

Read All About It!

Bibliotherapy for Gifted Children

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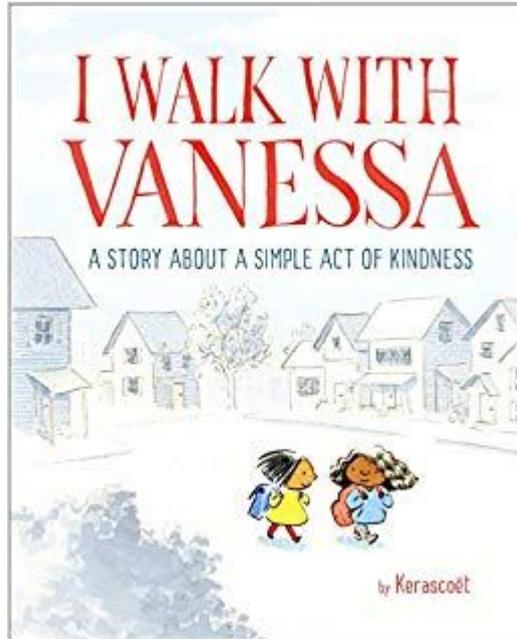
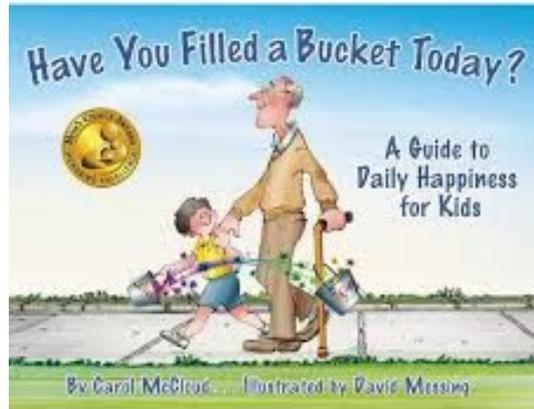
Welcome!

My name is Amber Stokes. I am the TD (AIG) teacher at J.V. Washam Elementary in Cornelius. I have my masters in gifted education, and teach AIG licensure courses through UNCC. I am also a parent myself of two children -- Autumn (5 years old) and Benjamin (1 year old).

I fell in love with bibliotherapy as a classroom teacher, but it is just as useful at home.



Our Favorites



How We Will Spend Our Time Together

- Defining bibliotherapy
- History of bibliotherapy
- Social and emotional issues
- Research says...
- Proactive bibliotherapy
- Implementation at home
- Book lists
- Q & A



In the News



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MDqH4hY2ReA>

Defining Bibliotherapy



“Bibliotherapy: The use of selected reading materials as therapeutic adjuvants in medicine and psychiatry; also guidance in the solution of personal problems through directed reading.” -- *AHIL Quarterly*, 1966

“Bibliotherapy is the process of dynamic interaction between the personality of a reader and the literature he reads -- interaction that can be used for personality assessment, adjustment, and growth.” -- Moses and Zaccaria, 1969

“Bibliotherapy is the attempt of an individual to promote his mental and emotional health by using reading materials to fulfill needs, alleviate pressures, or help his development as a person”. -- Hoagland, 1972

Roots

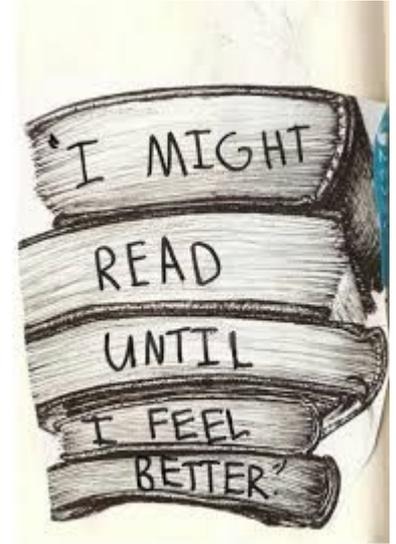


Bibliotherapy is rooted in healing practices for centuries:

- The entrances to the library of Ramses II were carved to read “the house of healing for the soul” (300 B.C.)
- Aristotle suggested that reading literature was a way of curing illness.
- In the 13th century, the Koran was prescribed in hospitals in Cairo.
- Libraries in mental hospitals (early 1900s) became commonplace in Europe and America.
- At the end of WWI, bibliotherapy was recommended for soldiers suffering from trauma and mental disorders, and libraries were established at veterans’ hospitals.
- In 1916, the term “bibliotherapy” was coined in an article from *The Atlantic Monthly* to describe using books to address patients’ mental health.

