

We have collected a list of stories that will help your child recognize their own emotional states and be sensitive to those feelings in others. Take time to talk about the illustrations to help your child connect your descriptive words and visual cues in the artwork with emotions they might recognize and feel, but not be able to explain. You're not only helping them read books—you're helping your child read people!

“Grumpy Monkey” by Suzanne Lang and Max Lang (2018)

In a horribly cranky mood despite an otherwise lovely day, Jim denies his feelings as friends try to cheer him up, when really, the chimpanzee would rather be left alone with his grumpiness.

“Looking for Smile” by Ellen Tarlow and Lauren Stringer (2020)

Bear and his smile are usually inseparable, but when he wakes one morning without his companion, Bear searches everywhere to find his smile again. The book offers a look at depression and can be helpful families grappling with that emotional weight.

“Maybe Tomorrow? A Story About Loss, Healing, and Friendship” by Charlotte Agell and Ana Ramírez González (2019)

Elba carries around a heavy black box of grief until Norris arrives and helps lighten her load. This is a tender look at loss and the weight of sadness, and a guide for friendship as an opportunity for readers to relate to the loss portrayed.

“My Heart” by Corinna Luyken (2019)

With dreamy illustrations and gently encouraging text, this picture book affirms the reader's emotional resilience and encourages young ones to live with compassion, self-care, and kindness. This is a lovely choice to guide a conversation about getting in touch with emotions.

“The Rabbit Listened” by Cori Doerrfeld (2018)

With gentle illustrations and minimal text, a child's frustration is finally comforted when a companion takes the time to just sit with the friend and listen empathetically.

“Sweep” by Louise Grieg (2019)

A little boy's bad mood grows and grows until it threatens to take over the whole town. Can Ed sweep away his anger before it overwhelms him?