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INCLUSION NATURALLY – EMOTIONS IN STORIES FOR CHILDREN AS A POSSIBLE WAY TO UNDERSTAND ONESELF AND OTHERS (BIBLIOEDUCATION IN PRE-PRIMARY AND PRIMARY SCHOOL)

PRESCHOOL AND PRIMARY SCHOOL AS A PLACE OF NATURAL INCLUSION

Pre-primary and primary school environments appear to have the greatest potential (among school settings) for natural inclusion. It is the youngest children and their view of the other that tends to be inclusive. That is, the younger the child is, the less he or she is burdened by prejudices, social customs of society, everything that could make living together difficult.

The concept of emotional intelligence in the context of this article can be defined as a set of emotional and social skills, the mastery of which helps us feel better about ourselves. But above all, it shows the way to treat others with sensitivity and respect. Emotional and social skills are a set of skills, the mastery of which helps us to understand ourselves and our feelings. By recognizing my own emotions, knowing how to handle them (experiencing, controlling, cultivating), I am able to self-motivate and motivate others, to empathize with others, to live with others. Pre-primary and primary school has many tasks, but it is the preparation for life that seems to be essential. Upbringing and education fulfil many sub-objectives that aim at one thing: to raise a happy and human person, an individual who will be part of society. Already the pre-primary

school must begin this difficult journey of cultivating the individual. The development of emotional intelligence in young children is a many-sided process that is related to various aspects of their social and emotional well-being. Research shows that emotional intelligence is instilled in children, which enables them to form the right behaviors in the learning process (Giordano et al., 2022). It is not immutable. Thus, this learning means acquiring the ability to recognize one's own emotions, to be able to control and cultivate them, to be able to motivate oneself, but also to be able to empathize with the feelings of others and to demonstrate social skill in the areas of communication and interpersonal relationships.

So who prevents natural inclusion in the preschool environment? Teachers are usually to blame. They are the ones who have a great influence on the development of their pupils' emotional intelligence. Teachers directly create, or fail to create, an inclusive classroom environment. Why isn't every school naturally inclusive? Perhaps because every community is made up of different individuals. And this diversity, because of its complexity, often ends up preventing inclusion. Not every teacher is inclusion-minded. Other times acceptance and tolerance of difference is not encouraged by children's parents (then the children). Sometimes there is a lack of support from school management, etc. But if we want schools, even pre-schools, to foster humanity and the ability to live together, there is no choice but to develop the emotional and social skills of children, especially the little ones. For what is not set early can be expected to be „caught up” with difficulty at a later age.

EMOTIONS IN BOOKS

So it is obvious that it is necessary to teach children emotions, to build character, to strengthen morals, from a young age. The emotions and social overtones hidden in children's books, if carefully selected, can be successfully revealed and conveyed to the audience. Through stories, children can be shown naturally what emotions exist, how we express them, what difficulties we may have in the connection with emotions, etc. Some texts are irreplaceable in the natural path to inclusion. They have a great power and ability to reach the heart of the listeners (and readers). This cannot be replaced by any other educational tool. „Only” art can do that. Not only in the hands of the artist. Research shows that including emotional content in children's books is considered a valuable tool for promoting understanding of self and others, especially in educational settings. Inclusion happens in people – storybooks are proof of this. After all, it is the shared reading of books that provides useful opportunities for children (and teachers) to have conversations that reflect mental states, as the characters in books are regularly presented in terms of their goals, thoughts and emotions that shape their actions and experiences (Dyer et al, 2000). Storybook characters represent specific actions, deeds and

experiences, which can be reflected in the empathy and prosocial behaviour of the audience (Papen, Peach, 2021). Moreover, picture books allow for the conversation of emotions by presenting a vivid menu of emotions that children otherwise rarely encounter, which has the potential to enhance their emotional experiences (Landry et al., 2014).

The advantages of children's books are numerous. When reading them in the school environment, we find in particular the development of pre-literacy and literacy skills: language, but also, for example, problem-solving, communication, etc. Language skills, comprehension and cognitive development are strengthened. Experts agree that repeated interactive reading with storybooks effectively increases children's engagement, comprehension and understanding of literature in preschool and school settings (McGee, Schickedanz, 2007). Yes, interactive reading, as in dialogical reading.

Dialogic reading is based on interactive behaviour that involves consciously staying with the other and involves asking open-ended questions, monitoring the child's interest and providing praise and encouragement from the teacher (Lever, Sénéchal, 2011). This interaction, or dwelling together over and in the story, can serve to strengthen not only understanding but also the relationship between the teacher and children. There is no need to talk about strengthening language skills, getting rid of shyness, building a passion for reading, etc. It is obvious. A distinctive feature of dialogic reading is the guiding role of the teacher – the one who works with the text. He or she encourages children to participate in the reading process, especially by asking them various questions and monitoring their comprehension and engagement with the text as they read the book (Fleury et al., 2013). This method of reading is a shared reading method that incorporates interactive questioning techniques, active participation and guided interaction with the aim of improving children's language skills, comprehension and vocabulary development. The basic principles should be respected: to encourage children's extended thinking and naming of their ideas, provide feedback to the child, and to adapt questioning and feedback to match and enhance the child's developing abilities (Cohrssen et al., 2016). It applies to each individual in the group. Which is a very difficult task. Accomplishing it requires the teacher's ability to work with the book, to handle it sensitively and skillfully, but also to select the book appropriately.

On the way to inclusion, where we are heading at schools, the meaning of children's books can be many-sided. It can encompass different aspects of diversity, representation and cultural response. „Inclusive” literature serves as an effective tool for communicating with children, including those with special needs (called in special education terminology), providing them with stories that reflect their experiences and everyday life (Derkachova, Tytun, 2020). In this way, they help universal coexistence. They can also play a key role in fostering understanding of different cultures, ethnicities and identities, thereby promoting empathy and a more inclusive worldview among children (Adam, 2021).

WHAT CAN A CHILDREN'S BOOK DO?

