

Title		Chrysanthemum			
Author (Text & Illustration)		Kevin Henkes			
Publication Year		1991	Publisher	Greenwillow Books	
Translated Versions		N/A			
Words	1,124	Pages	32	YL Level	1.1
Synopsis					
<p>Chrysanthemum the mouse loved her name very much, until the day she went to school. On her first day of school, which she was very excited to attend, the other children teased her about her name, shattering her confidence. She pulled herself together with her mother and father’s encouragement, but was disheartened because of the teasing. She was having one such gloomy day when the music teacher, Mrs. Twinkle, revealed that she too was named after a flower called Delphinium, and complimented Chrysanthemum on her lovely name. Everyone started to agree with her, and Chrysanthemum finally regained her confidence.</p>					
Introduction					
<p>One's name is considered their first gift from their parents. A child's name contains the thoughts and feelings of their parents and has elements that make it a story in itself. Incidentally, is Chrysanthemum an unusual name in English? Although flower names are sometimes used in English for girls' names, like Rose and Lily, Chrysanthemum seems to be rare. Flower names are used for girls in Japanese, such as Ume and Kiku, which mean plum and chrysanthemum, respectively, but these names are old-fashioned. I don't know if Chrysanthemum gives the same impression, but Chrysanthemum's friends tease her saying, "It's almost too long to fit on the name tag," "It uses 13 letters of the alphabet," and that "She was named after a flower."</p> <p>In assessing this story, some people are disappointed that as soon as the teacher praises the name, it's all over. Certainly, Chrysanthemum may be criticized for being passive from beginning to end, as she does not argue with the bullies herself, and regains confidence only with the intervention of the teacher. However, it seems harsh to ask a child who has just started school to overcome everything on her own.</p> <p>Rather, one can see how much impact a teacher's guidance has, and this makes us think about how adults should encourage children. When Chrysanthemum was struggling, her father was secretly referring to books like Childhood Anxiety and Understanding Identity (which are humorously illustrated). It also makes you think about how to encourage kids.</p>					

Kevin Henkes is an American author who won the Caldecott Award for *Kitten's First Full Moon* (2004), and his work has been translated into Japanese, but this book has not yet been translated.

(Text: Megumi Kobayashi)