



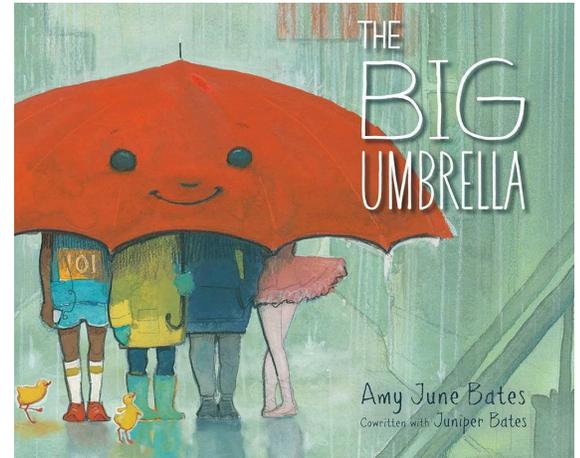
The Big Umbrella

by Amy June Bates

Under the big umbrella, there's room for everyone.

This simple yet powerful story celebrates kindness, inclusion, and the idea that our world, like the umbrella, grows bigger and brighter when we make space for others. Through beautiful illustrations and gentle storytelling, readers are reminded that belonging is something we can all help create.

This story connects to leadership skills of empathy, collaboration, and openness.



Discussion Questions

- The umbrella kept getting bigger to make room for everyone. What does that tell us about how we can include others?
 - Follow-up Prompt: What are ways we can make “more room” for people in our classroom or activities?
 - Leadership Connection: Leaders show empathy by noticing when someone needs a place to belong and making sure they feel welcome.
- Why can including others take effort or courage?
 - Follow-up Prompt: Think of a time you stepped outside your comfort zone to include someone. How did it feel?
 - Leadership Connection: Leaders practice collaboration by inviting different people and ideas into the group, even when it takes flexibility.
- At the end, everyone fits under the big umbrella even though they're all different. Why is it good to have a mix of different people in a group?
 - Follow-up Prompt: How does diversity make our classroom or school stronger?
 - Leadership Connection: Leaders know that anywhere is better, when everyone is welcome. They help “make room” for all different kinds of people.



Classroom Activities

“Umbrella of Support” Skits

- In small groups, students create short role-plays that show a time someone might feel left out (at lunch, recess, group work, etc.) and how classmates can “open the umbrella” to include them.
- Groups perform for the class.

“Inclusion Interview” Partners

- Pair students with someone they don’t usually work with.
- Give each a few simple prompts:
 - “What’s something you like to do at recess?”
 - “What helps you feel included?”
 - “What’s one kind thing someone’s done for you?”
- After interviewing, students introduce their partner to the class:
- “This is Taylor, and she feels included when people ask her to join a group.”

Whole School Engagement Project

“Under Our Big Umbrella” School Display

- Create a giant umbrella mural or hanging display in a main hallway.
- Each class contributes paper people, raindrops, or hearts labeled with their names and one inclusive action they’ve practiced (e.g., “invited someone new to sit with us,” “used kind words on the playground”).

On the umbrella write, “There’s Room for Everyone Under Our Big Umbrella”

Left Out at Recess

A student is standing alone on the playground while others are playing a game.
How can classmates "open the umbrella" and invite them to join in?

Group Project Problems

One group member's idea keeps getting ignored during a class project.
How can the group make space for everyone's ideas?

New Student Nerves

A new student just joined the class and looks nervous during morning meeting.
What can classmates do or say to help them feel welcome?

Different Abilities

A student in class needs extra time or help during an activity.
How can others be patient and supportive without making them feel different?

Lunchroom Loneliness

Someone is sitting alone at lunch.
What are ways others could include them under the "umbrella" of friendship?

Lost on the Way

A younger student looks confused in the hallway and can't find their classroom.
How could an older student offer help?

Recess Disagreement

2 classmates both want to be the leader in a game.
How could they share, take turns, or collaborate so everyone has fun?

Mistake in Class

A student reads a word wrong or spills supplies and looks embarrassed.
What can others do or say to show kindness and understanding?

Excluded from a Club or Team

A student wants to join a club or game but is told there's "no room."
How can someone else help make room for them just like the Big Umbrella?

Someone Being Teased

A classmate is being teased for something like their clothes, lunch, or interests.
How can others step in to support and protect that person in a kind way?

