ABSTRACT

Title of Thesis:	THE PORTRAYAL ANGER AND ANGER MANAGEMENT IN CHILDREN'S PICTURE BOOKS
	Ilcia Hernandez, Master of Arts, 2024
Thesis Directed By:	Dr. Hedwig Teglasi, Department of Counseling, Higher Education, and Special Education

Through a comprehensive analysis of a sample of 80 children's picture books, this study highlights the importance of embedding language to describe anger experiences and elements of social information processing (SIP) within stories to enhance young children's understanding of anger arousal within themselves and others, as well as of anger management strategies. This study identified anger-eliciting situations, physiological and behavioral reactions, coping strategies proposed by helpers or the main character, along with other themes related to emotion socialization within the books. The current study identifies gaps in the portrayal of SIP mechanisms within stories, which underscores a need to emphasize the role of emotion dysregulation and of SIP biases during interpersonal conflicts as it is critical to foster regulation, reappraisal, and problem-solving skills among readers. The depiction of anger arousal and its escalation, predominantly through illustrations, is explored, along with implications for emotion understanding and cultural considerations of emotion expression. Picture book stories convey beliefs and values about anger by normalizing the emotion while promoting constructive regulation and expression through addressing the arousal in the body, delaying reactive

responses, and using cognitive coping strategies. Overall, the current study has implications for caregivers and clinicians, in that becoming aware of how anger experiences are portrayed in picture books can aid in book selection based on a match with an individual child's experiences and temperament to maximize its use as a tool for social-emotional learning and anger management in young children.

THE PORTRAYAL ANGER AND ANGER MANAGEMENT IN CHILDREN'S PICTURE BOOKS

by

Ilcia Patricia Hernandez

Thesis submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School of the
University of Maryland, College Park, in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts
2024

Advisory Committee:
Professor Hedwig Teglasi, Chair
Professor Cixin Wang
Professor Emeritus Bill Strein

© Copyright by
Ilcia Patricia Hernandez
2024

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my coding team for their contribution to this thesis project: Janisa Hui, Laura Kelly, and John Seipp. I'd like to especially thank Janisa Hui for her insights when coding picture books. I also have a deep appreciation for Dr. Hedwig Teglasi for her mentorship and support throughout this project.

Table of Content

Acknowledgements ii
Table of Content iii
List of Tables iv
Introduction 1
Theoretical Frameworks 2
  Ecological Systems Theory 2
  Zone of Proximal Development 2
  Social Information Processing Theory 3
  Differential Emotions Theory 4
    Emotion Understanding 5
    Emotion Expression 7
    Emotion Regulation 8
Anger 9
  Temperament and Anger 9
  State Anger 11
Socioemotional Learning and Picture Books 14
  Fostering Socioemotional Development Through Shared Reading 16
  Anger and Picture Books 17
Current Study 18
Methods 19
  Sample 19
  Codebook Development 21
    Deductive Coding 22
    Inductive Coding 23
  Procedure 24
    Data Analysis 24
    First Analytic Step 25
    Second Analytic Step 26
  Researcher Reflexivity 27
Findings 28
  How Do Children's Picture Books Portray Anger? 29
    What Anger-Eliciting Situations are Presented? 32
    How is Anger Manifested and Expressed in Stories? 36
    What Anger Management Strategies are Presented to Children in Children's Picture Books? 42
  What Components of the SIP Model are Included in Children's Picture Books? 50
    Interpreting Cues 51
    Consequences of Reactive Behavior 52
    Relational Restitution 53
Limitations 55
Conclusion 58
References 62
Appendix A 83
Appendix B 84

List of Tables

1. Table A1**:** Interrater Reliability
2. Table B1: List of Anger-Eliciting Situations Found in Picture Books
3. Table B2: List of Covert and Overt Anger Manifestations Found in Picture Books
4. Table B3: List of Initial Reactions Found in Picture Books
5. Table B4: List of Helper-Suggested Anger Management Strategies
6. Table B5: Percentages of Picture Books with Main Character-Created Strategies
7. Table B6: List of SIP-Related Story Elements
8. Table B7: Elements of Main Characters, Helpers, and Context
9. Table B8: Helper and Narrator Views of Anger

Introduction

Children's picture books tell stories that become prominent tools of early childhood development. They are an easily accessible resource that aid caregivers and professionals in supporting children's literacy skills and socioemotional competence (Garner & Parker, 2018; Zambo, 2007). The extant literature has largely focused on the benefits of picture books regarding children's language and literacy skills (Mol et al., 2008; Van Kleeck, 2008) and have also studied their role in young children's socioemotional development through the use of real-world themes (Kelley et al., 2011; Koss, 2015; Smith-D'Arezzo & Thompson, 2006). Specifically, picture books help children learn about emotions (i.e., fear, joy, sadness, anger) and how to cope with them.

In the early developmental stages, children begin to use emotions to understand themselves and others (Izard, 2011). Emotions are a pertinent aspect of the development and maintenance of interpersonal relationships (Eisenberg et al., 1995). Young children learn to label, express, and regulate emotions as part of socialization within an ecological systems framework (Marion, 2003). Among the other basic emotions that children experience, anger is characterized by a response to situations that elicit feelings of threat or frustration (Deffenbacher et al., 1996; Izard, 1977). Research on individual differences in children's temperamental tendencies explain the variability in anger expression as trait anger influences state anger across contexts (Schultz et al., 2010).

The experience of anger can be told as a story by describing the eliciting situation, feelings, cognitions, and subsequent behaviors and consequences. When these stories provide real-world contexts, they may be used as tools to help children understand and regulate their emotions. While research on bibliotherapy has demonstrated that using books to teach anger

management is an effective strategy (Shechtman, 2009), few studies have analyzed how anger experiences are presented and explained in these books. To begin filling this gap in the literature, the current study will explore how anger and anger management is portrayed in the text and illustrations of picture books for young children.

Theoretical Frameworks

Ecological Systems Theory

Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological systems theory explains how child development is impacted and supported by the child's environment. According to the ecological systems theory, child development is influenced by complex relationships at multiple levels of their surrounding environment. The microsystem level describes the relationships and factors which are of immediate proximity to the child, followed by the mesosystem, exosystem, macrosystem, and chronosystem (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

Interactions at the microsystem level include a child's relationships with their family, school, and other settings that the child frequents (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). These interactions are most influential on child development due to the direct relationships with the child. As children's picture books are often used by caregivers and in schools to teach values and coping strategies to children, they are considered part of a child's microsystem as tools that further facilitate child development and interactions between adults and children.

Zone of Proximal Development

The zone of proximal development, introduced by Vygotsky (1978), also describes the use of children's picture books as tools for child development. According to Vygotsky, a child in the zone of proximal development can accomplish a task which is otherwise outside of their

developmental level, with the assistance of an adult or a more competent peer (1978). This process, referred to as scaffolding, occurs in the child's microsystem through shared activities with an adult, who models or verbally guides them to solve a task or achieve a goal.

While shared reading promotes literacy and language development, emotion-laden children's picture books are also tools to stimulate children's emotional development. Shared reading engages children in opportunities to discuss emotional experiences which foster their awareness and understanding of emotions (Grazzani & Ornaghi, 2011).

Social Information Processing Theory

The social information processing model (SIP; Crick & Dodge, 1994) conceptualizes anger as a central influence in how children attend to, interpret, and act on eliciting stimuli in the environment. There are two stages in this processing model – the first stage describes the child's attention to and encoding of their own emotional cues as well as situational cues, and the second involves identifying goals and forming, selecting, and carrying through a behavioral response (Crick & Dodge, 1994). Picture books often tell a story of emotional experiences that are characterized by elements of the SIP model.

Lemerise and Arsenio (2000) expanded the use of the SIP model by integrating emotion processes and cognition to better understand emotional experiences in the social world. They add that others' emotional cues are an important source of ongoing information and serve a regulatory function. These cues, along with one's own cues, facilitate adjustments to behavior throughout an interpersonal interaction (Lemerise & Arsenio, 2000). Moreover, Lemerise and Arsenio (2000) posit that mood, emotions, and the level of arousal can influence encoding and interpretation by affecting what individuals notice and what mood-related information they

recollect. Mood, emotions, and arousal can affect what is noticed about a social encounter. For example, children's attention is influenced by the intensity of an emotional experience and the child's ability to regulate emotion. Difficulties with emotion regulation can impede children from assessing the situation from different perspectives and can narrow children's outcome goals (Lemerise & Arsenio, 2000). Further, researchers have found that trait anger influences these attentional processes, which functions to determine anger arousal (Schultz et al., 2010).

Differential Emotions Theory

The differential emotions theory (DET; Izard, 1977) has conceptualized ten fundamental emotions which include: interest, enjoyment, surprise, sadness, anger, disgust, contempt, fear, shyness, and guilt. From this list, the emotions of interest, enjoyment, anger, fear, and sadness, are considered basic emotions, meaning that they do not require complex appraisals or higher order thoughts or judgment (Ekman, 1999). Arousal of basic emotions may depend on perception of situations or social contexts.

Izard (2007) states that basic positive emotions, such as interest and enjoyment, play a crucial role in forming and maintaining interpersonal relationships. While basic negative emotions, such as anger, fear, and sadness are found to decrease as children's emotion regulation increases, children learn to use emotions to communicate information about goals and needs in adaptive manners (Izard, 2011). Children's ability to communicate and interact with others rapidly increases during early childhood, as it is a major cognitive, language, and social developmental period (Marion, 2003). In one study, Roben et al. (2013) found that children's language skill and language growth were associated with increased latency and decreased

intensity of anger expressions by the age of 4. Language skills are also related to the use of regulatory strategies such as support seeking and distraction (Roben et al., 2013).

DET states that each of these emotions have motivational properties and adaptation functions. From this perspective, emotions stimulate social and cognitive development through interpersonal interactions and associated processes that prompt self-reflection of expectations, behaviors, and emotion knowledge (Abe & Izard, 1999; Izard, 2011).

In sum, basic emotions help young children develop social connections and help them adapt in challenging or threatening situations (Eisenberg et al., 1995). As children develop, maladaptive emotional patterns emerge and are maintained over time. A child's temperamental tendencies influence the intensity and frequency with which they experience emotions (e.g., children who are more prone to experience anger). It is especially important to teach positive regulation strategies to anger-prone children as they are inclined to express themselves more aggressively (Potegal et al., 1996). Socioemotional development during toddlerhood includes skills such as being able to recognize, regulate, and appropriately express these emotions, and being able to understand the processing of emotions in themselves and others (Denham, 2007).

The following sections include descriptions of concepts that contribute to the regulation of anger and to the appropriateness of its expression, such as emotion understanding. Then, these concepts will be discussed in the context of children's picture books that often present maladaptive emotional patterns of anger.

Emotion Understanding

Emotion understanding is defined as how a child identifies and explains emotions (Saarni et al., 2006). Being able to identify and interpret emotional expression is a crucial aspect of children's interpersonal relationships. Brown & Dunn (1996) conducted a longitudinal study that

tested the emotional understanding of young children over a three-year period. Their understanding of basic emotions at age three and their understanding of conflicting emotions at age six were significantly correlated (Brown & Dunn, 1996). Their findings demonstrate the importance of a foundational understanding of emotions as children normally develop. Emotion recognition is twofold; developing a simple understanding of the emotion they are experiencing and comprehending the emotion in the context of the social situation (Denham, 2007). For example, at around the age of three, children begin to recognize that others can have different beliefs and emotions about the same situation (Wellman, 2014).

During the preschool years, children gain a better understanding of themselves and others through direct teaching and their emotional experiences in social contexts and the associated development of affective-cognitive processes (Denham, 2007; Izard, 1999; Ogren & Johnson, 2020; Wellman, 2017). By the ages of three and four, children begin to recognize facial expressions of basic emotion (e.g., happiness, sadness, fear, anger) even when presented as pictures (Cutting & Dunn, 1999; Hughes & Dunn, 1998). In one study, researchers presented picture book pages with an accompanying scenario which was read aloud. The faces of the characters where left blank and children were asked to make an emotional attribution to the main character by choosing one of four emotion outcome pictures options. 75% of children were able to name different basic emotion facial expressions by the age of five (Pons et al., 2004). Similarly, children also develop an understanding of their own and others' mental states, referred to as theory of mind (Carpendale & Lewis, 2006). Additional findings show that emotion understanding, theory of mind, and language ability are positively correlated (Grazzani et al., 2018). Young children begin to make attributions about emotions, intentions, desires, and beliefs

in themselves and others through social interactions and these cognitive processes can explain children's behaviors (Denham, 2007; Wellman, 2014).

Children's emotions are representative of the significance they attribute to the eliciting event (Saarni et al., 2006). Findings show that a lack of emotion knowledge is related to inappropriate emotional responses which in turn influence the responses of others (Arsenio et al., 2000). Errors in emotion understanding, especially in contexts of anger, are associated with aggression and peer rejection (Denham, 2007; Schultz et al., 2004). Specifically, emotion attribution accuracy, emotion attribution bias, and levels of empathy are all related to aggression (Schultz et al., 2004).

Emotion Expression

Expression of emotions include using facial (e.g., smiling, frowning), vocal (e.g., laughing, yelling), and behavioral (e.g., hitting, stomping) patterns to demonstrate emotion states of arousal (Chaplin & Aldao, 2013; Denham, 2007). Emotional expression facilitates the development of interpersonal relationships as they are used to communicate needs and respond to the needs of others (Ersan & Tok, 2019; Denham, 2007).

Emotional expression is increasingly influenced by motivation and cognition as children develop a sense of their desired outcomes and goals (Saarni et al., 2006). A key aspect of children's socioemotional development is learning to express their own feelings and goals in accordance with the social context. From an early age, children learn display rules (i.e., culturally defined guidelines to manage emotional expression). Through experience and didactic teaching, children learn when certain expressions are appropriate and when they are not, as well as with whom. (Denham, 2007). A meta-analysis showed that preschool aged boys showed more negative emotion expressions (e.g., internalizing, and externalizing anger) than girls of the same

age, suggesting the possible role of gender socialization (Chaplin & Aldao, 2013). Along with temperamental influences, caregivers' socialization of emotional display rules contributes to the variability in anger expression across contexts (Cole et al., 2006).

Emotion Regulation

Emotion regulation is a critical component of a child's emotional experience and is necessary in order to cope with overwhelming or distressing emotions, especially for those prone to reacting with intense fear or anger. Children's ability to identify and use regulatory strategies emerges after children gain an understanding of the origin of their emotions and the consequences of emotional arousal and expression (Thompson, 1991). Research has shown that it is more challenging for children with high temperamental anger to gain these understandings (Schultz & Izard, 2010). However, emotion regulation is especially necessary when children's emotions interfere with their goals (Denham, 2007).

Children learn to regulate their emotions through a variety of interactions in their environment. In early childhood, caregivers often scaffold children in regulatory processes. In one study, Dunn and Herrera followed children longitudinally and found that their ability to solve interpersonal conflicts with their peers at age six was related to the mothers' use of conflict management as well as the children's own emotional understanding at age three (1997). Caregivers' use of emotion language in order to help children identify emotions and understand subsequent feedback also helps children choose appropriate coping strategies (Denham, 2007). Additionally, the use of verbal instruction, threats, or warnings of consequences of unregulated emotions help bring awareness to the importance of regulating emotion (Thompson, 1991). Lastly, caregivers directly teach emotion regulation by helping children better understand the emotion-eliciting event and suggesting coping strategies to the

child (Thompson, 1991). For example, caregivers scaffold cognitive coping strategies such as choosing a substitute goal in situations where a child's initial goal is blocked. Children's picture books provide caregivers with an opportunity to introduce emotion language and teach emotion regulation strategies using stories that interest their children.

Anger

Anger is a basic emotion that typically occurs when another individual, object, or event interferes with one's goals. Anger is characterized as both a trait and a state of arousal that occurs when an individual perceives an opportunity to change or remove obstacles to their goals (Schultz & Izard, 2010). Anger states are highly influenced by individual differences in the frequency and intensity of arousal, referred to as trait anger (Deffenbacher et al.,1996; Schultz et al., 2010). At preschool age, children begin to learn how to coordinate their own goals with those of their caregivers and peers in different contexts such as during play. Differences in anger expression among preschoolers may be attributed to individual differences in anger-proneness and the socialization of anger within families (Lemerise & Harper, 2010).

Temperament and Anger

Temperamental characteristics emerge early in life and describe individual differences in affect, activation, and attention that show consistency across contexts and development (Rothbart & Bates, 2006). Definitions of temperament in the literature have changed over time as recent theorists have built upon the foundational understanding of temperament and its development. Early researchers had a broad definition of temperament, focusing on individual differences in activity level and attention, as well as emotions (Thomas & Chess, 1977), while others described temperament as the biologically inherent dispositions that underlie individual differences in a

person's activity, reactivity, emotionality, and sociability (Goldsmith et al., 1987). Further, Rothbart & Bates (2006) added that individual differences in reactivity and self-regulation, which include the domains of affect, activity, and attention, are influenced by the interplay between experience and biological factors. Researchers agree that children's temperament becomes considerably stable by preschool (Thomas & Chess, 1977; Roberts & DelVecchio, 2000; Rothbart & Bates, 2006).