In itself, sometimes not much. But if a teacher (and parent, etc.) can use it, it can convey the author's message, reach the reader, create a reading experience. Then the teacher has in his/her hands an irreplaceable tool for reinforcing an inclusive mindset. Because inclusion happens in the mind. It is the way one views others, the way one respects the freedom of the other, their unique nature, the way one conceives of their apparent imperfection as a quality, etc. (Braumova, 2023, p. 88). Stories can be guides for teachers, a way to introduce children to different emotional states, models of accepting and dealing with emotions, to promote tolerance, functional relationships, etc. Stories can be used to: identify the emotions of characters, discuss emotions, situations, express their own emotions, experience them in a safe school environment, recognise emotional expressions and signs, promote positive behaviour, solve problems, develop communication, realise the diversity of emotions, create and name their own emotion-based stories, to regulate emotions, etc. which can be summarized under the development of emotional and social skills.

RESEARCH INVESTIGATION

The research conducted could be classified as an investigation that explores how emotional and social pre-literacy and literacy can be developed in the educational process, thereby strengthening an inclusive mindset, and how literature can be part of this. Furthermore, the research looks at the impact storybooks can have on children's emotions, especially from the perspective of teachers. They are looking at (among other things) the emotional reactions that are evoked by the texts, or for example how children understand and express their own emotions after reading a story, which can lead to the development of emotional intelligence and skills of both children and teachers.

The aim of the research investigation was to find out which publications facilitate the understanding of one's own emotions and build a sense of belonging and understanding in preschool and younger school-age children. The task was to select books that, through their stories, enhance the child listeners' knowledge of emotions, ability to name them, handle them, empathize with other people and communicate more skillfully, thereby strengthening interpersonal relationships and relating to others. And to do this as naturally as the book allows.

Thus, the basic research questions were raised:

- What storybooks are appropriate to be used in pre-school and primary school to develop children's emotional intelligence, build character and to foster an inclusive mindset?
- What are the strengths of the selected books?

The qualitative research investigation was conducted in two phases, from 2020 to 2023. The Covid situation caused interruptions and extensions of the

research investigation. The research instrument of the first phase of the investigation was the text analysis of children's books and the participant observation, which took place in the environment of 8 randomly selected preschools and primary schools in the Ústí nad Labem region of the Czech Republic, which were willing to participate in the investigation repeatedly. The aim of the text analysis and the observation was to set out basic criteria for selecting book titles that could support the development of emotional intelligence of preschool children in stories. The participant observation while working with books (stories) allowed to determine what is essential for working with emotional stories. The direct participation of the children and kindergarten teachers refined the requirements for the books selected (observational records, descriptions, categorizations, analyses during and after the observation, conclusions from what was observed and heard).

By conducting and analyzing the results of the participating observations, the basic criteria for the selection of books – the basic requirements – were set out. Only those books that met the selection criteria completely and without exception were included in the second phase of the investigation.

The set criteria (aesthetic, educational, ethical area):

- Emotions in the story – the story processes emotions, leads to experiences, strengthens humanity, mutuality, etc., appropriately mediates and communicates emotions, has a supporting theme (sadness, friendship, home,...),
- Biblioeducational role of the text – the book can be used to educate children, it is a learning tool,
- Language of the text – Czech, foreign language books must exist in translation,
- Availability – the book must be available in the commercial network (currently) or regional libraries, it was checked in 10 randomly selected libraries (availability had to be in at least 80% of them).
- Recommended age for (pre)readers – listeners – 5–8 years, this criterion does not have to be stated in the book, the recommendation was mainly estimated by the knowledge and experience of the adults participating in the survey,
- Text length – proportional to the age and form of the lesson, the possibility of reading the whole story at once was important, i.e. working with the book in one teaching unit,
- Illustrations, graphic design of the book – appropriateness of the graphic design, existence of illustrations that support the emotional charge of the story or leave room for imagination (not inconsistent with the text),
- Suitability for reading aloud (group work) – books that encourage silent and intimate reading were not included,
- Stimulating – for follow-up prosocial activities, experiential learning (working with props, situational learning, dramatization, etc.),
- Positive reception – the text was positively received/accepted by both children and school teachers during the participant observation.

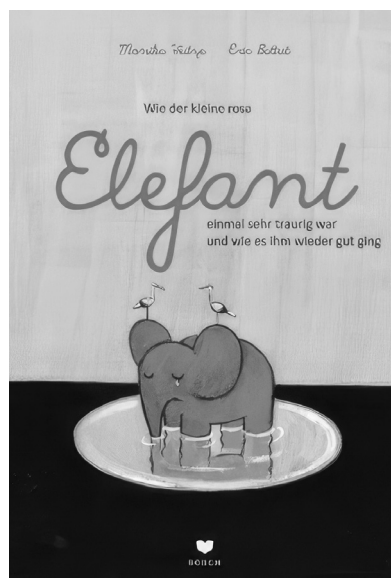
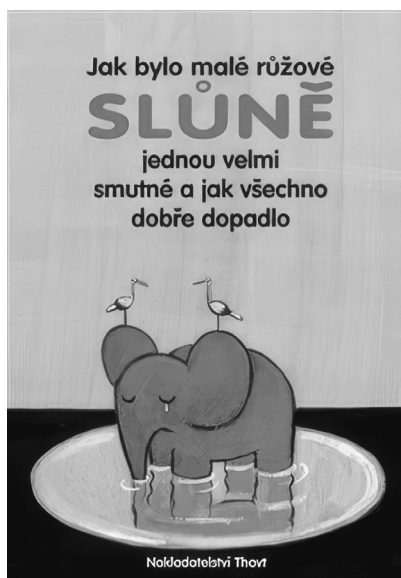
In the second phase of the investigation, which can be called the verification phase, 23 books were included. A teaching lesson was designed for each of them, which was based on a pre-reading part, supplemented with a description of the various activities, methodology (e.g., how to read to a group, dramatizing the text, leading a discussion, etc.). With this teaching lesson, the verification of the book pre-selection was entered. The children's reactions to the text read out and their emotional attunement were observed by the participant observation of kindergarten and primary school teachers and children. In this phase, 6 randomly selected kindergartens and 4 primary schools of the Ústí nad Labem region of the Czech Republic were included. If it was the same kindergarten or primary school that already participated in the first phase of the survey, it was made sure that the participant observation was conducted in a different group of children and teachers. Each group's work with a book was supported with a lesson. Further validation of the book selection took the form of the participant observation during the training of teaching staff in courses in the form of the researcher lectures, held across the country. A total of 47 teachers participated in this observation. An equally important method was the interview with individual teachers after the participant observation during the teaching of children and the group interview with the teaching staff after the seminar. These were semi-structured group interviews which were transcribed, and the data analysed. The aim of the validation phase of the research was to refine the selection of books that could be offered as essential during biblíoeducation in pre-primary and primary schools for the development of emotional and social literacy. Fifteen books were 'shortlisted' and six were discarded as not entirely appropriate.

