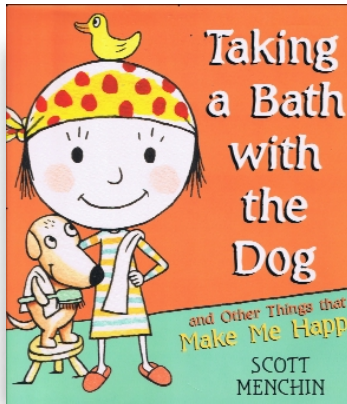


Book Nook

Using Books to Support Social Emotional Development



Taking a Bath With the Dog and Other Things That Make Me Happy

by Scott Menchin
Candlewick Press

Taking a Bath With the Dog begins with a mother asking her daughter, “I miss your smile today, Sweet Pea. What would make you happy?” Sweet Pea doesn’t know what would make her happy, so she decides to ask everyone and anything she can find. For example, a rabbit is happy running, a mole is happy digging, and a bat is happy sleeping upside down. Sweet Pea then remembers all of the things that make her happy! The colorful illustrations and simple text will appeal to both toddlers and preschoolers. (Ages 2-5)

Examples of activities that can be used while reading *Taking a Bath With the Dog and Other Things That Make Me Happy* and throughout the day to promote social and emotional development:

- Before reading the book, have a conversation with the children about what makes them feel happy. What do they like to do to feel happy when they are feeling sad? Tell them that you are going to read a book about a little girl named Sweet Pea. Sweet Pea is feeling sad and doesn’t know what to do to feel happy again. Show the children the first page of the story and ask them how they think Sweet Pea’s mom knew that she was feeling sad. Point out that she was crying (tears) and has a frown on her face. Ask the children to try to guess what they think would make Sweet Pea happy and then read the book to find out!
- After reading the book, ask children if they noticed that every character had a different thing that made them happy. Talk about how the same is true for all of us. We all have different likes, dislikes, and things that make us happy. It is ok that not everyone likes the same things or does things the same way. Talking about the different things that make each of us happy is a great way to celebrate our differences! Make a list of things that make the children happy. Help them think about different areas of their lives. Which people make them happy? Which special events, activities and times of day make them happy? Show children the page in the book that lists all of the different things that make Sweet Pea happy to help them think of ideas. After making their list, point out the ideas that are similar and those that are different. Just like Sweet Pea in *Taking a Bath With the Dog and Other Things That Make Me Happy* learned about the things that made other people happy, the children will all learn about what makes each other happy.
- Create a matching game for the children using all of the characters in the book and what makes each of them happy. Photocopy the pages showing each character, and attach them to cardstock. List the things that make each character happy on separate pieces of paper, and attach these to cardstock as well. Have the children play a matching game where they can try to remember what made each character from the book happy. Do this activity after you have read the book several



times with your class. Before you play the game, read the book one more time and ask the children to pay special attention to what makes each character happy, because they will need to remember for a game you are going to play. This could also be a great small group activity.

Reading the same book for several days in a row is a great way to provide opportunities for infants, toddlers, and preschoolers to develop a sense of competence and confidence, which is an important part of social and emotional development. They become able to turn pages, point at and label pictures, talk about the story, predict what will happen next, learn new vocabulary words, talk about their own experiences in relation to the story and even make up their own story! Try reading *Taking a Bath with the Dog and Other Things That Make Me Happy* for several days in a row and use some of the ideas, activities, and teaching opportunities listed below to enhance social and emotional skills.

Happiness

Art: Ask the children if they remember some of the things that made Sweet Pea happy. Have each child pick one thing that they do at school that makes them happy. Then take a photo of each child doing the thing that makes them happy and print the photos. Attach the photos to a sturdy backing, and then have the children create and decorate a frame for their pictures. For the frame, use craft sticks, pieces of construction paper, foam, or felt. Create a bulletin board in the classroom that says “Our Class is Happy When...” and display their framed photos. Help each child make a caption for their photo that can be posted next to their frame or at the bottom of the frame. Remind the children that just like all of the characters in *Taking a Bath With the Dog and Other Things That Make Me Happy*, they each have different things that make them happy.

Dramatic Play: Have a conversation with the children about feeling happy vs. sad and how we can tell when children are feeling sad. What things can we do to help cheer the children up? Encourage children to act out scenes where they will practice these skills. Have children take turns being in different roles. Some children can pretend to be sad, while others can pretend to help cheer them up or find something that makes them happy. Once children decide what will make them happy, act out this activity as well. For example, children could pretend to have a tea party, play dress-up, or bake cookies (these are all things that make Sweet Pea happy in *Taking a Bath With the Dog and Other Things That Make Me Happy*).

Centers: Create activities in the centers that reflect the “Our class is happy when...” art activity. For example, if several children said that drawing/coloring/painting were things that make them happy, create a “Happy Art” center. Have the children decide what should be in the happy art center on that particular day and make sure that their ideas/materials are included. If several children picked singing/playing instruments/dancing, make a “Happy Music” center. Children will feel really special when their ideas are incorporated into the center activities!

Music: Using the classic song “If You’re Happy and You Know It,” encourage children to make their own version of the song by incorporating the things that make them happy. Help each child create a verse that the class can sing together. Make a chart with each child’s name and what makes him or her happy. Everyone can personalize the song as they sing each verse: “When Ashley’s happy and she knows it, Ashley sings,” “When Sam is happy and he knows it, he plays outside.” By personalizing the song for each child, everyone will feel special and know that the things that make them happy are important!