

Room for Everyone

From the practice of Elliott McCray, Ed.S., The McCray Learning Lab

What this builds (transformative SEL): Belonging (“I belong”) with a thread of Identity (“Who I am”).

What this story practices. *Room for Everyone* builds **social awareness**: the skill of noticing that other people experience the world differently, and choosing to include them. It also builds two reading skills on purpose: **understanding a character’s point of view** (Zola reads Theo’s clues to figure out what he feels and needs) and **using strong describing words** (the story models vivid, sensory language and the child practices matching describing words to people).

On difference, gently. Theo learns and plays differently: he needs to move, he sorts to feel calm, loud rooms are a lot for him. The story never names a diagnosis or a “condition,” and never treats his way as a problem to fix. That’s on purpose: the lesson is *notice and include*, not *label*. Real children are wonderfully varied; the goal is a child who looks closer and makes room, not one who sorts friends into boxes.

Try this together. Ask your child: “*Was there a time something felt like a lot to you: too loud, too bright, too busy?*” and “*What helps you feel calm and ready?*” Then: “*How could we make room for a friend who feels that way?*”

Practice tool, not therapy. This story is for social-emotional and reading practice; it is not a substitute for professional support.

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