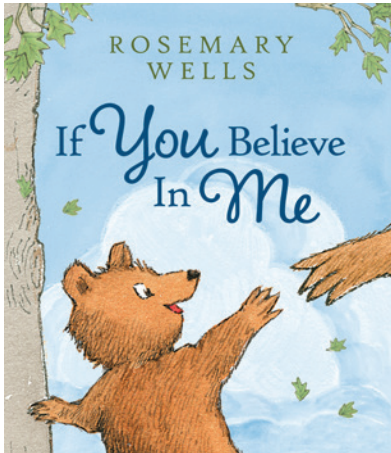


Resource Guide



If You Believe in Me

By ROSEMARY WELLS
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Resource Guide by EILEEN HANNING
www.readlearnreach.com

Ideas for sharing *If You Believe in Me* with children

Parents and caregivers are a young child's first and most important teachers. The experiences you create for them and the support you give shape what they learn and how they learn.

If You Believe in Me provides a map to creating learning opportunities for the children in your life. With the words and pictures in *If You Believe in Me*, you can help your child learn early language and number skills, physical movement skills, and lots of social-emotional skills, too. And you can build a stronger relationship with your child, by sharing this book. Here's how:

Kids create their own understanding of the world around them. The things they do, see, and hear make up what they know about the world. When you help them do, see, and hear new things, you help them learn and build their understanding of the world. You also show them what's important to you and your family.

If You Believe in Me invites young readers to dream big, take chances, and learn new things. The first illustration in the book shows a little bear in a tree—out on a limb! As a parent or caregiver, it's your job to support your little learner, to encourage them to take chances and try something new.



Genre: Juvenile Fiction / Social Themes / Self-Esteem & Self-Reliance / Family / Celebrations

Interest Level:
Ages 3–6
Grades PreK–1

Guided Reading: G

Lexile™: AD490L

Themes: Emotions and Feelings, Positive Thinking, Confidence, Achievement, Success

If You Believe in Me invites you to build strong relationships with your child. It encourages you to:



- **Read aloud to your child.**
- **Support your child's effort and hard work.** Perfection isn't a realistic goal. Progress is. [soccer, cartwheels]
- **Spend time with your child as they play and learn.** Provide chances and support them as they try new things. It may not seem like a big deal to you, but for young children, many things are firsts. [Grown up nearby as child experiences different things]
- **Figure out safe ways for kids to do things for themselves—** is it a chair to stand on so they can place blocks on top of castle, hands reaching out to catch child as they float on a wave?
- **Create a routine, so your child knows what to expect day to day.**
- **Provide a safe place for kids to be during dark or scary times.**

Here are some ideas, inspired by *If You Believe in Me*, that support your learning.

Create age-appropriate learning opportunities

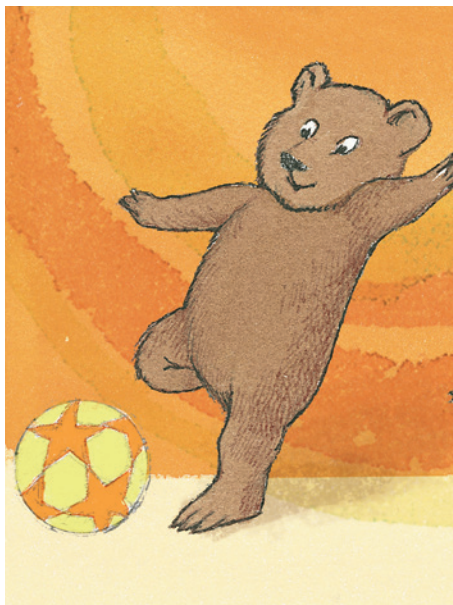
Kids learn in different ways and at different speeds. You know your child best. Look for chances to let them learn something new in a way that is right for them!

Physical Movement

Motor skills are movements like walking or coloring with a crayon. When you help your child try a cartwheel, swim, climb a tree, fly a kite, or kick a soccer ball, you are building their gross motor skills. When you encourage them to build things with blocks, turn the pages of a book, or eat with a spoon, you are helping them build their fine motor skills. When you do any of these things along with them, you show them how to do things and have fun, too!

Early reading and number skills

Reading aloud to a child is the single most important thing you can do to help them become readers. Listening to books teaches a child new words and ideas, helps them learn the sounds and shape letters have, and helps them learn the parts of a story. If you read a book aloud enough, even a small child can learn it by heart and recite the story back to you!