Various measures have been developed based on previous dimensions identified through studies such as the New York Longitudinal Study, which provided infant data for clinical purposes (Thomas & Chess, 1977). The Children's Behavior Questionnaire (CBQ) is part of a family of temperament questionnaires that were developed based on Rothbart's (1989) theory to assess reactive and self-regulative temperamental patterns in children three to seven. The CBQ yielded three broad factors – *Surgency/Extraversion, Negative Affectivity, and Effortful Control* (Rothbart et al., 2001). *Surgency/Extraversion* is defined by the scales of Approach, High Intensity Pleasure, Activity Level, and Shyness. *Negative Affectivity* includes the scales of Discomfort, Fear, Anger/Frustration, Sadness, and a negatively loading Soothability. Lastly, *Effortful Control* is defined by the scales of Inhibitory Control, Attention Focusing, Low Intensity Pleasure, and Perceptual Sensitivity (Rothbart et al., 2001).

The concept of temperament provides an understanding of the individual differences that underlie emotion and how it is developed (Bates et al., 2008). Calkins (1994) states that temperament influences the development of emotion regulation in early childhood. Children high in trait anger tend to become easily angered and react with greater anger intensity. Additionally, high trait anger is associated with unhealthy and maladaptive anger management and expression (Deffenbacher et al., 1996). While it may be difficult to discern the level of trait anger among

characters in children's picture books, authors may be inclined to include anger experiences and expressions that are typical for children with high trait anger.

Differential Emotions Theory (DET) and Anger

Consistent with DET, anger states are often a motivation to remove obstacles from achieving a goal (Lewis, 2010; Schultz et al., 2010). As described by DET, basic anger experiences consist of brief feeling and action (Izard, 1977). Actions to change the anger-eliciting context ranges in its appropriateness given the situation.

From the DET perspective, anger functions to foster autonomy and self-definition in preschool aged children. These lines of research show that increases in anger arousal and expression during toddlerhood reflects an emerging sense of autonomy and increased self-awareness (Abe & Izard, 1999). During toddlerhood, children also develop feelings of empathy, shame, and guilt (Mascolo & Fischer, 1995). An important developmental task during this period is learning to balance the arousal of anger, shame, guilt, and empathy within interpersonal contexts (Abe & Izard, 1999). Studies have found that children who were rated high on empathy were likely to display more prosocial behavior and less aggression (Findlay et al., 2006; Noten et al., 2020; Stayer & Roberts, 2004). Researchers argue that children learn to attend to their own emotional experience and that of others through interpersonal conflicts, which contributes to children's awareness of self and of their social world (Dunn & Slomkowski, 1992).

State Anger

State anger is the affective component of an experience of anger, which also involves cognitions and behaviors (Averill, 1982). State anger is characterized by physiological arousal symptoms such as increased heart rate, increased breathing, and muscle tension (Kahle et al.,

2018; Kahle et al., 2016). In the literature, the terms anger and aggression have often been used interchangeably. While these constructs overlap, the distinction between the arousal of anger and the subsequent behaviors through which anger is expressed is often not made clear.

In toddlerhood, anger expressions tend to be quick, intense, and persistent (Potegal et al., 1996). As children transition into their preschool years, these reactions are perceived as less developmentally appropriate. Physical aggression and anger expression are often viewed as synonymous in real life and in the literature (Kerr & Schneider, 2008). However, anger expression is a broader concept that involves anger directed towards the self (e.g., anger-in) or outwardly towards others (e.g., anger-out) (Averill, 1982). Anger-in describes both the negative suppression and the positive control of anger arousal (Averill, 1982). While anger-suppression describes an attempt to inhibit feelings of anger and outward expressions of anger, anger-control reflects an attempt to process or resolve anger arousal cognitively and is independent of outward expression (Kerr & Schneider, 2008).

Anger-out is defined as the outward expression of anger (Averill, 1982). While this construct does involve aggression, other components of outward anger expression include words or noises, facial expressions, and other physical gestures (Kerr & Schneider, 2008). Aggression is defined as verbal and physical acts that are intended to harm or hurt another individual (Anderson & Bushman, 2002). In previous studies, physical aggression has been operationalized as intentionally pushing, hitting, or kicking another individual (Ersan, 2020; Eran & Tok, 2019; Noten et al., 2020). However, other outward expressions, such as stomping feet, can be non-aggressive. Children who do not learn how to manage their anger in appropriate ways are more likely to have negative peer interactions and use negative coping strategies such as physical aggression or escape (Marion, 2003). These findings highlight the importance of understanding

how state anger and anger management strategies are taught to young children through picture books.

The display rules for anger expression vary across cultures and influence how caregivers react to children's displays of anger (Cole et al., 2006). As children develop, direct and indirect socialization methods are increasingly used to teach children about anger display rules (Lemerise & Harper, 2010). Preschool aged children begin to coordinate their goals with caregivers and peers by regulating their emotional arousal when necessary. Children's language development allows caregivers to directly socialize anger by acknowledging and labeling angry feelings as well as by teaching positive anger management strategies (Lemerise & Harper, 2010).

SIP and Anger

As anger functions as motivation to remove obstacles, it also motivates attention, processing, and how an individual responds in a situation (Crick & Dodge, 1994; Schultz & Izard, 2010). Anger arousal impacts cognitive processing patterns by decreasing the cognitive space that an individual uses to interpret the anger-eliciting context. For example, if a child is pushed by their peer while in the hallway, the child must bring their attention to what happened, and figure out why it happened (i.e., deciding whether the push was an accident or on purpose). With this in mind, the child may rapidly identify their goals for the situation, such as maintaining peace or retaliating. The intensity of the emotion, the child's ability to regulate their emotions, the child's self-efficacy for performing the response, and the peer's affective cues can influence the goals that are pursued in an interaction (Lemerise & Arsenio, 2000). Emotion schemas develop through experiences in early childhood and play a role in the perception of anger and threat, such as through modeling of hostile attributions by caregivers and peers (Dodge, 2006). Children high in trait anger are more likely to orient to angry faces and information (Schultz &

Izard, 2010). These children may also show less accurate recognition of facial expressions (Arsenio et al., 2000). Similar findings emerged in research on aggressive children which showed that they are more likely to interpret ambiguous social situations as hostile (Dodge, 2006). Because emotion schemas change individuals' emotional functioning, children who experience high intensity anger may engage in "preemptive processing" which can lead to socially unproductive responses such as physical aggression (Crick & Dodge, 1994).

Interpersonal relationships with caregivers and the use of picture books can introduce cognitive coping strategies to support children's emotion understanding. Healthier attributions, or emotional schemas, of threatening situations can be expressed by saying something along the lines of, "He didn't mean to hit you, it was an accident." These schemas can be reinforced by using picture book stories that provide dialogue that support these attributions. This is especially beneficial for children prone to anger as they are likely to make more frequent hostile attributions (Wong et al., 2019). Elicitors of anger can include situations in which children's goals are being thwarted and situations in which children attribute hostile intention to ambiguous stimuli (Crick & Dodge, 1994). It is important to explore how anger-eliciting events are explained in children's books and whether they promote healthy emotional schemas.

Socioemotional Learning and Picture Books

Researchers have emphasized the interdependence of children's emotional and social competence (Denham, 2007; Saarni et al., 2006). As stated in DET, emotions are key components of interpersonal relationships and experiences as they guide children's thoughts and actions (Abe & Izard, 1999). In fact, emotional competence is necessary to form successful relationships (Saarni et al. 2006). Young children must acquire skills that build their ability to respond reflectively rather than impulsively, especially in distressing social situations. Children's

picture books provide an ideal opportunity to discuss anger within interpersonal contexts that balance the needs and intentions of the child experiencing anger and the social expectations and feelings of others from an early age.

Children's picture books are used to teach children about a variety of real-world topics such as adjusting to school entry and their new classroom experiences (Cutler & Slicker, 2020; Phillips & Sturm, 2013). Oppliger & Davis (2016) analyzed the portrayal of bullying in picture books for preschoolers. Findings demonstrated that many of the stories allowed children to vicariously experience and think about what they would do in a bullying situation. Using real-world topics, picture books may focus on emotional experiences, such as anger, to help children understand emotions and the impact that their thoughts and behaviors have on others. A variety of studies have examined preschoolers' ability to make inferences about the real world after interpreting picture book stories (Dyer et al., 2000; Ganea et al., 2008; Trabasso & Wiley, 2005; Walker et al., 2014). In fact, Walker et al. (2014) explored how three- to five-year-old children learn causal information from fiction books. They found that children as young as three years can differentiate between realistic and fantastical story contexts. Furthermore, children in this study were more likely to make generalized causal relations presented in realistic stories to the real world in comparison to those in fantastical stories (Walker et al., 2014).

Picture books are a valuable resource for supporting children's emotion understanding and emotion regulation as they are often organized around real-world challenging situations as well as the emotions that are contextualized in those evoking situations. Picture book stories often address the emotional experiences of its characters using real world contexts and emotional schemas. They also suggest regulation strategies after walking readers through components of an

emotional experience that are encompassed by the SIP model (e.g., arousal, cognitions, behaviors; Garner & Parker, 2018).

Fostering Socioemotional Development Through Shared Reading

The shared reading experience also lends an opportunity for caregivers to support children's socioemotional competence. Shared reading provides an opportunity to provide insight, stimulate discussion about relational conflicts, and communicate coping strategies and possible solutions (Shechtman, 2009). Particularly during shared reading experiences, children who identify with characters in picture books are more open to disclose their feelings and process them in constructive ways (Beazidou et al., 2013; Ouzts, 1991). Shared reading in group settings, such as in the classroom, also provides an opportunity for children to practice turn-taking and listening to other children's thoughts and emotions (Doyle & Bramwell, 2006). One study conducted by Brownell et al. (2013) examined instrumental and empathic helping with children aged 18- and 30- months by having parents read picture books and measuring parent's attempts to label and explain emotions with their toddlers. Parents either provided or elicited emotion labels and explanations from their child. Furthermore, explanations of emotion lend information about the emotional context, explore its cause, and lead to a discussion about how to know someone is feeling that way (Martin & Green, 2005). While the toddlers in this study were in the early stages of acquiring emotion words and understanding, parents' efforts to engage them in labeling and explaining characters' emotions were related to helping and sharing behaviors (Brownell et al., 2013). These findings emphasize the value of choosing and using emotion laden picture book stories with children as opportunities to cultivate emotion understanding. The hope is that this study will bring more awareness to the utility of these books.

Picture books have been widely overlooked as a primary resource for socioemotional development among educators and caregivers (Nikolajeva, 2013). While children's picture books have been shown to support young children's socioemotional learning, they have typically been used to support young children's reading and writing skills in Western education. However, since young children learn to recognize pictures before they understand text, picture books provide an optimal opportunity to engage children in discussions about emotions and social skills such as prosocial behaviors (Garner & Parker, 2018). Children's picture books also give young children the opportunity to identify with characters with relatable experiences (Anderson & Hamilton, 2005; Zambo, 2006). Through using picture books, children can begin to gain insight about their own temperamental predisposition to experience anger, how it feels in their body, and how they tend to act on their emotions. Children's picture books about anger can help children learn to cope in constructive ways when they experience these feelings by making connections between the stories and their own experiences (Zaboo, 2006). However, to my knowledge, few studies have conducted an analysis of children's picture books on the topic of anger or anger management.

Anger and Picture Books

There is a wide selection of books that address anger and frustration and provide coping strategies for preschool aged children. In *Guidance of young children*, Marion (2003) provides a tool that is aimed to help teachers and caregivers determine if a book is appropriate to help young children learn about and manage their anger. The checklist guides caregivers to ask four questions when evaluating if their selected picture book meets the criteria for appropriate anger portrayal and management. According to Marion's criteria, a children's picture book should

include multiple vocabulary words to describe the angry feeling, identify a specific event that elicited the anger, instill the idea that it is normal to experience angry feelings, and promote positive anger management strategies (2003).

Current Study

Extant literature has explored how children's picture books can be used to discuss developmentally appropriate real-world scenarios (Clare et al., 1996; Hansen & Zambo, 2007); however, few studies have examined how anger is situated and portrayed within these stories for young children. Garner & Parker (2018) analyzed the frequency and portrayal of words and illustrations that described emotion in 51 children's books. The researchers coded for simple emotion words (e.g., happy, sad, angry), explanations of emotions (e.g., "Something that makes me feel scared is being alone in the dark."), empathy-related language (e.g., "When you are sad, I feel sad too"), among other constructs such as physiological states and sociomoral states (e.g., good, bad, nice, naughty). They also looked at the prevalence of emotion words in relation to the gender of the picture book characters. Their results give a broad description of the use of emotion words in picture books, and only provide brief findings of the portrayal of anger. For example, anger was more likely to be discussed when adult females interacted with boys. Additionally, authors used more anger-related words when a boy character talked about emotions than when a girl talked about emotions (Garner & Parker, 2018).

The current study will add a preliminary understanding about how children's picture books depict anger and anger management for young children ages three to six. This information will benefit caregivers and teachers as well as clinicians as they choose picture books as tools and make informed choices about how to enhance these learning opportunities for children through book reading. As our focus is on early childhood emotional development and

socioemotional competence, I am interested in exploring picture books that target children three to six years old. In the current study, I include popular and best-selling picture books as these have often been recommended across diverse book lists online. Lastly, I will sample picture books that portray narrative stories about anger experiences. These books may situate anger in developmentally appropriate contexts and portray a balance of the child's affective experience of anger and the social expectations within that context. We will exclude books based on the quality, content, and popularity. These criteria are further discussed below. We aim to answer the following research questions through this qualitative research:

1. How do children's picture books portray anger?
    a. What anger-eliciting situations are presented?
    b. How is anger manifested and expressed in stories?
    c. What anger management strategies are presented to children in children's picture books?
2. What components of the SIP model are included in children's picture books?

Methods

Sample

The initial focus of this study was to explore children's picture books that were published to help children ages three to six gain an understanding about anger and how to manage their anger arousal. A goal of this study was to analyze books that are easily accessible to families, teachers, and mental health practitioners and therefore, books were gathered from the Montgomery County Public Libraries (MCPL) catalog system, the Prince George's County Memorial Library System (PGCML, Amazon, as well as four recommended book lists online.

MCPL currently has 23 branches around Montgomery County and provides both physical and electronic book checkout services (MCPL, 2024). Similarly, PGCPS has 20 locations and reports to have circulated child-specific materials almost one million times in the 2023 fiscal year (PGCML, 2024).

I conducted a preliminary search using the Montgomery County Public Libraries (MCPL) catalog system. The keywords "anger" and "angry" were entered followed by other criteria to manage a smaller sample of books: published (within, 10 years), language (English), genre (fiction), audience (juvenile), format (print or eBook). After reviewing the sample, 33 of these books were written for children in the three to six age range. Through this review, I found that some books are classified as appropriate for a wider age range and are included in this study as they encompass the age range of interest. A similar search was done on PGCML, and it yielded limited results, all of which overlapped with the results from MCPL. As this sample seems relatively small considering that it included books published within the past 10 years, I decided to sample children's picture books from Amazon, given that a quick search of children's picture books about anger yielded over 5,000 results.

Amazon is one of the most popular book-selling sites (Oppliger & Davis, 2016). It has a wide selection of children's picture books, many of which I was unable to locate during the preliminary search of books on the MCPL catalog system. The following criteria was used on Amazon: Subject (Children's Books), Reader Age (3-5 Years), Language (English), Publication Date (All). Additionally, I sorted the results by "Bestselling". This search yielded 242 results.

Lastly, I also conducted a search of book lists of anger books to explore whether these bestsellers are being recommended by professionals, clinicians, and parents. I located four book lists – one by Mightier (which included 10 books), a company that develops games to help

children build their emotional strength, another by a Licensed Mental Health Counselor (9 books), another by a parent and her editorial team at The EveryMom (11 books), and another by the Center on the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning (14 books). About a third (12 out of 34) of the books sampled from the online book lists overlapped with the Amazon search results. Using a combination of these sources provided a better scope of the most recommended and sought-after picture books about anger and anger management and also allowed for a more diverse sample of children's picture books that include characters of different cultural backgrounds, race, gender, and socioeconomic status.

