

# Children's Storybooks that Promote Resilience



The themes in these storybooks relate to **seven abilities** associated with *resilience* in children. Most of these books are available in public libraries or through online booksellers.

Letters in parentheses after each book's title indicate which of the seven resiliency abilities are highlighted in the book.

KEY: (ER) = emotional regulation  
(IC) = impulse control  
(CA) = causal analysis  
(SE) = self-efficacy  
(E) = empathy  
(O) = optimism  
(RO) = reaching out

Aliki  
*Feelings* (ER) (IC)  
Mulberry Paperback Book, 1984

Pictures, poems, and stories portray various emotions, including jealousy, anger, fear, joy, and excitement.

Asch, Frank  
*Moondance* (ER) (IC) (O) (RO)  
Scholastic Inc., 1993

Little Bird helps his friend Bear challenge some negative beliefs and follow his desire to dance with the clouds, the rain, and the moon.

Blake, Quentin  
*Mr. Magnolia* (O)  
William Collins Sons & Co., 1980

Mr. Magnolia's positive attitude helps him cope with having only one boot to wear, as he focuses on all the other things he *does* have.

Bottner, Barbara  
*Bootsie Barker Bites* (SE)  
G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1992

A shy girl is intimidated and terrorized by a bully named Bootsie until she stands up to Bootsie and discovers the bully is really a chicken.

Buchanan, Joan  
*It's a Good Thing* (O) (SE)  
Annick Press, 1984

Daydreamer Marie finds her competence when she saves her sister from an icy river.

Bunting, Eve  
*The Pumpkin Fair* (SE) (RO)  
Clarion Books, 1997

A young girl feels pride and a sense of accomplishment when she wins a prize for the best pumpkin in the show at the annual fair.

Burningham, John  
*Mr. Gumpy's Outing* (IC) (CA)  
Holt, 1970

Mr. Gumpy and his animal friends learn what happens in an overcrowded boat.

Burningham, John  
*Would You Rather ...* (SE) (CA)  
Random House Children's Books, 1994

A source for discussion about making choices and the consequences of the decisions.



Carle, Eric  
*Little Cloud* (ER)  
Philomel Books, 1996

It's calming to watch the different pictures and shapes formed by moving clouds.

Carle, Eric  
*The Very Busy Spider* (SE) (RO)  
Philomel, 1984

A spider works hard to create his web.

Carlson, Nancy  
*Harriet and the Roller Coaster* (ER) (SE)  
Puffin Books, 1982

Harriet is afraid to ride the roller coaster, but she faces her fear and has a wonderful time.

Cole, Babette  
*Three Cheers for Errol!* (CA) (SE) (RO)  
Stoddart Publishing Co. Ltd., 1989

Young rat Errol is a talented, persistent athlete who creatively overcomes the mean-spirited competition at the annual ratathlon.

Feelings, Tom  
*Daydreamers* (ER) (O) (SE)  
Dial Books, 1981

Simple poetry voices the benefits of daydreaming to maintain hope, and to develop and mature.

Foon, Dennis  
*The Short Tree and the Bird that Could Not Sing* (O) (E) (RO)  
Douglas & McIntyre Ltd., 1986

A short, lonely tree becomes friends with an out-of-tune songbird when they accept each others' shortcomings and focus on the things they like about each other.

Freymann, Saxton and Joost Elffers  
*How Are You Peeling? Foods with Moods* (ER) (E)  
Arthur A. Levine Books, 1999

Real fruits and vegetables are creatively used to show a range of emotional expressions.

Gilmore, Rachna  
*A Gift for Gita* (ER) (SE)  
Second Story Press, 1998

A young immigrant girl misses her grandmother who remained in India, but finds comfort remembering what they did together.

Hastings, Selina  
*Peter and the Wolf* (CA)  
Walker Books, 1991

Peter uses his wits and problem-solving skills to protect his farm animals from a hungry wolf.

Hazen, Barbara Shook  
*Stay Fang* (ER) (SE)  
Atheneum Books, 1990

A young boy learns from his dog how to face disappointment.

Henke, Kevin  
*Bailey Goes Camping* (ER) (CA)  
Greenwillow Books, 1985

Bailey is too young to join his brother's activities, but his parents help him cope with disappointment by creating an imaginary camping experience at home.

Henke, Kevin  
*Chester's Way* (RO)  
Penguin Books, 1989

Two mouse friends develop flexibility by accepting a new mouse in the neighbourhood even though she does things differently.



Henke, Kevin  
*Chrysanthemum* (O)  
Greenwillow Books, 1991

Adult support helps Chrysanthemum when her peers tease her because of her name.

Henke, Kevin  
*Sheila Rae, the Brave* (SE) (RO)  
Mulberry Books, 1987

Brave Sheila Rae suddenly finds herself lost and afraid. Her usually timid sister assumes a brave persona and helps Sheila get back home.

Hughes, Shirley  
*Alfie Gets in First* (ER) (CA)  
Mulberry Press, 1981

When Alfie inadvertently locks his Mom and baby sister outside, he finds a way to solve the problem.

Hutchins, Pat  
*The Doorbell Rang* (IC)  
Greenwillow Books, 1986

Young children figure out how to share cookies as more and more friends come to call.

Lalli, Judy  
*I Like Being Me* (ER) (CA) (E) (SE)  
Free Spirit Publishing, 1997

A collection of poems about being kind, solving problems, learning from mistakes, telling the truth, dealing with feelings, and more.

Leghorn, Lindsay  
*Proud of our Feelings* (ER) (E)  
Magination Press, 1995

A book designed to stimulate discussion about people's feelings.

