



Volume 2, Issue 4

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Welcome Back!

We all know that the return to school after an extended break can be challenging. Add in the snow days many of us have experienced and we've got ourselves a chaotic start to the semester!

Hopefully we're back in the swing of things now and able to return to a regular routine. Disruption of a child's routine can be difficult to bounce back from- for the child and the teacher. As we jump into the new semester, let's reexamine challenging behavior and why it might be happening in our classrooms.

Reframing Behavior

All behaviors serve a purpose. Everything we do is carried out to accomplish a goal. The same is true of challenging behaviors in children. They are typically being used to communicate a message or meet a need. **Many times, these behaviors occur when children do not have**

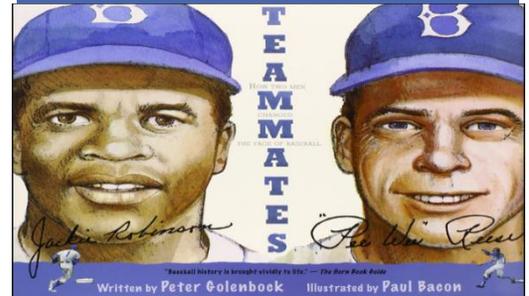
the social or emotional skills to appropriately express what is going on inside them. As adults, sometimes we "shut down" when we feel overwhelmed, or give short answers when we are stressed, or even cry. In all of these scenarios, it is the behavior that communicates the message, rather than language. Think about a child who is having difficulty sitting still or staying focused. In the recent weather we've had, he may be saying, **"I've been cooped up too long!"** Other simple messages may be, "I'm tired," "I'm hungry," or "I need to do something more stimulating."

As adults it takes a lot of self-awareness to really realize what we are feeling in a specific moment and use our words to communicate. **If it's hard for us, it's really hard for children.** However, they can do it, and we can set them up for success by teaching them social emotional language and modeling self-regulation.

Project B.A.S.I.C.

Better Attitudes and Skills in Children

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Project B.A.S.I.C. Facebook Group

The Facebook group has launched! Visit page 2 to learn more about how you can join!

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Black History Month

Celebrate the diversity of your school and classroom with books and activities that tell powerful stories of history and promote empathy and compassion among our students. Listed below are some of our favorites.

TEAMMATES

Teammates is a book by author Peter Golenbock that tells Jackie Robinson's story as the first African American Major League Baseball player. It contains real pictures from the time period and includes themes like courage and friendship.

Teammates has a corresponding Book Nook activity page, which is available [here](#). The activities listed are intended for older elementary aged students, but can certainly be aged down to accommodate younger minds.

Below are some questions to help younger children think through the story. These could also be adapted for other books you choose to read.

Before reading:

- Have you ever had a time when someone was not nice to you?
- Have you ever been called names because people thought you were different?
- How did that make you feel?

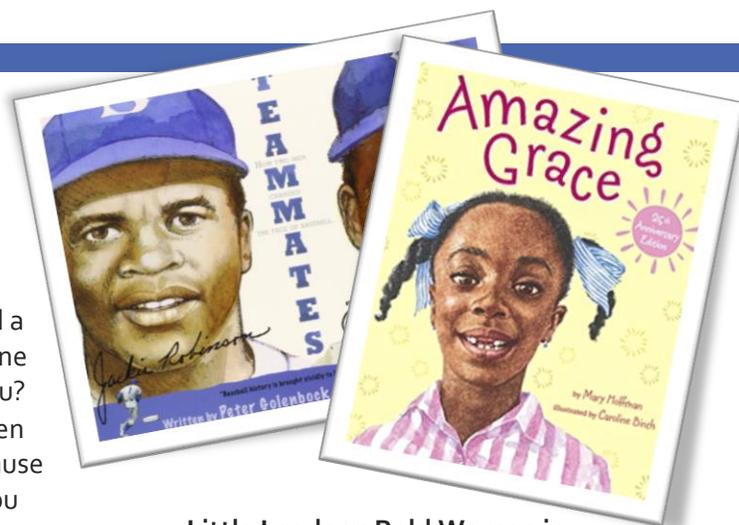
After reading:

- What made Jackie different from his teammates?
- How do you think it made him feel that people didn't like him because of his skin color?
- How did he have courage?
- How was Pee Wee a good friend?