I excluded books based on quality and content. Books that speak more generally about emotions and socioemotional learning were excluded from the sample because these stories may not deeply portray anger expression and experiences. However, books that include multiple emotions such as sadness and fear in addition to anger are included as these emotions are often involved in experiences of anger. Similarly, I excluded any books that provide a more didactic teaching of anger and anger management. The aim is to analyze how narrative stories about anger are used to relate to the child audience and engage them in reflections of their own anger experiences. Lastly, because I am looking to sample books that are most likely to be selected by caregivers or teachers, I noted the popularity and quality of the books in the initial sample. Any self-published books that have not received more than 200 positive reviews were excluded from the final sample. The final sample includes 80 children's books.

Codebook Development

To develop the codebook, I used inductive and deductive analysis to create and refine various codes. I used the deductive approach to create an initial codebook that guided coding that

reflected the goals of the research questions. These codes are drawn from the foregoing literature review. Throughout the coding process, the team added new codes to the codebook to reflect patterns that emerge from the content of the books. Using both approaches allowed for a more comprehensive analysis as inductive coding can detect patterns that may have not been captured from deductive reasoning (Roberts et al., 2019).

Deductive Coding

The first step involved using the deductive approach to answer how children's picture books portray anger. To answer this research question, anger-eliciting situations, anger manifestations, initial reactions, and anger management strategies were coded in the picture books. I referred to various sources of research to obtain a preliminary list of anger eliciting contexts. The CBQ, a caregiver report measure of temperament that was developed for children ages three to seven (Rothbart et al., 2001), includes an "Anger/Frustration" subscale that lists situations that could elicit anger from a child such as "Gets quite frustrated when prevented from doing something s/he wants to do." To supplement the situations presented in the CBQ, I also considered contexts reported by teachers (i.e., angry when making a mistake and angry when things don't go to plan) from a focus group conducted at the Center for Young Children at the University of Maryland, College Park (Teglasi, 2021, November 11).

The term, "anger manifestations" will be used to describe the initial physiological symptoms and behavioral expression of anger. Physiological symptoms of anger (i.e., high body temperature and fast breathing) were pulled from studies that reported on the autonomic physiology of three-year-old children (Kahle et al., 2018; Kahle et al., 2016). There are few scales in the literature that measure anger manifestations among preschool-aged children. Therefore, anger manifestation codes were deduced from a study that captured facial, gestural,

and verbal expression among children ages three to six (Ersan, 2020; Strayer & Roberts, 2004b). Aggression codes were derived from the Preschool Social Behavior Scale, developed by Crick et al. (1997), which includes sub-dimensions of physical aggression and relational aggression. For example, Crick et al. (1997) operationalized overt aggression as pushing, hitting, or kicking another individual, as well as verbally threatening others or purposefully ruining other's things. Similarly, anger management strategies were identified in the emotion regulation literature which include strategies to regulate physiological symptoms and cognitively reframe the situation (Denham, 2007). Some of the deduced codes include, "self-soothe," "avoid the situation," and "choose a substitute goal."

To answer the second research question about the components of the SIP model that are included in the stories, I will refer to Lemerise and Arsenio's (2000) integrated SIP model. Codes related to the interpretation of cues (i.e., intent attribution), clarification of goals (i.e., maintaining or regulating emotion, and instrumental goals), initial response generation and decision, and behavioral enactment. The behavioral enactment component of the model is addressed by our anger manifestation codes. Coding modified intent (i.e., scaffolded reattribution by caregiver) is also of interest. I constructed our initial codebook using these items to begin analyzing our sample.

Inductive Coding

During the coding process, the coders identified sentences or phrases as well as illustrations that answer our research questions. As an example, from the book When I Lose My Cool (Gordon, 2021), "Accidentally breaking a toy" was added as an anger-eliciting code as it sets the context for the character's subsequent anger manifestations, such as "tightened mouth" and "fisted hands", as well as the presented anger management strategies. In addition to coding

anger related content, we also looked at the characters' gender, race, and nature (i.e., human, animal, or fictional character). Other contextual information about the story was also coded to gather information about the setting and other expressed perceptions from characters or the narrator.

Procedure

The data was coded and organized on NVivo, a qualitative analysis software. The word content was coded by phrases and sentences to allow for more reliability between coders. The illustrations in the books were also coded and analyzed. As the principal investigator of the current study, I was the primary coder alongside a team of other graduate and post-baccalaureate student coders. When recruiting coders for this project, I was intentional to bring together a diverse team as our goal was to have different cultural perspectives which serve to reduce bias during the coding process.

Data Analysis

All 80 picture books were individually coded using techniques from the thematic analysis approach, which allows us to code and analyze data to find patterned meaning within the coded characters and situations (Roberts et al., 2019; Terry et al., 2017). Social Information Processing (SIP) theory and Differential Emotions theory (DET) also guides our analysis of anger experience stories in books, which may follow the series of elements found in the SIP model. The SIP model presents the opportunity for anger management strategies to be embedded within information processing (Lemerise & Arsenio, 2000; Thompson, 1991). This allows us to analyze what SIP components are emphasized and appropriate within picture books for preschool-aged

children. As picture books provide both text and illustrations to tell a story, both aspects were coded using these approaches.

First Analytic Step

Using NVivo and following guidance from Floersch et al. (2010), the data was given in-vivo codes such that the words or phrases used in the books were reflected in the codebook. The coding team had weekly and biweekly meetings on Zoom at all stages of the coding process to establish a shared understanding of the codes, refine definitions, and reconcile any differences. During these meetings the coding team also discussed new codes to promote consistency across coders. Open-ended insights from coders supplemented our initial codes which were produced by theory.

The coding process occurred in stages to increase the validity of findings. The first agreement establishment phase began in January 2023. Here, the coding team each coded the same ten picture books from the sample. The interrater reliability was determined to reveal any discrepancies in the coding process across coders. Cohen's kappa was used to determine interrater agreement. According to Altman (1991), a kappa of .81 to 1 is considered very good. Kappa statistics were shared in our coding meetings to clarify any misunderstandings of the codes. This process continued until interrater reliability reached at least .8. After the first round of coding, including both text and illustrations of the 10 books, the total average kappa between each coder and myself, as the expert coder, reached 0.84, 0.83, and 0.84 for the text, and 0.92, 0.92, 0.93 for the illustrations, respectively. To ensure continued agreement, a second round of the agreement establishment phase was conducted by having all coders independently code the next set of 10 books. For this set of books, the total average kappa between each coder and myself reached 0.83, 0.89, 0.94 for the text, and 0.92, 0.94, 0.96 for the illustrations,

respectively. While good agreement was established among coders (Altman, 1991), we continued to perform coding comparisons after every set of 10 books in order to enhance the validity of this study. The remaining 60 books in the sample were split evenly between two coder pairs, including myself. However, as the expert coder, I coded all 62 of the remaining books in order to continue checking interrater agreement with each coder (see Appendix A). The reconciliation process for a given item involved referencing codebook definitions, revisiting the literature, and allowing team members in the other coding pair to offer their perspectives as coders who were analyzing the item for the first time. The coding team met weekly to discuss discrepancies and address all coding questions. Once a final decision was made, coders adjusted their coding file to reflect the reconciliation. However, reliability estimates were based on independent coding.

Second Analytic Step

In the final analytic step, the inductive and deductive codes were organized into broader codes based on any observed patterns that emerged (Floersch et al., 2010). These broad categories were organized in NVivo and the codebook. Throughout this process, the consistency of coding and the use of appropriate categorization of broad categories was reviewed. For example, for Anger Manifestation codes, "Aggression" is a category that includes physical and verbal aggression. The coding team aided in this process by providing insights on the categorization of certain codes based on their nature. For instance, the codes *"move your body"* and *"exercise"* were merged under *"physical activity"* and were categorized as a self-calming strategy. This consensus was reached after considering findings from the literature and the context of the stories in our sample.

Lastly, coders engaged in memo writing throughout the independent coding process to reflect about their coding experiences, the meaning of codes, their reflections on the relationships between codes, and categories found in the data (Floersch et al., 2010). Coders also reflected on any personal biases that may have influenced their perception of anger representations within the cultural context of the stories they coded. These reflections inform interpretations of the data in this study. Following a final discussion about coders' reflections, themes that emerged were consolidated and used to further supplement the findings in this paper.

Researcher Reflexivity

As the expert coder of the team, I am a first-generation Latina doctoral student in school psychology who has experience working with young elementary school children in various capacities, including developing academic and behavioral intervention plans and using stories to teach emotion regulation skills. These experiences have helped me to further think about how various components of children's stories can be used to enrich shared reading and social-emotional development with children. Two other coders on the team are also school psychology doctoral students at the University of Maryland. One identifies as an Asian woman and is an international student from Hong Kong. The second is a White woman. The final coder is a transracially adopted Vietnamese American man who studied psychology and public health as an undergraduate student. He is currently a research assistant in the Center for Intervention Research in Schools at Ohio University.

All coders in this study have diverse experiences working with children and researching topics related to their social-emotional development and education. Each team member brings different identities and experiences that contribute to a comprehensive understanding and

analysis of the picture books they coded. Some coders expressed being attentive to themes about race and culture as sometimes they appeared ambiguous in the stories and therefore difficult to code. Another coder shared how they grew up in a family that is slow to anger and therefore anger topics were not often discussed. They express, "In this way, it's not an issue of conformity or non-confrontation, but quite literally non-existent in a way that I might have a harder time perceiving anger within myself or others. When reading about it, yes – but perhaps witnessing it in everyday life or knowing what coping strategies to employ, and why, seems a bit distant to me (particularly in a formulaic, story-book way)." These conversations were encouraged throughout the coding process and created a better sense of common ideas and prevalent white-centric themes in the sample.

Findings

The picture books in the sample include stories of diverse anger experiences among young children. Out of the sample of 80 picture books, 72 of them were published in the United States (90%), while others were published in the United Kingdom (8%), Canada (1%), and Australia (1%). The majority of authors published their books through publishing companies (74%), while a smaller percentage were self-published (26%). Additionally, 14 out of the 80 books were published by authors who had degrees in relevant professional fields. Ten books were written by authors with a background in psychology such as clinical psychologists, school counselors, and therapists. Lastly, three authors had backgrounds in education or special education, while one author had a background in social work.

The main characters of the stories were depicted in various ways. To start, about half of the main characters were human, whereas the other half were animals or creatures (see Table B7). Of the human characters, 60% of them presented as White, 14% of them as Brown, 5% as

Black, 3% as Asian, and 18% as from an unidentified race. Of all the characters (i.e., both human and personified animals or creatures), about 63% were male-presenting, 28% were female-presenting, and 9% were of an unidentified sex. Gender findings are consistent with the literature stating girls tend to display less anger and have more control over their emotions than boys which is associated with differences in emotion socialization across gender (Kerr & Schneider, 2008).

How Do Children's Picture Books Portray Anger?

The analysis of the content of the stories showed that almost all books in the sample presented clear anger-eliciting situations (99% of texts, 95% of images) and initial angry reactions (95% of texts, 94% of images) and that most books also provided anger management strategies (88% of texts, 80% of images). Most books followed a similar progression, starting with anger-eliciting situations, anger manifestations from the main character, provision of regulation strategies from a helper or from the main character, and a resolution.

Throughout this process, some stories described an escalation of the main character's anger (23% of texts). Oftentimes, authors made it clear that anger feelings were growing inside of the main character, which eventually led to a behavioral outburst. For example, in *Angry Octopus,* it states, "The more he looked at the mess the worse he felt. He got madder and madder, and he felt his body get tighter and tighter" (Lite, 2008). Interestingly, it was often the case that an escalation of anger was represented using a metaphor or analogy to symbolize its growing intensity. Volcano eruptions, hurricanes, dark storms, and flames were used to describe how quickly anger could become dangerous for the main character and those around them. For example, in *A Very Frustrated Monster*, the escalating feeling was described by stating, "He sat

in his chair and tapped both his feet–Twitch tried to sit still, but he bounced in his seat! An emotional volcano bubbled within; the pressure Twitch felt seemed to make his world spin!" (Green, 2013). Using metaphors creates a sense of growing intensity and danger of anger as storms and other natural disasters typically develop in magnitude over time.

Beliefs and values about anger were expressed and implied in the helper's or narrator's communication. Helpers conveyed that children must learn to control anger in 38% of the sample and warned that some anger expressions (i.e., hurting others, throwing objects) can be dangerous in 19% of the sample. When not coupled with an expression of acceptance or understanding, these messages may have adverse effects on children's social emotional development. Research shows that parental punishment (i.e., criticism, nagging) as a result of parental anger can influence child behavior in an aversive manner, potentially leading to reciprocal opposition and escalated anger (Snyder et al., 2010). The negative effect of parental control on child anger increases when it is coupled with low parental warmth (Strayer & Roberts, 2004a). While it is important for parents to help children understand practical consequences for inappropriate expressions of anger, it may be important for them to hold an empathetic and understanding stance to encourage more prosocial behavior in moments of anger. However, considering context, some parents may be less willing to tolerate anger expression in public settings or during parent-child conflict, especially when anger is intense or the child is being aggressive (Strayer & Roberts 2004a; Thompson, 1994). Parents may focus on helping children control or regulate their emotional expressiveness in ways that are situationally and culturally appropriate. Books that incorporate parental values of expressing acceptance of the child and understanding their anger, while also communicating that aggression is dangerous can serve as modeling for caregivers and as a tool to socialize children's emotional displays.

Helpers attempted to normalize anger in 23% of the sample, using statements such as, "It's normal to feel angry sometimes. Everyone does," (Szczecinski, 2020). Additionally, helpers expressed unconditional love towards the main character (19% of text sample) and self-disclosed about their own anger experiences (16% of text sample), which created a tone of warmth from helpers in the story. In *Today I am a Monster,* the mother expresses, "We love you when you make us proud, we love you when you rage, we soothe the monster with our love and return it to its cage" (Green, 2018). Some individuals may appraise anger as unsafe or harmful, while others may see it as serving an adaptive function (Averill, 1982). These beliefs may underlie how adults respond to anger experiences of children. Parental acceptance is related to positive social emotional development, while parental restriction and punishment leads to emotional suppression and poor peer relationships (Denham, 2007; Dodge et al. 2003). Broadly, having helpers who show unconditional positive regard foster positive social emotional development in children (Shechtman, 2009). For example, "Ms. Potts hugged her and explained, 'We all get upset sometimes, but we have to learn to control her emotions so that we don't hurt others" (Jones, 2022). While normalization and expressions of unconditional love were slightly less common than statements that conveyed that anger must be controlled, generally there was a tone of warmth when helpers provided these insights. The delivery of beliefs and values about anger is not only beneficial for students but also for parents as it models how they can approach moments of child anger with both control and warmth.

Narrators conveyed beliefs and values about anger at a slightly lower rate. Narrators stated that children must learn to control anger in 24% of the sample and that anger is dangerous in 17% of the sample. Statements that normalized anger occurred in 13% of the sample, while expressions of unconditional love and self-disclosure occurred in 7% and 4% of the sample,

respectively. Future research could explore if there is a significant impact of who delivers messages about anger in picture book stories. Messages communicated through helpers, such as the parent in the story, may create opportunities for discussion between parents and children during shared reading as they make connections to their own sentiments and experiences.

What Anger-Eliciting Situations are Presented?

Anger-eliciting situations were coded in the texts of 79 out of 80 stories. These situations were clearly illustrated in 76 out of 80 books. Given that it was common for books in the sample to include multiple anger-eliciting situations, they were the most frequently referenced code in the text sample. Additionally, our analysis captured the various contexts in which stories situated anger experiences. In books that illustrated clear anger-eliciting situations, 70% occurred at home, 36% occurred outside, 25% occurred specifically in the playground, 22% occurred in school, and 8% at the mall or store. It is important to note that many books often describe multiple anger-eliciting situations. This was often the case in stories where authors wanted to stress how nothing seemed to be going well for the main character, leading to an escalation of anger. Alternatively, some stories tended to list many anger-eliciting situations at once, leading the story to feel somewhat disjointed, though they still incorporated story elements such as relationships between characters. A small percentage of stories in the sample included vague anger-eliciting situations. These stories tended to include statements like, “When I feel angry…” to then explain how anger feels and is expressed.

There may be benefits and drawbacks to both stories that focus on a single anger-eliciting situation and those that focus on several situations. Reading stories that only focus on one anger-eliciting situation may be helpful for children that are having trouble understanding a particular context. Other children may benefit from stories that explain how anger can escalate when

multiple situations compound the problem and feelings of anger in order to gain insights to their angry experiences and those of others. Stories that provide many anger-eliciting situations, particularly in sequence, may also be helpful to read to children who have high trait anger or may be experiencing frequent and intense anger.

