



therapyfocus

HELPING CHILDREN GROW

## Lesson Plans & Related Curriculum Framework Links

The *I Am Special/ Jarrah's Jigsaw* Resource Booklet has been developed in line with the Early Years Learning Framework and the Department of Education and Training's Curriculum Framework to enable easy incorporation into programming and classroom schedules and activities.

The following activities meet elements of the Early Years Learning Framework.

Outcome 1: Children have a strong sense of identity

Outcome 2: Children are connected with and contribute to their world

Outcome 4: Children are confident and involved learners

Outcome 5: Children are effective communicators

More information regarding the Early Years Framework can be found at [www.deewr.gov.au](http://www.deewr.gov.au)

The activities also address the **Art, English** and **Society & Environment** learning areas, and encompass the five **Curriculum Framework Values**.

Curriculum Framework learning areas and values can be found on the Department of Education and Training website at [www.det.wa.edu.au](http://www.det.wa.edu.au).

# *I Am Special* Activities

## Activity 1

### **Class discussion**

*I Am Special* is a rhyming story written for younger children in a manner that approaches sensitive topics in a way that young children can understand. To further the understanding of the children in your care or in your classroom, set aside dedicated time for a fun and educational group discussion. As you are aware, discussions often brings out different opinions, thoughts and questions that you can expand on, even at a young age.

Start by reading *I Am Special* to the group of children. When finished, ask whether the children can tell you what the story is about. Ask questions that prompt children to explore the message of the story and whether they felt that it made them feel included.

Facilitate a class discussion based on some of the aspects of the story. For example whether they understand what a disability is, and how it might affect how a child may be able to participate in activities. Use the characters from the book to illustrate that while a child may have a disability they still want to participate in activities that other children do and, just like other people, have friends to play with.

Other aspects that the class could discuss could be on friendship, being included/different, acceptance and different types of disability. Students could be asked about how they feel about disabilities and how they would include a child with a disability.

Ask questions that encourage students to recall parts of the story and elaborate. Key questions to ask could be; 'does anyone know someone with a disability?', 'how would you feel if you were in a wheelchair?' and 'are you similar to (character's name) in anyway?'

Finally wrap up with asking students how they feel included at day care/kindy/school and using characters from the book, whether there might be ways to make children with disabilities feel included. For example how would students make Wesley (from the book) feel included? You could then play the game or activity suggested by the students.

## Activity 2

### Words, words, words

This activity is designed to encourage children to think about what they associate with certain words, characters or topics covered in *I Am Special* and why they might do so. It is a great activity for children to use new or different words and explore different ways of thinking.

#### **You will need:**

Whiteboard or large pieces of paper/card  
Whiteboard markers

#### **Optional:**

Paper  
Pens  
Scissors  
Glue  
Coloured Pens, Crayons or Textas  
String

Choose a topic, whether it is characters from the book or a key issue such as disability or inclusion and acceptance. Once you've chosen your topic ask the children to brainstorm words that relate to the topic, it can be on what they know about the topic, what they have learnt or how they feel.

Try to encourage students to think of positive experiences relating to the topic, and ask them why they were positive and what words it makes them think of. This way the children link the topic with a positive train of thought.

Write everyone's words up on the board, trying to keep them in groups, for example, if you have words with similar meanings. This way once you have finished the brainstorm you can go back and ask the children why they suggested these words- do they have a particular meaning to them? Is it something they have experienced?

Create word charts using words from the board to hang around room, to be used as references for children in other activities. You might choose to hang words individually instead.

Children can use these charts as references for other activities and will remind them of what they have learnt from the activity.

### Activity 3

## Acting out

This is a great activity for a social activity or for a Drama or English class. This activity can be very loud and aims at encouraging everyone to participate.

#### **Optional:**

To make the activity more exciting you could have children create finger puppets that represent the characters from the book, dress up or create actions or movements to represent each character. This could be a good time to allocate characters to each child, this way the child has an opportunity to explore one individual character.

An example would be if you were Micky, who is hearing impaired, you might ask the child to cover his/her ears, or if you were Jaimi who has a wheelchair, the motions could be to move their arms as if they were rotating the wheels.

Once you're ready, ask the children to sit in a circle and if you haven't done so already, allocate students a character or passage each. The group/class then reads through the story with each child reading their designated passage using characterization and/or actions.

Student 1:     Hi, my name is Junea,  
                  I am as special as can be.  
                  I cannot see as much as you,  
                  But I can listen carefully.

Student 2:     Hi, my name is Junea,  
                  I am as special as can be.  
                  I am a person who is vision impaired,  
                  Will you be friends with me?

The whole class responds to each character with: "YES! (Character name), we'll be friends with you!"

## Activity 4

### **We are special**

If you are really up for a challenge, then you may want to try using the *I Am Special* story rhyme concept. Create a class rhyme using students and their special talents. You may wish to use the last two passages of *I Am Special* for every student, or you might like to create your own rhyme using a similar concept.

You could ask students to create their own rhyme based on the last passages, or place them in pairs and ask them to create one for their partner. This way they get to know others in the class and their special talents as well.

The class can then perform their new story rhyme to other classes or at the school assembly; with each student saying their own (or their partners) rhyme.