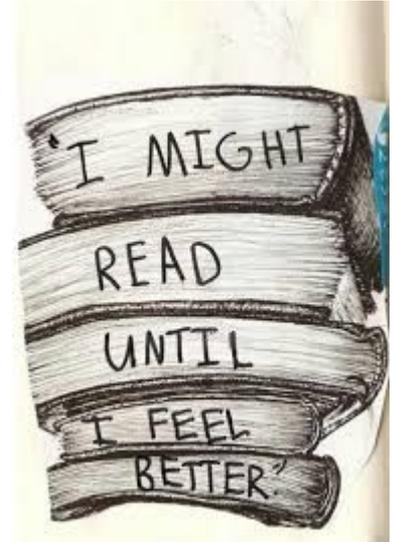
Bibliotherapy for All

- With the deinstitutionalization of mental health care in the 1970s, bibliotherapy became increasingly common in libraries, general medical practice, psychology, criminal justice, nursing, social work, and occupational therapy.
- The concept of bibliotherapy was spread among the educational world around the same time. Teachers began deliberately using books to guide classroom discussions related to social and emotional issues.



Bibliotherapy for All

- Today bibliotherapy is also used by parents to help their child cope with social and emotional needs. This includes use with gifted children, sometimes focusing on gifted protagonists and/or common issues tied to giftedness.
- Bibliotherapy may be particularly effective with gifted children due to the fact that they often read earlier, have a higher reading level, and have a greater interest in reading.
- Research on bibliotherapy is growing.



The Gifted Child

As with all children, gifted children can be very different in terms of personality, ability, how they react to different challenges and situations, and how they socialize with others. Research shows more social and emotional problems are found among the highly (profoundly) gifted; moderately gifted children tend to be more socially adept than the average child. Nevertheless, there are some specific traits that researchers recognize as specific needs of many gifted learners, and gifted children realize their “differentness” as a young age. Bibliotherapy featuring gifted children and adults can help children gain insights about themselves. They can better cope with issues such as anxiety, perfectionism, underachievement, and poor self-esteem. Very often these issues may be interrelated.