Not Getting What They Want. Of all stories that described anger-eliciting situations, *Not Getting What They Want* was the most commonly coded in the sample (73% of text). This situation reflected times when the main character was told "No" when they expressed what they wanted or when the main character had plans that did not turn out how they intended. Oftentimes, parents were the ones placing limits on what the main characters could do and what they could have. In some stories, *Not Getting What They Want* typically captured situations where the main character wanted a preferred activity or object, such as playing outside or a sweet treat. The parent would encourage the main character to engage in a less preferred activity by providing something desirable after they complete the first activity. In *My Way to Keep Anger Away*, the story starts, "One day she wanted to eat something sweet. Melissa didn't want her vegetables and meat. 'First healthy vegetables for your tummy, then your dessert,' said her mommy" (Cole, 2022). This strategy is established in the literature as the Premack principle which states that the opportunity to perform a more preferred behavior or activity reinforces an individual's engagement in a less preferred behavior or activity (Premack, 1961). A variety of studies among children have shown that the Premack principle is effective in reducing problem behaviors in the classroom and (Andrews, 1970; Becker, 1973).

Parental Limits. In other stories, limits were placed on the main characters with no further explanations or with other options as to what they could do; they were just told "No" when they expressed what they wanted. In the illustrations, it was common to see parents yelling,

frowning, and pointing their finger at the main character to depict the expression that they were not pleased with the main character's actions in the moment. This often occurred when the main characters' goals did not align with their parents' goals. Parental response has been shown to correlate with child anger throughout the literature. Some studies have found that parenting practices characterized by the assertion of power, high demands, and low warmth (i.e., authoritarian parenting) increases anger and frustration in children, especially when they do not receive encouragement to self-regulate (Snyder et al., 2012; Stayer & Roberts, 2004a). Alternatively, when parents help their child foster emotion regulation, understand the consequences of their unregulated actions, and problem-solve, children are less likely to display anger or aggression (Thompson, 1994).

In some stories where main characters are told no with no initial explanation, helpers eventually provided an explanation as to why the main characters were not allowed to do what they wanted, how to be patient, and how to accept when things don't go as expected. For example, when Llama Llama doesn't want to shop with Mama, he throws the groceries out of the shopping cart. Though initially frustrated, Mama Llama says, "I think shopping's boring too but at least I'm here with you. Let's see if we can make this fun and get the llama shopping done. Let's be a team at Shop-O-Rama--Llama Llama shops with mama!" (Dewdney, 2007). This form of scaffolded coping strategy was coded as *reappraisal.* Other helpers also provided alternative activities for the main character when they were limited in doing their preferred activity, showing flexible thinking, problem resolution, and compromise which are valuable skills for social-emotional development. These anger management strategies are further discussed below.

Overall, it may be important for picture books to depict the social information processes that occur within parent-child interactions. While a parent may have developed their own

interpretations and expectations about the conflict, it is important for them to perceive what is occurring for the child in order to best support them. Books that demonstrate how parents scaffold a child's social and emotional processing and regulation, even after experiencing their own negative emotions, may be beneficial for discussion among readers and a relevant topic for parent groups when discussing child anger due to limit-setting.

Catastrophic Thinking. The second subcategory of situations coded as Not Getting What They Want reflected situations in which the main character had plans that do not turn out how they wanted and was often a vague idea that "nothing" is going their way. This reflects catastrophic thinking that often was common among stories in which the main character is described to already be in a grumpy mood and subsequent events are perceived with a negative lens. For example, in The Very Frustrated Monster, the story begins with, "Have you ever had a day when nothing goes right, and you wonder "why me" from morning to night?" (Green, 2013). Here, a pre-existing mood influences the child's potential overreaction to relatively minor setbacks or annoyances.

Interpersonal Conflict with a Peer or Sibling. Of the stories that included anger-eliciting situations, *Interpersonal conflict with a peer or sibling* was the second most commonly coded (47% of texts). Conflict with a peer or sibling occurred in 29 more books than interpersonal conflict with an adult. A common theme among these codes involve the concept of sharing. Oftentimes, the main character was the one who did not want to share with their peers or siblings. Other times, peers or siblings were the ones who had something that the main character wanted. Toys and food were typically the items that caused conflict. For example, in *Today I Am Mad*, Josh wanted to play with his favorite toy at daycare, however, another boy, Tom, had it, which made Josh upset because he did not want to share with Tom (Gordon, 2019). Illustrations

often depict the main character trying to take a toy or food away from one of their peers. Other situations of interpersonal conflict involved sharing space. In *JP and the Polka-Dotted Aliens,* JP, the main character felt that his little sisters "invaded" his play space and that they were hindering him from enjoying himself (Crespo, 2015). Conflict with peers also encompassed themes involving turn taking, finding peers' actions to be annoying, and having differences in perspectives.

Other common anger-eliciting situations that occurred in at least 25% of the sample of texts were *uncontrollable situations, destroyed property,* and *given directions.* Please refer to Table B4 for the complete list of anger-eliciting situations. Uncontrollable situations prominently included instances of rain interfering with the main characters' plans and other unexpected occurrences in the classroom or home. Destroyed property included items such as toys or creations that were broken or ruined either by the main character themselves or by their peers or siblings. Lastly, main characters became angry when given directions such as, "Quiet down! It's time for bed!" or "Put your blocks down now, dinner is getting cold" (Silver, 2009; Yolen, 2013). This was typically because the instructions that were given infringed upon the main characters' goals, such as continuing to play with their toys. Interestingly, the vast majority of situations in which main characters were given directions occurred in the home and speaks to the utility of picture books to address the outcomes of this commonly occurring conflict between caregivers and their children.

How is Anger Manifested and Expressed in Stories?

Anger manifestations are defined as nonvolitional physiological or behavioral reactions to anger-eliciting situations. Some manifestations occur covertly (i.e., inside the body, somatic)

and others occur overtly (i.e., outside the body, visible to others). Initial, reactive behaviors will also be discussed in this section.

Covert Manifestations. Common covert manifestations, that is, those that occur physiologically, appeared somewhat more commonly in the texts than the illustrations of the sample (69% of texts and 54% of images). Out of the texts and illustrations that included covert manifestations, feeling *hot inside* was by far the most common (44 out of 55 texts; 39 out of 43 images), followed by *feeling out of control* (17 out of 55 texts; 3 out of 43 images), and *racing heart* (16 out of 55 texts; 5 out of 43 images).

Metaphors such as "boiling hot" and "growing steam" were often used to describe feeling *hot inside* (Estrada, 2018; Gordon, 2020). In other stories, similes were used to describe a hot face, such as in, *I Can Control My Anger*, the main character mentions, "...I get very hot, and my face turns red, like a tomato" (Geisler, 2019). Other similes provided a more intense picture of the feeling of anger inside. In *Feeling All My Anger* (Kim, 2022), the narrator states, "It's like a fire deep within, that spreads through inner roads. You feel so hot, you can't keep it in; watch out when it… EXPLODES!"

The connection between text and images in picture books becomes especially important for supporting awareness of the somatic aspects of emotions in young children. Images are critical aspects of picture books because they create vivid imagery of what anger feels like in the body, while also emphasizing its importance to the readers. Sipe (1998) uses the term "synergy" to refer to the working relationship between text and images in picture books. In some instances, text and images have a synergistic relationship in which both are needed to form a complete understanding of the story. Nikolajeva and Scott (2001) expand on this understanding by introducing five types of image-text interactions. Including the *complementary and enhanced*

text-image relationship. Complementary picture books have text-image relationships that fill in gaps of information that is presented in the other forms, while in enhanced relationships, the text or image elaborates on the information provided in the other form. The main character's face feeling hot was a common way of describing the sense of anger manifesting in the body. In fact, a hot face was also strikingly common in the illustrations. Whether the main character was a human or a creature, depictions of steam clouds and lightning bolts around the face, having red cheeks, along with other angry facial expressions were shown often in the sample. Other representations of being hot inside were more abstract such as volcano lava exploding out of the top of the head (Owen, 2021, p.10). The use of fire also appeared in the background illustrations and when the main character was a dragon, fire breath was used as a representation of releasing the anger "heat" that was building up inside (Gordon, 2018; Herman, 2018; Kim, 2022). In other abstract illustrations, the sense of being hot inside was represented using the color red, along with abstract lines and shapes around the main character (Bang, 2016; Geisler, 2019). Studies have shown that color is a powerful tool used in picture books to portray emotion (Papazian, 2021; Yannicopoulou, 2008). Dark intense colors such as red and black convey danger, conflict, and threat (Yannicopoulou, 2008). Emotion can be expressed with color and help tell a powerful story about how it impacts the world around us. Here, the enhancing use of images serve to help children identify anger in their bodies, especially as they typically precede reactive behaviors in stories.

Another theme that emerged in this sample of books was the sense of *feeling out of control.* Some characters demonstrated that they were attempting to regulate their emotions or actions, or on a more surface level, wanting to feel or do something other than what they were experiencing in their moment of anger arousal. In line with our definition of *feeling out of*

control, some main characters acknowledged that they could not control their body, actions, or feelings. In *Angry Octopus*, the narrator states, "He didn't feel like he was the boss of his own body or feelings, and now he couldn't see through the dark and clouds surrounding him" (Lite, 2008). Here, dark clouds represent the angry feelings that don't let him see clearly, or in other words, think clearly. In the literature we find that anger arousal is associated with narrowed cognitive resources when making decisions, often leading to reactive and aggressive goal-oriented behavior (Gable et al., 2015; Helmsen et al., 2012). Similarly, in *Ayo the Angry Lion,* the main character, Ayo shares, "I kept shouting and being mean to my friends. I can't help it, but I did it again, and again" (Walsh, 2023). Here, he is aware that his actions are aggressive, yet he cannot control himself due to his overwhelming emotions.

Overt Manifestations. Nonvolitional outward expressions of anger, overt manifestations, were found to be depicted in the illustrations of all books in the sample. In fact, it was the highest referenced code in the image sample. However, they were only coded in 68% of the book texts. Tight muscles encompassed having clenched fists, a clenched jaw, and stiff shoulders. Tight muscles were common overt anger manifestations in the text and illustrations, although it was coded almost twice as much in the illustrations. Out of all of the books that were coded to display tight muscles in the illustrations, clenched fists appeared in 92% of them, indicating that it is a common angry reaction for children ages 3-5. Notwithstanding, only about 13% of the stories highlighted muscle relaxation as a strategy to calm the tension in the body. While this technique can help individuals become more attuned to the tense response to anger in the body, it may not be a popular strategy for addressing anger in young children.

Having an *angry face* was by far the most common overt manifestation displayed by the main character in the sample of illustrations (100%), while it only was coded in 13% of the

sample of texts. In the codebook, an angry face consists of having a furrowed brow, narrowed eyes, and a frown. Furrowed brows describe when the eyebrows are brought together creating wrinkles in between the eyebrows. Similarly, anger arousal may also cause the eyes to narrow, either subtly or in a pronounced manner (Song et al., 2021; Zohuri & Dalili, 2023). Even when not directly described in the texts of the stories, facial expressions play an important role in conveying anger and recognizing anger from others, making them an essential part of the representation of anger in picture books. While frowning has universally been associated with sadness, it is not only portrayed in the illustrations, but also in the texts. Similarly, a *pout* was defined as pushing the bottom lip forward, scrunching the eyebrows together, and slightly elevating them. While pouting was not commonly described in the text, it was depicted in over half of the book illustrations. *Crying* was the second most commonly coded overt anger manifestation, mentioned in half of the texts that included overt anger manifestations. Research shows that preschool aged children are likely to confuse expressions of negative emotions (Székely et al., 2011). While portrayals of sadness were less explicit in the texts than images of books, images of characters frowning, pouting, or crying may open an opportunity for caregivers to explore co-occurring feelings of anger and sadness during shared reading.

Consistent with findings in the literature, children can experience anger and sadness in the same situation (Dennis et al., 2009; Tan & Smith, 2018). Anger and sadness serve distinct functions in that some studies have found that in comparison to anger, sadness was less associated with problem-solving behaviors during frustration tasks among preschoolers (Dennis et al. 2009). Similarly, another study suggested that young children describe overlapping situations that cause anger and sadness, though situations that provoke anger were described as having more possible solutions to change the undesirable situation or achieve their goals (Levine,

1995). For example, in *With Jesus I am Calm,* it was raining during recess, meaning that Olivia couldn't go outside to play and, "She is so angry and upset that she sits in a corner with a frown on her face" (Charles, 2022). Sadness could be important to consider when discussing emotions with children and choosing emotion regulation strategies. As anger is likely to promote more persistence in goal attainment than sadness (Tan & Smith, 2018), situations that elicit both emotions may require a distinct approach from caregivers, such as a focus on helping the child reappraise the situation.

Initial Reactions. In the codebook, initial reactions by the main character are defined as reactive behaviors in response to anger-eliciting situations that occur before help is provided. Initial reactions were coded similarly across texts and illustrations, 76 and 75 picture books out of the sample of 80 books, respectively. In the text sample, *yelling*, *verbal aggression*, and *object destruction* were the most commonly described initial anger reactions. In the illustrations of books, *yelling, object destruction, and tantruming* were among the most common reactive behaviors. The object destruction code included throwing, kicking, hitting, breaking, and ripping objects. The verbal aggression code was defined by saying negative or unkind words to another individual, yelling directly at others, and blaming others.

Anger often, but not always, leads to aggressive behavior in young children. As mentioned previously, while constructs of anger and aggression overlap, the distinction between the arousal of anger and the subsequent behaviors through which anger is expressed is often not made clear. Aggressive behavior and tantruming are common during preschool and early childhood, though with age, children become skilled with implementing adaptive ways to manage anger and resolve tensions (Lochman et al., 2010). However, research shows children with high trait anger experience challenges with developing emotional understanding and

cognitive flexibility to promote the control of reactive aggression (Ford et al., 2010). For example, errors in emotion understanding, especially in interpersonal contexts of anger, often lead to aggression and peer rejection (Denham, 2007; Schultz et al., 2004). Therefore, children with higher trait anger may experience prominent difficulties with anger management and be at increased risk for clinical levels of emotion dysregulation later in life (Schultz & Izard, 2010). Here, we see how authors portray interpersonal components at various stages of anger stories, where interpersonal anger-elicitors may often lead to aggressive reactions towards others. The stories in this sample share the idea that reactive aggression and other destructive behaviors are difficult to inhibit when anger arousal is heightened. However, there is a lack of focus on how one's thoughts can escalate anger feelings during an interaction. This gap will be discussed below.

What Anger Management Strategies are Presented to Children in Children's Picture Books?

About 74% of the books sampled included a helper character who provided strategies to support the main character in managing their anger. In the stories in which main characters received strategies from a helper, 53% of the helpers were parents, 41% were peers, 15% were teachers, 15% were dream or fantasy creatures. Main characters created their own strategies without prompting in 83% of the sample. It is important to note that in some picture books, anger management strategies were provided by more than one helper, sometimes including the main character themselves.

Helper suggested coping strategies were given in 87% of the stories (70 texts), though our findings show that they were portrayed slightly less frequently in the illustrations. Three

overarching coping strategy domains emerged in the sample: *addressing arousal in the body, response delay, and cognitive coping strategies.*

Addressing Arousal in the Body. As expected, strategies to address arousal in the body were offered most commonly (55 out of 70 texts) as it incorporates self-calming behaviors to regulate feelings of anger in the body. These strategies appeared in just under 80% of the text and illustrations of stories that offered coping strategies. Specifically, these strategies included *deep breathing* (52% of texts, 38% of illustrations), *physical touch* (22% of texts, 24% of illustrations), *safely releasing anger* (13% of texts, 11% of illustrations), and *physical activity* (13% of texts, 11% of illustrations).

Physical touch refers to touching or sensing a part of the body or a different object to provide sensory stimulation such as clasping one's hands behind one's back, hugging oneself, squeezing an object tightly, or pushing up and down on the seat while on a chair. External sensory input (i.e., when sensory organs communicate with the external world, in the context of the sample, this was largely tactile), and somatic senses (i.e., awareness of deep touch on the skin) both provide information about safety in the environment and internally (Sutton et al., 2013).

Similarly, safely releasing anger was coded when the main character released tension in the body by hitting, punching, or kicking an object, yelled, or stomped in a safe and controlled manner. Sometimes a symbolic action was introduced in which the main character could intentionally let go of their anger. For example, in *Ahn's Anger*, "They got down on their knees and pounded the ground with their hands. It sounded like they were playing drums on the Earth and Ahn liked that" (Silver, 2009). In other stories, helpers suggested main characters pretend

that anger was a ball and throw it, as well as punching a pillow to release anger (Gordon, 2020; Reul, 2020; Schiller & Kurtzman-Counter, 2013).

Consistent with the literature, relaxation-based activities, such as deep breathing and physical touch, are effective strategies to reduce anger arousal in the body (Candelaria et al., 2012; Kjærvik & Bushman, 2024). In contrast, there is a growing popularity of arousal-increasing strategies (e.g., physical activity, hitting a pillow, breaking objects in a rage rooms) among adult populations and the media. *Physical activity* in the sample encompassed any intentional exercise of the body, and included jumping around, dancing, shaking body parts, and taking a walk. It is important to note that studies show mixed findings about the effectiveness of physical activity, such as ball sports and aerobic exercise, on decreasing aggression among children; some showing reductions of aggression (Fite & Vitulano, 2011; Tkacz et al., 2008), while others no significant difference (Reynes & Lorant, 2002; Wade et al., 2018).

