

MAX AND THE TAG-ALONG MOON

Cognitive Flexibility

Preschool

This book follows Max, a young boy who says goodbye to his grandfather and makes the trip home. This story is about adjusting to changes that happen, such as having to say goodbye to a person or environment. It also has a subtle message about how a shift in our thinking can make changes easier.

CORE SKILL OBJECTIVES

INTENTIONAL TEACHING PRACTICES

REGULATE



Children will:

- ◆ Demonstrate ability to be flexible

Teachers will:

- ◆ Narrate cognitive flexibility
- ◆ Prompt child to shift thinking

TEACHING TIP

Cognitive flexibility is the ability to shift our thinking to meet the demands of a situation or environment. It includes being able to adjust to and accept changes in environments, routines, or circumstances. Young children are just beginning to develop this skill, so even small changes can be hard! Teachers can support children in this development by establishing consistent routines, preparing them in advance when a change in the routine or environment is about to occur, and talking about strategies they can use to help them with the change.

1. INTRODUCE

- ◆ “Today we’re going to read a story about a boy named Max. In this story, Max has to say goodbye to his grandpa. Saying goodbye can be hard, but luckily in this story, the moon helps Max feel better about having to leave his Granpa’s house.”

2. READ THE BOOK

- ◆ Pause occasionally to point out ways the character had to adjust his thinking and how it made him feel.
- ◆ Encourage children to share their thoughts about the story and acknowledge their comments.

Encourage Cognitive Flexibility

Read: “Max kept his eyes on Granpa as he disappeared from sight, and all he saw was the moon.”

Acknowledge: “Max had to say goodbye to his grandpa. It can be hard to say goodbye to people.”

Ask: “Have you ever had to say goodbye to someone special? How did it make you feel?”

Read: “He missed Granpa. He missed that tag-along moon.”

Acknowledge: “It looks like he feels sad.”

Ask: “Why do you think he is feeling that way? Have you ever felt that way after a big change? What did you do?”

Comment: “Sometimes change can be hard. It can make us feel lots of different emotions!”

Read: “Max knew then that whenever he saw the moon, he would think of Granpa, on and on.”

Acknowledge: “Even though his Granpa was not there, Max knew that his Granpa’s love will follow him, just like the moon! When he thought about it that way it helped him feel better about having to say goodbye. Sometimes changing how we think about something can help make it easier!”

3. REVIEW

“Max had to say goodbye to his Granpa and that made him sad. But seeing how the moon was always there, even when he couldn’t see it, helped him know that his Granpa’s love was always there, even when his Granpa couldn’t be.”

4. KEEP IT GOING

- ◆ Changes in routines and environments can be hard, especially for young children since they are just developing their cognitive flexibility. Think about your daily routines and schedule. Pick a time of day where children might have trouble “shifting gears.” Think about ways you can increase your level of support to help with their cognitive flexibility, such as transition warnings, visuals, or timers. As they transition to the new activity, point out their use of cognitive flexibility by acknowledging how they adapted to the change.