



Picture Books about Friendship, Feelings, & Fixing the Hard Moments

A curated guide for educators, librarians, and families who want to nurture children's social-emotional growth, connection, and confidence in navigating friendships.

By Inbal Alon - Educator,
Curriculum Designer,
and Children's Book
Author



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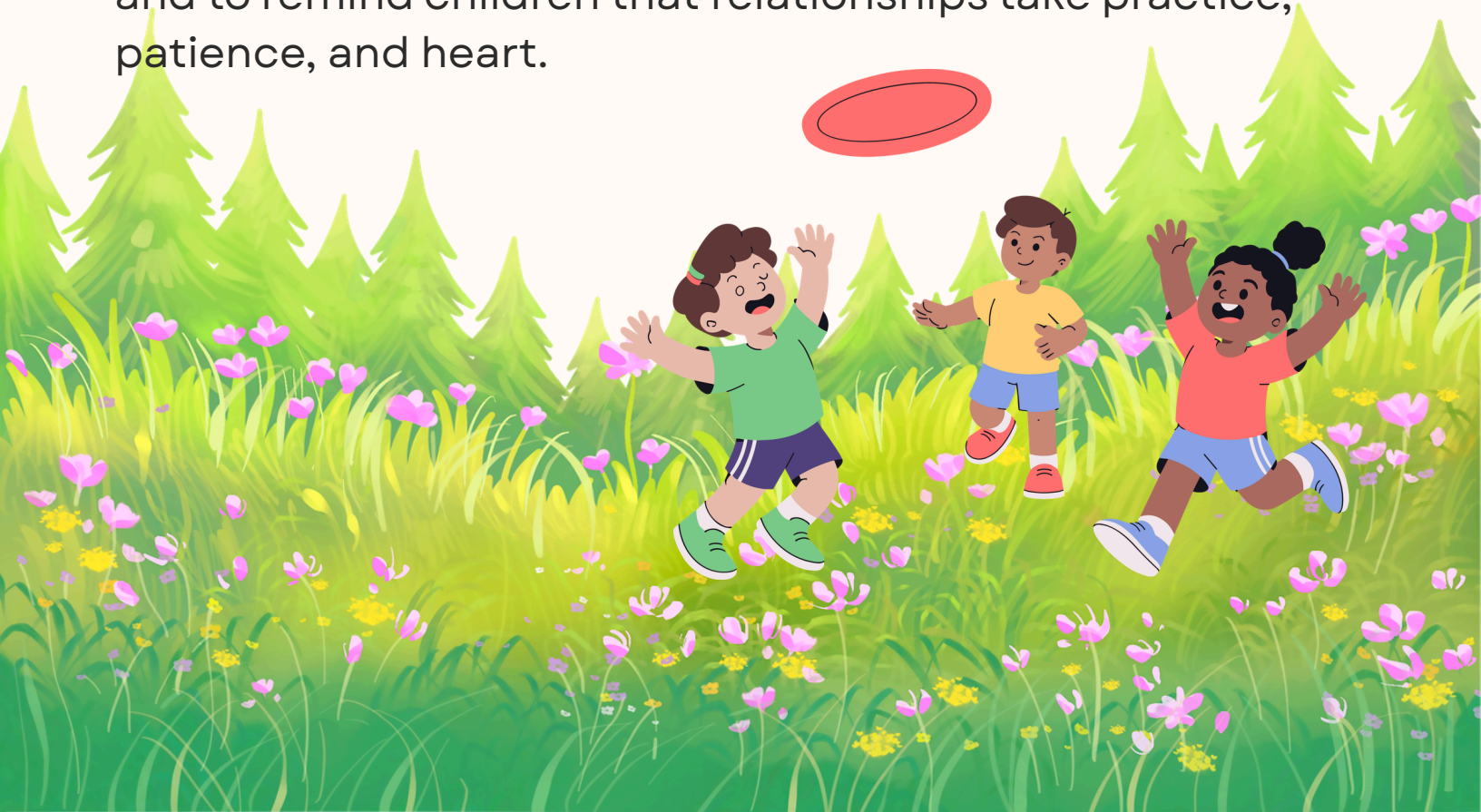


Why **Friendship** Matters

Friendship is one of the most important parts of childhood. Through friendships, children learn how to communicate, collaborate, repair mistakes, set boundaries, and feel seen and valued. Picture books that center friendship help kids:

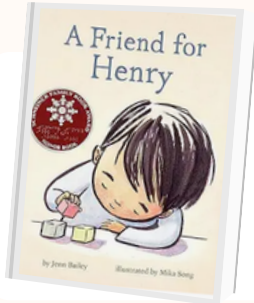
- understand emotions and social cues
- practice empathy and perspective-taking
- navigate conflict and repair trust
- build confidence in making and keeping friends
- recognize healthy vs. unhealthy dynamics
- feel connected, included, and understood

These stories offer gentle, developmentally appropriate ways to explore the joys and challenges of friendship – and to remind children that relationships take practice, patience, and heart.





