

## The Kissing Hand

Dr. Deborah Bergeron: Hello, Head Start. My name is Dr. B, and I'm so excited to be here to read you a book today. I thought it would be fun to read with a couple friends, so on this side, I have Ellie. Ellie is here to read with us. I have another friend here I'll show you. He may join us and then might walk away. This is Webster. Say hi, Webster! Webster's intrigued by the camera, so we'll see. We're gonna put him down. He might come join us later.

I have a special book for you. It's called "The Kissing Hand," and I'm very excited to share this book with you today. It's one of my favorites. And I know you're at home and I'm at my home, so I'm gonna read from my home to your home. This is called, "The Kissing Hand." It is by Audrey Penn. And Audrey wrote this book for Stefanie Rebecca Koren and children everywhere who love to be loved. And I'm thinking that's you. All right, are you ready? Get cozy; get something comfy. Maybe you have a special friend you want to bring with you to read this story.

"Chester Raccoon stood at the edge of the forest and cried. 'I don't want to go to school,' he told his mother. 'I want to stay home with you. I want to play with my friends and play with my toys and read my books and swing on my swing. Please, please, please, may I stay home with you?'"

Look how sad he looks. Oh, my goodness. Poor Chester Raccoon.

"Mrs. Raccoon took Chester by the hand and nuzzled him on the ear. 'Sometimes we all have to do things we don't want to do,' she told him gently, 'even if they seem strange and scary at first. But you will love school once you start.'"

Did any of you ever feel afraid to go to school? Were you scared to be somewhere where your mom wasn't with you? That can be scary. But I bet you made friends. Hmm, I wonder what's gonna happen to Chester.

"You'll make new friends and play with new toys."

Do you see the new toys that Chester's playing with?

"Read new books and swing on new swings. Besides,' she added, 'I know a wonderful secret that will make your nights at school seem as warm and cozy as your days at home.'"

What do you think her secret is? I'm wondering what her secret is.

"Chester wiped away his tears and looked interested. 'A secret? What kind of secret?' 'A very old secret,' Mrs. Raccoon said. 'I learned it from my mother, and she learned it from hers. And it's called the kissing hand.' 'The kissing hand?' asked Chester. 'What's that?' 'I'll show you,' Mrs. Raccoon said. She took Chester's left hand and spread open his tiny fingers into a fan. Leaning forward, she kissed Chester right in the middle of his palm. Chester felt his mother's kiss rush

from his hand up his arm, into his heart. Even his silky black mask tingled with a special warmth."

Wow, that must have been some kiss on Chester's hand.

"Mrs. Raccoon's smiled. 'Now,' she told Chester, 'whenever you feel lonely and need a little loving from home, just press your hand to your cheek and think, Mommy loves you. Mommy loves you. And that very kiss will jump to your face, fill you with toasty warm thoughts.' She took Chester's hand and carefully wrapped his fingers around the kiss. 'Now, do be careful not to lose it,' she teased him. 'But don't worry. When you open your hand and wash your food, I promise the kiss will stick.'"

Wow. Do you see all those animals in the forest there? Do you think those are Chester's friends? They might be.

"Chester loved his kissing hand. Now he knew his mother's love would go with him wherever he went, even to school. That night, Chester stood in front of his school and looked thoughtful. Suddenly, he turned to his mother and grinned. 'Give me your hand,' he told her. Chester took his mother's hand in his own hand and unfolded her large, familiar fingers into a fan. Next, he leaned forward, and he kissed the center of her hand."

Do you know what he's doing? Are you wondering what Chester's doing right now? I think you might know.

"'Now you have a kissing hand, too,' he told her. With a gentle 'goodbye' and 'I love you,' Chester turned and danced away."

Well, it doesn't sound like he's scared to go to school at all anymore. He danced away. I don't think we dance when we're scared. Look at all of his friends. I wonder if they have kissing hands, too.

"Mrs. Raccoon watched Chester scamper across the tree limb and enter school, and as the hoot owl rang in the new school year, she pressed her left hand to her cheek and smiled. The warmth of Chester's kiss filled her heart with special words. 'Chester loves you.'"

It's saying, "Chester loves you." Do you think that made her – his mom – feel happy? I think it made her feel happy. And now look at all of the animals at school. We've got hoot owl in the tree. Who else do you see? This is a very special school because they go to school at nighttime. I didn't go to school at nighttime when I was little. I went during the day. They look like they're having fun, though.

And look at this last page. It says, "I love you," and that is the sign for "I love you." You can make that sign, too. You can go up to your mom or your dad right now, and you can say, "I love you, or your sister or your brother or your friends. Maybe you're talking to someone on your computer, and you can say, "I love you."

I hope you enjoyed our book. I loved reading with you. You can watch this as many times as you want, and maybe you can even try to read the book yourself if you have this book, or another book. You could find a special friend, like I did, and read. You can read to someone, or to your special friend. Anybody you want. Have a great day. Bye.