



Book Title: *Mama and Mommy and Me in the Middle*

Written by: Nina LaCour

Illustrated by: Kaylani Juanita

Age Range: 3-9

Grades: PreK-3rd

Identities/Lived Experiences/Themes in This Book

- Feelings
- General racial/ethnic diversity
- Bi/Multiracial identity or relationships
- Same-Gender relationships

Literacy Connections

- Realistic fiction
- Identify details in the text
- Identify theme or main message
- Character point of view
- Use illustrations/pictures/photos to gain information
- Make inferences
- Make text connections (to self, text, the world)
- Describe major plot events
- Figurative language

Anti-Bias Education	Social-Emotional Learning
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Empathy and Understanding ● Healthy Complex Identities ● Respect Across Differences ● Notice, Name, and Reject Bias ● Responsiveness and Action 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Self-Awareness ● Self-Management ● Social Awareness ● Relationship Skills ● Responsible Decision-Making

Background Information for Adults

This book was inspired by the author's real experience as a mother leaving her 3-year-old for a 10-day business trip. Read more about her story in this Creator Note offered by Candlewick Press, the publisher:

<https://d3kr0g7umcubly.cloudfront.net/candlewick-press-us/pdfs/creator-note/9781536211511-notes-1.pdf>



Mama and Mommy and Me in the Middle is a great book that shows an example of a healthy, loving family that happens to have two mothers, but it is not about the challenges of having a family headed by a lesbian couple. Not every story depicting an LGBTQ+ family needs to be about the challenges or biases LGBTQ+ families may face. Representation as a part of healthy identity development means simply representing an identity, family structure, or lived experience as a normal, regular part of the human experience.

For more information about supporting children with LGBTQ+ families and how to navigate conversations with children about diverse family structures, see the **Diverse Family Structures Primer**.

Note: This book may trigger sadness in children who have a loved one, especially a parent, they haven't been able to see for a while. Reassure children that they are loved and talk with them about what they can do to feel connected with the one they miss. It's important to allow time and space for this grief or sense of loss. If you are an educator, remember to keep parents/caregivers informed of what you observe.

Reflection Questions for Adults Reading This Book to Children

Think about your own beliefs about family.

- What are the different family structures you are aware of? What is your familiarity or experience with these different family structures?
- Are there family structures that you are aware of feeling biased or negative toward? How might this impact the children that you interact with or work with?
- What experience do you have with same gender families?
- How can you make sure that children with same gender family members feel respected and welcomed?

Book Summary to Read to Children Before Reading the Book

A little girl loves sitting right in the middle of her two moms—Mama on one side, Mommy on the other. But when Mommy goes on a work trip, things feel different. Where should she sit? She and Mama read books, watch movies, and talk to Mommy on the phone, but she still really misses her. One day, while walking by a garden, the girl has an idea to help her feel better. Let's read this sweet story about how much we can miss someone we love—and how good it feels when they come back.

Discussion Questions
(essential questions in **bold**)

1. Several of the girl's classmates also miss loved ones. Have you ever missed someone you loved? What did you miss about being with them? What helped you feel better when you missed them?
2. Go through the story again and look carefully at the illustrations as you read the text. **What unique or different things happen on each day of the week?**
3. **What is the girl's plan for when Mommy comes home?**
 - a. How would you celebrate a loved one coming home from being gone for a while?
4. **Why doesn't the girl in the story want a kiss from her Mommy when she first sees her after being gone for a week, even though she missed her Mommy so much?** ("I cover my cheek with my hand. 'It isn't a day for kisses,' I tell her.")

Journal Prompts and Extension Activities

1. **Write or Draw:** Have you ever missed someone you loved? What helped you feel better when you missed them? Write or draw about that person. Think about what is special about them to you, things you like to do together, what you missed about them when they were gone, and what helped you feel better while they were away.
2. **Staying in Touch:** Make a list of ways you keep connected with loved ones when you can't be near them. Be creative. What are other ways besides a text message or a phone call? Choose one idea from the list, and use it in the next few days.

Maybe write a letter to a relative, create some artwork, or work on the same project but in separate places.

3. **Hoop jumping:** When we feel sad, mad, or worried, it can help us to express how we feel and problem solve. Place a hula hoop on the floor. One at a time, have each child stand in the middle of the hoop and express a negative feeling they have when they miss someone they care about or something specific that they miss about a loved one. Then have the child jump out of the hoop to the left or the right and share a positive thing they do to cheer themselves up when feeling down. They can do this several times. After everyone who wants a turn in the hoop gets one, have children share something new they learned from a peer that they can do to lift their spirits. This activity helps children learn new coping skills from each other.
4. **Garden Wall:** Inspired by the garden in the story, let children create a paper garden wall. Use construction paper, tissue paper, or printable flower templates. Each flower can show:
 - a. Someone they love
 - b. Something they like to do with that person

For additional activities, see the Tip Card offered by Candlewick Press:
<https://d3kr0g7umcubly.cloudfront.net/candlewick-press-us/pdfs/teachers-guide/9781536211511-tip-1.pdf>



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