# Jarrah's Jigsaw Activities

## Activity 1

### Class discussion

To help the children in your class further their understanding, facilitate a fun and educational group discussion. Group discussions often bring out different thoughts, opinions and experiences from children and you may have an opportunity to expand on questions raised.

Start by reading *Jarrah's Jigsaw* to the children. When finished explore whether the children understood what the message of the story is and why the message is being conveyed in a story such as *Jarrah's Jigsaw*.

As a group discuss some of the aspects of the story and the writing conventions used. For example whether they understand why a story such as *Jarrah's Jigsaw* may have been written. You can direct students to make statements about the story such as: "I found it interesting when... because...", or "I wonder what it would be like to have a disability". Encourage students to contribute to the discussion and justify their answers.

Other aspects that the class could discuss could be on friendship, being included/different, acceptance and different types of disability. Students could be asked about how they feel about disabilities and whether they would include a child with a disability. Explore with the children whether they know anyone with a disability and what the disability is.

Finally wrap up the discussion by asking students how they feel included at school, and referencing characters from the book, whether there might be ways to make children with disabilities feel more included.

For example, If Jarrah was new to your school, how would students make him feel included? What about if Wesley was new? It could be that students have some ideas on how the school could make children with disabilities more welcome, or how they themselves could facilitate inclusion.

## Activity 2

### Words, words, words

This activity is designed to encourage children to think about what they associate with certain words, characters or topics covered in *I Am Special* and why they might do so. It is a great activity for children to use new or different words and explore different ways of thinking.

#### **You will need:**

Whiteboard or large pieces of paper/card  
Whiteboard markers

#### **Optional:**

Paper  
Pens  
Scissors  
Glue  
Coloured Pens, Crayons or Textas  
String

Choose a topic, whether it is characters from the book or a key issue such as disability or inclusion and acceptance. Once you've chosen your topic ask the children to brainstorm words that relate to the topic, it can be on what they know about the topic, what they have learnt or how they feel.

Try to encourage students to think of positive experiences relating to the topic, and ask them why they were positive and what words it makes them think of. This way the children link the topic with a positive train of thought.

Write everyone's words up on the board, trying to keep them in groups, for example, if you have words with similar meanings. This way once you have finished the brainstorm you can go back and ask the children why they suggested these words- do they have a particular meaning to them? Is it something they have experienced?

Create word charts using words from the board to hang around room, to be used as references for children in other activities. You might choose to hang words individually instead.

Children can use these charts as references for other activities and will remind them of what they have learnt from the activity.

### **Activity 3**

## **Acting out**

This is a great activity for a Drama or English class. This activity can be very loud when everyone participates.

To further develop imagination and collaboration skills, ask students to break off into small groups and choose a favourite part of *Jarrah's Jigsaw* to act out.

The students must work together to retell their chosen part of the story through a dramatic performance which will be presented to the class.

Students might choose to perform to other classes or even at a school assembly to raise awareness of disability and promote inclusion, participation, diversity and acceptance.

### **Optional:**

To make the activity more exciting you could have students create finger puppets that represent characters from the book, dress up or create actions or movements to represent each character.

An example would be if a child had chosen to represent Micky, who is hearing impaired, he/she may choose to cover their ears. If they were representing Jaimi who has a wheelchair, the student may use actions or motions such as moving their arms as if they were rotating the wheels of a wheelchair.

## Activity 4

### Pen Pals

Ask students to write a letter to one of the characters in *Jarrah's Jigsaw*. In the letter, students should identify why they are writing to the character, what they find interesting about the character and describe something interesting about themselves.

For example, a student may find Anoop's trumpet playing very interesting and may wish to invite Anoop to play the trumpet at your school's next assembly. They may go on to write that they play the recorder themselves and would one day like to play the trumpet.

# Disability Information & Resources

## Department of Education

Provides links to values curriculum and curriculum framework. Another useful resource on this website is the section on Statewide Specialist Services, which contains specific articles and resources on disability and special needs.

[www.det.wa.edu.au](http://www.det.wa.edu.au)

or

<http://det.wa.edu.au/studentsupport/statewidespecialistservices/detcms/portal/>

## Centre for Inclusive Schooling

The Centre for Inclusive Schooling is a division of the Department of Education dedicated to supporting teachers to facilitate an inclusive environment for students with disabilities and special needs. Their website contains many useful resources and links regarding disability and education.

<http://www.cis.perthwa.net/>

## ABC – Ramp Up

The Australian Broadcasting Corporation's website covering disability stories and issues. A fantastic website for finding media articles and productions on disability aired on the ABC.

<http://www.abc.net.au/rampup/>

## Disability Infolink

A comprehensive website providing information to families and caregivers of people with a disability. A very easy website to navigate, with great links to other websites and resources.

[www.tccp.com.au/disability\\_infolink/home](http://www.tccp.com.au/disability_infolink/home)

## Disability Services Commission

The website of the Government body which supports disability needs and advocacy in Western Australia. Great links to community services and information, as well as articles and events relevant for teachers and service providers.

Phone: (08) 9426 9200 or Country: 1800 998 214

[www.disability.wa.gov.au](http://www.disability.wa.gov.au)