



Teacher's Guide

Incorporating Social Emotional Learning into Reading Instruction

OVERVIEW

Getting children to read sometimes involves getting them to regulate their emotions, organize themselves, and decide to be intentional about focusing on reading. In other words, teaching a child to read sometimes involves Social Emotional Learning (SEL) strategies.

What is SEL? The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (casel.org) has developed a set of core competencies. These competencies fall into these five categories:

- Self-awareness
- Self-management
- Social awareness
- Relationship skills
- Responsible decision-making

What do these competencies have to do with reading? Indirectly, the absence of one or more of these competencies can interfere with a child's learning, which includes their reading development. The ability to focus, ask questions, and interact with peers effectively are important components of learning to read in a classroom setting. As children transition from emerging to fluent readers, these SEL competencies can play an important role in classroom readiness.

RIF is committed to helping teachers and caregivers engage children in reading, so we have several places where you'll find resources to support SEL-focused instruction:

SKYBRARY

In Skybrary, our digital library, where you'll find related books on the *My Friends, My Family* Island.



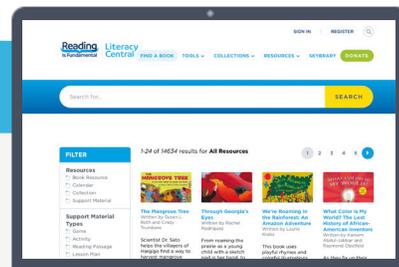
RIF.ORG/SEL

At RIF.org/SEL, a location devoted exclusively to social and emotional learning.



LITERACY CENTRAL

In Literacy Central, where you'll find supporting resources for SEL titles.



LITERACY NETWORK

In Literacy Network, where you'll find community support.



This teacher’s guide is a collection of concrete, simple ways to incorporate SEL concepts into the reading instruction you’re already doing in your classroom, along with a detailed list of suggested titles and their associated themes:

- We have curated a collection of children’s books, appropriate for young readers, that have stories aligned to these competencies. At the end of this guide is the complete list of books.
- We provide a basic lesson plan that can easily be adapted for the books you use to address social and emotional learning, whether the books are from our curated list, the many digital books provided on Skybrary, or your own collection. These lesson components allow you to seamlessly integrate SEL concepts into your instruction.
- We have identified a set of literacy themes for each of the curated books. These themes create a broader context for the SEL competencies and are closely aligned with reading instruction. These themes include:
 - Feelings
 - Friendship
 - Fairness
 - Focus

We know that SEL concepts are relevant even outside the context of reading instruction. We hope the resources we provide here will help you in that regard: Let the emergent reader become socially aware and the fluent reader become socially responsible.

Note to Skybrary Users. RIF’s eBook platform, includes seven “islands,” which are curated collections of books and videos. The island called *My Friend, My Family* is the place where you and your students will find SEL-themed books and resources. A list of suggested SEL books found on *My Friends, My Family* is found at the end of this guide.

Clicking on the island takes your student to the media selection area.

Here you and your students can select books to read in the classroom or assigned to students to read at home. There are also related videos.



To see the introductory video for the *My Friends, My Family* islands, click on this link: <https://vimeo.com/120432404/c46b5e0384>

To learn more about Skybrary, or to get a 30-day free trial, go to <https://www.levarburtonkids.com/school>

LESSON PLAN COMPONENTS

For additional SEL reading resources go to RIF.org/SEL. There you'll find lesson plans, teaching strategies, research, and other resources.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Use these questions with your SEL-themed books.

Pre-Reading Questions

Before you begin reading the book, ask the following types of pre-reading questions:

FEELINGS	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• How do you feel when you are with your friends or family?• When someone is upset, what sort of facial expressions do they have?• When someone is happy, what sort of facial expressions do they have?• Look at some of the illustrations of the characters in the book. Can you tell how they are feeling?
FRIENDSHIP	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• How do you make friends? What do you say? How do you act?• How do friends make you feel?• Why is friendship important?• Look at the illustrations in the book. How can you tell when two characters are friendly toward one another? How can you tell when they are being unfriendly?
FAIRNESS	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What happens when one person treats another person unfairly?• Have you ever been treated unfairly? How did it make you feel?• Look at some of the illustrations of different situations in the book. How are characters behaving in these different settings
FOCUS	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• How can you tell if someone is paying attention to something?• When you're following directions, why is it important to focus your attention?• Look at some of the illustrations of different situations in the book. What do you think this story is about?



