

Little Voices, BIG Choices

Alexandra Bennett Cannady

Jane Bloom

Copyright © 2025 The Oz Effect

SERIES INTRODUCTION

Grownups don't seem to understand. Life is tough for a kid. Adults get to play on their computers all day, but they limit *our* screen time. Adults go to bed when they want, but send us to bed when we're not even tired. Adults eat what they want, but tell us to eat more of the gross green stuff. On top of that, they tell us, "Don't play with your food," "Don't climb on the table," "Don't finger paint on the walls!"

They won't explain why we have to do something and usually just say, "because I said so." Ugh. It's all so complicated. We try to kidsplain, but parents still don't understand the awesome things we do. Sometimes words just aren't enough. My teacher says us kids don't have the **vocabulary** to properly explain why we do the things that make grownups mad!

Sometimes it seems they forget that WE'RE KIDS! We're doing our job! We learn through *playing*...not lectures! (It's true, just ask scientists.) Just like your boss needs charts and graphs to explain complex data in an easy way for you to remember, don't you think us kids could use some pictures to understand how to make decisions, especially the complicated ones? Better yet, what if those pictures were *interactive*?

Welcome to the **Little Voices, BIG Choices** series, a picture book series that focuses on the adventures of me, Walter (I'm six and a half) and my awesome group of friends. The coolest part of the series are the visuals- -interactive illustrations to help parents and young people better communicate. It turns the idea of grownup charts and graphs into clever visuals that illustrate cause and effect, helping us kids understand why going to bed late and eating too much candy can make us feel like little monsters. It's all about choices...and learning how to make the right ones.

Each book is a guide that allows us kids to *show* grownups how we're feeling when we don't know how to put emotions into words- - things like an exploding volcano can help us explain that we're REALLY mad and reminds us when and how to use our self-regulation tools. There are also really cool things like race cars to help us understand time management, a screaming monster who shows us why we may need to use our "inside voice", and a rocketship fuel tank to show us why getting the right "fuel" matters.

In each book, my best monster friend, Retlaw, and I go on adventures that help teach us about age-appropriate responsibility, decision-making and how to use our little voices to make BIG choices.

BOOK 1 SHORT SUMMARY (Book Blurb)

Walter's morning routine went from usual to unusual in one swift second. Everything was fine until he looked in the mirror. Instead of his normal reflection, he found a (not-so-scary) monster looking right back at him. This not-so-scary, but *very* bossy monster, named Retlaw is the mirror opposite of good behavior. He spends the rest of their day trying to get Walter to misbehave- -leaving Walter to make some very big choices. They have amusing back-and-forth discussions about everything from eating habits to screaming at the top of their lungs. Over the course of the story, Walter discovers that the many little decisions he makes can have a significant effect on his overall happiness.

Monster in My Mirror, the first book in the **Little Voices, BIG Choices** series features Walter, a curious first grader, and his best friend, Retlaw, a loveable but gruff monster. This interactive picture book series allows kids to discover the cause and effects of their decisions in a playful new way.

ELEVATOR PITCH

These days, a goal in education is to prepare young children to solve problems they've never seen before. Studies show that kids' learning is optimized when they are able to play with their education, or *purposeful* play.

Little Voices, BIG Choices is an interactive picture book series that allows kids to physically discover the cause and effects of their decisions in a multi-sensory, playful new way. The series explores versatile subject matter through heart-warming stories intended to teach young people about decision making, problem solving, and age-appropriate responsibilities (which is everything from making your bed to learning about senses to learning acceptance and more). The demographic can be as wide as ages 4-8.

The series employs a kid-centered approach, while also being a critical tool for adults (parents, educators, counselors, caregivers) to better communicate with their children or students. And the book is designed to naturally build imagination and social skills, develop reading, language and math skills, and advance fine motor skills.

In essence, the **Little Voice, BIG Choices** series is a accessible approach to problem-solving and is *the* play book for parent/child communication.

GENRE

1. Picture Books*
2. Games & Activities- -Kids 3-5, Kids 6-8
3. Family & Growing Up- -Kids 3-5, Kids 6-8
4. Empowerment & Success- -Kids and parents
5. Learning Basic Concepts- -Kids 3-5, Kids 6-8
6. Social Issues- -Kids 3-5, Kids 6-8
7. Special Needs- -Kids 3-5, Kids 6-8
8. Social Studies- -Kids 3-5, Kids 6-8
9. Parenting & Family
10. Self-Help & Relationships

*Could also be moveable books.

