Couldn’t Stay With His Birth Mother: A Fostercare and adoption storybook for children to explain or support*, Holly Marlow (1 of a 4 books series in Fostering Stories and Resources)

*Finding the Right Spot: When Kids Can’t Live With their Parents*, Janice Levy

*Mama’s Waves*, Chandra Ghosh Ippen

*Addie’s Mom Isn’t Home Anymore*, Genia Calvin

*Maybe Days*, Jennifer Wilgocki

*Kids Need to Be Safe*, Julie Nelson

*Families Change*, Julie Nelson

*Love From Right Here*, Jamie Sandefer

*Speranza’s Sweater*, March Pusey

*Murphy’s Three Homes*, Jan Levinson Gillman

*No Matter What, A Foster Care Tale*, Josh Shipp

*Kinda Like Brothers*, Coe Booth (Middle-Grade)

#### Mixed Race Families/Different Families

*In My Heart*, Molly Bang

*You Be Me, I’ll Be You*, Pili Mandelbaum

*Who’s Whose?*, Jan Omerod

*For Black Girls Like Me*, Mariama J. Lockington (Middle Grade)

*And That's Why She's My Mama*, Tiarra Nazario

## **Trauma/Physical Abuse/Sexual Abuse**

*Tuff Stuff, A Children's Book About Trauma*, Joy Wilt

*The Hurt*, Teddy Doleski

*My Parents are Fighting Again: Dealing with the Feelings*, Marian Louise Camden

*Brave Bart: A Story for Traumatized and Grieving Children*, Caroline H. Sheppard

*Something is Wrong at My House: A Book About Parents Fighting*, Diane Davis

*Healing Days: A Guide for Kids Who Have Experienced Trauma*, Susan Farber Straus

*I Saw it Happen: A Child's Workbook About Witnessing Violence*, Wendy Deaton

*The Day My Daddy Lost His Temper: Empowering Kids That Have Witnessed Domestic Violence*, Carol S. McCleary

*Emmy's Question*, Jeannine Auth

*A Terrible Thing Happened*, Margaret M. Holmes

*The Boy Who Built a Wall*, Ali Redford

*Riley the Brave*, Jessica Sinarski

*Do You Have a Secret*, Jennifer Moore Mallinos

*My Body Belongs to Me*, Dagmar Geisler

*Let's Talk About Body, Boundaries, Consent, & Respect*, Jayneen Sanders

*Please Tell, A Child's Story of Sexual Abuse*, Jessie

## **Behavior/Life Skills**

The key here is to chose books that:

- 1) Match the child's true developmental abilities (not what their chronological age is). For example, remember that a child who does not yet have the skills to self-regulate and/or does not feel felt-safety in the moment of dysregulation will struggle with a book that encourages them to use internal self-regulation tools (e.g., deep breathing, asking for help; examples are noted with Asterix). Such a book could, in the end, just leave a child feeling like a failure because they are not able to take in and then use such advise;
- 2) Focus on the child being seen as accepted despite difficult (i.e., not yet developed) behaviors.

### Caregiver (Teacher) Acceptance in the Face of

*Harriet You Drive Me Wild*, Mem Fox

*A Difficult Day*, Eugenie Fernandez

*I'll Always Love You*, Paeony Lewis

*No Matter What*, Debi Gliori

*I Love You Stinky Face*, Lisa McCourt

*Lily's Plastic Purse*, Kevin Henkes

Skill building (note: building and using skills a child doesn't have requires a safe and regulated other – usually a trusted caregiver – to help with this work. It also requires self-regulation and some cognitive function in the child)

*Cleversticks*, Bernard Ashley

*Needing Attention\**, Joy Berry  
*When I Care About Others\**, Cornelia Maude Spelman  
*Being Helpful\**, Joy Berry  
*Wanted Best Friend\**, A.M. Monson  
*Starting School*, Janet and Allan Ahlberg  
*Just Because I Am*, Lauren Murphy Payne  
*Another Important Book*, Margaret Wise Brown  
*The Year We Learned to Fly*, Jacqueline Woodson  
*I Chose to Try Again*, Elizabeth Estrada  
*Mistakes are How I Learn*, Kiara Wilson  
*I Can Do Hard Things: Mindful Affirmations for Kids*, Gabi Garcia

### Brain Science

*Your Fantastic Elastic Brain*, Jo Ann Deak  
*Hey Warrior*, Karen Young

### **Self-Esteem**

*I Like Me*, Nancy Carlson  
*I Like Myself*, Karen Beaumont  
*You Are Special*, Max Lucado  
*Best of All*, Max Lucado  
*The Most Important Book of All*, Margaret Wise Brown  
*Just In Case You Ever Wonder*, Max Lucado  
*I Am Enough*, Grace Byers

### **Babies/Young Children Developmental/Family Life**

*101 Things to Do with a Baby*, Jan Omerod  
*Everywhere Babies*, Susan Meyers  
*Peepo*, Janet and Allan Ahlberg  
*Sunlight and Moonlight*, Jan Omerod  
*So Much*, Helen Oxenbury  
*Big Sister, Little Sister*, Charlotte Zolotow  
*A Morning in Maine*, Robert McCloskey  
*Alfie and Annie Rose*, Shirley Hughes

### **Parental Love**

*Just In Case You Ever Wonder*, Max Lucado  
*In My Heart*, Molly Bang (not specifically about adoption but the illustrations heavily imply that due to different race of child and parents)

### **Community Connection**

*Our Class is Family*, Shannon Olsen  
*I Wish You Knew*  
*The Invisible Thread*, Patricia Karst

## **Feelings**

The same rules that apply to skill building apply here. Children with histories of early adversity often struggle to open up about their feelings (bodily sensations) and emotions (cognitive representations assigned to feeling states) for several reasons including: 1) the feeling is implicit (that is pre-verbal) and they do not have the words to express it; 2) the feeling is a bodily sensation that they do not understand; 3) they lack a coherent narrative of their early life experiences; 4) their internal states scare them and they avoid them at all cost (hence, why they will struggle to even talk in general terms about feelings).