Additionally, a meta-analytic study conducted to explore the effects of arousal-increasing strategies among adults suggest that strategies to "let go of steam" are generally ineffective for anger management (Kjærvik & Bushman, 2024). With limited evidence that suggests that releasing anger in this manner may cause short-term relief, the literature sheds light to its potentially maladaptive nature (Olatunji et al., 2007; Zdilar, 2023). Studies demonstrate how venting anger could add fire to the flame and increase aggressive responding among adults (Bushman, 2002). Considering these mixed findings, while physiological arousal is a central component of anger experiences for children, proposed strategies to safely release anger in the sample should be taken cautiously as it may not be helpful for all. Alternatively, by promoting a grounding effect in the individual who is in a state of anger arousal, strategies to calm the body could precede other cognitive coping strategies. Studies show it facilitates the use of other

adaptive interpersonal or cognitive strategies to process anger (Deffenbacher et al., 2002; Golden, 2003; Sutton et al., 2013).

Response Delay. Based on both dialectical behavior therapy (DBT; Linehan, 2014), *response delay* encourages the individual to focus on awareness to the present moment, by taking their attention away from the anger-elicitor and shifting to a different activity or task in efforts to diffuse aggressive behaviors. Strategies that focus on shifting and controlling attention incorporated into mindfulness-based interventions (e.g., MBCT; Baer, 2014; Kabat-Zinn, 2003) may work to reduce the anger and thereby to increase the child's capacity to regulate the response. Response delay strategies were found in 79% of stories that included helper suggested coping strategies (55 out of 70 texts). This category classified items such as *counting* (47% of all response delay strategies), *shifting thoughts* (31%), *shifting activities* (27%), and *taking a break* (27%).

Examples of delay strategies included prompting the main characters to think of something that made them happy, such as thinking of a happy memory or envisioning themselves in a happy place (e.g. in *Roaring Mad Riley)* and being given a suggestion by the teacher, "When you feel this way, you can think about something that makes you happy. I'm thinking of planting roses in my garden" (Szczecinski, 2020). Other delay strategies included taking a break, such as by walking away from the situation or person that elicited anger to take time to calm down or shifting activities in scenarios where limits were placed, or the initial goal was not possible. Oftentimes, helpers listed developmentally appropriate activities that the main character could focus on included drawing, journaling, listening to music, or playing a game.

Other delay strategies that occurred less frequently, *pray* (5% of all response delay strategies), *and mindfulness* (4%) emphasize a spiritual approach to de-escalation of the anger by

centering the focus outside one's anger and thereby gain perspective before responding in the stories. All books in which prayer was coded referenced the triune God and Christian values. Prayer is defined as entering and maintaining conversation with the triune God. Entering prayer shifts attention away from the anger-elicitor and reminds Christians of the nature of Christ's redemption and love which leads to emotion regulation and a reappraisal of reality that is later expressed through action (Tan, 2007). The function of prayer in three stories focuses on seeking God's help with emotion regulation before re-engaging with others. Additionally, one of these stories briefly mentions seeking Jesus for forgiveness and being open to acknowledge one's own mistakes. Jax's father shares, "When I am angry, I need God to help me. I need Jesus to forgive me and show me where I am wrong too. The Great Book says that God is always there to help in times of trouble. Let's ask God to help us now," (Powlison, 2018). While an intricate topic of discussion, a small portion of picture books in the sample show how Christian families can model prayer in times of anger arousal to delay an aggressive reaction and facilitate conflict resolution.

According to Kabat-Zinn (1994), mindfulness is the act of paying attention in a particular way: on purpose, in the moment, and nonjudgmentally. Mindfulness-based interventions emerged from four establishments of mindfulness in Buddhist practice that cultivates a non-reactive awareness that counters angry reactions (Anālayo, 2018). As studied, mindfulness leads to a reappraisal of reality, promotes the ability to shift attention, and greater awareness of one's emotions (Kabat-Zinn, 1994). Two stories incorporated forms of mindfulness. In one story, the main character is encouraged to, "Stop and tell me three things you see, and one thing you hear, taste, touch, and smell," (Wade, 2020). Though mindfulness is more accepted and discussed within the psychological literature, it may be necessary to consider the spiritual roots behind

prayer and mindfulness when recommending picture books to families, who hold culturally diverse views of spiritual practices and their relation to social-emotional experiences.

Overall, de-escalation strategies (i.e., moving away from an anger-eliciting situation, shifting attention to other stimuli, distraction) and mindfulness (i.e., being present in the moment) are main components of DBT and mindfulness-based interventions (Baer, 2014; Linehan, 2014). Taking a pause after anger arousal preempts automatic reactions that often have negative outcomes. These strategies have been found to be effective in reducing anger and have been widely used across child populations (Ciesinski et al., 2022) and are often noted qualitatively by children in studies that explore child perspectives of anger experiences (Oolup et al., 2016).

Cognitive Coping Strategies. In the context of anger management, cognitive coping strategies were rooted in cognitive behavior therapy (CBT) techniques to restructure thinking patterns related to the anger-eliciting situation. These strategies were described in about 51% of stories that included helper-suggested strategies. A variety of different cognitive coping strategies were found in the sample, including *reappraisal* (78% of all cognitive coping strategies in text), *choosing a substitute goal* (25%), *recognizing the angry feeling* (22%).

Reappraisal occurred when the main character was encouraged to think about or to assess the anger-eliciting situation again from a more adaptive perspective. Distinct from proposed strategies to shift thoughts, helpers who facilitated reappraisal suggested that they think of something different instead of focusing on the anger-elicitor. In *Princess Addison Gets Angry*, it states, “A princess knows there’s always tomorrow. And tomorrow, it might not rain, (Martin, 2013). In this particular story, Princess Addison became frustrated when not able to go outside to walk her dog like she usually does due to the rain. After validating the frustration of her blocked

goals and addressing her initial distress, reappraising the situation allowed her to shift her perspective from catastrophizing to more flexible thinking.

Disruptions and distortions in information processing require cognitive strategies such as those proposed within established cognitive behavioral therapies (Beidel & Turner, 1986). Cognitive restructuring is a crucial component of CBT and involves recognizing negatively distorted thought patterns or beliefs associated with the anger-eliciting situation (Sukhodolsky et al., 2004). Helping children challenge and reframe distorted thoughts allows them to regulate the arousal in their bodies, and once calm, opens the opportunity to access more behavioral response options.

Although far less common, recognizing the angry feeling and choosing a substitute goal are also prominent elements of CBT. Many CBT-based programs teach children how to identify anger in their bodies and actions in order to increase self-awareness, address distorted thinking patterns, regulate emotions, and ultimately choose how to respond (Kalvin et al., 2024; Sukhodolsky et al., 2004). Bibliotherapy practices for anger and aggression also encourage self-awareness before attempting to modify behavior (Shechtman, 2009). Similarly, some books in the sample emphasize the importance of paying attention to the signs of anger arousal in order to think about how to act next. One helper explains, “Now, after you recognize the anger, you need to quickly move away from the things that cause it. Better to go to a place where you feel calm.” (Kushnir & Kushnir, 2022). Here, the helper promotes the use of other response delay and self-calming strategies after becoming aware of anger. Incorporating details about anger management promotes discussion of the process of change during shared reading with children.

Cognitive coping strategies were less commonly provided from helpers in the sample. Books that incorporated cognitive coping strategies by a helper provided a reappraisal about the

situation which facilitated the use of other self-calming strategies and decision-making. Picture books that incorporate cognitive components along with other strategies to address arousal provide more insight about the process of anger management from a social cognitive perspective. Books that provide relaxation techniques alone may not be as beneficial for young children in comparison to those that model the cognitive change process underlying anger management and may speak to why effective bibliotherapies that address anger and aggression incorporate similar aspects to that of the CBT model (Montgomery & Maunders, 2015).

Main Character-Presented Strategies. It is interesting to note that in 66 books of the sample, the main character also created their own coping strategies. Deep breathing, recognizing the angry feeling, and reappraisal were among the most practiced novel strategies that main characters came up with (i.e., without the suggestion of a helper). In a different portion of books (39% of texts), the main characters used strategies initially introduced by helpers in subsequent anger-eliciting situations. For example, this was noted in *Today I am Mad,* when the main character, Josh, remembered the anger management strategies that his mother had taught him earlier in the story. Josh says, "He breathed deeply in and out like Mama said he should. He counted slowly 1 to 10 and started to feel good" (Gordon, 2019).

While many of these stories also depicted other strategies suggested by helpers, it is an interesting concept that the main character also played an active role in identifying strategies to address their own anger. As such, children learn to take agency in different ways (i.e., using their own strategies and adopting those suggested to them) to address the anger-eliciting situation. For children readers who relate to the angry main character, this may serve as a model for self-efficacy concerning emotion regulation and behavior change.

What Components of the SIP Model are Included in Children's Picture Books?

According to the social information processing model, children process information from their social interactions by encoding cues, interpreting cues, identifying goals, accessing, and constructing a response, deciding on the response, and enacting the response (Crick & Dodge, 1994). Researchers have established how this process is influenced by factors such as schemas, emotional cues, and other individual traits. Particularly, Lemerise and Arsenio (2000) posited that internal cues about one's emotions, along with noticing cues of others, influence enactment of behavior throughout an interpersonal interaction. Specifically, mood, emotions, and the level of arousal can influence encoding and interpretation of information by affecting what individuals notice and what mood-related schemas they recollect. From the literature, we know that if a person is in a bad mood, they are more likely to have anger arousal and act aggressively (Anderson & Bushman, 2002). A pre-existing grumpy mood can play a role in a child's overreaction to a relatively minor situation. A few books that explore the interplay between the internal context (i.e., grumpy mood, schemas, and interpretation) and the external context (i.e., situational anger-elicitors) and its effects on the main character's immediate emotional experience such as the intensity of anger arousal and behavioral response. As presented previously, some books follow a story where "nothing" is going right for the main characters. Understanding how mood can influence interpretations of subsequent events can help parents tailor strategies to best support children with these experiences.

Additionally, research among aggressive children show that they seek and receive less social information and are more likely to interpret ambiguous stimuli as threatening (Dodge, 2006). When determining how to respond, aggressive children are able to access fewer response options and often select aggressive behaviors (Dodge & Pettit, 2003). Components of the SIP

model were most evident in picture book stories that involved descriptions of interpersonal conflict which introduced the need for the main character to analyze consequences of their actions, reconsider the intentions of others, and repair relationships. As mentioned previously, interpersonal conflict with peers or siblings involved concepts of sharing, taking turns, finding peers' actions to be annoying, and having differences in perspectives.

Interpreting Cues

Once the anger-elicitor is identified, a critical factor that precedes the initial response is the interpretation of cues. Within interpersonal contexts, individuals evaluate the actions of others based how they interpret the intention underlying it. Intent attribution has been widely studied in relation to anger and aggression as a form of interpreting social emotional information (Helmsen et al., 2012; Schultz et al., 2010). While 37 stories included peer or sibling interpersonal conflict, only nine books addressed the main character's intent attribution. In six stories, authors included statements that made it clear that the main character attributed hostile intent to others' actions. In *The Pout Pout Fish and the Mad Mad Day,* the main character reflects, "But they didn't seem to care. He thought they were ignoring him!" (Diesen, 2021). Similarly, in *When Miles Got Mad,* the main character blames his little brother for breaking his favorite toy and says, "You always break everything!" (Shiller & Kurtzman-Counter, 2013). In these examples, readers are able to note that the main character perceived others' intentions to be on purpose.

However, in other examples, authors provided more context about how main characters encoded the social information in an anger-eliciting situation. In total, there were five stories in which it was made clear that the peer or sibling did not purposefully cause a conflict with the main character. However, these apologies typically occurred after the main character had already

reacted to the initial provocation. Out of these five stories, only one describes a situation where the main character takes in the apology and shifts their appraisal of the situation on their own (Carr, 2016). The rest, four of these five stories, describe how the main character remains angry even after learning the situation was an accident or receiving an apology. In *Angry Me* by Feder (2022), the main character shares, "Sometimes I get angry even though it was a mistake." In another story, Roaring Mad Riley is still upset after her peer states that he knocked over her block castle by accident (Szczecinski, 2020). As mentioned previously, children may have a high level of arousal, hostile attribution of intent, and aggressive schemas that influence the way they process social information, which may impede them from choosing a prosocial response (Dodge, 2006; Horsely et al., 2010). These themes underlie the progression of this subsample of stories as main characters have difficulties with emotion regulation even after receiving alternative information from others. As themes of intention attribution were only portrayed in a very small portion of the sample, caregivers who seek to use picture books as tools to teach emotion understanding and anger management from a social information processing perspective may require additional support and resources to facilitate discussion with young children. Typically, language that describes the internal process of appraisal and decision-making will need to be made accessible for young children who are developing social and emotional awareness, leading to implications for future children's picture book authors and other professionals.

Consequences of Reactive Behavior

Findings from this study also display how the social information processing cycle continues after initial response enactment from the main character. 24% of the entire sample of texts described consequences as a result of reactive or aggressive behavior from the main character. More than half of these items included negative consequences that typically required

adult involvement. Examples included main characters being called into the principal's office, being sent to their room, being reprimanded by a teacher, and losing access to preferred activities and toys. The remaining items that described consequences of angry reactions were more interpersonal in nature. For instance, in some stories, the main character realized that their friends did not want to be around them or play with them after they reacted angrily.

Given literature about the correlation between aggression and peer rejection in children (Yue & Zhang, 2023), it is important that subsequent negative peer feedback is included in picture books depicting anger-eliciting interpersonal conflict that potentially leads to aggressive behavior. Peer rejection is not only a consequence but may also predict aggression in children. Typically, aggressive behaviors among children decrease across age as they develop theory of mind, intention-cue detection, social problem solving, and other social-emotional skills (Dodge et al., 2003). Seven out of the thirty-seven stories that involved components of interpersonal conflict with peers or siblings also described interpersonal consequences of their actions. Following the social information processing model, the literature provides evidence that peer rejection leads to antisocial outcomes (Yue & Zhang, 2023), children's picture books have the opportunity to socialize adaptive thinking patterns and schemas of conflict resolution.

Relational Restitution

When a main character's initial response to an interpersonal conflict is maladaptive, they are often given the opportunity to make amends with loved ones and to generally make things "right". Various forms of relational restitution were portrayed in 45% of the text in the overall sample. Restitution was also depicted with scenes of forgiveness, hugs, and playing together again in the illustrations of 51% of the sample. Forgiveness, a complex concept, carries a restorative ability intrapersonally and interpersonally, as the forgiveness process may involve

reconciliation with others (Lichenfield et al., 2019; Thompson & Snyder, 2003). Forgiveness education interventions incorporate skill building in emotion regulation, working through interpersonal conflict, and healing from hurt. These interventions have found statistically significant positive changes in anger and forgiveness outcomes (Esra, 2019; Rapp et al., 2022). It is important to note that the most participants sampled in these meta-analyses experienced mild severity of offense (more easily forgivable).

Exploring the stories in the current sample further, we found that situations in which the peer wronged the main character all occurred by accident and they offered an apology after the main character had calmed down and was ready to receive it. However, in the majority of the stories with relational restitution (30 out of 37 texts), the main character realized that their reaction hurt those around them and is the one to ask for forgiveness, which opens space for peers to offer additional feedback to the main character. For example, after Ayo, the angry lion, apologizes to his friends for yelling at them during a game, his friends say, “We love you, it's ok and sometimes we know, you don't mean it, but it hurts us though. When you shout and you roar, we both get scared and we don't want to play” (Walsh, 2023).

Emotional socialization among peers begins during interpersonal exchanges, including instances where an apology is offered. Not only do readers learn to apologize for their angry actions and thereby to take responsibility to restore the temporary disruption in the relationship, they also may learn how their actions affect others’ emotions. However, feedback from peers was not common in the children’s books sampled in the current study, leaving a gap for caregivers to fill when reading to children. For example, *Calm Down and Work Through Anger* by Meiners (2010) provides ideas of how to resolve conflict. Once the main character calmed down, they state, “I can show respect as I tell how I feel and what I want. I can also listen and try

to understand the other person's view…I can find a way to get along" (Meiners, 2010). Given that providing language for emotion understanding and attaching value to interpersonal communication are beneficial for children's social-emotional development (Kårstad et al., 2015), children's picture book authors may consider expanding on the nature of interpersonal restitution in addition to other forms of restitution such hugging and playing together again, which give the stories a happy ending.

