

Children's books for building resilience

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Children's books can be great teaching tools for developing resilience in fun and positive ways. Considering the holistic development of children, stories can support children to overcome challenges, recover from setbacks and support a deeper understanding of emotions and happiness.

Resilience in the Covid-19 era

Super Felix by Phoebe Morris (2020)

Gruffalo Stayed in the Cave by Julia Donaldson and Axel Scheffler (2020)

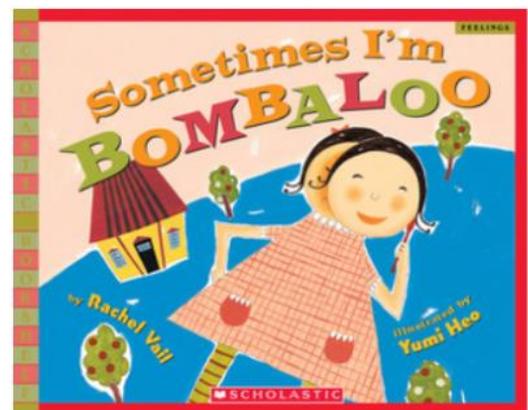
KidsHealth, supported by the Ministry of Health New Zealand, provides a good selection of children's books that are great for helping and reassuring children during Covid-19 and building resilience (KidsHealth, n.d.). The books are written by child psychologists and children's literature writers. They can be valuable resources to support children in making sense of Covid-19, coping with uncertainties and changes, and developing good personal hygiene habits. For example, *Super Felix* describes a superpower to overcome the fear of Covid-19. A series of pictures illustrated by Julia Donaldson and Axel Scheffler, the authors of *The Gruffalo*, show how the characters from their books live with the new reality of social distancing and staying home. The pictures offer opportunities for kaiako (teachers) to discuss complicated Covid-19 topics with children in reassuring, supportive and simple ways.



Resilience and feelings

Sometimes I'm Bombaloo by Rachel Vail (2002)

This is a great book to explore emotional resilience with young children. The story starts with a brief introduction of its key character, Katie Honors, who is usually a happy child. After highlighting what she is good at, the story recounts the moments when Katie was not able to control her emotions. The story introduces Katie through a credit-based lens that acknowledges the child as a whole. Katie's happiness, smiles, anger, lovely manners, laughs, uncontrollable emotions at times, and her method of calming herself are added to the richness of the character. This credit-based lens provides an excellent opportunity for kaiako to explore intense emotions with children and how they can learn to manage with other people's help. What helps Katie calm down at the end are love, acceptance and hugs from her family. This ending draws attention to Katie's significant others who provide a positive, friendly and loving environment that nurtures children's emotional resilience. Kaiako can discuss with children about their responsibility for making a better learning environment and helping each other.

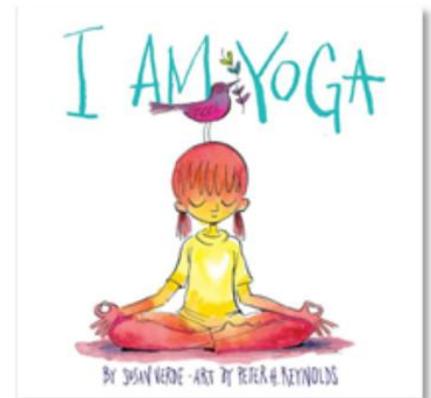


Other books about feelings and resilience that kaiako could consider are *When Sophie Gets Angry - Really, Really Angry...* (Bang, 2004), *Aroha's Way* (Phillips, 2019), *The Red Tree* (Tan, 2010) and *My Feelings* (Jennings, 2016).

Resilience through body-mind connections

I am Yoga by Susan Verde (2015)

This book helps build resilience through body and mind connections. The author is a certified yoga instructor. The story shows how yoga can take one from feeling small in a big world, to freedom, peace, positivity, new possibilities and love. The author uses simple words that are suitable for children in early childhood settings. The beautiful illustrations in the book are inviting for kaiako to enjoy simple yoga together with the children. The other books in the *I am* series, such as *I am Peace* (Verde, 2017), *I am Love* (Verde, 2019) and *I am Human* (Verde, 2020) are also great resources for building resilience through peaceful minds, strong communities and compassion.



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