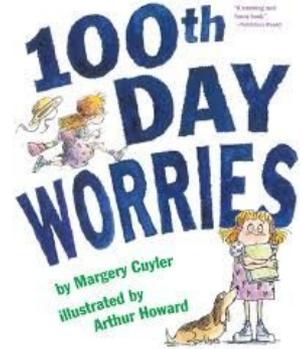
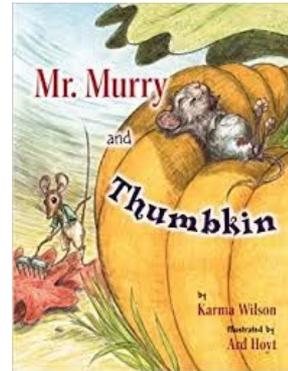
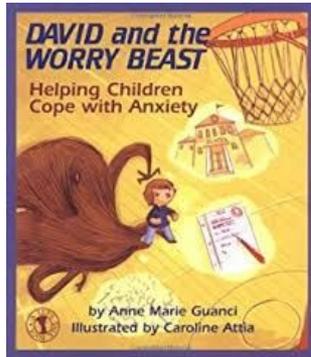
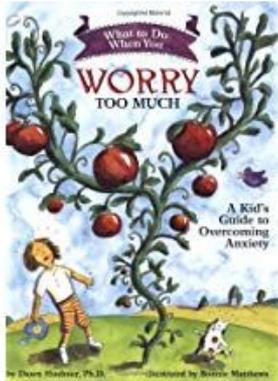
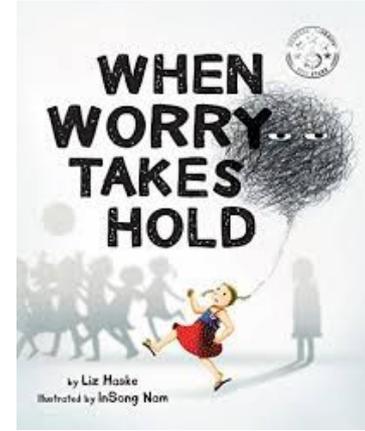
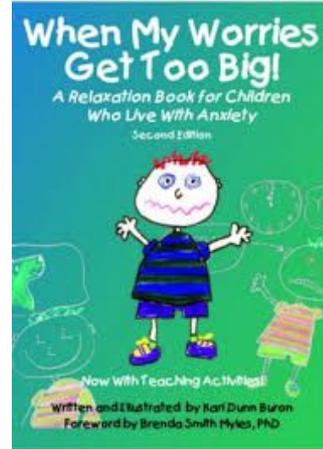
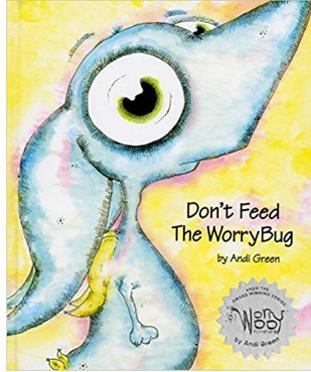
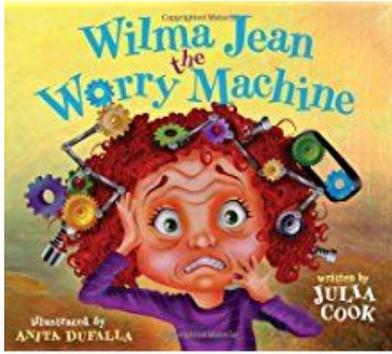
Anxiety



Research indicates that around 15% of children experience high levels of anxiety. Gifted children in particular may develop anxiety as a result of heightened sensitivity, conflict with society (questioning others, judging, etc), or being overly self-critical.

Bibliotherapy often addresses anxiety in a head-on approach, featuring protagonists who experience level levels of anxiety and find coping methods and strategies. Books should not trivialize or discredit anxiety, but instead encourage students to develop more positive ways of thinking and problem-solving skills.