Limitations

One potential limitation of this study is that oftentimes stories included multiple anger eliciting situations and described them with varying amounts of detail. The codes in the codebook also reflect different levels of depth or specificity when it came to the type of situation that occurred. This could make it difficult to create codes that do not overlap. This led to many discussions about which code captured the situation the best and sometimes it could fit under two codes. For example, a situation in which a peer destroys the main character's toy directly fits under *destroyed property*, however it could also be seen as *an interpersonal conflict with the peer*. To address this limitation throughout the coding process, the team collectively made decisions to edit code definitions and merge codes that overlapped. However, in the case of *destroyed property* in the peer context, the team decided to code the segment as both the specific and overarching code. These stories very commonly included other elements that were coded as *interpersonal conflict with a peer or sibling*, and therefore were included in both frequency counts. Future studies should carefully consider a specific and consistent level of specificity of codes in their codebook before the start of inductive coding to clarify coding processes.

Another limitation related to the methods used to identify the race of characters in the sample. Race of human main characters were coded based on how they presented in the

illustrations of the book. Coders report using color of skin and facial features to make decisions of race, however there was some reluctance to coding race when it was ambiguous. This may have led to some bias and inaccurate labeling, especially among characters of color. Future studies should determine methods to avoid stereotyping when coding for race such as by conducting searches for book listings under categories that highlight African American, Asian American, and Latino characters.

A large majority of the picture books were written by a White author or published by a U.S publisher. While the goal was to study books written in English, we know that the U.S is a racially, ethnically, and culturally diverse country. Studies that analyzed contemporary picture books found that the majority of books featured White characters (Koss, 2015). In fact, most recent evaluations by the Cooperative Children's Book Center (CCBC)'s diversity statistics show that there has been no significant change in the representation of minoritized racial and cultural group members in books in the past 50 years (CCBC, 2022). Racial cultural, and socioeconomic diversity in picture books can enhance how children relate to the character and story context as children make connections to characters based on various characteristics (Ingram & Cahill, 2022). The coding team reflected how many of the stories in the sample incorporated settings, anger-eliciting situations, and interpersonal relations that may not generalize to minority cultures, parent-child relationships and other family dynamics and values. The current sample contained 12 books written by the same author, who is White. Out of these books, only two had a main character of color. Furthermore, as books are a tool for caregivers and children to connect and discuss experiences of anger, future directions should explore how imagery and related details can strengthen the benefits of shared reading experiences.

More work can be done to examine the values and beliefs about anger that are embedded into stories, often presented through adult characters (i.e., parents or teachers). For example, beliefs that anger is dangerous and must be controlled may differ across cultures or may be communicated in distinct ways. For example, research found that Asian American and Latino parents reported being more likely to encourage anger suppression and discourage emotional displays in preschoolers as they are harmful for the unity of their collectivistic cultures (Grady et al., 2019). Parental control and level of warmth when responding to a child's anger experience may also differ across culture and context. Therefore, sampling picture books published by culturally diverse authors, perhaps outside of the U.S, may yield distinct findings about how anger and anger management is portrayed in children's picture books.

Lastly, the notion of regret and shame were not captured in the codebook. There were instances where the main character regretted their aggressive reactions after a helper reappraised the situation or after they themselves took time to reflect on what happened. This was common in contexts of interpersonal conflicts where the main character hurts others. "Ayo thought about his anger inside and realized it came from fear and pride" (Walsh, 2023). A similar concept was captured under reappraisal. Characters reflected on what they did wrong and what they could have done differently. "But sometimes when I feel angry, it means something needs to be different. Maybe it's me" (Spelman, 2000). As we know complex emotions such as regret and shame can underlie sadness and anger (Izard, 2007), future studies can explore how these co-occurring emotions are presented and to what extent they are explained within picture books that focus on anger and anger management.

Conclusion

Overall, the findings suggest picture-books available online and in public libraries are useful tools to engage young children in comprehensive conversations about anger experiences (e.g., internal, and external context) and anger management. There are details embedded throughout stories that are critical to maximize its usefulness and facilitate children's understanding of their own and others' emotions and to engage in a more prosocial manner. Furthermore, stories in the current sample reflect previous research showing that emotion dysregulation and SIP biases are related to aggressive responses from children (Helmsen et al., 2012). Adopting a SIP approach during shared reading with stories that incorporate interpersonal conflicts (more than half of the sample) can help young children recognize how their interpretation of perceived conflict influences their plans to achieve goals and ability to problem-solve.

Previous research suggests that sharent reading between caregivers and children prompts social emotional development especially when they use terms that refer to mental states such as cognitive terms, desires, perceptions (Adrian et al., 2005; Aram et al., 2013). There are some aspects of information processing that are not described adequately in the sample. Few books portray the process of hostile attribution of intent when interpreting social cues, how cognition influences escalation of anger, and low frustration tolerance due to pre-existing mood. Caregivers may need to engage children in discussions regarding how internal and external factors influence each other in order to bridge the gap between the portrayal of social information processing themes in stories and how they relate to the child's social world.

For example, a character's internal context was described in the stories, though the focus was more on the immediate feelings than thoughts or pervasive mood. While a grumpy mood

was not commonly portrayed in the sample, pre-existing or pervasive moods are found to influence how individuals interpret situations. Caregivers may need additional resources to understand the interplay between the character's internal context (e.g., pre-existing mood, temperament), cognition (e.g., schemas, interpretations), emotions (e.g., intensity, physiological arousal), and behavior. This foundation allows caregivers to explain how behavior change, potentially to repair the consequences of initial behaviors, is possible through cognitive coping strategies such as reappraisal and other strategies to address emotional arousal.

Vivid descriptions and imagery of how anger intensifies and grows within an individual was commonly portrayed in the sample. Overt anger manifestations were more common in the illustrations than in the text of books, perhaps because it is easier to portray anger expressions via images than through descriptions. Illustrations provide clarity and a better understanding for readers about the situations, manifestations, and coping strategies presented in the text. They can also be used by adults to promote emotion recognition in facial features and body language, as often done within interventions using picture books for social emotional learning (Harper et al., 2016). This depiction may lead children to view anger as dangerous if not controlled, however, it may be important to show how anger escalates as thoughts escalate or as they narrow around an individual's immediate goals. Covert anger manifestations are important when considering cultural values that encourage anger suppression. In some cases, children may not be able to express anger overtly and may benefit from the normalization of such feelings and related coping strategies. Using metaphors creates a sense of growing intensity and danger of anger as storms and other natural disasters typically develop in magnitude over time. Some stories provide opportunities to provide insight that less intense feelings of anger may get bigger unless managed.

Generally, picture books convey the message that anger can be dangerous to oneself and others if unregulated, therefore one must learn to control their anger expression. It is also made clear that anger is normal, and children have the potential to express it in a constructive manner. Using picture books as a modality to socialize anger expression allows readers to learn from supportive helpers and understand that emotion understanding, and regulation leads to positive outcomes.

Beliefs and values about anger were expressed and implied in the picture book sample. Literature suggests that a child's recognition of anger along with acceptance and understanding from helpers are essential at early stages of change when engaging in bibliotherapy (Shechtman, 2009). Acknowledging and affirming children's emotional experiences often precede providing cognitive processes for a change in perspective and action. This may explain why there is a focus on incorporating statements that express understanding and acceptance in almost half of the sample, as it serves as a basis needed to help children with information processing. Stories with helpers who provide reappraisal strategies often begin by normalizing the child's anger experience before providing ideas to challenge thinking patterns and elicit more realistic thinking. In books in which the main character was more self-directed (i.e., they introduced their own strategies) it is implied that the child has ownership over their anger and the responsibility to control it.

More books in the sample offered techniques to address arousal and delay response than cognitive coping strategies for younger children. This may reflect the idea that emotion understanding, and awareness is a building block before targeting distorted thinking patterns and problem-solving. Picture books that incorporate cognitive coping strategies may address common cognitive distortions among young children, although the current study showed that

they were not as frequently portrayed in the illustrations than in the text. This is consistent with previous literature showing a sample of picture books failed to portray mental state information in its illustrations (Dyer et al., 2000). In the sample, catastrophizing, such as fixating on the worst negative outcomes of situations, was often addressed by reappraisal strategies. Hostile attribution bias within interpersonal situations was also addressed by reappraisal and other problem-solving strategies that are presented in CBT (Sukhodolsky et al., 2004). The picture books in this sample offer a range of evidence-based strategies to address anger in young children.

Due to the various anger-elicitors portrayed in picture books, there are implications for selection of books with characters most relatable to an individual child. Caregivers may consider what situations most affect their child or if they display high levels of trait anger which influence how they perceive and react. Caregivers could also consider what strategies are most relevant for their child and within what contexts. Some children may have difficulties with sharing toys and materials and may benefit from reappraisal and problem-solving strategies presented in certain stories. Concepts of inhibitory control and patience were not prominently discussed in the sample, leaving gaps for caregivers to fill as they discuss stories with children. Lastly, while most picture books provide scaffolding for social-emotional learning and anger management, some books also model children's ability to self-regulate and problem solve, which are important factors when considering beliefs and values regarding emotion socialization.

References

Abe, J. A. A., & Izard, C. E. (1999). *The Developmental Functions of Emotions: An Analysis in Terms of Differential Emotions Theory*.

Adrian, J. E., Clemente, R. A., Villanueva, L., & Rieffe, C. (2005). Parent–child picture-book reading, mothers' mental state language and children's theory of mind. *Journal of child language*, 32(3), 67

Allport, G. W. (1961). *Pattern and growth in personality*. Holt, Rinehart, and Winston.

Altman, D. G. (1991), *Practical Statistics for Medical Research*, London: Chapman & Hall.

Anālayo, B. (2018). The potential of facing anger with mindfulness. *Mindfulness*, 9(6), 1966-1972.

Anderson, C. A., & Bushman, B. J. (2002). Human Aggression. *Annual Review of Psychology*, *53*(1), 27–51. https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.psych.53.100901.135231

Anderson, D. A., & Hamilton, M. (2005). Gender Role Stereotyping of Parents in Children's Picture Books: The Invisible Father. *Sex Roles*, *52*(3–4), 145–151. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11199-005-1290-8

Andrews, H. B. (1970). The systematic use of the Premack Principle in modifying classroom behaviors. *Child Study Journal*, 1(2), 74–79.

Aram, D., Fine, Y., & Ziv, M. (2013). Enhancing parent–child shared book reading interactions: Promoting references to the book's plot and socio-cognitive themes. *Early childhood research quarterly*, 28(1), 111-122.

Arsenio, W. F., Cooperman, S., & Lover, A. (2000). Affective predictors of preschoolers' aggression and peer acceptance: Direct and indirect effects. *Developmental Psychology*, *36*(4), 438–448. https://doi.org/10.1037/0012-1649.36.4.438

Averill, J. R. (1982). *Anger and aggression: An essay on emotion*. Springer Science & Business Media.

Baer, R. A. (2014). *Mindfulness-based treatment approaches : Clinician's guide to evidence base and applications* (2nd ed). Academic Press.

Bang, M. (2016). *When Sophie gets angry-really, really angry...* Scholastic Inc.

Bao, T., & Chang, T. S. (2014). Why Amazon uses both the New York Times Best Seller List and customer reviews: An empirical study of multiplier effects on product sales from multiple earned media. *Decision Support Systems*, *67*, 1–8. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.dss.2014.07.004

Bates, J. E., Goodnight, J. A., & Fite, J. E. (2008). Temperament and Emotion. In *Handbook of emotions* (Vol. 3, pp. 485–496).

Beazidou, E., Botsoglou, K., & Vlachou, M. (2013). Promoting emotional knowledge: strategies that Greek preschool teachers employ during book reading. *Early Child Development and Care*, *183*(5), 613–626. https://doi.org/10.1080/03004430.2012.678490

Becker, W. C. (1973). Applications of behavior principles in typical classrooms. *Teachers College Record*, 74(5), 77-106.

Beidel, D. C., & Turner, S. M. (1986). A critique of the theoretical bases of cognitive behavioral theories and therapy. *Clinical psychology review*, 6(2), 177-197.

Bornstein, M. H., Hahn, C. S., Putnick, D. L., & Pearson, R. (2019). Stability of child temperament: Multiple moderation by child and mother characteristics. *British Journal of Developmental Psychology*, *37*(1), 51–67. https://doi.org/10.1111/bjdp.12253

Bronfenbrenner, U. (1979). *The ecology of human development: Experiments by nature and design*. Harvard university press.

Brownell, C. A., Svetlova, M., Anderson, R., Nichols, S. R., & Drummond, J. (2013). Socialization of Early Prosocial Behavior: Parents' Talk About Emotions is Associated With Sharing and Helping in Toddlers. *Infancy*, *18*(1), 91–119. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1532-7078.2012.00125.x

Bushman, B. J. (2002). Does venting anger feed or extinguish the flame? Catharsis, rumination, distraction, anger, and aggressive responding. *Personality and social psychology bulletin*, 28(6), 724-731.

Calkins, S. D. (1994). *Origins and Outcomes of Individual Differences in Emotion Regulation* (Vol. 59, Issue 2). *Biological and Behavioral Considerations.*

Calkins, S. D., & Johnson, M. C. (1998). Toddler regulation of distress to frustrating events: temperamental and maternal correlates. *Infant Behavior and Development*, *21*(3), 379–395. https://doi.org/10.1016/S0163-6383(98)90015-7

Candelaria, A. M., Fedewa, A. L., & Ahn, S. (2012). The effects of anger management on children's social and emotional outcomes: A meta-analysis. *School Psychology International*, 33(6), 596-614.

Carpendale, J., & Lewis, C. (2006). *How children develop social understanding*. Blackwell Publishing.

Carr, E. (2016). *Rufus and his angry tail: A book about anger*. (M. Garton, Illus.). Sparkhouse Family.

Chaplin, T. M., & Aldao, A. (2013). Gender differences in emotion expression in children: A meta-analytic review. *Psychological Bulletin*, *139*(4), 735–765. https://doi.org/10.1037/a0030737

Charles, G. L. (2022). *With Jesus I am calm.* Good News Meditations Kids.

Ciesinski, N. K., Sorgi-Wilson, K. M., Cheung, J. C., Chen, E. Y., & McCloskey, M. S. (2022). The effect of dialectical behavior therapy on anger and aggressive behavior: A systematic review with meta-analysis. *Behaviour research and therapy,* 154, 104122.

Clare, L., Gallimore, R., & Patthey-Chavez, G. G. (1996). Using Moral Dilemmas in Children's Literature as a Vehicle for Moral Education and Teaching Reading Comprehension. *Journal of Moral Education*, *25*(3), 325–341. https://doi.org/10.1080/0305724960250305

Cole, E. (2022). *My way to keep anger away: Children's book about anger management and kids big emotions.* (T. Kim, Illus.). Andriy Bohutskyy.

Cole, P. M., Tamang, B. L., & Shrestha, S. (2006). Cultural Variations in the Socialization of Young Children's Anger and Shame. *Child Development*, *77*(5), 1237–1251. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8624.2006.00931.x

Cooperative Children's Book Center, (2022). *CCBC diversity statistics*. Retrieved March 26, 2023, from https://ccbc.education.wisc.edu/literature-resources/ccbc-diversity-statistics/

Crespo, A. (2015). *JP and the polka-dotted aliens: Feeling angry.* (E. Sirotich, Illus.). Albert Whitman.

Crick, N. R., & Dodge, K. A. (1994). A review and reformulation of social information-processing mechanisms in children's social adjustment. *Psychological Bulletin,* 115(1), 74–101. https://doi.org/10.1037/0033-

Crick, N. R., Casas, J. F., & Mosher, M. (1997). Preschool Social Behavior Scale--Teacher Form. *Developmental Psychology*.

Cutler, L., & Slicker, G. (2020). Picture Book Portrayals of the Transition to Kindergarten: Who is Responsible? *Early Childhood Education Journal, 48*(6), 793–813. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10643-020-01040-w

Cutting, A. L., & Dunn, J. (1999). Theory of Mind, Emotion Understanding, Language, and Family Background: Individual Differences and Interrelations. *Child Development, 70*(4), 853–865. https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-8624.00061

Deffenbacher, J. L., Oetting, E. R., & DiGiuseppe, R. A. (2002). Principles of empirically supported interventions applied to anger management. *The Counseling Psychologist,* 30, 262–280.

Deffenbacher, J. L., Oetting, E. R., Thwaites, G. A., Lynch, R. S., Baker, D. A., Stark, R. S., Thacker, S., & Eiswerth-Cox, L. (1996). State-Trait Anger Theory and the Utility of the Trait Anger Scale. In *Journal of Counseling Psychology* (Vol. 43, Issue 2).

Denham, S. A. (2007). Dealing with feelings: how children negotiate the worlds of emotions and social relationships. *Cognition, Brain, Behavior,* 11(1).

