

Growing Readers Review

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Compassionate Tots

When do children begin to consider the feelings of others? When do they know what it means to help a friend? When does impulse give way to thoughtfulness? How do parents and teachers help youngsters learn about kindness and compassion?

Children model their own behavior on the behavior they see. Even very young toddlers can care for a pet, act gently with a younger sibling, perhaps part with a toy for a child who needs it more. Children model their language on the words they hear. They learn the words to express kindness and resolve conflicts. Respect for fellow human beings and character development begin at an early age.

And children learn how to care for others from the books they enjoy. *Tuck Me In* is a lovely picture book about a collection of animals that need to be tucked in at bedtime. The young reader turns the half-page blankets for the zebra, the hedgehog, the alligator, and more, practicing the familiar ritual.

Good deeds are rewarded in *A Sick Day for Amos McGee*. Amos works at the zoo and visits his special friends each day, but one day a cold keeps him home. Elephant, tortoise, penguin, rhino, and owl worry about their friend and take the bus to Amos's house to return the many kindnesses he has shown them.

In *Junkyard Wonders*, a smart and caring teacher helps children overcome their differences, find strength to face the school bullies, and discover their own sense of worth. Where others see misfits, this teacher sees genius, and her students live up to her belief.

Children's books help us create the language and action of compassion for young children. Both stories and pictures can be tools for developing caring and considerate young citizens.

By Susan C. Brenner, EdD



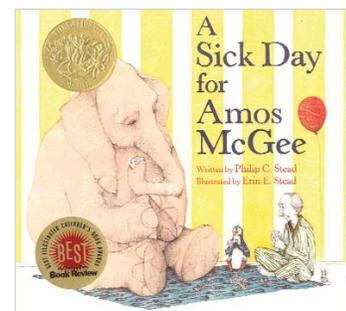
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BOOKS OF EXCELLENCE

PRESCHOOL

A Sick Day for Amos McGee

Written by Philip C. Stead; illustrated by Erin E. Stead



Henry David Thoreau said "The language of friendship is not words but meanings." Author Philip C. Stead brought this quote to life with his wonderful main character, Amos McGee. Amos is a zookeeper who sticks to a very tight schedule but always seems to make time to visit with his good friends at the zoo. Children will delight in the illustration of Amos playing chess with the very large elephant on a tiny stool and will laugh as Amos gets beat by the tortoise in every single running race! As Amos sits very quietly with the shy little penguin, the reader can feel how comforted the penguin is to have a good friend around who allows him to just be himself.

Every day Amos has his routine at the zoo until one day he doesn't show up. All of his friends wait and wait and then decide to board the bus in order to check up on their beloved zookeeper. If readers thought a rhinoceros with a runny nose was funny, just wait until he squeezes himself onto the bus! Amos is very pleased to see the animals and, in a sweet turn of events, each animal is able to give back to Amos a little bit of the companionship and thoughtfulness that he gave to them.

Erin Stead, illustrator, artistically captures the story that her husband wrote. Through the use of woodblock printing and pencil drawings she is able to portray the empathy on the face of Amos as he sits with his animal friends in the zoo, and the caring on the faces of the animals as they visit with Amos when he is too sick to work. This Caldecott-winning book is sure to earn a place as a well-loved book on any reader's shelf.

About the author and illustrator — Philip and Erin Stead

This husband and wife team divides their time between Ann Arbor, Michigan and New York City. Philip is the author of *A Sick Day for Amos McGee* and the author/illustrator of *Creamed Tuna Fish and Peas on Toast*. *A Sick Day for Amos McGee* was the first book that Erin illustrated.

Bright Horizons is excited to celebrate 25 years of learning, exploration, and discovery. We are equally honored to help cultivate a love of books by growing young readers and sharing the treasures of excellent children's literature with the many children and families we serve each day.

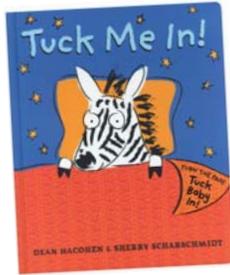


INFANT/TODDLER

Tuck Me In!

Written by Dean Hacoen; illustrated by Sherry Scharschmidt

"It's time for bed. Who wants to be tucked in?" Pig does! Zebra does! Elephant does! And so do a zoo full of other animals. By the end of this interactive book, the audience is ready to be tucked in too. Every other page is cut in half to resemble a unique blanket for each creature. Toddlers are sure to enjoy turning the page to tuck in their animal friends. The colors are bright and the illustrations are simple for toddlers to recognize. The words are gentle, engaging, and predictable – perfect for the nighttime ritual. Children will look forward to the bedtime transition with *Tuck Me In*.

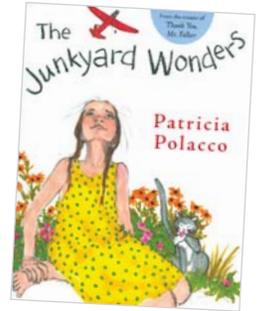


SCHOOL-AGE

The Junkyard Wonders

Written by Patricia Polacco

The Junkyard Wonders is an inspirational, autobiographical story that describes the special education class otherwise known as "The Junkyard" that the author attended in elementary school. Led by a compassionate and motivational teacher, Mrs. Peterson, who taught the class from day one to think of themselves as geniuses, this group of children rose to the many challenges presented to them and became a team that worked together and encouraged each other to succeed. Themes of overcoming stigma and being different can provide opportunities for rich discussion with school-agers.



NOTABLE BOOKS



My Friends

Written by Taro Gomi • Infant/Toddler

This delightful board book tells the story of a child who credits the many things she has learned to her friends, including learning to love.

Fly Free

Written by Roseanne Thong; illustrated by Eugin Kim Neilan • Preschool

Using unique illustrations, this beautiful tale set in Vietnam has at its heart the idea that doing one good deed may foster the creation of many more good deeds.

My Brother Charlie

Written by Holly Robinson Peete and her twin children, Ryan and Elizabeth; illustrated by Shane W. Evans • Preschool

A true story of compassion and appreciation of differences, *My Brother Charlie* shares the experiences of a family who learns to live with understanding, hope, and acceptance for a sibling with autism.

Fleabag

Written by Helen Stephens • Preschool

Told from a dog's point of view, *Fleabag* is a poignant story of belonging, as a stray dog befriends a boy. Author and illustrator, Helen Stephens, uses emotions and whimsy to celebrate the love and devotion between a dog and his boy.

Star in the Forest

Written by Laura Resau • School-Age

Zitlally is a young Latina girl who finds her life upended when her father is deported and she must work hard to be strong and to help her family. This is a beautiful story of friendship, determination, and faith; a story of how a young girl can make a difference in the lives of her family and friends.

House of Dolls

Written by Francesca Lia Block • School-Age

The lonely, bored little girl in this story creates a fantasy world with the dolls in her doll house and eventually rediscovers the love of her grandmother and the rest of her family.



Bright Horizons Family Solutions® programs empower children from infancy on to become confident, successful learners and secure, caring people. We grow young readers, scientists, artists, and explorers who are encouraged to reach their full potential. We are privileged to accompany children and families on their journey of lifelong learning. Learn more about Bright Horizons and Growing Readers at www.brighthorizons.com.