The participant observation and interviews revealed that 7 books did not meet these predetermined selection criteria (the original selection was not confirmed, these were books that could be described as borderline. They were included in the pre-selection with some hesitation due to the graphic design of the books and the recommended age of the audience (the interviewees estimated the recommended age for younger school age).

Overview of recommended publications is presented below. (no ranking was done; each book selected met the above criteria and was briefly introduced). Finally, the message of the book that emerged from the survey and was able to be articulated has been summarized. The books were verified in the Czech Republic, so they were translations of books into the Czech language. Both the original titles and the Czech translated versions have been listed herein. As a supplement, there are samples of reactions to the books from interviews with the participants of the biblíoeducation, which show their significance. The books presented here work with emotions and relationships. Most of them aim at tolerance, acceptance, and togetherness. Difference is emphasized in them. Other texts seek the meaning of life, contentment, what makes a home a home. They encourage a sense of self. Friendship is such a pillar of all the books. Most of the texts start

from friendship, or work towards it, highlighting friendship as one of the highest relational values.

A list of other books that are of higher quality but were not directly shortlisted has been given at the end of this overview.



Book title in Czech: *Jak bylo malé růžové slůně jednou velmi smutné a jak vše dobře dopadlo*

Original: *Wie der kleine rosa Elefant einmal sehr traurig war*

Author: Monika Weitze

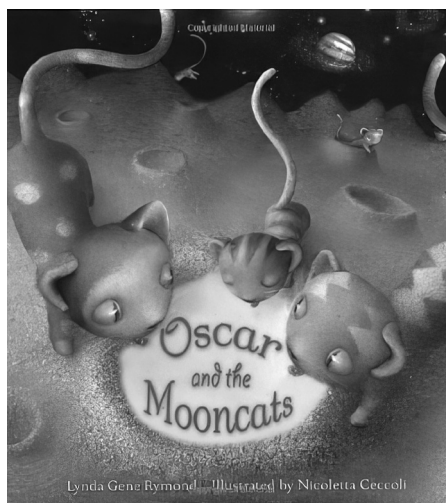
Strengths of the book: it deals with the theme of grief, the grief of losing a loved one. The book shows how to deal with grief (the stages of experiencing grief), with advice that is easy to follow; sensitive treatment, the theme of friendship and the importance of relationships is not missing; the illustrations correspond to the text. The book includes accompanying material (poster, colouring book). It is suggested why it is necessary to experience sadness, why it is necessary not to fight back tears, what time can do, etc. which has been illustrated with some selected answers of the respondents:

The first book I know that so sensitively shows that you are allowed to cry. It's wonderful, very nice to work with.

I can't describe what the lines evoke in me. I'm amazed at how transferable it is to children. I cried the first time I listened to it.

Shortcomings of the book: occasional shortcomings in translation (extra words in the Czech version).

The message of the book: sadness and its experience are natural and desirable. No problem is insignificant. Tears are irreplaceable. The loss of a loved one is one of the greatest worries. Loss can be processed; suppressing it is not desirable.



Book title in Czech: *Oskar a měsíční kočky*

Original: *Oscar and the Mooncats*

Author: Lynda Gene Rymond

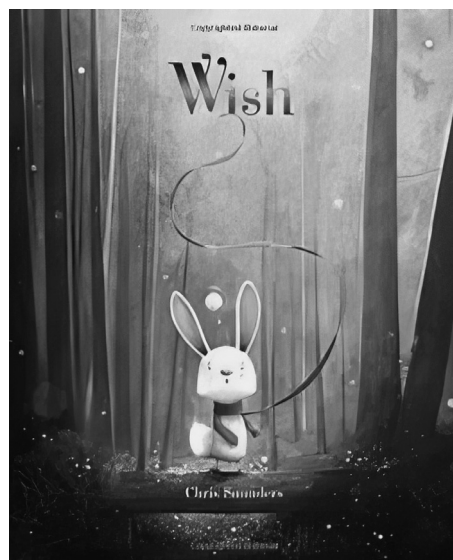
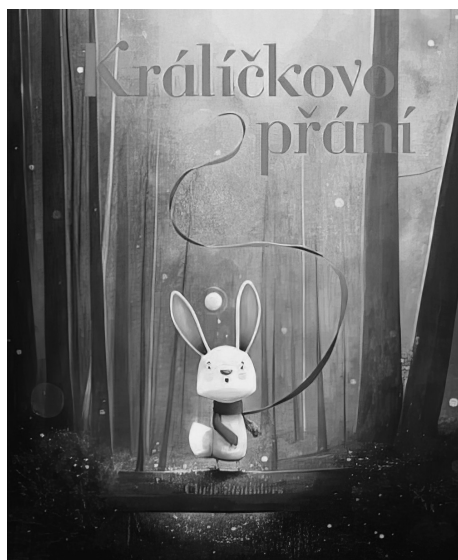
Strengths of the book: the text of the book together with the illustrations presents childhood as it is usually. Oskar is a cat child and can be quite “naughty”, but even the one who sometimes „gets naughty” has a good heart and realizes what is important. Accepting others as they are, is the message of the book. Liking someone ONLY UNDER CERTAIN CONDITIONS definitely does not apply here. As illustrated with some selected answers of the respondents:

A very nice, dreamy story, the kids react well to Oskar's mischief, he comes across as one of them. And it works.

A wonderful story about loyalty and the challenges that accompany it.

Shortcomings of the book: some found the character of the cow ambiguous, it was not possible to determine clearly the evil/good character. Others, however, stated that this character added to the believability of the story, the human imperfect dimension.

The message of the book: the world is full of attractions and opportunities for discovery. It is good to be able to choose what is the most important. Loyalty to loved ones „pays off”. Friendship is unique even in its „ordinariness” of everyday life.