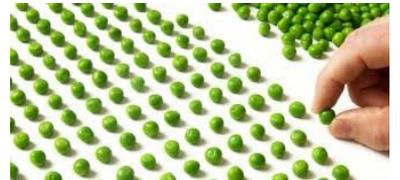
Books About Anxiety



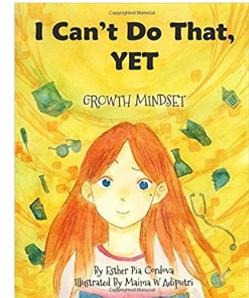
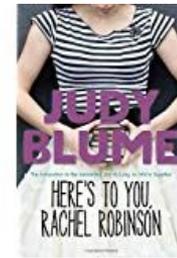
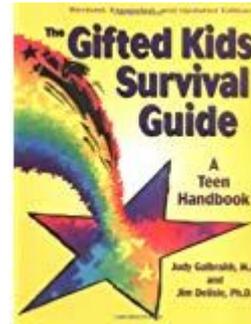
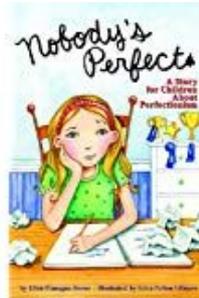
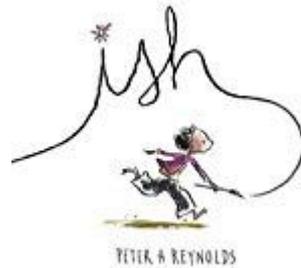
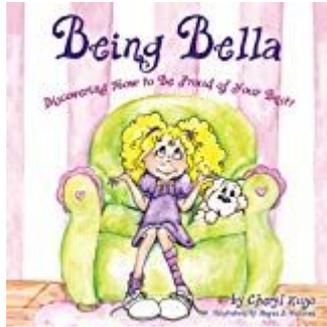
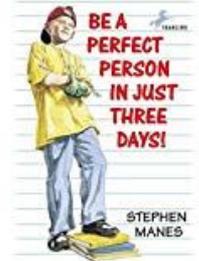
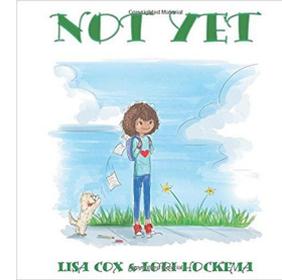
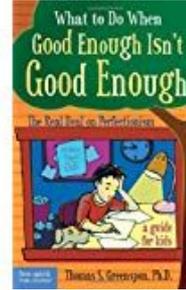
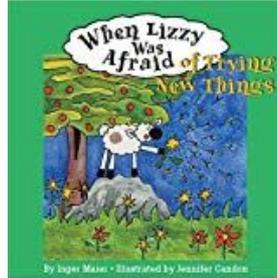
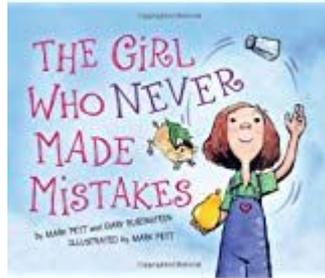
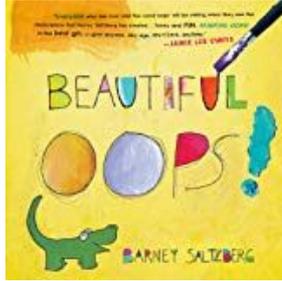
Perfectionism

Perfectionism is setting unreasonably high standards and refusing to accept anything below that expectation. Perfectionism can be a positive trait when coupled with setting high standards in effort (and not just results) and willingness to learn from mistakes. Maladaptive perfectionism is tied to feelings of defeat, frequent frustration, and poor self-esteem.

Bibliotherapy can be used to help students develop more realistic self-expectations, view mistakes and failure as learning tools, and recognize that effort and “grit” are more valuable than being “perfect”.



Books Addressing Perfectionism



Self-Esteem and Being Unique

Gifted children are not necessarily more at-risk for developing low self-esteem, but they are more likely to have the problem overlooked. They are often aware that they view the world in unique ways and experience the world with greater sensitivity and intensity. This can lead to a sense of feeling “different” and lower self-esteem. Research shows that gifted children can be adept at hiding depression from others.