### General

*Feelings*, Aiki

*In My Heart*, Jo Witeck

*The Color Monster*, Anna Lenas

*Today I Feel Silly and Other Moods*, Jamie Lee Curtis

*Once I was Very Scared*, Chandra Ghosh Ippen

*Holdin' Pott*, Chandra Ghosh Ippen

*Percy Gets Angry\**, Stuart J. Murphy

*Feeling Angry\**, Joy Berry

*When I Feel Sad*, \* Cornelia Maude Spelman

*Don't Worry About Tomorrow*, Melody Carlson

### Opening Up About/Exploring

*Visiting Feelings*, Lauren Rubenstein

*The Boy Who Built a Wall*, Ali Redford

*I Wish You Knew*, Jackie Azua Kramer

*Morris and the Bundle of Worries*, Jill Seeney

*Listening to My Body*, Gabi Garcia

### Adult Empathy With

*The Boy Who Built a Wall*, Ali Redford

*You Weren't Here*, Chandra Gosh Ippen (*adult acceptance of child's feelings about abandonment; could be used in reunification or after caregiver separation*)

*I Love You When Your Angry*, Erin Winters

*The Rabbit Listened*, Cori Doerrfeld

## **Separation/Loss/Fears**

*The Kissing Hand*, Audrey Penn

*The Invisible String*, Patrice Karst

*Aarvy Aardvark Finds Hope*, Donna O'Toole

*Jessica and the Wolf*, Ted Lobby, MSW

*Tell Me Something Happy Before I go to Sleep*, Joyce Dunbar

*I'll Always Love You*, Hans Wilhelm (Pet Loss)

*Badger's Parting Gifts*, Susan Varley

*I forgot to Say I Love You*, Miriam Moss  
*Always*, Anna Pignataro  
*The Heart and the Bottle*, Oliver Jeffers  
*Badger's Parting Gifts*, Susan Varley  
*A Land Called Grief*, Maddie Janes  
*Some I love Died*, Christine Harder Tangvald  
*Where Are You: A Child's Book About Loss*, Laura Olivieri  
*I Wish I Could Hold Your Hand: A Child's Guide to Grief and Loss*, Pat Palmer  
*I Miss You*, Pat Thomas  
*The Memory Box*, Joanna Rowland  
*A Hug from Heaven*, Anna Whiston-Donaldson

### **Relaxation/Therapy**

*Each Breath a Smile*, Sister Susan  
*A Boy and a Bear*, Lori Lite  
*Cools Cats, Calm Kids*, Mary L. Williams  
*What to Do When Your Brain Gets Stuck*, Dawn Huebner  
*Feeling Better, A Kid's Book About Therapy*, Rachel Rashki  
*Up and Down the Worry Hill (a book about OCD)*, Aureen Pinto Wanger  
*Somebody Cares, A Guide for Children Who Have Experienced Neglect*, Susan Faber Straus  
*I Can Do Brave Things: Mindful Affirmations for Kids*, Gabi Garcia

### **Sibling Reading**

It is difficult having a sibling with special needs, including PTSD and Complex Trauma (and the behaviors that sometimes accompanies these). The following books have given a voice to these siblings and can help sort out feelings.

*All Capone Does My Shirts and All Capone Shines My Shoes*, by Gennifer Choldenko (Middle Grade)  
*My Corner of the Universe*, Ann M. Martin (not a sibling, but family member with mental illness)  
*Views From Our Shoes*, Donald Meyer and Cary Pillo (Various Ages)  
*My Invisible World*, Morasha Winokur  
*Wonder*, RJ Palacio  
*The Sibling Slam Book: What it is Really Like to have a Brother or Sister with Special Needs*, Ed. Don Meyer  
*Oh Brother*, Natalie Hale

### **Adult Reading**

Again, this is not an exhaustive list. These are a few books that I have read that I have used to formulate conversations and/or narratives, and to guide me in my selection of reading material for my children.

*Connecting with Kids Through Stories*, Denise B. Lacher  
*Talking to Young Children About Adoption*, Mary Watkins and Susan Fisher  
*Parenting the Hurt Child*, Keck and Kupecky

*Lifebooks*, Beth O'Malley

*Walk a Mile in My Shoes*, [www.EMKpress.com](http://www.EMKpress.com) (A caregiver/parent guide to help put you in the frame of mind to listen and learn to the adopted teen you know and love)

### **Clearing Houses For Adoption Books**

EMK Press, [www.emkpress.com](http://www.emkpress.com) (also resources for adoption and foster parents)

Tapestry Books, [www.tapestrybooks.com](http://www.tapestrybooks.com)

[www.full-potential-parenting.com](http://www.full-potential-parenting.com)

There is a prerecorded interview with author and therapist Denise Lacher about Family Attachment Narrative Therapy

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<sup>i</sup> This list is not meant to be exhaustive. There are many good books that address these issues. The key is to remember to keep the child's needs at the forefront rather than what the adult caregiver feels "safe" talking about, or the narrative the adult wants to portray in the midst of fear of child's experiences or having to address those.