Counting with your child and looking for patterns build early math skills. Noticing shapes and how they are alike and different (like a square and rectangle) help build math and reading skills because numbers and letters are just shapes. And some of them look a lot alike!

- **Encourage your child to crawl, climb, skip, tumble.** Move along with them.
- **Provide chances to exercise little fingers.** Make finger foods, puzzles, or blocks available. Encourage your child to draw, paint, or work with clay.
- **Read aloud with your child.** Read books they like more than once.
- **Emphasize rhymes or repeating words or phrases.** Once your child knows the story, pause and let them finish rhyming or repeating parts of the story.
- **When reading, ask questions about the pictures or story and give your child time to answer them.**

Ask a toddler: “*What noise does that animal make?*”

Ask a preschooler: “*What animal is that?*”

Ask a school-aged kid: “*Where does that animal live?*”

- **Count things you see together—toys, food, clothes, cars, anything.**
- **Help your preschooler look for patterns or make them with toys or household items.** Spoon, fork, spoon, fork. OR shoe, sock, sock, shoe.
- **Invite your school-aged child to look for numbers in the world around them, like numbers on sports jerseys.**



Social Emotional Learning

Sharing books with children is a great way to help them learn about feelings and relationships. It gives you the chance to talk about different situations and model skills and values for your child.

If You Believe in Me provides lots of chances to talk about and model behaviors.

Values: You can show examples and talk about things that are important to you. For example, the illustration where the little bear is looking at a book while sitting at the table with a big bear. The big bear is showing, by her actions, that she is interested in what the little bear is doing: looking at the book. Perhaps Rosemary Wells, the author, is also suggesting that books and time spent together are as important as food. She puts books and bread and milk in important positions on that page. Wells shows

different big bears, spending time with the little bear, at home and out in the world, reading, eating, and playing.

You can:

- Talk about the pictures with your child. What do they see? What do they like? What is important to them.
- Think about what your child sees you doing every day. You are showing your child what is important to you.
- Make time to do things with your child. Support their interests and curiosity. That shows that you value them.

Feelings: Many of the illustrations in *If You Believe in Me* explore feelings or challenges children experience. A dark night or a big rainstorm might be scary. Playing with bigger kids or being in the ocean might feel intimidating. Some days are disappointing or scary. Sometimes the castle you build with blocks falls down.



When you talk about the pictures and what the little bear is doing, your child can learn about feelings and coping skills.

- **Start with naming the little bear's expression.** Does he look happy, proud, interested, worried, relieved, anxious, confident?
- **Ask your preschooler to name feelings they see in the illustrations.** If they aren't sure, help them identify and name the feeling.
- **Talk about feelings. Relate them to the book and real-life experiences** (both your child's and yours). Ask—have you ever felt like the little bear?

Then talk about how the little bear might feel better.

- **Confidence:** Little bear feels small, but tries anyway. They practice playing soccer and make a goal.
- **Resilience:** Little bear bounces back after a stormy (maybe scary or disappointing) day. Talk about how storms and bad days pass and things can get better.
- **Perseverance or grit:** the little bear's first block castle fell down, but they kept trying and built another block castle. And the little bear kept practicing soccer and got better.

Recognize, name, and validate your child's feelings

- **For a baby, it can be as simple as, "Are you sleepy? You've had a long day! Let's get you ready for bed."**

- **For a toddler or preschooler, you might say, “I see that you are angry. You’ve made fists with your hands. You must be very upset.”**
- **After a big feeling, like anger, frustration, or fear, has passed, talk with your child about it.** Help them notice how their body felt when they had a big feeling. “When you were angry, I noticed you made a fist with your hands ... Do you remember how you felt? Did you feel hot? How did your tummy feel?”
- **Show, or model for your child, how you manage fears, lacking confidence, or having a hard day. Think out loud.** “I’m feeling sad and disappointed that it rained today, and we can’t go to the park. I wonder what else we could do that would be fun instead.” Or, “I’m getting really frustrated that we have to wait in this line. I’m going to take deep breaths and close my eyes for a minute. That will help me relax a little.”

If You Believe in Me is a gentle picture book about the relationship between young children and the important grown-ups in their lives. Its words and pictures provide lots of opportunities for all kinds of learning. Share it with the child in your life and watch them grow!

