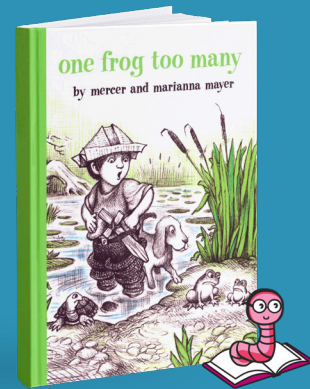




HELPING YOU  
HELP CHILDREN  
COMMUNICATE

## Building Perspective-taking Skills in Children with Autism with *One Frog Too Many*



An important part of understanding stories is recognizing that different characters may have different feelings, likes or dislikes. When you help your child “tune in” to the thoughts and feelings of others, you’re not only nurturing her literacy development, but also building an important communication skill.

If your child enjoys books and is able to answer questions and make comments, then book reading can be a great time to build her perspective-taking skills in a way that’s natural and fun.

### Example book

*One Frog Too Many* by Mercer and Marianna Mayer

### What it’s about

This wordless book tells the story of a boy with a pet frog who gets a new frog as a gift. Unfortunately, the current pet frog does not want to share the spotlight and is jealous of the new frog!

### Why it’s great

- Clear illustrations of characters’ emotions
- Lots of opportunities to talk about how different people might have different feelings and reactions to the same event

### What you can do

Take a look through the book beforehand and see where you might:

- **Stress words that describe the characters’ feelings and thoughts** – Think about the language you might use to draw your child’s attention to a character’s feelings or thoughts. Remember to emphasize these words to make them stand out. For example:
  - “The boy is so *excited* to have a new pet frog.”
  - “This frog is *angry* that there is a new frog.”
  - “The boy is *upset* that his old frog bit his new frog.”
- **Use “thinking-out-loud” questions and comments** – Think about what you might say to help your child think about what the characters are thinking and feeling. For example:
  - “I’m *wondering* why the old frog is so angry that the boy got a new frog.”
  - “I *think* the new frog just wants to be friends with the old frog.”
  - “How do you think the old frog *feels* when he gets in trouble?”

## The first time you read the book

Look at the pictures together and comment on what's happening. This will build your child's understanding of the basic story.

- Use words that describe what the characters' thoughts or feelings might be, and emphasize those words when you say them (for example, *angry, excited, worried, scared or happy*).
  - Point to the facial expression of the character as you stress the word.
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## Re-reading the book

Once your child understands the basic story, you can work in conversations that encourage perspective-taking.

- **Add thinking-out-loud comments or questions that highlight what a character might be wanting, thinking or feeling:**
  - "Why do you think the old frog is so *upset*?"
  - "I wonder how the new frog feels when he sees he is going to be living with another frog."
  - "I wonder why the old frog changed his mind about the new frog at the end of the story."
- **Make comments or ask questions that relate the characters' experiences to those of your child:**
  - "Have you ever had a present you were really excited about?"
  - "Have you ever changed your mind about how you felt about something?"
  - "This reminds me of the time when Jake came over to play. You were having fun but your brother was jealous because he wasn't getting as much attention."

For more tips on building perspective-taking and other skills in children with autism, visit [www.hanen.org/Helpful-info](http://www.hanen.org/Helpful-info).

### About The Hanen Centre

The Hanen Centre is a not-for-profit organization committed to promoting the best possible language, literacy and social skills in young children. This includes children who have or are at risk for language delays, those with developmental challenges such as autism, and those who are developing typically. For more information, visit [www.hanen.org](http://www.hanen.org).