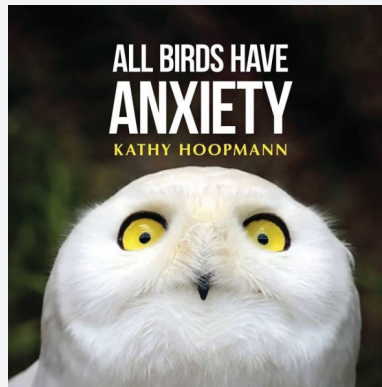


Second Reaction: Teaching Children How to Recognize New Feelings

Hoopmann, Kathy. *All Birds Have Anxiety*. Jessica Kingsley Publishing, 2017.

Kara Zaicow



Kathy Hoopmann's book, *All Birds Have Anxiety*, helps to put into words what exactly anxiety can look and feel like. The book combines funny and cute pictures of all different types of birds along with descriptive examples of what anxiety is. Anxiety can be hard to understand and to explain, especially when you are dealing with the anxiety of children. For children who may not be aware of these feelings, the book does a great job at helping them understand.

I shared this book with the five-year-old and seven-year-old boys that I babysit. The five-year-old boy was mostly interested in all of the pictures and laughed a lot at the funny expressions of the birds. However, the seven-year-old boy enjoyed the book another way and was able to apply the feelings and emotions Hoopmann talked about to his own experiences. After reading the story to them, we talked a little bit about anxiety. The seven-year-old boy learned that it's okay to be scared and to have anxiety; sometimes it can be good, too. Before we started the book, he asked what anxiety was, and by the end he told me that anxiety sometimes feels scary and worrisome. I think that it was amazing that he was able to recognize and then put into words what he feels when he is anxious just after reading and discussing one short book. Emotions can be hard to recognize and understand, especially when you don't have words to describe them. This book does a great job of defining how anxiety identifies itself and then includes pictures of birds that further enforce that idea.

Hoopmann has come up with a great way to teach children about feelings that they might not recognize or understand yet. As a young adult, I thought that reading and discussing this book with two young readers helped me to understand anxiety a little bit better. My

favorite reason for sharing this book is that it brings awareness to ways that we can cope with anxiety. These actions include “exercise, spending time outside in the sun, eating healthy, and even snuggling a pet” (9). The author points out that the best way of dealing with anxiety is facing your fears. This may not always be the easiest thing to do for anyone of any age. She explains why it is important to face the fears that may be causing anxiety. If they are avoided and ignored, they will only grow bigger and scarier. By facing fears and practicing actions that decrease anxiety, we will learn that the things we thought were so terrible are actually not so bad when we can see the fear as something outside of ourselves that gives us control over it. I also appreciated how the story describes symptoms and feelings associated with anxiety in many different ways. The experience of anxiety is not the same for everyone, and different people can have very different physiological reactions to their own anxiety as evidenced by the different humorous faces of the birds.

All Birds Have Anxiety is most effective for older children, ages seven to nine, who are able to recognize situations when they might have felt these feelings and how to examine the “why.” Even though both boys said that their favorite part of the book was all of the pictures of the different birds, the older one definitely comprehended the text at a higher level. I would recommend this book to parents and teachers because it is important for children to be aware of different types of emotions, and that those emotions are normal and can be explained and dealt with in positive ways. It’s important that children can be made aware of simple things that they can do to help deal with these big feelings.

About the Author

Kara Zaicow is currently a junior at Purdue studying developmental and family science and psychology. After graduation, she wants to pursue a career as a child-life specialist, working in hospitals with children and their families to help minimize stress and make them as comfortable as possible.