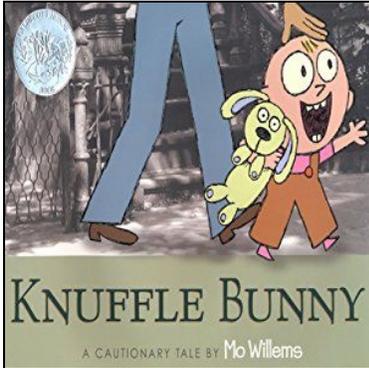


# Book Nook

Book Nook Project - Susan Handerhan



## ***Knuffle Bunny***

By Mo Willems

Hyperion

A young and not yet talking toddler named Trixie, her Daddy, and Trixie's stuffed friend Knuffle Bunny travel hand in hand together through the neighborhood to the laundromat. However, things go hilariously wrong when Knuffle Bunny accidentally gets left behind in the washing machine. Children will recognize Trixie's distress as she tries to communicate, without the words to do so, her despair at leaving knuffle

bunny behind. Parents will recognize Dad's distress as he tries to interpret and cope with Trixie's sudden and seemingly incomprehensible tantrum. A story for parents and children alike that is sure to open up a dialogue about communication and emotions. (Ages 3-6)

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

- Discuss with the children what it means when Trixie "goes boneless" in the story. Why does she do that? What is she trying to **communicate** when she says "Aggle, flaggle, babble?" Why doesn't her Daddy understand? Encourage them to think of a time when they have "gone boneless" or had a difficult time communicating what they feel. How else could Trixie have **communicated** what had happened in a different way? Write down the children's ideas on chart paper. Talk about how Trixie says "Knuffle Bunny" at the end of the story. Ask the children if it will be easier for Trixie now that she is using words to **communicate** what is bothering her. Why is it sometimes hard to use words when you are upset?
- Read the story again with the children. Have the children act out the part of the story where Trixie "goes boneless" and says "Aggle, flaggle, babble." Then read the ideas the children came up with from the first discussion about how Trixie could **communicate** her emotions. Have the children act out Knuffle Bunny being left behind, but with the ideas they came up with. After acting it out, discuss what ways the children think worked best.
- Read ***Knuffle Bunny*** again. After reading the story pass the stuffed bunny from the earlier lesson around the circle. Talk about what favorite toys can mean to us. Why are

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they important? Ask the children about favorite toys they have and why they like them. Send a note home in advance to parents about ***Knuffle Bunny***. Have children bring in favorite toys from home. Children can take turns sharing their favorite toy and **communicating** with the class about why they like that toy.

Reading stories again and again in preschool is an important way to build vocabulary, fluency, comprehension, and confidence. Taking the time to re read ***Knuffle Bunny*** with the class will not only build on the children's growing pre-reading skills, but it will deepen their understanding of the themes in the story. Try including some of the ideas listed below throughout the school day to offer hands on opportunities to build on the social and emotional lessons of this wonderful story.

## Communicating

**Small Group:** Play emotion charades with children during small group work. Have children take turns pulling a picture from a basket and try to imitate the facial expression they see in the picture. Children will guess what emotion their friend is trying to communicate. Look at the picture together after each turn. Why do you think the person in the picture looks that way? Rotate until all children have a chance to take a turn.

**Music:** The teacher will talk about how music can communicate emotions just like words and actions can. The teacher will pre-select music that sounds happy, sad, angry, and excited. The teacher will play a little bit of each piece and talk about how each piece makes the children feel. Then the class will play emotion music freeze dance. The children will move to the different pieces of music based on how the music makes them feel. The teacher will freeze the first piece of music and then play a different piece. The children will freeze in the emotion the music made them feel.

**Movement:** Play *Communication Follow the Leader*. The teacher will explain that we are going to play a game with no words at all! The teacher will explain that she is going to act out an emotion and the children have to imitate the emotion back. The teacher will stomp her feet and look angry. The children will imitate the action. The teacher will jump up and down, clap her hands and smile, the children will imitate the action. The teacher will make a sad face and curl up in a ball, and the children will imitate the action. The teacher will demonstrate how she is going to choose a new leader by communicating non-verbally and nodding at another child. The teacher will explain

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each step of the game as she demonstrates. The child she chose will then imitate an emotion. After playing the game, talk about some of the emotions that were acted out.

**Literacy:** Students will draw a picture of their favorite toy at home. They will share with their teacher how their toy makes them feel, and what they like about the toy. The teacher will write their words down. The teacher will put the pages together and add a title page called, ***Our Favorite Toys***, written and illustrated by the children in the class. The teacher will read the class book with the children during read-aloud time. She will talk about how much was learned about each child by their communicating their ideas in the class book.

**Dramatic Play:** Turn a box into a washing machine with a cut out slot for putting coins in (use checkers as pretend coins.) Put a bag of rags into dramatic play that the children can take turns putting into the washing machine. Put the bunny used to act out the story into dramatic play. Encourage children to act out the story, and to act out their own stories communicating their ideas in the pretend laundromat.

**Block Area:** During the story Trixie and her Dad take a walk through the neighborhood. Encourage children to build a neighborhood out of blocks. Add pictures to certain blocks of a school, a laundromat, houses, apartment buildings, parks etc. Before children get to work in the block area discuss how they are going to work together to make the neighborhood. Discuss how they are going to communicate their ideas with each other. Take pictures of the different neighborhoods the children create.