Reading: Having framed some of the social emotional content in the book with your pre-reading questions, read the book as a class. This can be a read-aloud, shared reading, or, if appropriate, independent reading. You can also make the books available for students to read in the classroom, either in an SEL reading center or just as part of your classroom library. Once students read the book, discuss the post-reading questions below and give students the opportunity to review the book to answer them.

POST-READING ACTIVITIES (ELA SKILLS)

After students have read the book, engage them with these post-reading questions.

- Who was the main character in the story? (CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.K.1 -- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.2.1)
- How did the main character feel at different parts of the story? When were they happy? When were they sad? What caused these emotional changes? (CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.K.3 -- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.2.3)
- As a class, let's put together a list of words or phrases that described how the main character and other characters felt at various points in the book. (CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.K.4 -- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.2.4)
- As a class, let's identify illustrations from the book that match some of the words or phrases from our list. (CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.K.7 -- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.2.7)

Here are some suggested post-reading activities to do with your students. These activities cover a standards progression from grades 1 to 5, so adjust the activity for your class configuration.

- **Writing Activity.** Pretend you are going to interview the main character of the story. Write a series of questions that would help someone better understand the character. Try to include questions that ask about:
 - How the character felt at the beginning, middle, and end of the story.
 - What challenges the character faced.
 - What the character learned.
- **Now pretend you are the main character.** Answer the questions you wrote based on your understanding of the story. Write your responses next to the questions you wrote. (CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.1.6 -- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.5.6)
- **Group activity.** In the table below are phrases that are often used to describe emotional states, along with their meanings. As a group, select a phrase from the table and, without telling the rest of class which one you selected, have one or more members of your group act it out as a visual presentation. You are actors presenting this emotional state. Have students identify which phrase you are acting out.

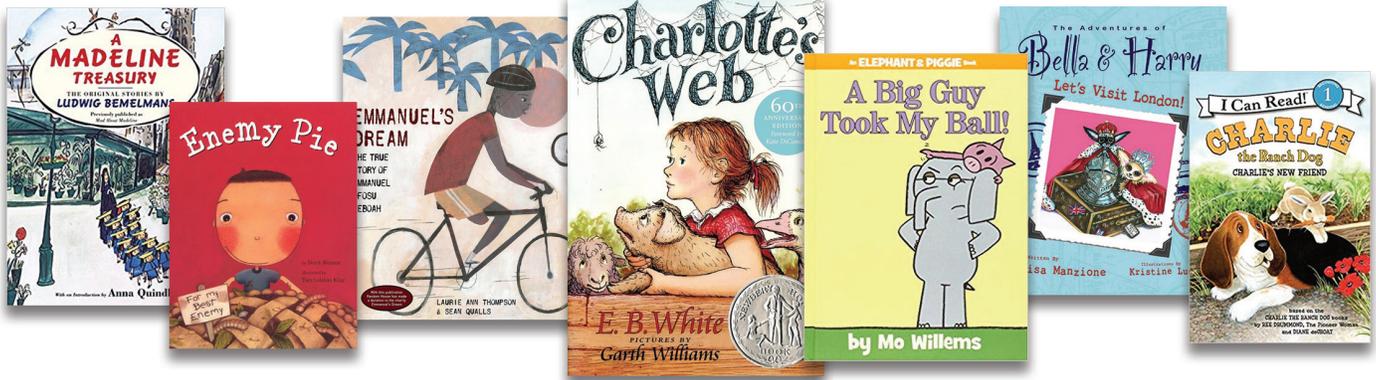
PHRASE	MEANING
"Cool as a cucumber"	Someone who isn't upset by anything and remains unemotional
"Red with rage"	Someone who is so angry that their face is reddish
"Green with envy"	Someone who is jealous of another person
"Breathless with excitement"	Someone who is so happy (usually through a surprise), that they are momentarily out of breath
"Down in the dumps"	Someone who is sad or in a "down" mood
"Hair raising"	Someone scared by an event or experience

Use these phrases to describe the characters and events of the book you read. (CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.1.5 -- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.5.5)

POST-READING ACTIVITIES (SEL)

Here are some suggested post-reading activities to encourage your students to practice their emerging awareness of SEL competencies. These activities are clustered around the four literacy themes.