Book title in Czech: *Králičkovo přání*

Original: *Wish*

Author: Chris Saunders

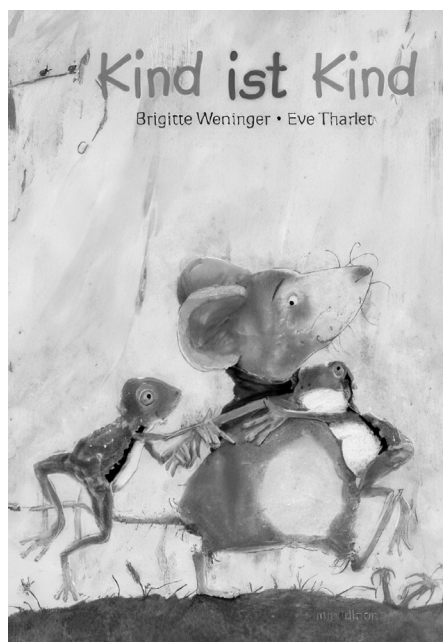
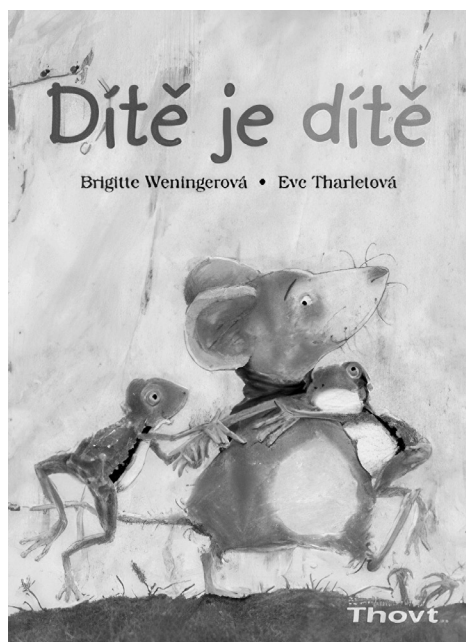
Strengths of the book: the story is a kind of dialogue with oneself through others. The rabbit has three wishes and finds out what his friends would like to get. By listening to them and letting their wishes come true, he makes his wish come true, even though it doesn't seem like it at first. They are together and that is important. The tender illustrations complement the text appropriately. The text is written in verse, which helps keep it rhythmically readable and fresh. The respondents reported:

At first the bunny made me a little angry that he wasn't thinking of himself at all, but the kids knew it would turn out well.

I like the rhyming text, kids remember it easily, lots of activities to do afterwards.

Shortcomings of the book: occasionally someone mentioned that he prefers untranslated texts, but others welcomed the poetic depiction.

The message of the book: your joy can be hidden in the joy of others. Together with them, living is more satisfying. Friendship is that joy.



Book title in Czech: *Dítě je dítě*

Original: *Kind ist Kind*

Author: Brigitte Weninger

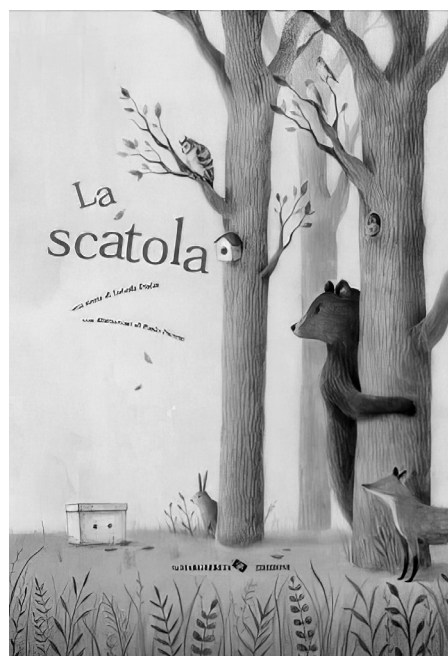
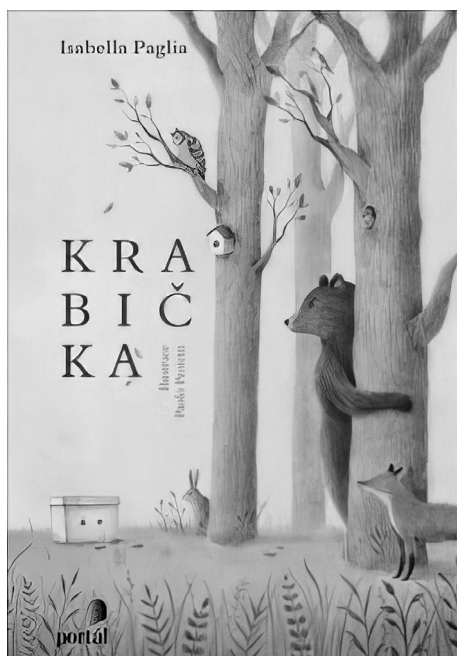
Strengths of the book: it deals with the theme of unconditional acceptance (social acceptance), which is (hopefully) only possible in the family, it shows how important acceptance is for further life, As the title suggests, a child is a child, everyone needs love and care. Courage comes precisely from being able to do natural things, to care for others, to help. Which is also perceived by the respondents:

It is beautifully written in the text how often we make excuses, how it is easier not to solve things, not to help.

I liked how Mama Mouse took in the abandoned cubs without hesitation. How others eventually joined in, it always takes a first daredevil.

Shortcomings of the book: some respondents mentioned the guideline illustration on the book cover, the climax of the story can be anticipated (Mama Mouse hugging the frogs).

The message of the book: individual difference is natural and desirable, diversity is not a barrier. Humanity is a value to strive for. The family and the parent's natural acceptance of the child can be a model.



Book title in Czech: *Krabíčka*

Original: *La scatola*

Author: Isabella Paglia

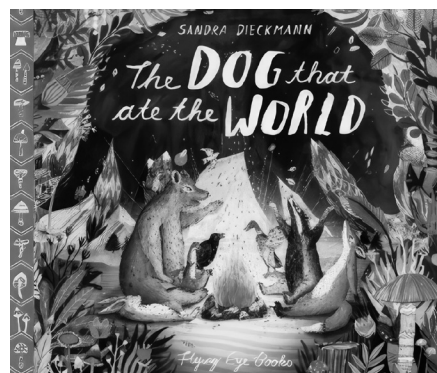
Strengths of the book: it deals with the theme of courage to explore the unknown, even though it may not be easy. Together, many things can be discovered and solutions to problems can be found. Fear must not destroy the ability to learn and help. Supporting one another „destroys” fear and opens the door to unfamiliar corners. The brave are not the ones who know everything. The courageous are those who seek to discover despite possible difficulties. For example, the respondents highlighted:

The text is gripping, we don't know for a long time what's in the box, the suspense is well built.