Dennis, T. A., Cole, P. M., Wiggins, C. N., Cohen, L. H., & Zalewski, M. (2009). The functional organization of preschool-age children's emotion expressions and actions in challenging situations. *Emotion*, 9(4), 520.

Dewdney, A. (2007). *Llama llama mad at mama.* Penguin Young Readers Group.

Diesen, D. (2021). *The pout-pout fish and the mad, mad day.* (D. Hanna, Illus.). Farrar, Straus and Giroux (BYR).

Dodge, K. A., Lansford, J. E., Burks, V. S., Bates, J. E., Pettit, G. S., Fontaine, R., & Price, J. M. (2003). Peer rejection and social information-processing factors in the development of aggressive behavior problems in children. *Child Development*, 74(2), 374-393.

Dodge, K. A., & Pettit, G. S. (2003). A biopsychosocial model of the development of chronic conduct problems in adolescence. *Developmental Psychology*, 39 , 349– 371.

Dodge, K. A. (1991). The structure and function of reactive and proactive aggression. In *The development and treatment of childhood aggression* (pp. 201–218).

Dodge, K. A. (2006). Translational science in action: Hostile attributional style and the development of aggressive behavior problems. In *Development and Psychopathology* (Vol. 18, Issue 3, pp. 791–814). https://doi.org/10.1017/S0954579406060391

Doyle, B. G., & Bramwell, W. (2006). Promoting Emergent Literacy and Social-Emotional Learning Through Dialogic Reading. *The Reading Teacher*, *59*(6), 554–564. https://doi.org/10.1598/RT.59.6.5

Dunn, J., & Slomkowski, C. (1992). Conflict and the development of social understanding. In *Conflict in child and adolescent development.* (pp. 70–92). Cambridge University Press.

Dyer, J. R., Shatz, M., & Wellman, H. M. (2000). Young children's storybooks as a source of mental state information. *Cognitive Development*, *15*(1), 17–37. https://doi.org/10.1016/S0885-2014(00)00017-4

Eisenberg, N., Fabes, R. A., Murphy, B., Maszk, P., Smith, M., & Karbon, M. (1995). The Role of Emotionality and Regulation in Children's Social Functioning: A Longitudinal Study. *Child Development*, *66*(5), 1360. https://doi.org/10.2307/1131652

Ekman, P. (1999). Basic Emotions. In *Handbook of Cognition and Emotion* (pp. 45–60). John Wiley & Sons, Ltd. https://doi.org/10.1002/0470013494.ch3

Ersan, C. (2020). Physical aggression, relational aggression, and anger in preschool children: The mediating role of emotion regulation. *The Journal of General Psychology*, *147*(1), 18–42. https://doi.org/10.1080/00221309.2019.1609897

Ersan, C., & Tok, S. (2019). The Study of the Aggression Levels of Preschool Children in Terms of Emotion Expression and Emotion Regulation. *Ted EğİTiM Ve BiLiM*. https://doi.org/10.15390/EB.2019.8150

Esra, A. (2019). Forgiveness interventions for children and adolescents: Systematic review. *Studies in Psychology*, 39(2), 429-457.

Estrada, E. (2021). *I choose to calm my anger.* Independently Published

Feder, S. V. (2022). *Angry me*. (R. Jomepour Bell, Illus.). Groundwood Books Limited.

Findlay, L. C., Girardi, A., & Coplan, R. J. (2006). Links between empathy, social behavior, and social understanding in early childhood. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, *21*(3), 347–359. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ecresq.2006.07.009

Fite, P. J., & Vitulano, M. (2011). Proactive and reactive aggression and physical activity. *Journal of Psychopathology and Behavioral Assessment*, 33, 11-18.

Floersch, J., Longhofer, J. L., Kranke, D., & Townsend, L. (2010). Integrating Thematic, Grounded Theory and Narrative Analysis. *Qualitative Social Work*, *9*(3), 407–425. https://doi.org/10.1177/1473325010362330

Ford, B. Q., Tamir, M., Brunyé, T. T., Shirer, W. R., Mahoney, C. R., & Taylor, H. A. (2010). Keeping your eyes on the prize: Anger and visual attention to threats and rewards. *Psychological Science*, 21(8), 1098-1105.

Fox, N. A., & Calkins, S. D. (2003). P1: ZBU Motivation and Emotion [me] pp843-moem-465025 The Development of Self-Control of Emotion: Intrinsic and Extrinsic Influences 1. In *Motivation and Emotion* (Vol. 27, Issue 1).

Gable, P. A., Poole, B. D., & Harmon-Jones, E. (2015). Anger perceptually and conceptually narrows cognitive scope. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 109(1), 163–174. https://doi-org.proxy-um.researchport.umd.edu/10.1037/a0039226

Ganea, P. A., Pickard, M. B., & DeLoache, J. S. (2008). Transfer between Picture Books and the Real World by Very Young Children. *Journal of Cognition and Development*, *9*(1), 46–66. https://doi.org/10.1080/15248370701836592

Garner, P. W. (2010). Emotional Competence and its Influences on Teaching and Learning. *Educational Psychology Review*, *22*(3), 297–321. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10648-010-9129-4

Garner, P. W., & Parker, T. S. (2018). Young children's picture-books as a forum for the socialization of emotion. *Journal of Early Childhood Research*, *16*(3), 291–304. https://doi.org/10.1177/1476718X18775760

Geisler, D. (2019). *I can control my anger.* (D. Geisler, Illus.). Sky Pony.

Golden, B. (2003). Healthy anger : how to help children and teens manage their anger (Ser. Oup e-books). Oxford University Press.

Goldsmith, H. H., Buss, A. H., Plomin, R., Rothbart, M. K., Thomas, A., Chess, S., Hinde, R. A., & Mccall, R. B. (1987). *Roundtable: What Is Temperament? Four Approaches* (Vol. 58, Issue 2).

Gordon, M. (2018). *Dragon's fury.* Independently Published.

Gordon, M. (2019). *Today I am mad.* Independently Published.

Gordon, M. (2020). *How to accept no.* (M. Larin, Illus.). Independently Published.

Gordon, M. (2021). *When I Lose My Cool.* Independently Published.

Grady, J. S., Her, M., Moreno, G., Perez, C., & Yelinek, J. (2019). Emotions in storybooks: A comparison of storybooks that represent ethnic and racial groups in the United States. *Psychology of Popular Media Culture*, 8(3), 207–217.

Grazzani, I., & Ornaghi, V. (2011). Emotional state talk and emotion understanding: A training study with preschool children. *Journal of Child Language*, 38(5), 1124-1139.

Grazzani, I., Ornaghi, V., Conte, E., Pepe, A., & Caprin, C. (2018). The Relation Between Emotion Understanding and Theory of Mind in Children Aged 3 to 8: The Key Role of Language. *Frontiers in Psychology*, *9*. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2018.00724

Green, A. (2018). *Today I'm a monster*. (V. Mykhalevych, Illus.). April Tale Books.

Green, A. (2013). *The very frustrated monster*. Monsters in My Head, LLC.

Hansen, C. C., & Zambo, D. (2007). Loving and Learning with Wemberly and David: Fostering Emotional Development in Early Childhood Education. *Early Childhood Education Journal*, *34*(4), 273–278. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10643-006-0124-9

Harper, L. J. (2016). Preschool Through Primary Grades: Using Picture Books to Promote Social-Emotional Literacy. *Source: YC Young Children*, *71*(3), 80–86. https://doi.org/10.2307/ycyoungchildren.71.3.80

Helmsen, J., Koglin, U., & Petermann, F. (2012). Emotion regulation and aggressive behavior in preschoolers: The mediating role of social information processing. *Child Psychiatry & Human Development*, 43, 87-101.

Herman, S. (2018). *Train your dragon to accept NO.* Digital Golden Solutions LLC.

Horsley, T.A., De Castro, B.O., & Van der Schoot, M. (2010). In the eye of the beholder: Eye-tracking assessment of social information processing in aggressive behavior. *Journal of Abnormal Child Psychology*, 38, 587-599.

Hubbard, J. A., Romano, L. J., McAuliffe, M. D., & Morrow, M. T. (2010). Anger and the Reactive–Proactive Aggression Distinction in Childhood and Adolescence. In *International Handbook of Anger* (pp. 231–239). Springer New York. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-0-387-89676-2_14

Hughes, C., & Dunn, J. (1998). Understanding mind and emotion: Longitudinal associations with mental-state talk between young friends. *Developmental Psychology*, *34*(5), 1026–1037. https://doi.org/10.1037/0012-1649.34.5.1026

Ingram, E., & Cahill, M. (2022). Depictions of Diversity in Books Recommended for Storytime: A Cautionary Tale. *Libri*, *0*(0). https://doi.org/10.1515/libri-2021-0126

Izard, C. E. (1977). Differential Emotions Theory. In *Human Emotions* (pp. 43–66). Springer US. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4899-2209-0_3

Izard, C. E. (2007). Basic Emotions, Natural Kinds, Emotion Schemas, and a New Paradigm. *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, *2*(3), 260–280. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1745-6916.2007.00044.x

Jones, J. (2022). *Dafina learns to cope with anger.* Fulton Books.

Kabat-Zinn, J. (2003). Mindfulness-based interventions in context: Past, present, and future. *Clinical Psychology: Science and Practice*, 10(2), 144–156. https://doi.org/10.1093/clipsy.bpg016

Kahle, S., Miller, J. G., Helm, J. L., & Hastings, P. D. (2018). Linking autonomic physiology and emotion regulation in preschoolers: The role of reactivity and recovery. *Developmental Psychobiology*, *60*(7), 775–788. https://doi.org/10.1002/dev.21746

Kahle, S., Miller, J. G., Lopez, M., & Hastings, P. D. (2016). Sympathetic recovery from anger is associated with emotion regulation. *Journal of Experimental Child Psychology*, *142*, 359–371. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jecp.2015.10.004

Kalvin, C., Zhong, J., Rutten, M., Ibrahim, K., & Sukhodolsky, D. G. (2024). Evidence-Based Psychosocial Treatments for Childhood Irritability and Aggressive Behavior. *JAACAP Open.*

Kårstad, S. B., Wichstrøm, L., Reinfjell, T., Belsky, J., & Berg-Nielsen, T. S. (2015). What enhances the development of emotion understanding in young children? A longitudinal study of interpersonal predictors. *British Journal of Developmental Psychology*, 33(3), 340-354.

Kelley, J. E., & Darragh, J. J. (2011). Depictions and Gaps: Portrayal of U.S. Poverty in Realistic Fiction ty in Realistic Fiction Children's Picture Books. *Reading Horizons: A Journal of Literacy and Language Arts*, *50*(4), 263–282.

Kerr, M. A., & Schneider, B. H. (2008). Anger expression in children and adolescents: A review of the empirical literature. *Clinical Psychology Review*, *28*(4), 559–577. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cpr.2007.08.001

Khu, M., Graham, S. A., & Ganea, P. A. (2014). Learning from picture books: Infants' use of naming information. *Frontiers in Psychology*, *5*. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2014.00144

Kim, T.S. (2022) *Feeling all my anger: A picture book about dealing with anger for kids, toddlers, preschoolers, kindergarten.* Independently Published.

Kjærvik, S. L., & Bushman, B. J. (2024). A meta-analytic review of anger management activities that increase or decrease arousal: What fuels or douses rage?. *Clinical Psychology Review*, 102414.

Kleeck, A. van. (2008). Providing preschool foundations for later reading comprehension: The importance of and ideas for targeting inferencing in storybook-sharing interventions. *Psychology in the Schools*, *45*(7), 627–643. https://doi.org/10.1002/pits.20314

Kottman, T. (2013). Positive emotions. The therapeutic powers of play: 20 core agents of change, 103.

Koss, M. D. (2015). Diversity in Contemporary Picturebooks: A Content Analysis. *Journal of Children's Literature*, *41*(1), 32–42.

Kushnir, R., Kushnir, J. (2022). *Benny controls his anger: Anger management for kids and parents.* (V. Jaishankar, Illus.). Independently Published.

Lemerise, E. A., & Arsenio, W. F. (2000). An Integrated Model of Emotion Processes and Cognition in Social Information Processing. *Child Development*, *71*(1), 107–118. https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-8624.00124

Lemerise, E. A., & Harper, B. D. (2010). The Development of Anger from Preschool to Middle Childhood: Expressing, Understanding, and Regulating Anger. In *International Handbook of Anger* (pp. 219–229). Springer New York. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-0-387-89676-2_13

Levine, L. J. (1995). Young children's understanding of the causes of anger and sadness. *Child Development*, 66(3), 697-709.

Lewis, M. (2010). The Development of Anger. In *International Handbook of Anger* (pp. 177–191). Springer New York. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-0-387-89676-2_11

Lichtenfeld, S., Maier, M. A., Buechner, V. L., & Fernández Capo, M. (2019). The influence of decisional and emotional forgiveness on attributions. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 10. https://doi-org.proxy-um.researchport.umd.edu/10.3389/fpsyg.2019.01425

Linehan, M. (2014). *DBT? Skills training manual.* Guilford Publications.

Lite, L. (2008). *Angry octopus: An anger management story for children introducing active progressive muscle relaxation and deep breathing to help control anger.* (M. Strasuyk, Illus.). Stress Free Kids.

Liu, R., Phillips, J. J., Ji, F., Shi, D., & Bell, M. A. (2021). Temperamental Shyness and Anger/Frustration in Childhood: Normative Development, Individual Differences, and the Impacts of Maternal Intrusiveness and Frontal Electroencephalogram Asymmetry. *Child Development*, *92*(6), 2529–2545. https://doi.org/10.1111/cdev.13621

Lochman, J. E., Barry, T., Powell, N., & Young, L. (2010). Anger and aggression. *Practitioner's guide to empirically based measures of social skills,* 155-166.

Marion, M. (2003). *Guidance of young children* (6th ed.). Merrill Prentice Hall.

Martin, M. (2013). *Princess Addison gets angry.* (M. Florian, Illus.). Picture Window Books.

Martin, R. M., & Green, J. A. (2005). The Use of Emotion Explanations by Mothers: Relation to Preschoolers' Gender and Understanding of Emotions. *Social Development*, *14*(2), 229–249. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9507.2005.00300.x

Mascolo, M., & Fischer, K. (1995). Developmental transformations in appraisals for pride, shame, and guilt. *Self-Conscious Emotions: The Psychology of Shame, Guilt, Embarrassment, and Pride*.

Meiners, C. J. (2010). *Cool down and work through anger.* (M. Johnson, Illus.). Free Spirit Publishing.

Mol, S. E., Bus, A. G., de Jong, M. T., & Smeets, D. J. H. (2008). Added Value of Dialogic Parent–Child Book Readings: A Meta-Analysis. *Early Education and Development, 19*(1), 7–26. https://doi.org/10.1080/10409280701838603

Montgomery County Public Libraries. (2024). *Use the Library.* Montgomery County Public Libraries. https://montgomerycountymd.gov/library/index.html

Montgomery, P., & Maunders, K. (2015). The effectiveness of creative bibliotherapy for internalizing, externalizing, and prosocial behaviors in children: A systematic review. *Children and youth services review*, 55, 37-47.

Nikolajeva, M. (2013). Picturebooks and emotional literacy. *The reading teacher*, 67(4), 249-254.

Nikolajeva, M., & Scott, C. (2001). *How picture books work.* London: Routledge.

Noten, M. M. P. G., van der Heijden, K. B., Huijbregts, S. C. J., van Goozen, S. H. M., & Swaab, H. (2020). Associations between empathy, inhibitory control, and physical aggression in toddlerhood. *Developmental Psychobiology*, *62*(6), 871–881. https://doi.org/10.1002/dev.21951

Ogren, M., & Johnson, S. P. (2020). Factors Facilitating Early Emotion Understanding Development: Contributions to Individual Differences. *Human Development*, *64*(3), 108–118. https://doi.org/10.1159/000511628

Olatunji, B. O., Lohr, J. M., & Bushman, B. J. (2007). *The pseudopsychology of venting in the treatment of anger: Implications and alternatives for mental health practice.* In T. A. Cavell & K. T. Malcolm (Eds.), Anger, aggression, and interventions for interpersonal violence. (pp. 119–141). Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Publishers.

Oolup, C., Brown, J., Nowicki, E., & Aziz, D. (2016). The emotional experience and expression of anger: Children's perspectives. *Child and adolescent social work journal*, 33, 279-292.

Oppliger, P. A., & Davis, A. (2016). Portrayals of Bullying: A Content Analysis of Picture Books for Preschoolers. *Early Childhood Education Journal*, *44*(5), 515–526. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10643-015-0734-1

Ouzts, D. T. (1991). The Emergence of Bibliotherapy as a Discipline. *Reading Horizons: A Journal of Literacy and Language Arts*, *31*(3), 199–206.

Owen, D. (2021). *Everyone feels angry sometimes.*(G. Baycik, Illus.). Puppy Dogs & Ice Cream Incorporated.