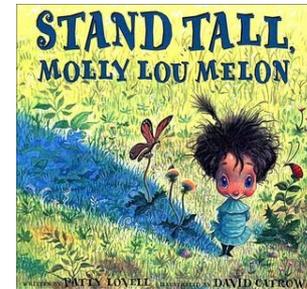
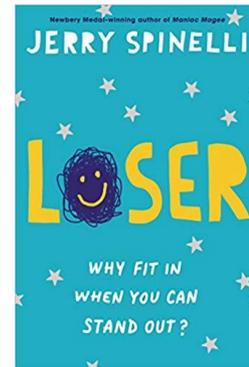
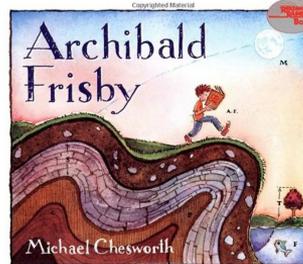
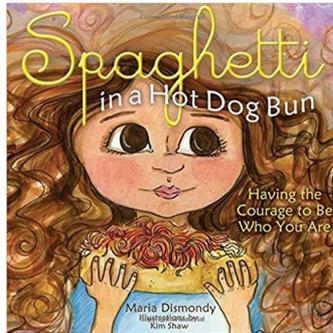
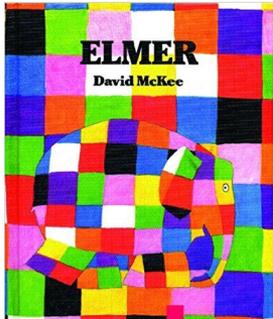
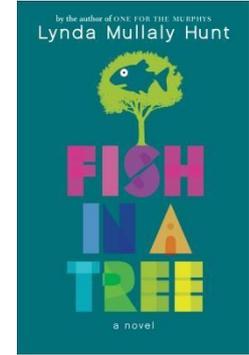
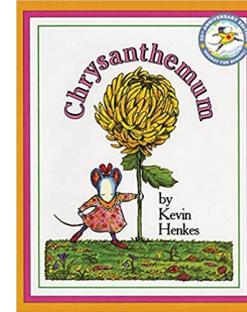
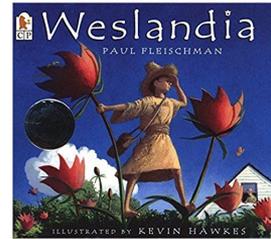
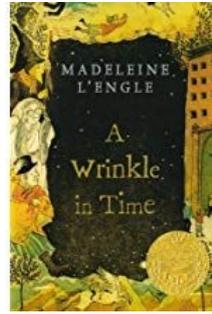
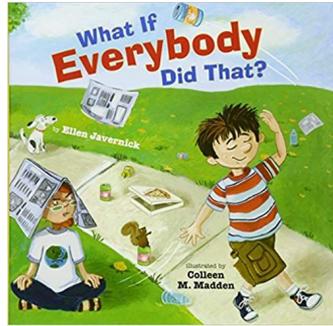
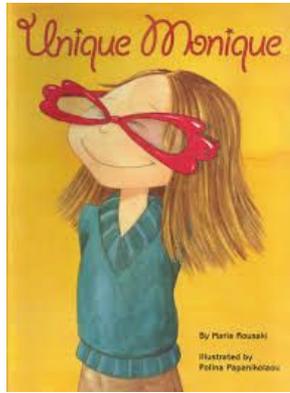
Bibliotherapy can be used to help children understand that being unique is a positive trait.

EGS102-TS



"Mr. Wickers called me 'gifted' in front of the whole class. I'm ruined."

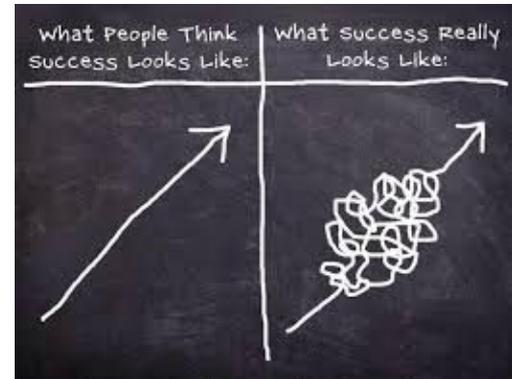
Books Addressing Self-Esteem and Being Unique