It is worth noticing the art of symbolically portraying the necessity of patience and the ability to wait for the right time. I also like the tenderness that can be felt in the words and images.

Shortcomings of the book: some respondents said that it is not necessary to summarise the message of the story on the last page, the children should figure that out on their own, but others recommend summarising.

The message of the book: exploring is beautiful, must not be hindered by fear of the unknown and failure. Finding solutions together is meaningful and creates a space for belonging and friendship. Together we can achieve much!



Book title in Czech: *Pes, který spolkl svět*

Original: *The Dog That Ate the World*

Author: Sandra Dieckmann

Strengths of the book: the book invites the reader in an interesting way into a story that seemingly cannot happen. However, the plot is constructed in such a way as to draw the listener into the story. Only a borderline situation - evil in the form of a dog - shows how superficial animal relationships can be and might have been, and how important it is to refocus on relationships. TOGETHER we can truly live. Anywhere. The illustrations with their attention to detail are very impressive. The respondents affirmed:

The crazy story scared me at first, but then I discovered its qualities. Every time I look at the illustrations, I discover a new detail.

Kids love it when they can dramatize a story. They can go on to invent sequels, the dog swallows a piece of himself, etc.

Shortcomings of the book: some respondents found the story „far-fetched” (unbelievable), others, on the other hand, welcomed a certain degree of „craziness and absurdity”.

The message of the book: together we create a place for living. It does not matter where we live together, but we must live together consciously. Not just next to each other without concern for the other.



Book title in Czech: *Strašidláci nebrečí*

Original: *Stór skrímsli gráta ekki*

Author: Áslaug Jónsdóttir, Kalle Güettler, Rakel, Helmsdalová

Strengths of the book: a very hilarious book about the need and ability to cry. The story shows differentness through specific examples. One scarecrow succeeds, the other – in his point of view - does not. The motivation of the text is that children should not compare, that grief should be allowed to be experienced adequately. The illustrations show with exaggeration the power of the text. Scarecrows are simply allowed to cry! The respondents affirmed:

Wonderful, I hate the statement “boys don’t cry”, why is that? The text helps me teach this to children.

Kids are great at empathizing with the scarecrow’s feelings, the illustrations always put them in the mood.

Shortcomings of the book: the respondents did not mention.

The message of the book: everyone can do anything. And everybody gets sad sometimes. Tears have an important place in our lives. No experience should be made light of. Let’s try to see things through the lens of the other.



Book title in Czech: *Duchové neklepou na dveře*

Original: *Els fantasmes n toquen a la porta*

Author: Eulália Canal

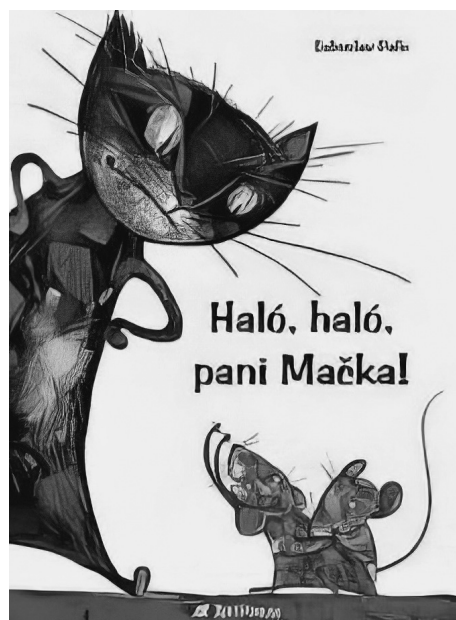
Strengths of the book: friendship is not just one-on-one. The book shows that we can have multiple friends without feeling threatened by each other. The main characters are mischievous, as only children are, which is very appealing and inspiring. The illustrations humorously accompany the text. The emotions are exceedingly readable and funny in the expressions of the cartoon characters. The groundhog can be aptly grumpy and imaginative. The respondents capture the instructional overlay of the book:

The story works in the classroom, where we're still figuring out who will and won't be friends with whom.

The crazy characters fascinate the kids. It works.

Shortcomings of the book: the respondents did not mention.

The message of the book: friendship is not ownership. A book about the selflessness of friendship and openness to more relationships. The courage to let another into your life can pay off.



Book title in Czech: *Haló, halo, paní Kočko!*

Original: *Kind ist Kind*

Author: Ľuboslav Paľo

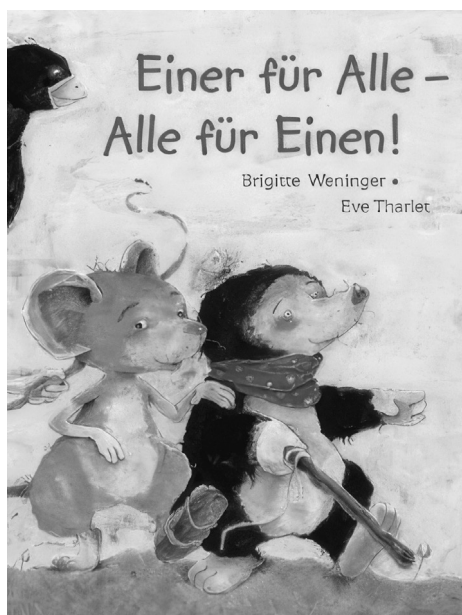
Strengths of the book: the well-known „cat chasing mice” is traditionally captured here, but more as a background for a story about friendship. When the hedgehog shows what it means to be a friend. The hedgehog helps even at the risk of endangering himself. The story is intended for the very young, but the quirky illustrations and the readability of the text make it suitable for the older target group as well. A certain provocation of the cat tends to be inherent in children. The names Tim and Pim also encourage word play – rhythmisation in teasing. The respondents highlighted:

The illustrations are wacky, we cheered along with the kids for the little mice.

The children thought of other ways to help the mice. I was intrigued that they were always kind, in a way that didn't actually hurt the cat.

Shortcomings of the book: some respondents mentioned that it is obvious from the beginning how the story will end. Others, however, welcomed this readability – the children were more involved in anticipating the plot.

The message of the book: as the text itself unveils the story carries the message „a friend in need is a friend indeed”.



