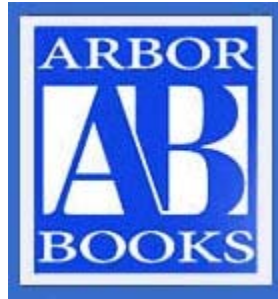


Your Kids And Peer Pressure

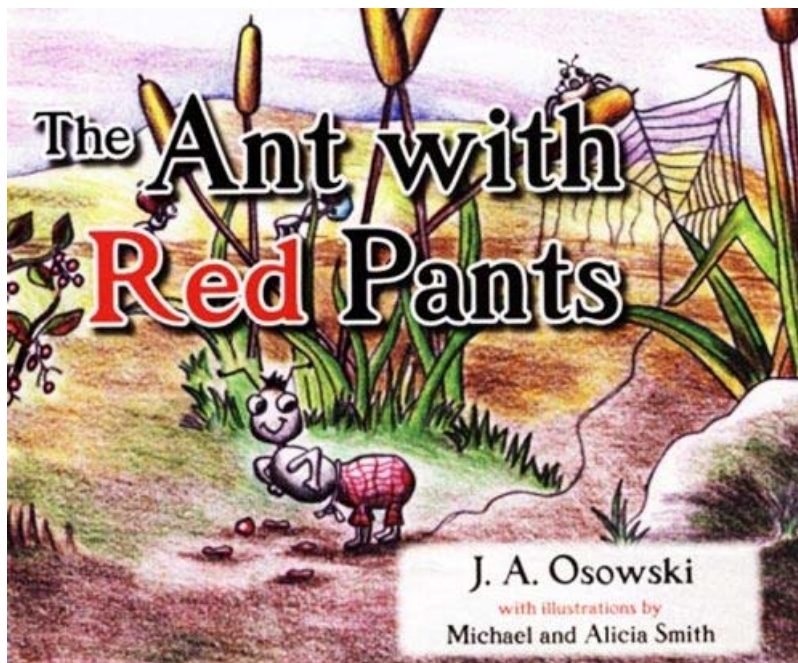


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Knowing what to tell your children about verbal peer intimidation, especially if they are being bullied, can be difficult. Now one author is trying to make it a little easier by telling the story of an ant who becomes a hero, despite being teased and laughed at by his fellow ants.



J.A. Osowski, author of the new children's book The Ant with Red Pants, believes that children need concrete examples of role models that have overcome challenges such as intimidation.

"We all face challenges in life and sometimes that includes the ridicule of other people," says Mr. Osowski. "Having public examples of people—or, in this case, ants—that believe in themselves and who don't listen to the negativity of other people is really helpful to kids."

Mr. Osowski's book, illustrated by Michael and Alicia Smith, is about an ant named Andrew who makes red pants for himself from a spider's web in order to hide his legs, which he thinks are too skinny. The other ants in the colony mock Andrew for his insecurities and his situation becomes worse.

"We all have insecurities about feeling like an outsider or that we aren't the same as the other people around us," says Mr. Osowski. "It's important that kids see that bullies are really just insecure people who don't know how to manage those insecurities."

Andrew the ant learns to overcome his insecurities, and the bullies in his colony, in order to save the day when his colony is threatened by the winter cold. It's a lesson that Mr. Osowski has taught to hundreds of school kids during readings of his book.

"The moral of the story is how children can discover and celebrate their own personal gifts and talents in the face of people who may be making fun of them," says Mr. Osowski. "That's something we've all had to deal with in life."

Joseph A. Osowski resides in eastern Connecticut with his wife, Ann Marie. They have two grown children and two grandchildren. Drawing from his own experiences, he hopes to build children's confidence as they try to fit in with their peers in today's society.

Illustrators Michael and Alicia Smith reside in eastern Connecticut with their two children, a boy and a girl. Michael works part-time and cares for their son, who has special needs. Alicia is an elementary-level art teacher in the town of Ledyard.

(The Ant with Red Pants by J.A. Osowski; ISBN: 1-59971-974-6; \$15.95; 28 pages; 8" x 10"; hardcover; Baltic Books)

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