- **Feelings Activity.** This is a role-playing activity. Working in groups of two or three, one child plays the role of one of the main characters from the story. The other children engage the child-as-character in a friendly dialogue.
 - Encourage children to ask questions that indicate an understanding (empathy) for the main character's interests and feelings.
 - Have the child in the role of main character explain to others some of the challenge he or she has faced (based on the book's narrative).
 - For example, after reading *Lola Plants a Garden*, have one of the students pretend to be Lola. The other students in the group ask her about her interest in gardening and how she feels about it.
- **Friendship Activity.** This is an arts and crafts activity. Using paper, pencil, crayons, or other media, have students write and illustrate a mini-book, modeled on this [booklet](#). The topic of the mini-book is a description of one of their classmates. Students work in pairs and spend several minutes getting to know each other, with the goal of becoming friends.
 - Show students how to fold the mini-book to create the booklet.
 - Have the students write about their new friend and include illustrations.
 - Use this [template](#) for students to create their mini-books.
- **Fairness Activity.** This is a class activity. After reading the book, work as a group to identify some of the ways the main character was treated unfairly or how the main character may have treated others unfairly. For example, after reading *Enemy Pie*, have the class answer the following questions:
 - How did the main character treat Jeremy Ross at the beginning of the story? Was this fair or unfair? Why?
 - How did his treatment of Jeremy Ross change throughout the book?
 - Is it possible to treat someone unfairly and still be friends with them?
- **Focus Activity.** This is a problem solving activity. For example, after reading *Lola Plants a Garden*, the class plans on growing a community garden and needs to break up this broad goal into manageable tasks. This activity can be done over several class periods. The key is to have students recognize the needs for planning, persistence, and goal setting. (Reinforce to students that this is a thought experiment. You may subsequently decide whether or not to execute this plan.)
 - Decide on the location of the garden and the types of plants to grow.
 - As a class, make a list of the tasks involved in planting and growing a garden. The list should include supplies, costs, care and feeding of the plants, and (if appropriate) harvesting.
 - Develop a timetable and budget, along with strategies for raising the money.
 - Assign these tasks to different groups of students.



CURATED BOOK LIST

The following books make up a RIF-curated collection that aligns with SEL competencies and themes. Each book is hyperlinked to a book resource page on RIF's Literacy Central. Some of these books can also be found in Skybrary.

TITLE	DESCRIPTION	THEME	GRADE RANGE
A Chair for My Mother	This book showcases the strength and resilience of a family after a tragedy – their home is destroyed by a fire. Rosa, her mother, and grandmother save their coins to buy a really comfortable chair for all to enjoy. There can be joy and happiness following adversity, by working together toward a common goal.	Feelings Focus	PK-3rd
A Madeline Treasury	This book illustrates the power of a group of young classmates through teamwork and friendship. Madeline, the fearless little girl full of mischief and energy, may step out of line to try on a new adventure, but the other characters in the book from her eleven classmates to the teacher, Miss Clavel, always bring her back to the safety and structure of her loving group.	Feelings Friendship	K-3rd
Amelia Bedelia Makes a Friend	This book enlightens young readers that friends comes in all shapes and sizes. Amelia Bedelia's best friend and neighbor, Jen, moves away, so she is very sad. One day, a new neighbor moves in. But she isn't anything at all like her best friend who moved away. Or is she?	Feelings Friendship	PK-2nd
Bella and Harry: Let's Visit London!	This book outlines the travels of two adventurous Chihuahuas, Bella and Harry. They travel the world with their family, exploring travel to and through different countries, customs, landmarks, and history. Traveling through London, Bella and Harry and their family discover that we are much the same the world over, even through our differences. Try tea and crumpets for a new treat!	Friendship Focus	K-5th