ANTICIPATED WORD COUNT

Book 1 has 647 words

Book 2 has 596 words

COMPETITIVE TITLES

Note: we've included bullet points that address the similarities in each competitive title the Little Voices, BIG Choices series

1. [How the World Works: A Hands-On Guide to Our Amazing Planet](#) by Christian Dorion (published by Candlewick Press)
 - Published February 23, 2010
 - ISBN 9780763648015
 - Cost: \$24.99
 - Book is a physical tool for learning in which cause and effect is a major theme
 - Interactive visuals explain difficult concepts
2. [The Color Monster: A Pop-Up Book of Feelings](#) by Anna Llenas (published by Union Square Kids)
 - Published September 1, 2015
 - ISBN 9781454917298
 - Cost: \$24.99
 - Focus on Social-Emotional learning, using story and illustrations as a tool to break down complex concepts
 - Whimsical Design

3. [I Want My Hat Back](#) by Jon Klassen (published by Candlewick Press)
 - Published September 2011
 - ISBN 9781454917298
 - Cost: \$18.99
 - Uses story and pithy dialogue to teach life lessons
 - Both adults and children are engaged in the story

Like the books above, the **Little Voices, BIG Choices** series empowers young people to learn complex life skills by combining strong storytelling with *purposefully crafted, gamified illustrations* that they can explore with their own two hands. This makes the series (and our corresponding guidebooks) a critical tool for parents, educators, therapists and counselors.

SUMMARY OF SERIES CONCEPT

Why Interactive Visuals?

Imagine sitting in a board meeting without a Power Point presentation. Teams would be lost without visuals. Charts and graphs explain everything visually and help everybody get a clear understanding of complex concepts. Diagrams present data too complicated to be explained with words. Well, kids are tactile and visual beings, doesn't it stand to reason that this same visual tactic be adapted for the youngest members of the human race?

What if that visual tactic came to life? What if we supersized and kidified it, creating colorful, 2D interactive elements that engage kids, helping them understand complex concepts like responsibility, health, mental wellness, emotions...all in the name of helping them better understand themselves and how the decisions they make affect their overall wellbeing.

This series is the next evolution of multi-sensory, interactive books that aims to mediate meltdowns, empower young people, and facilitate parent/child communication through purposeful play. It's a gamified book, a physical tool that will help illustrate the complexities of cause and effect in a way kids can understand.

Developed in consultation with stakeholders: child psychologists, educators, parents, *and* kids, this series will help empower young people by showing them that their choices (and voices) matter! Using sharp storytelling paired with whimsically illustrated charts,

graphs, and boardgame-like activities the **Little Voices, BIG Choices** books illustrate the importance of cause and effect while focusing on a growth mindset and youth empowerment through language, storytelling, and tactile, purposeful play.

Imagine...

- an animated x-ray illustrates the beautiful ways that our brains are all different
- a screaming monster tells us why we may need to use our “inside voice”
- an exploding volcano displays what happens when one doesn’t let off steam
- race cars on a track help kids understand time management
- a whimsical illustration shows young people a way to practice mindfulness—using pizza
- a maze of emotions explains how important it is to name (and feel) our feelings

Note: the series could also be pop-up books on steroids (think: a moveable/mechanical book with pop-ups, sliders, volvelles, flaps, audio chips, textures) or it could be a purposefully illustrated picture book. Either way, each book is designed to encourage self-reflection, self-regulation and age-appropriate accountability.

AUTHOR BIOS

Alexandra Bennett Cannady and Jane Bloom

Behind the keyboard, you’ll find us, the kids who knew what they wanted to be when they grew up and went on to fulfill their calling. We’re Alexandra Bennett Cannady and Jane Bloom, and we’ve spent most of our adult lives producing kid-focused network television.

Over the years, Alexandra spent time at NBC, ABC, and CBS. Her initial dream to work in children’s television was officially realized when she became a producer at Nickelodeon. Her eight years there proved her theory that the greatest thing in the world was making a kid smile and if they can learn at the same time?! Home run. She lived the guiding Nickelodeon principle to never talk down to kids, which was probably a key reason she was recruited by Disney. One of her favorite credits? Producer on the ABC Disney Christmas special—another dream come true. After three years at Disney, she was poached by Discovery/Animal Planet and was an Executive Producer for eight years. Volunteering for twelve years at the Children’s Inn at NIH, and now, with a 13 year old of her own, this book fulfills her mission of making kids smile while learning. And she’s never been more excited about an idea.

