



She's the Pro

Reading to increase social/emotional learning

By *Andrea Burns, Beta Kappa-Kansas*

I have always had a passion for reading and literature since I was young. I love the smell of a new book, a character you can connect to, and the time to look at beautiful illustrations. My love for literature only grew when I became a teacher. I had so many meaningful conversations with my students through literature. It was my favorite time of the day knowing that we would all come together and fall in love with the magic of each story.

Recently featured on *Good Morning America*, **Andrea** is raising awareness about a teaching method to help students tap into their mental health and learn how to manage their emotions in healthy ways.

I know that it can be hard to get kids on board with reading, but it truly leads to magical moments. Along the way, I've learned some great tips of how to get your kids to become a life-long reader!

“Right now we are seeing a lot of children who are struggling and need the time and space to develop these social emotional learning skills.”

LET YOUR KIDS PICK WHAT TO READ

A lot of parents are worried about what level their child is reading at. Yes, that is important, but knowing their level does not matter when building their love for reading. Just let your kids read what THEY want to read! Whether its a picture book, graphic-novel, early reader, or chapter book age doesn't matter! I read picture books with my fourth grade students and they absolutely LOVED them! Kids just want to see themselves in a book and be able to relate to it. It should not matter to you what they read as long as they are reading!

COME UP WITH FUN ACTIVITIES THAT GO WITH THE BOOK

Books are meant to be FUN! There are so many quirky characters, settings and plots that have the could have fun activities to go with them. You can come up with a new ending of the story together, do a craft that pairs with it or even come up with a fun song about the book! If you aren't the creative type, look on social media! There are so many accounts that already have the activities done for you!

HAVE A VARIETY OF BOOKS AVAILABLE AT HOME

Not only are books fun, but kids can learn so much about others and themselves through





them! Have books that not only include characters like your kids, but have them learn about different experiences and cultures through books! Books can bring your kids to places they have never been. It's like going on a beautiful trip for free! Build that library so that your kids can always find a place to snuggle up with a good book.

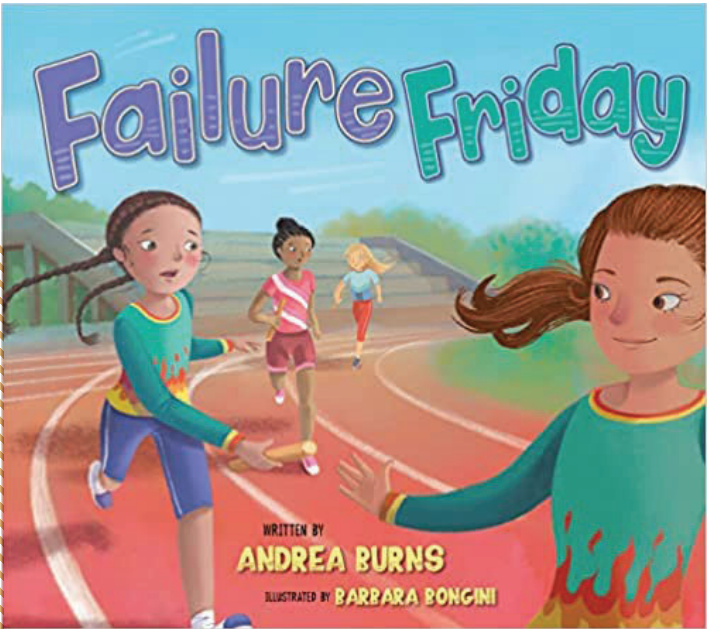
LET THEM SEE YOU READING!

This is one thing that I learned when teaching in the classroom. Kids get on board with reading when you HYPE IT UP! When we would have D.E.A.R. time (Drop Everything and Read) I would bring my own book from home and read with the kids too! I would even read kids chapter books as well. Find time to do this together (when you don't have a million other things to do)!

SPEND TIME CULTIVATING JOY AROUND READING!

Building a culture around reading is SO important. Taking trips to the library, going to local bookstores and letting them go pick out one of their favorite books will only cultivate JOY! Attend local story times or go meet a local author at an event! Make a special snack together and really make reading a focus. I know my mom did this and it made me LOVE that special time we had together.

These are some tips that I know will help build life-long readers. I encourage you to take the time to make this a priority. Reading brings magic to life and brings people together. ⚓



Andrea's book teaches that failure isn't something to fear.

Meet Andrea

After eight years of teaching, Andrea is currently a book-buyer for a local bookstore in Kansas as well as a published author. Andrea has her Bachelors of Science in Elementary Education and her Master's of Science in Curriculum & Instruction. You can visit Andrea on Instagram @bookishburnsss or you can visit her website www.readbookishburns.com

During the pandemic, Andrea started an Instagram handle to share book recommendations with other educators and parents. She took a large amount of time each week to pick books to share that she knew were powerful based on the results in her own classroom. She developed a love for books that had social emotional learning concepts in them. Social emotional learning focuses on things like self-awareness, social awareness, self-management, relationship skills and responsible decision-making.

Children and their mental health have become a growing concern in the past few years, especially amid the pandemic. The Department of Health and Human Services released findings in March based on a survey of over 170,000 children that showed anxiety problems among youth were up 29% between 2016 and 2020, rates of depression were up 27%, and behavioral and conduct problems increased 21% between 2019 and 2020. Andrea found that the best way to discuss and learn more about social emotional learning was through literature. Read more on pg. 23 about how one of her Instagram posts made it on *Good Morning America*.