Kat is feeling sad, so she decides to write a song to make herself feel better. When she sings it, the sun comes out and she wonders if her “Amazing Song to Make Things Better” will work for everyone. Singing is a great way to introduce children to sound recognition and listening skills.

Activity Ideas for Kat Writes a Song:

• In the book, Kat writes her own song. You can help children make up their own songs, too! Singing is a great way to practice hearing how sounds are combined in different ways. This helps children sound words out when they start to read. Take any familiar tune and replace the words with nonsense syllables the children choose, such as la, oooh, or ahhh. Or make up your own words to The Wheels on the Bus, adding interesting-sounding animal names, sounds, or actions as you go, such as:
  The wombat on the bus sings la la la
  The zebra on the bus says hey hey hey
  The eel on the bus goes bubble bubble bubble

• As she walks around the neighborhood, Kat recognizes the emotions and feelings of her friends. Emotions and feelings are abstract ideas and can be difficult concepts for children to understand. Check out a book from the library with lots of different photos of people. Practice making different facial expressions as you talk about different feelings. Talking with your child about emotions will introduce new words to their vocabulary and build their understanding of their own emotions, the emotions of other people they know, as well as of the characters they read about in books.

• Make musical instruments to tap out the syllables in the names of family and friends. Punch holes in a paper plate and tie bells or yarn to the holes to make a tambourine. Add rice or beans to a jar with a lid to make a shaker. Or bang on a pot with a wooden spoon! Tap or shake once for every syllable:
  José is two taps: Jo-sé. Imani is three taps: I-man-i. Kim is one tap: Kim.

The CLEL Bell Picture Book Awards are given to books that provide excellent support of early literacy development in young children. For more information and for other activity sheets, visit http://www.cel.org and select the CLEL Bell Awards tab.

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