TITLE	DESCRIPTION	THEME	GRADE RANGE
<u>Bella and Harry: Let's Visit Paris!</u>	This book outlines the travels of two adventurous Chihuahuas, Bella and Harry. They travel the world with their family, exploring travel to and through different countries, customs, landmarks, and history. Traveling through London, Bella and Harry and their family discover that we are much the same the world over, even through our differences. Visit the Eiffel Tower for a new sightseeing landmark!	Friendship Focus	K-5th
<u>Bella and Harry: Let's Visit Venice!</u>	This book outlines the travels of two adventurous Chihuahuas, Bella and Harry. They travel the world with their family, exploring travel to and through different countries, customs, landmarks, and history. Traveling through London, Bella and Harry and their family discover that we are much the same the world over, even through our differences. Take a gondola ride on one of the many canals for a new mode of transportation!	Friendship Focus	K-5th
<u>Biscuit Finds a Friend</u>	This book demonstrates that no matter how young we are, we can all make a difference and be a friend to someone. Little puppy, Biscuit, goes to see and meets a lost duckling. Biscuit helps the duckling find its way home, and then the fun begins. An unlikely but happy friendship is formed!	Fairness Friendship	PK-2nd
<u>Bud, Not Buddy</u>	This book is the story of struggling to find one's place in the world, after the loss of a parent, including resiliency, searching for one's other parent, and learning to rely on one's self. Even though Bud is only 10 years old, he strikes out to find his father but more importantly, himself.	Family Fairness Feelings	3rd-7th
<u>Charlie's New Friend</u>	This book shows that getting along is often easier than fighting against each other. Charlie the ranch dog chases a rabbit who stole a carrot from Mama's garden. When his efforts to catch the rabbit fail, he decides it's easier to become friends instead.	Fairness Feelings	PK-2nd
<u>Charlotte's Web</u>	This book is the timeless story of the friendship. Charlotte's spiderweb tells of her feelings for a little pig named Wilbur, who simply wants a friend. They also express the love of a girl named Fern, who saved Wilbur's life when he was born the runt of his litter. In exchange, Wilbur watches over Charlotte's descendants for many years to come.	Friendship Fairness Feelings	3rd-7th



TITLE	DESCRIPTION	THEME	GRADE RANGE
<u>Clark the Shark</u>	This book shows how being socially aware can help you get along with others. Clark is an exuberant shark, sometimes too exuberant. His teacher patiently models how to behave respectfully with others and in the process make friends.	Friendship Focus	PK-3rd
<u>Each Kindness</u>	This book subtly addresses the topic of bullying, specifically in the form of children ostracizing others. Throughout this book there are opportunities to engage kids in how they could interact with someone new to their school.	Friendship Fairness Feelings	K-3rd
<u>Elephant and Piggie: A Big Guy Took My Ball</u>	This book is about helping a friend when they are in need. Gerald is the cautious, worrying elephant, while Piggie is the happy-go-lucky pig friend. When someone big takes her ball, Piggie is devastated. Gerald is big, too, but is he big enough to help his friend? Even though they may seem like unlikely friends, they are best friends!	Feelings Friendship	PK-2nd
<u>Emmanuel's Dream: The True Story of Emmanuel Ofose Yeboah</u>	This book outlines the definition of persistence, grit, and determination. Based on the real life of the Emmanuel, born with one leg deformed, he reached for his dreams. From an early age his mother taught him self-reliance, hard work, and to keep on going. Eventually, he became a cyclist. He rode an astonishing four hundred miles across Ghana in 2001, spreading his powerful message: disability is not inability.	Focus Fairness Feelings	PK-3rd
<u>Enemy Pie</u>	This book shows how it's easier to make friends than to stay enemies. With the help of his father's secret recipe, a young boy learns about friendship. Use this book to model social relationships and their importance at school and at home.	Fairness Feelings Friendship	PK-7th

TITLE	DESCRIPTION	THEME	GRADE RANGE
<u>Frog and Toad Are Friends</u>	This book demonstrates the meaning of true friendship. Frog and Toad are complementary friends, playing to each other's strengths and interests, while having fun in the process. Their loving, best friend relationship is a model for children to emulate.	Friendship Feelings	PK-3rd
<u>Hope for Winter: The True Story of a Remarkable Dolphin</u>	This book illustrates struggling, surviving, and thriving, with the help of many friends. An orphaned dolphin is nursed back to health, growing strong and healthy. Her tale is one of courage and triumph, through the kindness of caring humans.	Focus Friendship	PK-3rd
<u>If I Ran for President</u>	This book outlines all the preparation that goes into running for president...at any level. It takes developing ideas and setting a platform, selecting a running mate, and debating your opponents. And it takes lots of energy, too! Are you ready and willing to do all the hard work?	Focus Feelings	K-3rd
<u>If You Give a Mouse a Cookie</u>	This book is about helping a friend when they are in need. Gerald is the cautious, worrying elephant, while Piggie is the happy-go-lucky pig friend. When someone big takes her ball, Piggie is devastated. Gerald is big, too, but is he big enough to help his friend? Even though they may seem like unlikely friends, they are best friends!	Feelings Friendship	PK-2nd
<u>Ish</u>	This book shows how it is OK to do something "ish-ly" rather than perfect or just right all the time. One's own ideas and creativity are enough! Don't let anyone tell you not to try something or that it isn't right!	Focus Feelings	K-3rd
<u>Joey Daring Caring and Curious</u>	This book outlines what unconditional love is all about. In a family, children may wonder how parents can love their children equally or fairly. See how the mother in the story answers all of her young son's questions, making him understand that parents may not always love the ways their child behaves, but will always love their child for who he or she is as an individual!	Fairness Feelings	PK-3rd
<u>Little Bear</u>	This book demonstrates the love of family for its family members, in particular mother to child. Meet Mother Bear, who is there whenever Little Bear needs her. What a great lesson to teach parent to child through everyday actions, and to have the child return in kind to the parent!	Friendship Feelings	PK-3rd