Book title in Czech: *Jeden za všechny, všichni za jednoho*

Original: *Einer für alle*

Author: Brigitte Weningerová

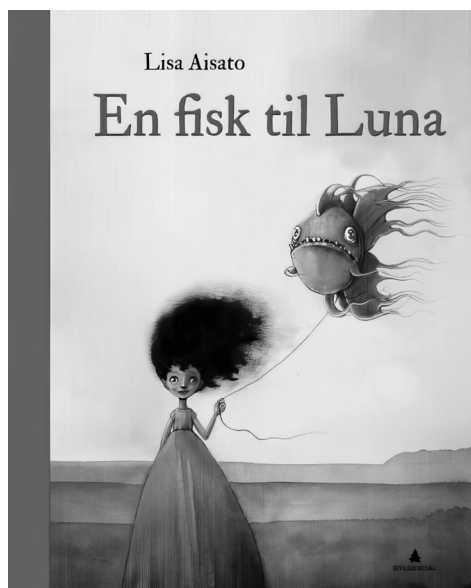
Strengths of the book: how to explain a well-known proverb? With a story? Definitely yes. The book shows that we cannot do much as individuals, but together with others - we can. But others are not only the nicest, the smartest, and the best; the seemingly weaker, unimportant ones are also needed. The very sensitively plotted story works precisely with the necessity and need of otherness for the functioning of the world. The respondents affirmed:

Amazing story, in what other way to show that everyone is important.

A book about tolerance, it's not a cliché, it shows children very well what it really is.

Shortcomings of the book: the respondents did not mention.

The message of the book: the world is us, everyone has a place here. Everyone should be accepted as they are. Imperfection is natural.



Book title in Czech: *Luna a ryba*

Original: *A Fish and Luna (En fisk til Luna)*

Author: Lisa Aisato

The book's strengths: the book shows in a symbolic story the true humanity of a child who helps another (instead of adults), selflessly, even if the help comes with the possibility of sadness over the loss of a soul mate. It's possible to get along, even though we each speak a different language; the effort is appreciated. The illustrations and the way they are portrayed are very emotive and enhance children's imaginations. Even the respondents appreciated this unique charm of the book:

Wonderful book, I was touched by it and so were the children, the little girl is goodness itself.

I wondered why we help, I see traces of altruism in the text.

Shortcomings of the book: some children find the book gloomy (illustrations), it is associated with unpleasant feelings. Others, however, welcome this very feel of the book.

The message of the book: children's openness, kindness, but also curiosity can be a model and a path to society-wide humanity. Physically small, but mentally big, they can accomplish great deeds – perceive, accept, do without judging, respect, help.



Book title in Czech: *Slon a mravenec*

Original: *Slon a mravenec*

Author: Daisy Mrázková

The book's strengths: an adventure story of unconditional acceptance, love without conditions. The coexistence of three different animals, not only in size, shows their different needs and desires. But that does not prevent them from living together and loving each other. Some things become petty in the desire to help, others become virtues, which is also perceived by the respondents:

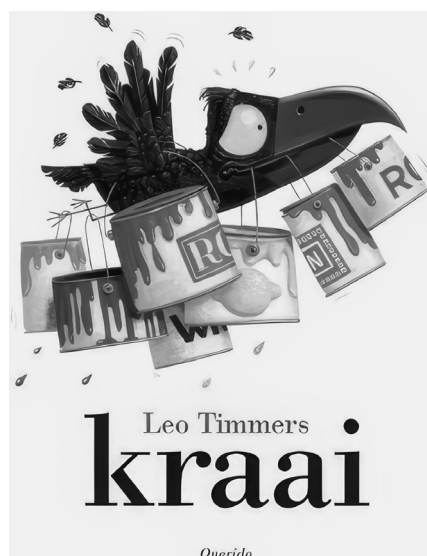
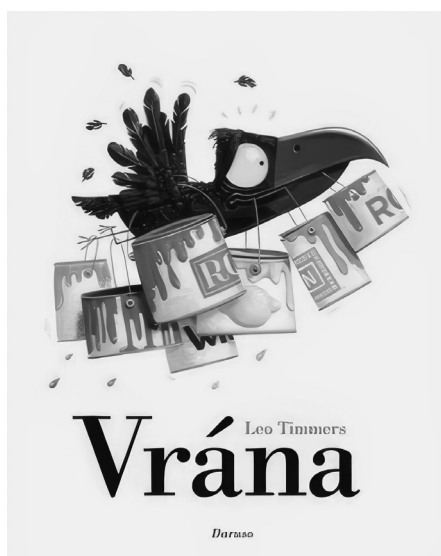
They were always whining and so maddeningly unhappy that it annoyed me (and the kids). Which is great that the book stirs up emotions.

I kept wondering why the squirrel was living with them? Then it dawned on me... and the kids.

The book illustrations and the crafting are an art. They help you dream.

Shortcomings of the book: the respondents did not mention.

The message of the book: we are all different, even the one we love is different. Difference is natural and should not hinder love and relationships. The conclusion of the book is: „they had a beautiful life as before”. Yes, even though up until now everyone has been rather moaning and unhappy. They did not know what contentment was. A book about a form of gratitude.



Book title in Czech: *Vrána*

Original: *Kraai*

Author: Leo Timmers

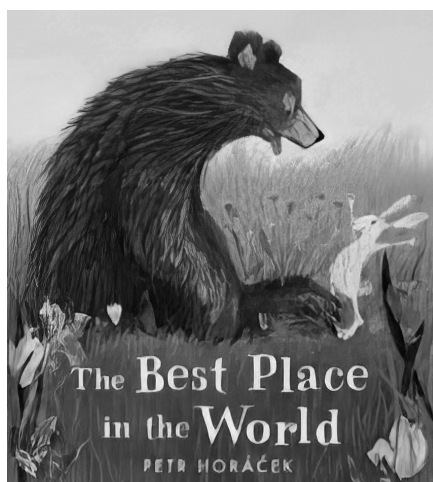
Strengths of the book: it deals with the theme of difference and the desire and need of people to belong to a group. What are we willing to change about ourselves in order to please others, to be accepted by them? Is it possible to stay one-self and build functional relationships? Do we have to be like others to be friends? It is the ability to be as we are that can be a win, even for others. This is confirmed by the selected answers of the respondents:

The simple plot allows us to open up debates about who we are and why we are that way. It is not necessary to be friends with everyone.

