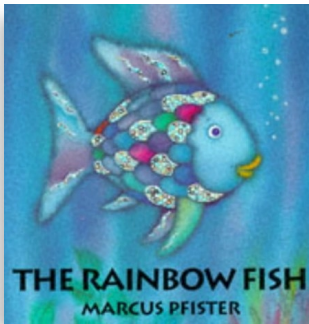


# Book Nook

## Using Books to Support Social Emotional Development



### **The Rainbow Fish**

*By Marcus Pfister*

North South Books, 1992

*Rainbow Fish* is the most beautiful fish in the ocean. He thinks he is very special because of his sparkling scales, and refuses to share his scales with the other fish. His friends become upset when he doesn't share and begin to ignore him. Rainbow Fish is very lonely until he seeks advice from a wise octopus and discovers that he is much happier when he shares his beautiful scales with his friends. (Ages 3-8)

### **Examples of activities that can be used while reading *The Rainbow Fish* and throughout the day to promote social and emotional development:**

- After children become familiar with the story, discuss the different emotions that the fish feel throughout the story. Ask children how Rainbow Fish feels about his beautiful, sparkling scales. Why did the little blue fish want one of Rainbow Fish's scales? How do they think the other fish felt when Rainbow Fish wouldn't play or share with them? Why did Rainbow Fish feel lonely? Why was Rainbow Fish happy at the end of the book? How did the other fish feel when Rainbow Fish shared his glimmering scales with them?
- While reading the story, have children talk about times when they didn't feel like sharing. Ask children how they would feel if they were Rainbow Fish. Would they want to share their pretty scales with their friends? What if they were Rainbow Fish's friends? How would they feel if Rainbow Fish didn't want to share his scales with them? Ask children what they can do when they don't want to share what they are playing with. For example, they might use a timer and tell their friend they can play with the toy in 5 minutes. Ask if they remember what Rainbow Fish did. He asked for help! First he asked the starfish and then the wise octopus. Explain that they could do what Rainbow Fish did and ask a teacher or one of their friends for help. This is a great opportunity to discuss how it is sometimes really hard to share!
- Talk about the importance of friendship. Ask children what it means to be a good friend. As the children share their thoughts, write them on a sheet of paper decorated with "fish friends" (fish cut out of construction paper). Refer back to their list as you see children using their "fish friend" ideas throughout the day.
- Have a "Be a Good Friend Day!" so children can practice using their friendship skills throughout the day. Refer back to their "fish friend" list to remind them of ideas for being a good friend.



Reading the same book for several days in a row is a great way to provide opportunities for infants, toddlers, and preschoolers to develop a sense of competence and confidence, which is an important part of social and emotional development. They become able to turn pages, point at and label pictures, talk about the story, predict what will happen next, learn new vocabulary words, talk about their own experiences in relation to the story and even make up their own story! Try reading *The Rainbow Fish* for several days in a row and use some of the ideas, activities, and teaching opportunities listed below to enhance social and emotional skills.

## Friendship

Remind children how the fish became upset and ignored Rainbow Fish when he would not share his beautiful, glimmering scales with them. When they did this, Rainbow Fish was very lonely and felt like he didn't have any friends. Refer back to the list of "fish friend" ideas for being a good friend. Explain to the children that today they will be doing some fun activities related to being friends.

**Art:** Ask the children if they remember what Rainbow Fish shared with the other fish in the ocean (his beautiful scales). Tell them that they are going to work together and make their own Rainbow Fish with beautiful, glittery scales. Make a large fish shape on butcher paper. Using half circles made with construction paper or paper plates cut in fourths, have children work together to make shimmering, glittery fish scales just like Rainbow Fish had! They can decorate their scales with glitter, pictures, foil, stickers, markers, etc. Limit the number of materials to encourage children to share and work together. As they are decorating their scales, point out how they are sharing and working together like friends do. After they have finished decorating the scales, help children attach each scale to the large fish shape. Be sure to attach only a small corner of the scale to the Rainbow Fish shape. The next time you read the story and get to the part where Rainbow Fish gives away his scales, you can have children take a scale off of the big Rainbow Fish and put it on a smaller fish made out of construction paper and taped around the large Rainbow Fish shape.

**Block Area:** Tell the children that they are going to build a pretend ocean with the blocks just like the one that Rainbow Fish and his friends lived in. Help children put the blocks in a circle to make the ocean. Explain that they are now going to go fishing in the ocean. Put metal fruit juice can lids with pictures of the children glued to the top of the lids in the "ocean" (prepare the picture lids ahead of time). Using a fishing pole with a magnet, children can go "fishing for friends". After they catch a friend, they can do something special with their friend during the day. Talk to the children about what kinds of things they can do with their friends. Remind them about the ideas on their "fish friends" list. At the end of the day, have children share what kinds of special things they did with their friends.

**Literacy:** Explain to children that they are going to make a Rainbow Fish book about what it means to be a good friend. Have fish shapes cut out of different colored construction paper with "I am a good friend when I ..." written on each fish. Talk to children about what kinds of things a good friend might do. Have them think about their friends. What do their friends do that make them feel really special? Help them write their thoughts on each fish. They can also draw pictures and decorate their fish pages. When they are finished, put all of the pages together to make a book. Read the book during large group time and then put it in the book area so children can read their Rainbow Fish book throughout the year.