Other books to consider that are favorites among Tennessee Voices for Children's staff are:

Amazing Grace by Mary Hoffman

This is the story of a little girl with a big imagination who dreams of being Peter Pan in a school play.



Little Leaders: Bold Women in Black History by Vashti Harrison

Notable women in black history are highlighted and children learn the stories of their accomplishments.

Martin's Big Words by Doreen Rappaport

Powerful words and illustrations set the stage for children of all ages to learn about the importance of MLK Jr.'s life and its impact on today.

Check out more books that celebrate diversity at [The Conscious Kid](#), an education, research, and policy organization that promotes positive identity development in young children.

You can also head over to our Pinterest board where we have pinned more books and activities!

 TVC Early Childhood Program

Valentine's Day

In addition to the treats and cards, Valentine's Day is an opportunity to highlight friendship skills. [Chrysanthemum](#) is a story about a mouse who loves her name until other classmates start to make fun of it. Below is an idea for an interactive lesson to show how our words can impact others. The lesson can be adapted for grades K-3 by adjusting the discussion questions.

1. Before Reading: Give each student a paper heart. Tell them to decorate it with all of their favorite things. Ask students share out what is on their heart and why it is important to them.
2. During Reading: Each time a character teases Chrysanthemum about her name, have students fold their heart. When a character says something nice to Chrysanthemum, have students open one of the folds.
3. After Reading: Ask students to compare and contrast their hearts from before and after the reading. Lead students into a discussion on the impact of our words. Even though Chrysanthemum's classmates were nice at the end of the story, their unkind words left a mark on her heart.

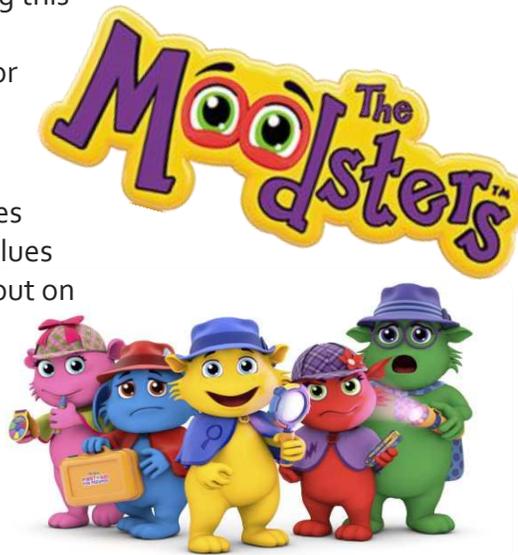
Project B.A.S.I.C. CDS Facebook group has launched!

If you haven't joined the Project B.A.S.I.C. Facebook group yet, log on and join us! This is a space for CDSs to collaborate and brainstorm together. If you have a lesson plan or resource that has been successful at your school, share it with others here!



Thanks to **Neta Gross** for using this group to tell us about The Moodsters, a great resource for social and emotional learning!

The Moodsters are a group of friendly monster-like detectives who help children detect the clues to their feelings. Check them out on their website at www.themoodsters.com



CDS Shout-Outs

Kelsey Mercer- Kelsey incorporates music into her classroom presentations. The upbeat songs give students a chance to dance as they enter the room and add structure to the waiting time before their teacher arrives.

Welcome! **Jennifer Kinzer** (Maury Co.) and **Samantha Butler** (Giles Co.) are jumping into their new roles as CDSs.

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Better Attitudes and Skills in Children

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Tennessee Voices for Children Early Childhood Program appreciates the work that you do and wants to provide you with ongoing support. Please reach out if we can support you in any way.

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