

Our True Colors



A Children for Health book

How we created Our True Colors

Children for Health worked with health workers, a group of children and their teachers on the island of Guam to create this storybook and resource book. Because of the impact of the Covid-19 Pandemic on schools in 2021, this work was done online and, because of school closures and interruptions, the process took a year to complete.

The children wanted to develop a book on bullying and resilience. We ran several workshops to train a facilitator. The facilitator then ran several workshops with a group of children to generate ideas and storylines and to come up with issues, names and characters with which they could identify. At the final stage, Mr Castro - the lead teacher on the book at Guahan Academy Charter School - worked with the children to review the story and the artwork.

We hope you are as pleased with the result as we are!

Readers

The book is aimed at 10-14 year old children to read, to debate, to use to create songs and drama, and to read to younger children. The summary sentences in red are to help younger readers enjoy the story and can be used for reading and for older readers to help younger ones follow the story.

Note that we have used American spellings where possible as this storybook was co-created with teachers and health educators in Guam.

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Our True Colors

Hi. I'm Kira and I come from a small island in the middle of the Pacific Ocean with beautiful beaches and green mountains and palm trees. I was so lucky to have the best family in the world, my mom my dad and my two brothers, Joseph and Lucas. I had lots of good friends in school and I woke up every morning happy to live in such a great place. For me, it was like paradise.

Then suddenly everything changed. Dad was killed in a car crash. It was awful. So then Mom had to go back to work. Mom was a teacher, but she could not find the right job for her on our island. So we had to move to a larger island a few hundred miles away. My mom got a job as a science teacher at a middle school there.

'And it will be your school too, Kira and Lucas,' Mom said, showing us a photo. It looked way bigger than our old school, with three big buildings around a schoolyard. I wondered how the children knew where to go in such a large place. For the first time, I was nervous about going to school. I told myself to be brave and that I had always had good friends and lots of fun at my other school. I would be all right.



THE NEW SCHOOL

It was sad leaving our old island and waving goodbye from the boat. We were still feeling sad about Dad and it felt like we were leaving him behind too. I cried so much that day.

Mom told us that going to the new island would be an experience that was going to make us stronger. 'Yeah, right,' I thought. Yet another thing that was 'supposed to make us stronger.'

Kira must leave the island home she loves and begin a new life on a different island.

I tried to look forward to the future and told myself, 'this will be like our old lives but just on a bigger island.' I would make lots of new friends. I could see if this school has a science club and a volleyball team.

Arriving on the new island, it seemed so much busier than our old island, with more roads and brighter lights and lots of people in the malls. There was lots to get used to. Our new house was all right but I missed Dad. We all did, and we all knew we did, but none of us spoke about it.



KIRA CANNOT SLEEP

The night before the first day of classes, I couldn't get to sleep. Thoughts just went round and round in my head. Was I nervous or was I just excited? Sometimes feeling scared and feeling excited seem almost the same. There should be a word for that! Scared AND excited.

I must have fallen asleep and then suddenly I felt someone shaking my shoulder. Lucas was standing by the bed, dressed in his uniform. 'Wake up, Kira. Today is our first day of school.' I jumped out of bed worried I'd be late and wrestled on my school uniform.

'I sure am excited about starting at our new school,' I said as we ate breakfast. I felt more fear than anything but I noticed that Lucas was not eating or talking – just looking at his bowl. 'Hey, what's the matter?' I asked him.

'It's the first time I have gone to school far from home and I won't know anybody my age. Will they pick on me?'

'Don't worry. I think this school will be great - we both loved school before. Once you get used to it, you're going to love school as much as I do. It's just the change. Don't worry, it'll be fine - you'll see.'

Mom came in and helped me do my hair in front of the mirror. Lucas and I have purple hair – like everyone in our family and like most people back on our old island. I've always been proud of how curly mine is.

'Do you think people at school will laugh at our hair, Mom?' said Lucas. 'Because when I look around, people on this island have blue hair or blue and green stripy hair, but I haven't seen any children our age with purple hair like us.'

'You children have beautiful hair,' Mom said, helping Lucas comb his curls neatly. 'Don't be ashamed of the things that are special about you and what makes you -YOU. Be proud of who you are and where you come from – I am! Then you will appreciate all the differences in other people. Would you really like to live in a world in which everyone was the same? Now off you go and have a lovely day. You need to walk to school without me as I am going to give Joseph a lift to college on the other side of town, then I'll come back to our school and I will see you at break time.'

Kira and her brother Lucas are worried about starting a new school because they will be the only children with purple hair. The other children have blue or green hair. Mom says, 'Don't worry. Be proud of who you are.'

It wasn't a long walk to school. Soon Lucas and I were standing at the gates looking at all the children playing in the yard before the bell rang. I'd never seen so many children in one place. All the children had either blue or green hair or hair with blue and green stripes.

'Oh shoot, we really are the only ones with purple hair,' whispered Lucas. 'Ugh – this feels horrible'.

