

# Book Nook

## Ideas for Using Books to Support Social Emotional Development



### **Llama Llama Misses Mama**

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Viking

*Llama Llama Misses Mama* is a book about little Llama on his first day of school. At the beginning of the day, Llama is sad and misses his mamma. Why did she have to leave? Will she come back? By the end of the day Llama has made new friends and has learned how much fun school can be! This story is great for teaching about the schedule of the school day, and for discussing what to do when we miss someone. The rhyming text makes this book fun to read aloud. This is a perfect story to read at the beginning of the school year when some children might be feeling just like little Llama! (Ages 3-5)

### **Examples of activities that can be used while reading *Llama Llama Misses Mama* and throughout the day to promote social and emotional development:**

- Before reading the book, talk about what it means to miss someone and feel alone or lonely. Ask the children if they have ever missed someone. How did they feel? What did they do to feel better? Ask the children if they can think of a time when someone might feel all alone because they miss someone special. Ask the children if they sometimes miss someone when they come to school? Tell the children that you are going to read a book about a little llama on his first day of school! Read the title of the book and see if the children can guess who the little llama misses!
- Have children bring in pictures of their family, or people that they might miss while they are at school. If children don't have a photo to bring to school, have them draw a picture of the people in their family. Have children "show and tell" the pictures to one another so that everyone in the class can meet each other's families. You can bring in a picture and talk about your family too! Make a bulletin board in the classroom with everyone's photos. Tell the children that if they miss Mom/Dad/Grandma, they might feel better if they see a picture of that person. Also, remind children that their Mom/Dad/Grandma will come back at the end of the day.
- Discuss how to tell if a friend is feeling alone and what to do to make him feel happy again. How could we tell that Llama felt lonely (he started to cry, he didn't want to eat, he didn't want to read a book or take a ride on the Chugga-Choo)? What did the children and teacher do to try to make Llama feel better (teacher told him that mama would come back, other children asked Llama to play, they showed him the playhouse and the slide)? Ask what the children would do if one of their friends felt alone and lonely.
- While reading the book, talk about what happens (schedule) during Llama's day. Use pictures on a velcro or magnet strip to make a visual schedule of Llama's day (Hello, Choice Time, Read a Book, Lunch/Snack, Playground etc.). As you read, have children help complete the schedule by sticking



each picture to the strip in the order they happen in the book. After reading the book for several days, ask children if they know what activity comes next in Llama's day. Have the children help make a visual schedule for their day and talk about how it is similar or different from Llama's schedule. Ask children what their favorite part of the day is. If someone is feeling lonely, talk about how much fun it can be to look forward to a favorite activity. Have children compare their classroom schedule to Llama's classroom schedule.

- Talk about the different ways children come and go from school. Little Llama drives to school with his mama, but some children might take a bus to school, or walk to school with Mom or Dad. Grandma or a babysitter might pick up some children at the end of the school day. The teacher might come in a car or ride a bike. Have each child talk about how they get to school in the morning and how they get home when school is over. How do they feel when they see Dad/Mom/Grandma at the end of the school day? Additional resources can be found on the CSEFEL website ([Vanderbilt.edu/csefel](http://Vanderbilt.edu/csefel)) I Go to Preschool on The Bus, I Go to Preschool in a Car.
- 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 *Llama, Llama Misses Mama* 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 Alone

**Art:** Remind the children how little Llama felt in the story. Ask them how they felt today when they came to school. Tell them that they can make an emotions chart using a paper plate with a spinner in the middle, and emotion faces around the edges to show how they are feeling. Have the children glue different emotion faces from the CSEFEL website (happy, sad, lonely, excited, scared etc.) on the edge of their plate, then use a brad to attach an arrow in the middle. You could also take pictures of the children making different faces to express emotions and use those on the plates. Ask children to point the arrow to the way they are feeling at different times during the day. Put these on a wall where children can reach them, and can change the arrows to match how they are feeling throughout the day. Encourage children to notice how their friends are feeling and to use the strategies they came up with earlier to make their friends feel better if they are lonely. You could also make one chart for the class instead of individual charts for each child

**Dramatic Play:** Provide materials/props for children to "act out" the *Llama Llama Misses Mama* story. Children can use stuffed animals or dolls to pretend that they are Mama Llama (or Papa Llama) and are taking their little Llama to school. What can they tell Llama to make sure he doesn't feel alone (tell Llama they will be back at the end of the day, that school will be lots of fun, and that he will make new friends)? Children can also pretend to be Llama Llama's teacher or classmates. How can they show Llama how much fun school is? What could they do if Llama is missing Mama Llama and feeling alone?

**Music:** Ask the children if they remember how little Llama felt in the story (alone). Help the children create a song about what to do when they are feeling alone. For example, they could sing, "If you're happy and you know it," but create their own words to the song. Children can give suggestions for what they can do to feel better when they are lonely. For example: "If you're lonely and you know it tell your teacher/ ask for a hug/ check the schedule/find a friend." Write the children's song on chart paper and then sing the song together. If someone is feeling lonely, ask them to think of the song and all of the things that they can do to feel better.