Some children find it difficult to accept themselves, the group has a huge impact on how they view themselves. The book shows how pointless this can be.

Shortcomings of the book: the respondents did not mention.

The message of the book: loneliness sometimes happens in life. Let's help children build self-esteem and a positive relationship with themselves, which can reduce feelings of loneliness.



Book title in Czech: *Nejkrásnější místo na světě*

Original: *The Best Place in the World*

Author: Petr Horáček

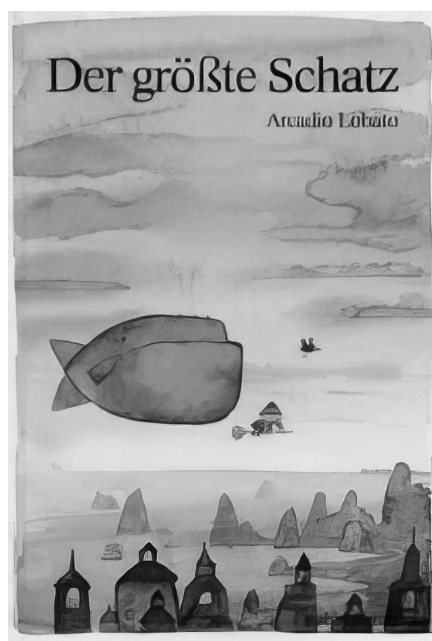
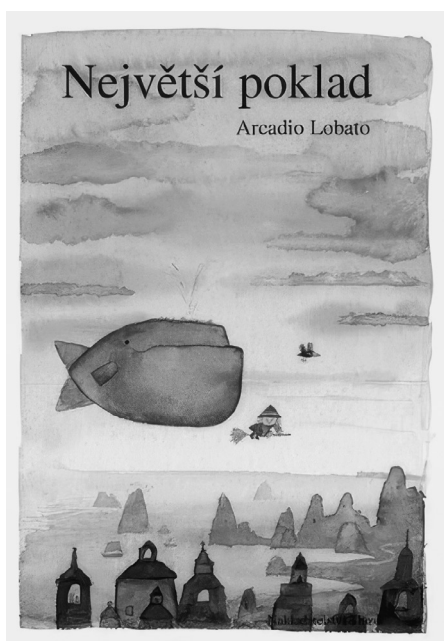
Strengths of the book: the book opens questions about the meaning of life and the search for its quality, especially the place where we belong. It shows what makes a home a home, what is its uniqueness. We discover that home is shaped by those close to us, in the hare's case - friends. The importance of questions in the process of learning and verifying what is said in practice is also heard. The respondents emphasized:

Wonderful text, simple, showed that we have to figure out for ourselves what is essential for life.

The children are excellent at guessing the continuation of the story, the escalation here is of great importance.

Shortcomings of the book: respondents did not mention.

The message of the book: home is the place where loved ones are, where we can be ourselves. The best place to be is where one is comfortable. It does not matter where that place is, but who we share it with.



Book title in Czech: *Největší poklad*

Original: *Der grösste Schatz*

Author: Arcadio Lobato

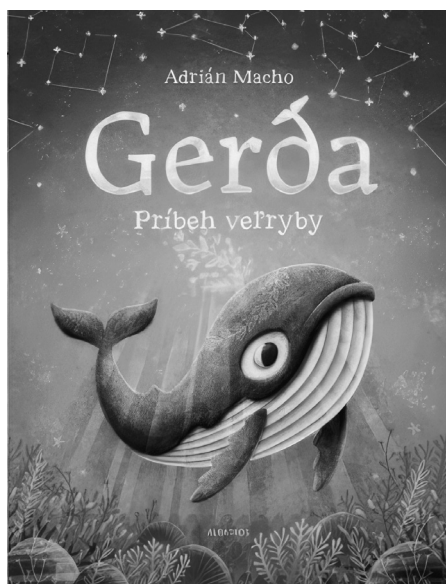
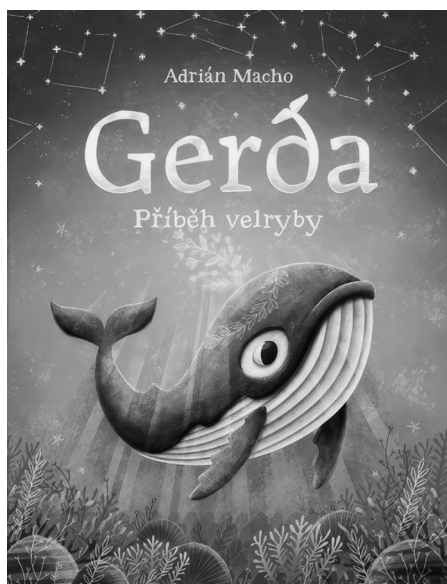
Strengths of the book: it shows what is important in life, it denies the supreme importance of the material. With the help of the text, we look for the greatest “treasure” for quality living, we find that the main thing is friendship and good relationships. The book is supplemented with teaching material (colouring book, poster). The respondents say:

A classic tale of the pursuit of happiness, I like the witch concept.

Encouraging kids to have friends is still needed in my opinion, any text like this helps.

Shortcomings of the book: occasionally it was mentioned that no reason was given why exactly the whale “saves” the witches’ kingdom, teachers had to guess the written version of the text (intuition, etc.).

The message of the book: listen to your intuition, the inner voice will show you what is good for you. Let’s be courageous when it comes to friends, let’s follow our inner voice (despite the disapproval of those around us). A friend is the one who lets me be myself. It is worth having a friend!



Book title in Czech: *Gerda, příběh velryby*

Original: *Gerda, príbeh veľryby*

Author: Adrián Macho

Strengths of the book: the book is about finding oneself. It is often built on longing, dreams, but along the way there are difficulties and disappointments. That's what life is about. In the story we learn a lot about whales, but they are likened to humans and human coexistence. Gerda loses her home in order to find what is essential - a home she appreciates. The language is flowery and affectionate. There is a sequel to the book and a mascot in the form of a cuddly whale. The respondents wrote:

A thrilling story full of kindness.

The children love Gerda, the text is longer, yet the children listened in anticipation.

Shortcomings of the book: some people were bothered by the introduction, which slightly anticipates the story (preface). However, it can be skipped while reading.

