

BOOK REVIEW

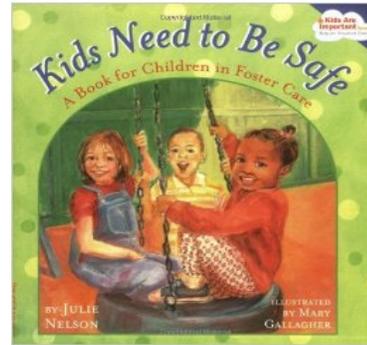
Title: *Kids Need to Be Safe*

Author: Julie Nelson

Illustrated by: Mary Gallagher

Recommended Ages: 2-6

About: Helping children understand foster care



Entering foster care can be an incredibly confusing and traumatic experience for a child. As well, it is an experience that provides safety, security, and hope. Many children entering care have experienced numerous traumas which have left them with fear and a sense of loss. This book uses simple language and colorful illustrations to help a child understand the concept of foster care. There are two very powerful statements that are repeated on every page in this book; “Kids are important.” And “Kids need to be safe.” Children experiencing trauma so desperately want to feel a sense of security and safety and the simple repetition of these statements can help a child connect foster care with a sense of safety. Many children who have experienced trauma may be confused about what feeling safe is. This book explains the concept of safety.

Many children believe that their removal from their home was their fault. This book clearly highlights the complexity of how birth parents love their children but that their adult problems make it difficult for them to keep their children safe. It introduces the idea that other adults need to help their parents by taking care of them; adults highlighted are extended family members, police officers, social workers and foster parents.

This book acknowledges the variety of mixed feelings a child may be experiencing. It has several pages designed to educate caregivers on the complex feelings the child may be experiencing and how to send messages of hope to the child. There are also pages with various resources for caregivers.

I’ve used this book numerous times to help children understand their placement in foster care. This book is a door opener and can help facilitate a conversation with the child about their feelings and the many questions they may have. It helps re-write whatever narrative a child may have internalized regarding their removal and helps them understand that they were not at fault. It supports children in seeing other adults as safe and as “helpers.”

Reviewer:

Maria Santos, LCSW

Early Childhood Consultant

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