TITLE	DESCRIPTION	THEME	GRADE RANGE
<u>Lola Plants a Garden</u>	This book outlines how patience and persistence are needed when trying to reach a goal. Lola decides she wants to plant a garden. She chooses what type of plants she wants to grow, buys the seeds, plants the seeds, then patiently waits for the seeds to grow. Once the garden is in full bloom, she invites family and friends to come enjoy it all with her!	Friendship Focus Feelings	PK-K
<u>My Friend Is Sad</u>	This book demonstrates how we can help a friend when they feel sad. Gerald the elephant is down in the dumps. Piggie, his best friend, is determined to cheer him up by dressing as a cowboy, a clown, and even a robot! But what does it take to make a sad elephant happy? Can you help cheer up a friend or family member?	Fairness Feelings	PK-3rd
<u>No, David!</u>	This book is all about following directions by presenting the opposite perspective. Yet, at the core of David's misbehavior is a parent's unconditional love.	Feelings Focus	PK-3rd
<u>One Family</u>	This book shows how many "one" can be, by showing how a family can be big or small and comprised of people of a range of genders and races.	Friendship Feelings	PK-3rd
<u>Red: A Crayon's Story</u>	This book is about a blue crayon mistakenly labeled as "red" suffers an identity crisis. No matter how "blue" tries to be "red," he is "blue." Find the courage to be true to your inner self!	Focus Feelings	PK-3rd
<u>The Day the Crayons Quit</u>	This book provides an excellent opportunity to learn about the perspectives of others as each crayon from a box of crayons discusses their laments about their life as a color. The book presents kids with many opportunities for role play.	Friendship Feelings Fairness	PK-2nd
<u>The Dot</u>	This book is about having the confidence to believe in self-expression. But the lesson requires patient role modeling and encouragement from a teacher.	Focus Feelings	K-5th



TITLE	DESCRIPTION	THEME	GRADE RANGE
<u>The Invisible Boy</u>	<p>This book shows how small acts of kindness can help children feel included and allow them to flourish. The “invisible” boy that no one notices much or includes in special occasions, is the first to make friends with a new boy who comes to class. Making a new friend and working together helps the “invisible” boy to shine!</p>	Feelings Friendship Fairness	1st-4th
<u>The Most Magnificent Thing</u>	<p>This book is about persistence in the face of failure. This book follows a young girl and her best friend as she attempts to create the most magnificent thing. Join her as she finds out that creating something magnificent means making mistakes along the way...and that’s OK!</p>	Feelings Focus	PK-2nd
<u>The Story of Fish and Snail</u>	<p>This book shows how friendship can be challenging at times, especially when one friend is outgoing and the other is more introverted. How do you navigate such a friendship?</p>	Fairness Friendship	PK-K
<u>When You Need a Friend</u>	<p>This book reminds all of us that in helping others, we help ourselves, too, and that we all need help some times.</p>	Feelings Friendship	PK-2nd
<u>Where the Wild Things Are</u>	<p>This book describes the fact that no one loves us like our family. It is OK to be disappointed, angry, and wanting to leave for a while. But there really is “no place like home!”</p>	Feelings Focus Fairness	PK-3rd
<u>Wolfie the Bunny</u>	<p>This book shows us that families are formed in many different ways, and just because we are different doesn’t matter. We are still family, and we support one another with unconditional love.</p>	Friendship Feelings	PK-2nd
<u>You Will Be My Friend</u>	<p>This book shows the persistence and courage of looking to make a new friend. Sometimes it comes easily, and sometimes it is hard. But when we least expect it the right friend comes along!</p>	Friendship Focus	PK-2nd



Skybrary Titles. Although the *My Friends, My Family* island has hundreds of books, below are some highlighted titles.

