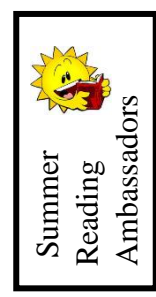
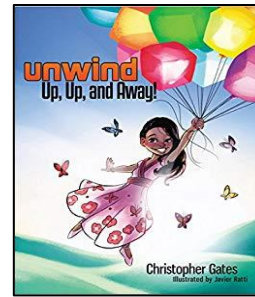




Unwind, Up, Up, and Away
by Christopher Gates
Mindfulness, Emotions, Well-Being



Six-year-old Alyssa finds it hard to cope with her emotions. In her head, they appear like scary monsters, their strength overwhelming her. In these moments, Alyssa sets off on a journey to find the power to conquer those emotions and unwind. Through mindfulness, Alyssa embraces the power she has to control her thoughts and emotions, supporting her social emotional well-being to "Unwind. Up, Up, and Away" into a great day.

Before Reading:

- From the book cover, what predictions can you make about the story?
- What does it mean to *unwind*? (Discuss multiple meanings and have children act out.)

During Reading:

Make your reading interactive by having children breathe in and out with Alyssa. Show them how to breathe in slowly through the nose and exhale slowly from the mouth. Have children follow the movements of Alyssa by lifting hands and placing gently over heart. Engage the reader in the story imagery and notice how the darkness and emotional monsters are expressed.

After Reading:

- How do Alyssa's emotions change throughout the book?
- How do the illustrations change throughout the book? Where and why do they change?
- How did Alyssa break through the boxes? How did the boxes change at the end of the story? What made them change?

Extension Ideas:

- **Be Mindful!** Guide children through mindfulness practice using the SEL competencies chart in the book. Example: With your eyes closed and palms gently placed on your thighs, breathe in and breathe out. Recognize your strengths (self-awareness) and reflect on a time when you used your strength to help others (responsible decision-making). Stretch your arms out, and reach up towards the sky, breathing in, breathing out.
- **Create:** Identify the emotions represented by the monsters in the book. Have children recreate the monsters in creative ways (paint, sculpt, build, drama, etc.) and create scenarios representing the emotions.
- **Act Out!** Have children create a dramatic performance scene where they model children supporting each other in their well-being as well as how when certain emotions enter the room, they can change for the positive or negative. How can you overcome negative emotions? (self-management) How did supporting each other in overcoming emotions help? (social awareness) How can you help your family and community? (relationship skills)
- **Play Emotion Charades!** Write emotion words from the book on index cards and have children take turns performing emotions (self-awareness) while the rest of the class guesses the emotion.