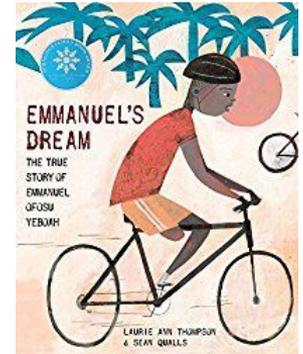
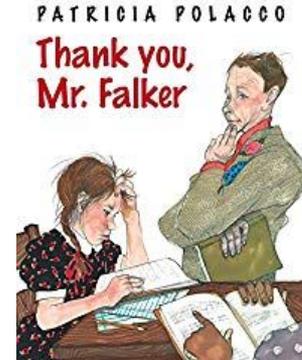
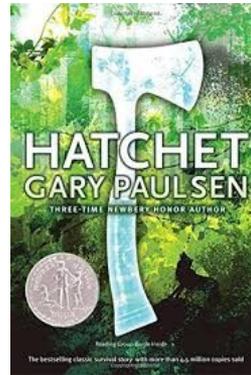
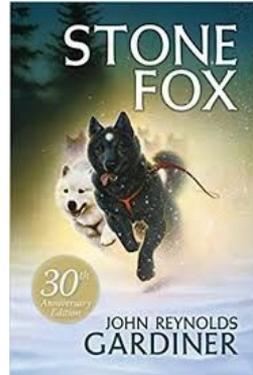
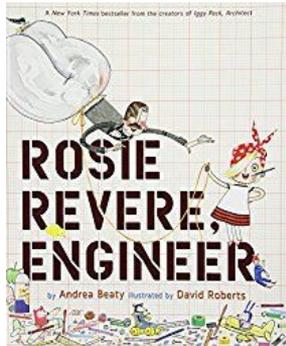
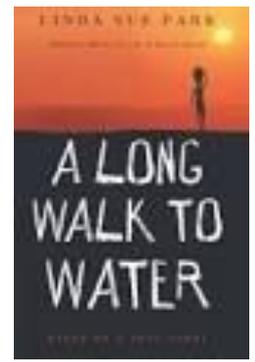
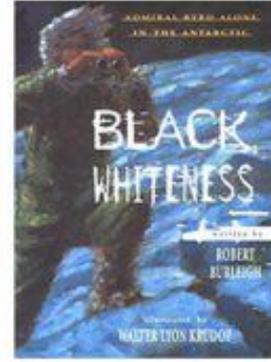
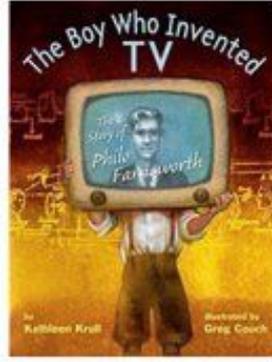
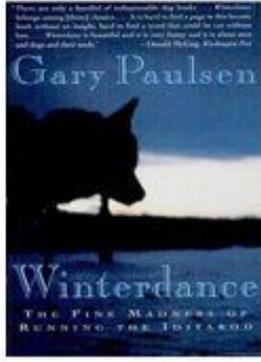
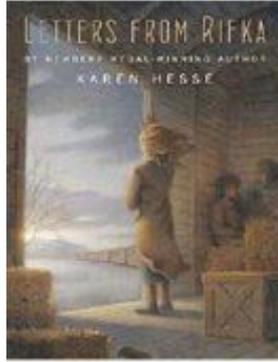
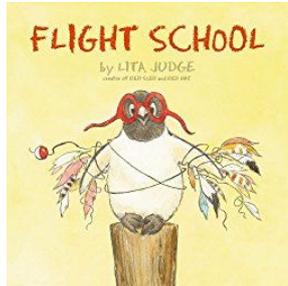
Underachievement and Grit

Gifted children may be prone to underachievement since they may not be challenged appropriately, may be perfectionists (and thus not willing to take on anything that may involve initial failure), or may have developed a habit of not trying their best. These children need opportunities at success through perseverance, goal setting, scaffolding and support, and celebrating effort.

With bibliotherapy, books should focus on the concept of grit -- perseverance and resilience with positive mindset. Protagonists who make goals and work through challenges are excellent reads.

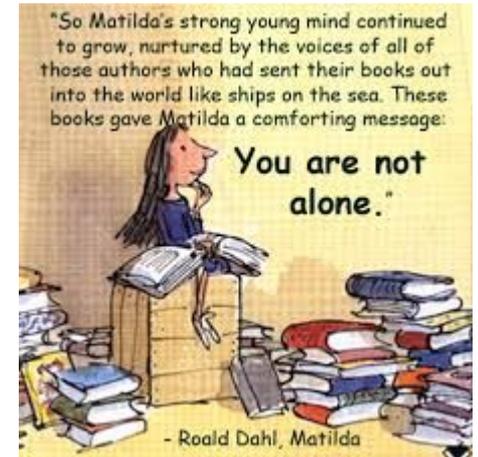


Books About Grit



Research on Bibliotherapy

- Shows that there is a positive impact on social and emotional development and health when used in therapy and in the classroom.
- Notes that follow-up discussion is an essential component.
- Participants show greater empathy, problem solving skills, and self-awareness.
- Greater research on adults and self-help books than literature for children.
- Children must have buy in and show interest in the process.
- Not a cure-all for major mental health issues.