Books about Making Friends & Feeling Seen



A Friend for Henry by Jenn Bailey & Mika Song
A neurodiverse boy searches for a friend who understands him.



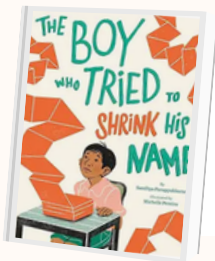
Meesha Makes Friends by Tom Percival
A girl who struggles with social cues finds her own creative way to connect.



The Boy with Big, Big Feelings by Britney Winn Lee & Jacob Souva
A child overwhelmed by emotions discovers a friend who feels the same.

The Perfect Sushi by Emily Satoko Seo & Mique Moriuchi.

A humorous reminder that trying too hard to impress friends isn't necessary.



The Boy Who Tried to Shrink His Name by Sandhya Parappukkaran & Michelle Pereira.
A child embraces his identity with the help of a new friend who sees his worth.

The Little Library by Margaret McNamara & G. Brian Karas.

A friendship blossoms over shared stories and the joy of giving.





Books about Friendship Trouble & Repairing Trust



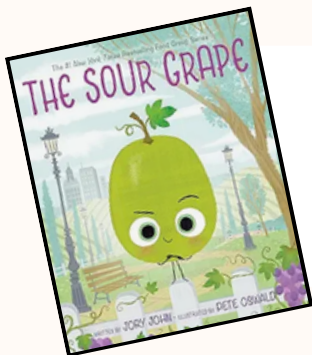
The Yellow Áo Dài by Hanh Bui & Minnie Phan.
A girl navigates embarrassment and honesty, discovering how trust deepens friendships.

The Together Tree by Leah Hong & Rashin Kheiriyeh
A moving story about bullying, allyship, and standing beside someone who needs a friend.



The Long Ride Home by Stephanie Graegin.
A misunderstanding on the school bus becomes a lesson in repairing hurt feelings.

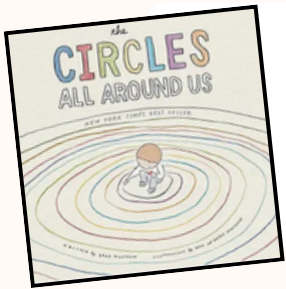
The Friendship Surprise by Georgia Dunn.
A sweet look at mismatched expectations and how friends navigate disappointment.



The Sour Grape by Jory John & Pete Oswald.
A funny, pun-filled story about grudges, forgiveness, and second chances.



Books about Empathy, Listening & Emotional Support



The Circles All Around Us by Brad Montague & Kristi Montague.

A gentle look at how our circles of connection grow as we learn to include others.

The More You Give by Marcy Campbell & Francesca Sanna.

A story about generosity and the roots of strong relationships.



The Lost Package by Richard Ho & Jessica Lanan.

A quiet urban story about kindness and connection between strangers who become friends.

The Wishing Balloons by Jonathan D. Voss.

Two children learn that sharing wishes – and disappointments – builds deeper connection.



The Rabbit Listened by Cori Doerrfeld.

A quiet reminder that sometimes the best way to help a friend is simply to listen.

The Friendship Book by Mary Lyn Ray & Stephanie Graegin.

A bright, inclusive celebration of all the ways friendships form, falter, and flourish.



How to Use These Books

For Teachers:

Use these stories to launch SEL lessons, model conflict-resolution language, support classroom community-building, and help students practice empathy and perspective-taking.

For Librarians:

Create friendship-themed displays, pair books with feelings charts or conversation prompts, and host read-alouds that spark discussions about kindness and connection.

For Parents:

Use these books to talk about friendship challenges, practice problem-solving, role-play tricky moments, and celebrate the small acts of kindness that strengthen relationships.



About the Curator

Inbal Alon is an educator, curriculum designer, and children's book author who creates stories and resources that nurture emotional literacy, curiosity, and wonder. She specializes in early literacy and SEL-centered storytelling that helps children feel seen, supported, and empowered.



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