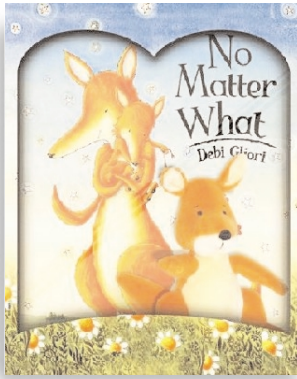


Book Nook

Using Books to Support Social Emotional Development



No Matter What

By Debi Gliori
Harcourt, Inc.

No Matter What is a book about the uncertainty a little fox has about his parent's love. Small, the little fox, feels "grim and grumpy" as bedtime nears. He wants reassurance from his parent, Large, that regardless of whether he is a grizzly bear, a squishy bug, or a crocodile, he will still be loved. (Ages 2-5)

Examples of activities that can be used while reading *No Matter What* and throughout the day to promote social and emotional development:

- While reading the first part of the story, talk about how Small is feeling grim and grumpy and doesn't think that Large loves him at all! Ask the children if they know what it means to feel grim and grumpy. Ask if they have ever felt grim and grumpy. When they feel grim and grumpy, what do they do to make that feeling go away? Does knowing that someone loves them help them feel better?
- After reading the story, show the children the first page of the story again where Large is talking on the phone. Point out the expression on the little fox's face. How do they think Small is feeling? How can they tell? Ask the children what Small does to show that he is "grim and grumpy" (Small acts out by turning the furniture in the living room upside down). Talk about different ways Small could have expressed the way he was feeling. Ask if they think Small was grim and grumpy because Large was talking on the phone and not paying attention to him. Ask what they do when they want to get someone's attention.
- Ask the children to name people they love (parents, grandparents, teachers, friends, neighbors, babysitter, etc.). Make a list of all the names. Tell them that they are like the little fox in the story. They have people who love them! Have children draw pictures of the people who love them and then make a class mural displaying all the "People Who Love Us—No Matter What."

After reading the book, ask the children what kinds of things we can do to make sure people know that we love them (hugs, tell them we love them, do something special for them, etc.). Teach children how to say "I love you" using sign language as a way to let people know that we love them. Ask what makes them feel special and loved? How do they feel when they know someone loves them? Ask what Large did to make Small feel loved. Show the picture on the last page of the story and ask the children how they think Small is feeling. How can they tell? Do they think Small feels loved?



- Point out some of the things that Large and Small did together before it was time for Small to go to bed (snuggled together in a chair, hugged, read a book, looked out the window). Ask children to share the things they do before they go to bed at night. Ask if the special things they do before bedtime make them feel loved.

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 *No Matter What* for several days in a row and use some of the ideas, activities, and teaching opportunities listed below to enhance social and emotional skills.

Feeling Loved

Talk about how Small was feeling grim and grumpy and didn't think that Large loved him at all! Ask them if they remember some of the things that Large did to make Small feel loved. Teach them the following song to the tune of "Skip to My Lou." After the children learn the song, use their names instead of "little fox." Have children take a copy of the song home so their parents can sing it to them (using their names) before bedtime.

Little fox, little fox, I love you.
Little fox, little fox, yes I do!
Little fox, little fox, I love you.
I'll love you forever no matter what you do!

Art: Have a variety of materials available so children can make a special gift for someone they love. Remind children about the list they made of the names of people they love. They can choose someone from that list or think of someone else. As they work on their special gift, talk about the gifts they are making. Ask them what kind of special gift they think Small might make for Large. Have wrapping paper available for children who would like to wrap their special gift.

Writing Center: Have hearts cut out of construction paper with "I love you because..." written on each heart available in the writing center. Children can make a special heart card for someone they love. Children can write and/or draw their message on each heart or have a teacher write for them. As they work on their hearts, talk about the things they love about people. Tell them things that you love about them! Ask what they think Small would write and draw if he made a heart for Large. Discuss how they can deliver their special cards to the people they love.

Housekeeping: Have dolls, rocking chairs, stuffed animals, blankets, books, etc. so children can pretend that they are the parent and they are going to do things with their child to help them feel loved. They can pretend they are Large or just be Mom, Dad, or Grandma. Ask children if they remember what Large did to make Small feel loved (snuggled in a chair together, hugged, read a book together, ate dinner together, said "I love you," etc.). What kinds of things can they do? As children are playing, point out the things they are doing and comment on the ways they are helping their babies feel loved.