



Change Can Be Good by Julie Dillemath, PhD



Camilla the cartographer and her loyal sidekick, Parsley, are back to solve a fresh new problem in [Camilla and the Big Change](#) by Julie Dillemath, PhD, a companion book to the critically acclaimed [Camilla, Cartographer](#). When beavers make a dam that changes the path of the river, Camilla has to help make new maps and learn that change can be a good thing.

Here is an adapted excerpt from Dr. Dillemath's Note to Parents and Caregivers with more information about coping with change and develop in spatial awareness.

Coping with change

When coping with change, we often feel a range of feelings. Naming and acknowledging feelings is helpful during this process of adapting to change, as is knowing that these big feelings won't last forever. Kids need to know that feelings change over time, and that it's ok to have mixed feelings—to feel sad for something going away, but excited for a new thing about to happen. The whole range of feelings is valid.

Try this: Camilla goes through a range of emotions in the book. With your child, go through the book and identify Camilla's feelings from page to page, why she might feel that way, and how those feelings change as things happen.

Take it further: Use this story to talk about a change in your child's life. A change can be as minor as having a substitute teacher (which can be major to a child), or as big as a move or loss. Gently encourage your child to tell their story—what happened? What were their feelings? What did they do? What did they want to do? Your child may want to draw pictures or write out a story.

Spatial thinking

Spatial thinking encompasses a range of skills for how we think about and understand the world around us and use concepts of space for problem solving. Some spatial thinking skills we practice every day and others are critical for working in STEAM fields: science, technology, engineering, arts, and math. By encouraging your child to think spatially from a young age, you are helping the development of these skills and laying foundations that will be built upon as your child grows and learns.

Try this: With your child, talk about the maps Camilla and the beavers drew. Talk about how they worked together to create the pond safely, so that no animals living in the forest would be harmed. How did they know which animals would need to be moved to avoid being flooded?

Take it further: Your child can explore spatial relationships at home. Pick a room in your house and talk about rearranging the furniture. What if we moved the bed across the room? What if we turned the couch 90 degrees? Try moving things around for fun and encourage your child to make discoveries—what doesn't fit? What things go together? Where is empty space important? Try to use lots of spatial language like next to, in front of, between, to the left, behind, etc.

If your child is having a hard time adjusting to change, consider seeking out a licensed therapist who specializes in working with children. To find a therapist near you, use [APA's Psychologist Locator](#).