Lindenbaum, Pija  
*Elsa-Marie and her Seven Little Daddies* (O) (CA)  
Douglas & McIntyre Publishing, 1991

Elsa-Marie spends the day worrying about how others at daycare will react when they find out she has seven little daddies! All ends well when she changes her perspective.

Lionni, Leo  
*Frederick* (ER) (O) (E)  
Alfred A. Knopf, 1967

The story demonstrates acceptance of different people's strengths and contributions, highlighting visualization as a useful coping strategy in times of stress.

Lionni, Leo  
*It's Mine!* (RO) (CA)  
Alfred A. Knopf, 1985

Three frogs bicker and fight about everything until a storm forces them to work together and appreciate the good things they have.

Lionni, Leo  
*Swimmy* (CA) (SE)  
Alfred A. Knopf, 1968

A school of fish discovers it can defend itself against a bully shark by working together.

Lionni, Leo  
*Tillie and the Wall* (O) (RO) (CA) (SE)  
Alfred A. Knopf, 1989

A curious, imaginative, and persistent mouse takes a risk and leads her mouse community in a problem-solving effort that helps them connect with another mouse community.

Lite, Lori  
*A Boy and a Bear* (ER)  
Specialty Press Inc., 1996

A boy and a polar bear share a friendship and learn how to relax together.



Lottridge, Celia Barker  
*The Name of the Tree* (SE) (RO)  
A Groundwood Book, 1989

In this Bantu folktale, the animal that tries the hardest, not the one endowed with the greatest talents, helps alleviate the suffering caused by a drought in the forest.

MacDonald, Amy and Sarah Fox-Davies  
*Little Beaver and the Echo* (ER) (SE)  
Walker Books, 1993

A sad, lonely beaver discovers he can make friends when he follows the echo of his own voice.

Modesitt, Jeanne  
*Sometimes I Feel Like a Mouse* (ER) (E)  
Scholastic, 1992

Animals are used to teach about feelings. Excellent as a source for physical expression and movement.

Moss, Geoffrey  
*Henry's Moon* (CA) (O) (SE)  
Somerville House Publishing, 1989

Henry loves the moon, but the city's tall buildings and smog sometimes block the view. So Henry constructs his own moon, one that would "always be there, always be right for him, to make him feel good."

Moss, Marissa  
*Regina's Big Mistake* (IC) (O) (RO)  
Houghton Mifflin Co., 1990

A young girl learns that making mistakes is okay.

Murphy, Joanne Brisson  
*Feelings* (ER) (E)  
Black Moss Press, 1991

"It's nice to have feelings, as many as can be, 'cause it helps me to know and to understand me." Different scenarios help children identify, accept, and express their feelings.

Novato, C.A.  
*The Tortoise and the Hare* (ER) (SE)  
Living Books, 1993

The tortoise's slow and steady pace helps him win the race.

Passen, Lisa  
*Fat, Fat Rose Marie* (SE) (CA) (E)  
Henry Holt and Company, 1991

A new girl at school gets teased by a classmate, but is able to bounce back because of a friendship she forms with another peer.

Payne, Lauren Murphy  
*Just Because I Am* (ER) (SE)  
Free Spirit Publishing, 1994

This colourfully illustrated book provides examples of how children can talk to themselves to encourage self-acceptance and recognition of their feelings.

Peet, Bill  
*Pamela Camel* (RO) (SE) (E)  
Houghton Mifflin Co., 1984

A misunderstood circus camel receives recognition when she prevents a train from derailing.

Penn, Audrey  
*The Kissing Hand* (ER) (SE)  
Scholastic, 1998

A mother raccoon reassures her child of her love and gives him a way to soothe himself as he begins to separate from her to go to school.

Pinkwater, Daniel  
*The Big Orange Spot* (O) (CA) (E) (SE)  
Scholastic Press, 1977

Mr. Plumbean inspires his neighbours to redecorate their homes to reflect their unique visions and dreams.



Reynolds Naylor, Phyllis  
*King of the Playground* (EM) (CA) (SE)  
Aladdin Paperbacks, 1994

Dad helps Kevin challenge his beliefs about a schoolyard bully and gain self-confidence and perspective about the situation.

Shannon, David  
*Duck on a Bike* (SE) (RO)  
Blue Sky Press, 2002

The farmyard animals have a range of thoughts and feelings as they watch Duck peddle past on a bicycle. In the end, all the animals follow Duck's lead and try biking for themselves. A great book to introduce discussion about B-C connections with children.

Steig, William  
*Spinky Sulks* (SE) (RO) (ER)  
A Sunburst Book, 1988

Spinky rejects his family's efforts to console him, believing they don't love and understand him. Eventually, he develops a more flexible outlook and reaches out to them.

Thomas, Frances  
*What If?* (O) (ER)  
Hyperion Books for Children, 1998

A young monster is worried about what will "happen if?" His mother calms him by reframing the negative thinking into positive thinking.

Varley, Susan  
*Badger's Bad Mood* (ER) (RO)  
Arthur A. Levine Books, 1998

Badger's friends help him out when he can't seem to shake his bad mood.

Viorst, Judith  
*Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day* (ER)  
Macmillan Publishing Co., 1972

A young boy has a day when nothing goes right. His mom tells him that some days are like that, helping him accept that it is not a permanent situation.

Williams, Vera B.  
*A Chair for My Mother* (CA) (RO) (SE) (E)  
Mulberry Books, 1982

Neighbours help a young girl, her mother, and her grandmother when a fire destroys their home and possessions. Then, the three relatives save enough money to buy a comfortable chair for their new apartment.

Zolotow, Charlotte  
*The Hating Book* (CA) (ER) (E)  
Harper Collins Publishing, 1969

A young girl initially feels rejected by her best friend, but the misunderstanding is cleared up when she talks to the friend and finds out the real story.