Papazian, G. (2021). Coloring Feelings: Concept Books Making and Remaking Racialized Color Meanings. *Children's Literature in Education*, 52(3), 357-377.

Phillips, E. C., & Sturm, B. W. (2013). Do Picture Books About Starting Kindergarten Portray the Kindergarten Experience in Developmentally Appropriate Ways? *Early Childhood Education Journal*, *41*(6), 465–475. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10643-012-0560-7

Pons, F., Harris, P. L., & de Rosnay, M. (2004). Emotion comprehension between 3 and 11 years: Developmental periods and hierarchical organization. *European Journal of Developmental Psychology*, *1*(2), 127–152. https://doi.org/10.1080/17405620344000022

Potegal, M., Kosorok, M. R., & Davidson, R. J. (1996). The Time Course of Angry Behavior in the Temper Tantrums of Young Children. *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences*, *794*(1 Understanding), 31–45. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1749-6632.1996.tb32507.x

Powlison, D. (2018). *Jax's tail twitches: When you are angry.* New Growth Press.

Premack, D. (1961). Predicting instrumental performance from the independent rate of the contingent response. *Journal of Experimental Psychology,* 61(2), 163–171. https://doi.org/10.1037/h0042090

Prince George's County Memorial Library. (2024). Fiscal Year 2023 Annual Report. *Prince George's County Memorial Library.*

Putnam, S. P., & Rothbart, M. K. (2006). Development of Short and Very Short Forms of the Children's Behavior Questionnaire. *Journal of Personality Assessment, 87*(1), 102–112. https://doi.org/10.1207/s15327752jpa8701_09

Rapp, H., Wang Xu, J., & Enright, R. D. (2022). A meta-analysis of forgiveness education interventions' effects on forgiveness and anger in children and adolescents. *Child Development,* 93(5), 1249-1269.

Reul, S. L. (2020). *Allie all along.* Union Square Kids.

Reynes, E., & Lorant, J. (2002). Effect of traditional judo training on aggressiveness among young boys. *Perceptual and motor skills,* 94(1), 21-25.

Roben, C. K. P., Cole, P. M., & Armstrong, L. M. (2013). Longitudinal Relations Among Language Skills, Anger Expression, and Regulatory Strategies in Early Childhood. *Child Development, 84*(3), 891–905. https://doi.org/10.1111/cdev.12027

Roberts, B. W., & DelVecchio, W. F. (2000). The rank-order consistency of personality traits from childhood to old age: A quantitative review of longitudinal studies. *Psychological Bulletin, 126*(1), 3–25. https://doi.org/10.1037/0033-2909.126.1.3

Roberts, K., Dowell, A., & Nie, J.-B. (2019). Attempting rigour and replicability in thematic analysis of qualitative research data; a case study of codebook development. *BMC Medical Research Methodology, 19*(1), 66. https://doi.org/10.1186/s12874-019-0707-y

Rothbart, M. K. (1989). Temperament and development. In G. A. Kohnstamm, J. E. Bates, & M. K. Rothbart (Eds.), *Temperament in childhood* (pp. 187–247). John Wiley & Sons.

Rothbart, M. K., Ahadi, S. A., Hershey, K. L., & Fisher, P. (2001). Investigations of Temperament at Three to Seven Years: The Children's Behavior Questionnaire. *Child Development, 72*(5), 1394–1408. https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-8624.00355

Rothbart, M. K., & Bates, J. E. (2006). Temperament. In N. Eisenberg, W. Damon, & Lerner R.M (Eds.), *Handbook of child psychology: Social, emotional, and personality development* (pp. 99–166). John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

Rueda, M. R., Posner, M. I., & Rothbart, M. K. (2004). *Attentional Control and Self-Regulation*.

Rueda, M. R., Rothbart, M. K., Mccandliss, B. D., Saccomanno, L., & Posner, M. I. (2005). *Training, maturation, and genetic influences on the development of executive attention*. www.pnas.orgcgidoi10.1073pnas.0506897102

Saarni, C., Campos, J. J., Camras, L. A., & Witherington, D. (2006). Emotional development: Action, communication, and understanding. In *Handbook of child psychology* (Vol. 3, pp. 226–299).

Shechtman, Z. (2009). *Treating child and adolescent aggression through bibliotherapy.* Springer Science & Business Media.

Schiller, A., Kurtzman-Counter, S. (2013). *When Miles got mad.* Mother Company.

Schultz, D., Grodack, A., & Izard, C. E. (2010). State and Trait Anger, Fear, and Social Information Processing. In *International Handbook of Anger* (pp. 311–325). Springer New York. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-0-387-89676-2_18

Schultz, D., Izard, C. E., & Bear, G. (2004). Children's emotion processing: Relations to emotionality and aggression. *Development and Psychopathology*, *16*(2), 371–387. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0954579404044566

Shiner, R. L., Buss, K. A., Mcclowry, S. G., Putnam, S. P., Saudino, K. J., & Zentner, M. (2012). What Is Temperament Now? Assessing Progress Temperament Research on the Twenty-Fifth Anniversary of Goldsmith et al. *Child Development Perspectives*, *6*(4), 436–444. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1750-8606.2012.00254.x

Silver, G. (2009). *Anh's anger.* (C. Krömer, Illus.).Parallax Press.

Sipe, L. R. (1998). How picture books work: a semiotically framed theory of text-picture relationships. *Children's Literature in Education,* 29(2), 97–108.

Smith-D'Arezzo, W. M., & Thompson, S. (2006). Topics of Stress and Abuse in Picture Books for Children. *Children's Literature in Education*, *37*(4), 335–347. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10583-006-9015-3

Snyder, J., Schrepferman, L., McEachern, A., & DeLeeuw, J. (2010). The contribution of child anger and fear, and parental discipline to early antisocial behavior: An integrative model. *International handbook of anger: Constituent and concomitant biological, psychological, and social processes*, 517-534.

Sorensen, A. T. (2007). Best Seller Lists and Product Variety. *The Journal of Industrial Economics*, *55*(4), 715–738. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-6451.2007.00327.x

Spelman, C. M. (2000). *When I feel angry.* (N. Cote, Illus.). Albert Whitman.

Strayer, J., & Roberts, W. (2004a). Children's anger, emotional expressiveness, and empathy: Relations with parents' empathy, emotional expressiveness, and parenting practices. *Social development*, 13(2), 229-254.

Strayer, J., & Roberts, W. (2004b). Empathy and Observed Anger and Aggression in Five-Year-Olds. *Social Development, 13*(1), 1–13.

Sukhodolsky, D. G., Kassinove, H., & Gorman, B. S. (2004). Cognitive-behavioral therapy for anger in children and adolescents: A meta-analysis. *Aggression and violent behavior*, 9(3), 247-269.

Sutton, D., Wilson, M., Van Kessel, K., & Vanderpyl, J. (2013). Optimizing arousal to manage aggression: A pilot study of sensory modulation. *International journal of mental health nursing*, 22(6), 500-511.

Szczecinski, A. (2020). *Roaring mad Riley: An anger management story for kids.* (D. Gray, Illus.). Callisto Publishing.

Tan, L., & Smith, C. L. (2018). Function of child anger and sadness in response to a blocked goal. *Journal of Experimental Child Psychology*, 170, 190-196.

Tan, P. Z., Armstrong, L. M., & Cole, P. M. (2013). Relations between temperament and anger regulation over early childhood. *Social Development*, *22*(4), 755–772. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9507.2012.00674.x

Tan, S. Y. (2007). Use of prayer and scripture in cognitive-behavioral therapy. *Journal of Psychology and Christianity*, 26(2), 101.

Terry, G., Hayfield, N., Clarke, V., & Braun, V. (2017). Thematic Analysis. In *The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Research in Psychology* (pp. 17–36). SAGE Publications Ltd. https://doi.org/10.4135/9781526405555.n2

Thomas, A., & Chess, S. (1977). *Temperament and development*. Brunner/Mazel.

Thompson, R. A. (1991). Emotional Regulation and Emotional Development. In *Educational Psychology Review* (Vol. 3, Issue 4).

Thompson, R. (1994). Emotion regulation: A theme in search of definition. In N. Fox (Ed.), The development of emotion regulation: Biological and behavioral considerations (pp. 25–52). *Monographs of the Society for Research in Child Development,* 59 (2–3, Serial No. 240).

Thompson, L. Y., & Synder, C. R. (2003). Measuring forgiveness. In S. J. Lopez & C. R. Snyder (Eds.), *Positive psychological assessment: A handbook of models and measure*s. (pp. 301–312).

Tkacz, J., Young-Hyman, D., Boyle, C. A., & Davis, C. L. (2008). Aerobic exercise program reduces anger expression among overweight children. *Pediatric exercise science,* 20(4), 390-401.

Trabasso, T., & Wiley, J. (2005). Goal Plans of Action and Inferences During Comprehension of Narratives. *Discourse Processes*, *39*(2–3), 129–164. https://doi.org/10.1080/0163853X.2005.9651677

Vander Wege, B., Sanchez Gonzalez, M. L., Friedlmeier, W., Mihalca, L. M., Goodrich, E., & Corapci, F. (2014). Emotion displays in media: a comparison between American, Romanian, and Turkish children's storybooks. *Frontiers in Psychology*, *5*. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2014.00600

Vygotsky, L. S. (1978). *Mind in society: Development of higher psychological processes*. Harvard university press.

Wade, L., Smith, J. J., Duncan, M. J., & Lubans, D. R. (2018). Mediators of aggression in a school-based physical activity intervention for low-income adolescent boys. *Mental Health and Physical Activity,* 14, 39-46.

Wade, O. (2020). *Bubba the hamster tames his tantrums.* (I. Turova, Illus.). Independently Published.

Walker, C. M., Gopnik, A., & Ganea, P. A. (2015). Learning to Learn From Stories: Children's Developing Sensitivity to the Causal Structure of Fictional Worlds. *Child Development, 86*(1), 310–318. https://doi.org/10.1111/cdev.12287

Walsh, A. (2023). *Ayo the angry lion.* Ocean Water Publishing.

Wellman, H. M. (2014). *Making Minds*. Oxford University Press. https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199334919.001.0001

Wellman, H. M. (2017). The Development of Theory of Mind: Historical Reflections. *Child Development Perspectives, 11*(3), 207–214. https://doi.org/10.1111/cdep.12236

Wong, M. S., Chen, X., & McElwain, N. L. (2019). Emotion understanding and maternal sensitivity as protective factors against hostile attribution bias in anger-prone children. *Social Development, 28*(1), 41–56. https://doi.org/10.1111/sode.12336

Yolen, J. (2013). *How do dinosaurs say I'm mad?*. (M. Teague, Illus.). Blue Sky Press.

Yue, X., & Zhang, Q. (2023). The association between peer rejection and aggression types: A meta-analysis. *Child Abuse & Neglect,* 135, 105974.

Zambo, D. M. (2006). Learning from Picture Book Characters in Readaloud Sessions for Students with ADHD. *Teaching Exceptional Children Plus, 2*(4).

Zdilar, I. (2023). Always all the Rage: Anger and its Management. *Psychē: Časopis studenata psihologije,* 6(1), 269-288.

Zohuri, B., & Dalili, S. (2023). Understanding anger and effective anger management techniques (a short review). *Management Studies,* 11(4), 236-244.

Appendix A

Table A1.

Interrater Reliability

	IH-JH	IH-JS	IH-LK
Sample	**Kappa**	**Kappa**	**Kappa**
A01-A10 Text (reliability round 1)	0.84	0.83	0.84
PDF	0.92	0.92	0.93
A11-A20 Text (reliability round 2)	0.83	0.89	0.94
PDF	0.92	0.94	0.96
A21-A30 Text	0.85	0.80	
PDF	0.94	0.91	
A31-39 Text	0.82	0.80	
PDF	0.91	0.91	
A41-51 Text	0.81	0.80	
PDF	0.95	0.92	
A52-A61 Text			0.89
PDF			0.97
A62-A71 Text			0.88
PDF			0.96
A72-82 Text			0.80
PDF			0.96

Appendix B

Table B1.

List of Anger-Eliciting Situations Found in Picture Books

	Text (%)	Illustration (%)
Anger-Eliciting Situation	99	95
Not getting what they want	73	42
Interpersonal conflict with peer or sibling	47	47
Uncontrollable situations	30	17
Destroyed property	29	30
Given directions	25	9
Finding things difficult	20	14
Time to stop or transition	19	16
Unfair situation	19	13
Made a mistake	16	21

Table B2.

List of Covert and Overt Anger Manifestations Found in Picture Books

	Text (%)	Illustration (%)
MC Covert Anger Manifestation (Inside)	69	54

Hot inside		80	91
Feeling out of control		31	7
Racing heart		29	9
Fast breathing		22	12
Racing thoughts		18	5
MC Overt Anger Manifestation (Outside)		68	100
Tight muscles		52	83
	Clenched fists	54	92
	Clenched jaw	36	44
	Stiff shoulders	4	47
Angry face [a]		20	100
Crying		50	38
Shaking		22	9
Pout		13	54
Crossed arms		6	48

[a] Consists of having a furrowed brow, narrowed eyes, and a frown.

Table B3.

List of Initial Reactions Found in Picture Books

	Text (%)	Illustration (%)

Main Character Initial Reaction	95	94
Yelling	70	59
Object Destruction	39	51
Throwing objects	67	58
Kicking objects	27	21
Breaking objects	13	26
Hitting objects	20	18
Ripping objects	10	11
Verbal aggression	47	36
Yelling at others	94	100
Saying mean things to others	33	4
Blaming others	8	4
Stomping feet	37	32
Tantruming	28	51
Running away	24	15
Physical aggression	24	12
Pushing others	39	56
Hitting others	44	44
Snatching toy	28	22

Bad on purpose	21	9
Arm flailing	1	33

Table B4.

List of Helper-Suggested Anger Management Strategies

	Text (%)	Illustration (%)
Anger Management Strategies	87	78
Addressing arousal in the body	79	77
Deep breathing	78	63
Physical touch [a]	33	41
Hug from helper	25	35
Safely release anger [b]	20	18
Physical activity	20	18
Muscle relaxation	13	6
Stretch body	7	8
Delay Response	79	70
Count	47	47
Shift thoughts	31	20
Shift activity	27	20

Walk away or take a break	27	29
Sing, hum, or chant	16	13
Sit	11	9
Go outside	8	7
Practice patience	13	2
Pray	5	4
Mindfulness	4	11
Cognitive Processes	51	23
Reappraisal	78	40
Choose a substitute goal	25	33
Recognize angry feeling	22	27
Self-talk	6	7

[a] Touching another part of the body or a different object to provide sensory stimulation.

[b] Releasing anger energy by hitting, punching, or kicking an object in a safe and controlled manner such as through a symbolic activity to intentionally release anger.

Table B5.

Percentages of Picture Books with Main Character-Created Strategies

	Text (%)	Illustration (%)

MC Learning Process	-	-
MC creates own strategies	80	58
MC uses helper suggested strategies in other situations	39	21

Table B6.

List of SIP-Related Story Elements

	Text (%)	Illustration (%)
Story Analysis	-	-
Anger representation [a]	54	45
Consequences	24	16
Escalation of anger	23	8
Restitution	45	51
Problem solve	28	22
Clean up mess	26	28
Interaction with helper	35	22
Talk about what happened	65	71
Talk about feelings	52	36
Intent interpretation–On purpose [b]	6	-
Clarification of intent–On accident [c]	6	-

[a] An anger manifestation or reaction is represented using an image, metaphor, simile, or analogy; anger is compared to or is symbolized by something else to describe its intensity.

[b] The main character believes others' actions were on purpose and has a hostile attribution of intent.

[c] The story includes a peer character who shares that they did not mean harm and that their actions were an accident.

Table B7.

Elements of Main Characters, Helpers, and Context

	Illustration (%)
Main Character (MC)	100
Human	54
White	60
Brown	14
Black	5
Asian	3
Unidentified race	18
Animal or creature	46
Male-presenting	63

Female-presenting	28
Unidentified sex	6
Helper	74
Parent	53
Peer	41
Dream/Fantasy Creature	15
Teacher	15
Context	95
Home	70
Outside	36
Playground	25
School	22
Mall/store	8

Table B8.

Helper and Narrator Views of Anger

	Text (%)
Helper's View of Anger	-
Must learn to control anger	38

Aggression is dangerous	19
Normalization of anger [a]	23
Express unconditional love [b]	19
Self-disclosure of anger [c]	16
Narrator's View of Anger	-
Must learn to control anger	24
Anger is dangerous	17
Normalization of anger [a]	13
Express unconditional love [b]	7
Self-disclosure of anger [c]	4

[a] The helper/narrator states that it is a common experience to feel angry.

[b] The helper/narrator states that it is okay for one to feel angry and that they are still loved.

[c] The helper/narrator share that they understand how the main character feelings.