4 Stages of Bibliotherapy

- 1) Identification - the child makes connections to their own experiences in a safe way that makes their feelings feel validated
- 2) Catharsis - the child feels an emotional release or sense of empathy with the character(s) in the book
- 3) Insight - the child sees how they might address their own problems, often through discussion
- 4) Universalization - the child applies their learning or understanding to other situations that occur in the future, including being more empathetic to others.



Proactive vs. Reactive

"Mention the word *bibliotherapy*, and children's librarians and booksellers have similar tales to tell. The stories go something like this: a well-intentioned parent comes in and asks for a book about death. When questioned further, she explains that her child's grandmother is dying and the child needs some books to help her understand what is happening. The librarian or bookseller suggests several picture books that deal, in one way or another, with death. Each time the woman is handed a book, the librarian or bookseller tells her a little about it. Each time, the woman rejects the choice. "No, *The Tenth Good Thing about Barney* won't do. It's a book about a dog dying. I told you it was a *grandmother*. No, *Grandpa Abe* won't do either because that book is about a *grandfather*. Oh, no, I know you said this next lovely book is about a grandmother, but the grandma in this book has cancer. My daughter's grandma is dying from congestive heart failure." And so it goes. The parent is looking for a book that exactly mirrors her own life."

-- Maeve Visser Knoth, "What Ails Bibliotherapy?", 2006

Being Proactive



- Bibliotherapy does not need to be limited to what has already happened.
- Reading about difficult situations (moving, death, divorce, racism, bullying, alcoholism, etc) can help our children be mentally equipped to deal with those situations when they do occur, especially when unexpectedly.
- Proactive bibliotherapy can help our children demonstrate better empathy (going beyond sympathy) and understanding.
- Choosing emotionally complex books helps children develop emotional intelligence.
- Often books do not fit a child's exact situation (gender, age, circumstances) and that's okay.

Implementation at Home



- Before reading: Find appropriate books (books with positive or neutral messages, books that address giftedness, books that involve complex emotions and situations, etc) that are appropriate for the age and reading level of your child.
- During reading: Read aloud the book with your child, or you may each read independently and discuss after.
- After reading: Retell the story. Discuss connections that your child makes to the book. Ask questions about how the character felt (and why), and how they reacted to what happened in the book. Delve into ideas about right and wrong, character strengths and weaknesses, etc. Refer to the book when you read other books with similar themes, or when your child encounters a similar situation in real life.

To Sum Up...

Linda Sue Park's TedTalk on reading and empathy (0:00 - 4:30):



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=40xz0afCjnM>

Suggested Book Lists

Some of My Best Friends are Books by Judith Halstead

Hoagies' Gifted Education book list: https://www.hoagiesgifted.org/reading_lists.htm

Children's Literature Web Guide: <http://people.ucalgary.ca/~dkbrown/>

Mensa book list: <https://www.mensaforkids.org/achieve/excellence-in-reading/>

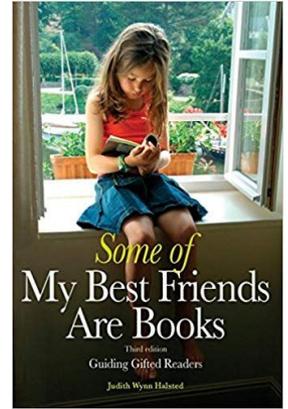
Picture Books:

www.weareteachers.com/15-must-have-picture-books-for-teaching-social-emotional-skills/

Center on the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning:

<http://csefel.vanderbilt.edu/documents/booklist.pdf>

SEM-R Book Lists: <https://gifted.uconn.edu/semr-booklist/>



Any Questions?

Thank you for coming!

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<http://bit.ly/maxfeedback>

Link to presentation: tinyurl.com/yayx395f