The message of the book: home is a place of safety. Sometimes we do not realise its importance until we lose it. Such an experience enriches us and brings us to the point.

Additional recommended books include:

- Book title in Czech: *Neptáček*, original: *The No-No bird*, author: A. F. Peters, P. Peters.
- Book title in Czech: *Jako ty!*, original: *So wie du!*, author: S. Gemmel.

- Book title in Czech: *Žádný strach, zajičku*, original: *Keine Angst, kleiner Hase*, author: S. Gemmel.
- Book title in Czech: *Sloni v domě*, original: *Elefanten im Haus*, author: A. Hennová.
- Book title in Czech: *Strakáč a Tioni*, original: *Strakáč a Tioni*, author: D. Rušar.
- Book title in Czech: *Velké překvapení pro malého tučňáka*, original: *Une grosse surprise pour Petit Pingouin*, author: M.-D. Croteau.
- Book title in Czech: *Nejkrásnější dárek*, original: *Von kleinen und grossen Geschenken*, author: J. Coulmannová.
- Book title in Czech: *Kde zůstal medvídek Bobík?*, original: *Wo bleibt Teddy Bobby?*, author: P. Coran.
- Book title in Czech: *Vajíčko, vajíčko, vajíčko*, original: *Ei, Ei, Ei*, author: E. Battut.
- Book title in Czech: *Nejlepší dárek*, original: *The Perfect Present*, author: P. Horáček (a další knihy autora).
- Book title in Czech: *Cesta za štěstím*, original: *In einem fernen Land – Eine Geschichte über den Mut und die Kraft*, author: M. Engler.
- Book title in Czech: *Mega mamutice Matylda*, original: *Gretel the Wonder Mammoth*, author: K. Hillyard.
- Book title in Czech: *Placatý králik*, original: *Flata kaninin*, author: B. Oskarsson.
- Book title in Czech: *Itukova vánoční cesta*, original: *Ituku's Christmas Journey*, author: E. Pasqualiová.
- Book title in Czech: *Ti otravní králíci*, original: *Those Pesky Rabbits*, author: C. Flood.
- Book title in Czech: *Lední medvídku, vezmi mě s sebou!*, original: *Kleiner Eisbär, nimm mich mit!*, author: H. de Beer (+ *Lední medvídku, vrať se brzy!*).
- Book title in Czech: *Nerozluční přátelé*, original: *Na zawsze przyjaciele*, author: P. Wechterowicz.
- Book title in Czech: *Obejmi mě, prosím*, original: *Prosze mnie przytulić*, author: P. Wechterowicz.
- Book title in Czech: *Kdo postaví nejkrásnější domeček?*, original: *Paisley Rabbit and the Treehouse Contest*, author: S. Richardson.
- Book title in Czech: *Kiki a Jax, Příběh o zázračné síle přátelství*, original: *Kiki a Jax: The Life-Changing Magic of Friendship*, author: M. Kondo.

CONCLUSION

The research can be assessed as successful. It was determined which books seem to be suitable for work at pre-primary and primary schools for the development of emotional intelligence of children, for the promotion of inclusive thinking

(in the Czech environment). A list of them was compiled and was preceded with the verification in concrete lessons. This list of books indicates where their strengths lie. Intentionally, the originals of the selected books have also been listed, so that they can be traced in case of interest in other countries (different language versions). Understandably, not everything is transferable to another cultural context. However, within Europe, I dare say, they may find identical or similar applications. Certainly, the list, however, is not exhaustive. That was not the aim. It is a kind of outline and inspiration of how emotional and social intelligence can be developed through children's books.

Crucial in examining the importance of these books was an alignment with findings in similar investigations: that a sensitive affection and emotional atmosphere when reading books is associated with greater children's enthusiasm for reading and their cooperation, which indicates a positive effect of the emotional content of books on children's engagement and social interactions (Isha et al., 2022). Yes, the books that were enthusiastically received „acted” as if they were alone. They made teachers' jobs easier. However, it was not only books and children that created this atmosphere. The teacher was central to the work itself. The harmony between the teacher, the book and the children was crucial to its acceptance/non-acceptance.

It was evident that the teachers of pre-primary and primary schools are courageous and able to choose more complex texts to work with children. Yet, it is clear that they too need help with developing the emotional and social skills of their charges. They need to be encouraged and shown ways and possibilities to support this educational area. Therefore, the article shows what books can be drawn from. How to non-violently foster inclusion in practice. After all, it is through texts and stories for children that one can enter into emotions. While strengthening emotional intelligence is undoubtedly desirable for society, it is unfortunately not always at the forefront of education. In summary, children's books play an important role in introducing diverse experiences, promoting empathy and fostering a sense of belonging and understanding among children. Illustrative and in love with words and images as such. At the same time, the potential of storybooks will only be exploited if the teacher is willing and able to work with the texts appropriately. If they allow art to reveal the essential - the humanity within us.

Many of the books mentioned have been translated into various foreign languages. Others are awaiting translation. May the selection inspire other authors, publishers, translators, but especially those who actually read to children, who are in conscious contact with children.

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Inclusion naturally – emotions in stories for children as a possible way to understand oneself and others (biblioeducation in pre-primary and primary school) **Summary**

Aim: The text focuses on the development of emotional and social literacy in the educational process. Theoretically, it tries to capture one of the possibilities of natural support for inclusive thinking. It introduces which books for children’s listeners and readers facilitate understanding of their own emotions, build a sense

of belonging and acceptance in preschool and younger school-age children, and which are suitable for working with children at the beginning of school.

Methods: The qualitative research investigation was conducted in two phases. The data have been collected through the text analysis of children's books, the participant observation of educational activities (lessons) with selected books in kindergartens and primary schools, and the semi-structured interviews with teachers. 23 books were included in the second phase of the study and 47 teachers were observed and interviewed.

Results: Attention was focused on establishing criteria for selecting suitable books, their practical verification and the final selection of books in the Czech language (the original title is also given). The article presents 16 titles that can stimulate an inclusive mindset.

Conclusions: The purpose of the text is to lead to an understanding of the importance of storybooks for children and teachers. It seeks to encourage and help teachers to develop the educational area of emotional and social skills by presenting specific titles from which to draw, thus entering the world of emotions.

Keywords: Inclusion, acceptance, child, school, education, emotions, story, book, social, dialogic reading.