Jane has won two national Emmy Awards for social impact/educational television and has developed after school programs aimed at empowering young people and communities. At the peak of her career, she knew she needed knowledge that no documentary could reveal. She went on a two year journey around the world, traveling to 30 countries, interviewing and observing kids all along the way. She embraced the fact that no matter where a toddler was brought up, there may be different ways of doing things, but there were many universal needs that overlapped. With her now three year old, she's experiencing this first hand and entertaining young people is part of *our* daily conversation.

Both authors are members of the Producers Guild of America, have both written numerous hours of television, and can pull the rabbit out of the proverbial hat.

MARKETING

Besides the creators, our advisors (a child psychologist and international educator), will be available for book signings, conferences (virtual and in-person), and speaking engagements.

- **Traditional Media**

Traditional media is in our wheelhouse. We can help promote the book by engaging with our various media contacts which include everything from *The Today Show* to Nickelodeon...to Warner Media and Apple Music for potential podcast placement. Our involvement with the Producers Guild of America also gives us reach into new media markets.

In the online media world, we're involved in many closed/invite-only groups that have thousands of members. These include "mommy groups", PTA groups, therapy and neuroarts groups, non-profit foundations, and media professional organizations.

As producers we are experts at leveraging relationships, pitching stories, and creating opportunities and partnerships with influencers. We're also experts at creating media campaigns that engage audiences and drive sales such as contests, competitions, media tours, and videos.

- **In-Person Presentations**

In addition to traditional media tours and book signings at libraries, major outlets like Barnes and Noble, independent bookstores, and children's boutiques, we can promote the series in-person in unique ways such as attending and giving presentations at conferences including the National Afterschool Association.

- **Curriculums**

Our team has been involved in educational media for decades. We can work with various public school systems to include in various early childhood education programs, special needs education, and sensory programs (like nationally franchised Mommy and Me classes) for additional sales and promotion. Once the book is published, we will approach the National Home School Association and Montessori groups for inclusion in their curriculum guides.

- **Social Media and Online Presence**

The creators of this series engage in social media outside their personal circles. We have run international social media campaigns and have partners that include the former head of global digital advertising at the New York Times and a google SEO/SEM expert. With book and budget in hand, we can activate this army's wide reach for ultimate online promotion through Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Pinterest and TikTok. We can also build our own author's website for the series that, along with a campaign, will create a vibrant, user-led community around the series.

SAMPLE PITCH FOR MORNING SHOW

TODAY SHOW

Coming up next on the Today Show...

- ❖ Voices and Choices, a child psychologist shares new ways to mediate meltdowns at home...
- ❖ Meet the neuroscientists who think this new book series can make a difference by *showing*, not telling...
- ❖ How two moms, an educator and a psychologist tackle cause and effect for kids...
- ❖ This mom boss takes her work home, how one woman uses boardroom strategies to tackle parenting challenges at home...
- ❖ Mr. Rogers famously said that *play is serious learning*, the creators behind this book series agree...

WHY THIS BOOK IS TIMELY

Educational Trends

Our international educational advisor says: *these days, a goal in education is to prepare young children to solve problems they've never seen before.* Giving access to visual tools with a book, will help begin the process of problem-solving in a gameified way.

There are tons of tools out there right now designed to help young people regulate emotions, build life skills, and better navigate their worlds- -but most of them rely on *digital* tools. Parents and educators are desperate for interventions that pull kids away from screens and into the real world of play. This book fills that gap.

In addition, we've designed this book with input from all the stakeholders- -including parents. A recurring theme is that parents crave more intimate ways to engage in learning with their littles. This gives parents another reason to put down the phone and get on the floor to connect with their kids, while teaching them valuable life skills.

Creative Distribution

This series isn't just for the home and classroom. It has reach in areas like hospitals, refugee housing, juvenile justice centers, and therapist offices. Our social impact work has given us connections for distribution in each of these settings. With input from stakeholders in each of these populations, we can author titles in the series that deal with things like illness, displacement, justice, and alternative futures.