TITLE	DESCRIPTION	THEME	GRADE RANGE
A Dog Like Jack	A family adopts an elderly shelter dog who is as gentle as he is old. As the dog becomes a part of the family, they have to address his declining health, and eventually his death. This book gently addresses the topic of losing a pet.	Friendship Feelings	K-1
Bear's Bad Day	With the best of intentions, Bear wants to make friends with the other animals in the woods. But his way of making friends doesn't endear him to them. A friendly bird guides him toward a better way of making friends.	Feelings Friendship	K-1
Carmen Learns English	Carmen's first day of school is made more challenging due to language differences. But a helpful teacher tries to bridge the language gap. Carmen also wants to make it easier for her younger sister, who starts school the following year. Courage and persistence allow Carmen to learn English and be a role model for her sister.	Feelings Fairness Focus	K-1
Can't Wait Willow	This book shows how the decisions you make can influence how you feel. Willow wants to go to the circus to buy cotton candy, but along the way spends her money on other things and has none left when she gets to the circus.	Feelings Focus	PK-2nd
Eli, No!	This book shows how Eli, the family dog, though he might from time to time misbehave, he is loved and is a part of the family.	Friendship Feelings	PK-K



TITLE	DESCRIPTION	THEME	GRADE RANGE
Emma's Friendwich	Emma has just moved to a new city where she doesn't know anyone. When she sees a girl next door she wonders what she can do to get to know her. What if she smiles, asks to play, and shares her toys?	Feelings Friendship	PK-K
Freda Stops a Bully	Freda loves her new pink shoes. But when she wears them to school, a boy teases her. What can Freda do to make the bully stop?	Feelings Fairness	PK-K
Great Choice, Camille!	This book shows how Camille has to decide which special project to work on at school. But which one should she choose? She decides on the community garden project, but is it the right choice?	Fairness Focus	PK-K
I Can Do It Myself	Emily Pearl can do lots of things by herself. But sometimes even resourceful little girls need help.	Feelings Focus	K-1
Must Have Marvin	This book shows how to value what you have over what you want to have. Marvin loved getting new things. But once he got something new, he was on to the next thing he wanted. Dreaming about what he wanted sometimes got in the way of what he was doing, or of his friendships.	Friendship Focus	PK-3rd
Nina Nandu's Nervous Noggin	Nina Nandu has just moved to a new neighborhood, and she does NOT want to go to a new school. But Granny Nandu and teacher Alpha Betty have different ideas—plus a big surprise for Nina!	Feelings Focus	PK-2nd
Scrubba Dub, Carlos!	Washing hands is important, but can it be fun? Watch Carlos learn how washing hands involves more than just cleanliness. His friends set a positive example for him.	Friendship Focus	PK-K
Seeds of Change	This is the inspiring story of Wangari Maathai, who was the first African woman to receive the Nobel Peace Prize. Learn about her humble origin, her world-changing environmental movement, and the many obstacles she overcame.	Fairness Focus	2-3

TITLE	DESCRIPTION	THEME	GRADE RANGE
Winning by Giving	This book defines philanthropy in a way that children can understand and even put into practice. From volunteer work to simple acts of kindness, there are numerous strategies for doing good.	Fairness Focus	2-3
When You Need a Friend	This book reminds all of us that in helping others, we help ourselves, too, and that we all need help some times.	Feelings Friendship	PK-2nd

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Topics in SEL align nicely with the themes and content of many children’s books. Here are some book lists from various organizations with additional books that align with SEL topics.

Publishers Weekly SEL Booklist

<https://www.publishersweekly.com/pw/by-topic/childrens/childrens-book-news/article/77750-social-and-emotional-learning-a-book-list.html>

We Are Teachers List

<https://www.weareteachers.com/15-must-have-picture-books-for-teaching-social-emotional-skills/>

School Library Journal List

<https://www.slj.com/?detailStory=hearts-and-minds-picture-books-that-strengthen-social-emotional-learning>

Research on SEL and “bibliotherapy”

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/320040250_Using_Children’s_Literature_to_Strengthen_Social_and_Emotional_Learning