Just then a little boy ran up to Lucas. 'Hey! What great hair you have! It's like fireworks. Are you new today? I'm Ace. I am going to be on the Friends' Bench at break time. If you don't know anyone or feel lonely, you can come and sit on the Friends' Bench, and then people will come over and talk. I'll be there at first break and you can come and talk to me. But with your great hair, everyone will want to know who you are. Which class are you in?'

'Mr. Castro's class.'

'Hey, me too! Come with me. I'll show you the way there.'

Lucas looked at me to see if I minded being left - even though I was his big sister. 'Go on,' I said and we gave each other a fist bump. 'Thanks Ace!' I shouted as they ran off. Ah, I felt alone then. I walked around the playground. Everyone was hurrying by in groups and no one talked to me. Then the bell rang and I had to rush to find my first class. With a fluttery feeling in my stomach I searched for Room 14. By the time I found it, all the others were sitting at their desks, talking to each other and waiting for the teacher. Many students in the room had shiny, straight blue or green hair. As soon as I walked in, everyone stopped talking and looked at me.

I coughed, my voice dry. 'Hello,' I said, 'Is this Room 14? I think this is my class.'

'You're in the right place,' said a girl. 'And there is a place by me. Would you like to sit here? My name is Emma. I am part of the Middle School Spirit Club. We always make new kids feel welcome at our school.' 'Hi, I'm Kira. I'm new today.'

I felt sick. I sat down next to Emma. The other girls crowded around the desk telling me their names and asking questions about where I came from. They offered to help any time I wasn't sure what to do. I started to relax.



LUCAS AND ACE

Then I noticed that one girl did not come over or say hello. She sat at the back of the classroom looking annoyed, twirling her curly, blue hair around her finger. She was glaring at me.

'Who is that?' I asked Emma in a whisper. 'She looks angry with me.'

'That's Arrabella. She came to the school a few weeks ago. She was worried that people would not like her because she has curly hair, but she has lots of friends now. Everyone here tries to be kind to new people and be friendly with them. That's our way. Now you are the new girl and we welcome you.'

Then Arrabella brought out a large shiny new phone. She sat tapping it as if it was the most interesting thing in the world, smiling and giggling and ignoring everybody else. No one else in the class had a phone like that. One by one, the students began to drift towards Arrabella's desk to see what was so interesting on her phone. Soon there was only Emma left by me.

Emma shrugged and said, 'Don't worry. Arrabella's just excited about the new phone she got from her dad. He has a big shop in town and buys her lots of new things. She does show off a bit sometimes, but she's OK really.'



ARRABELLA

'Don't forget,' Arrabella said on purpose so that everyone could hear, 'I'm having a party at my house next week, but only my best friends can come! My loyal friends.' She stared hard at Emma who was still sitting next to me.

'Hey Arrabella, don't you want to come over and meet Kira?' asked Emma. Arrabella scowled and said, 'Do you mean that girl with the purple hair? She looks weird to me. But, hey, if you want to choose her to be your friend, go ahead, Emma'.

'But we always welcome new students at this school,' said Emma. 'We were kind to you when you were new!'

Arrabella shrugged and carried on tapping her phone. Then the bell rang, the teacher came in and everyone went back to their own desk.

Lucas makes a new friend, Ace, but in Kira's class, Arrabella does not seem to like her. Arrabella ignores Kira and plays on her shiny new phone.

I was too busy to worry about Arrabella for the rest of the day. There was so much to learn and to get used to. I was glad Emma and some of the other students helped me find the different classrooms and the cafeteria. They let me sit with them at lunchtime. But when Arrabella saw me there, she took her lunch to a different table and got out her phone, ignoring everybody else. One by one, the other students went to join her until it was just me and Emma left again. Emma had bright red cheeks by now and looked like she was going to cry. She took my arm and said, 'Let's go outside. I'm sorry they are being like that'.

Out on the yard during break, I was glad to see Lucas playing with his new friend, Ace. Lucas was easy to see because his purple hair stood out so much. Emma braided my hair into a new style. 'I love your hair,' she said. 'It's really cool.'

Then Arrabella came by with a friend on each side. 'Yuk,' she said to Emma, 'I don't think I would like to touch that weird purple hair.'

'That's rude,' said Emma.

'I think it's rude not to be loyal to your old friends,' replied Arrabella. 'Don't bother coming to my party, Emma.' Arrabella marched off with her friends following.

'She'll stop being mean soon,' said Emma. But she did not look very sure about it. She watched Arrabella and the other girls leave with a worried frown on her face. 'Are you coming to the Night Market tonight? Lots of people do. We can meet there and have some fun after we have done our homework.'

Mom thought it would be a good idea to go to the Night Market. We could get some food there and it would be good to go out after the sun had gone down and it was cooler.

When we got there, it looked like everyone had come out to watch the entertainment, with traditional dancing and music. Everyone was enjoying the evening, sitting at tables eating food, or shopping at the booths. The elders started dancing the cha-cha to live music and then others joined in.

I saw Emma sitting at a table with her family. She waved at me and I ran over.

'Hi,' said Emma. 'Come over and meet my family. Come and eat!' There were containers of red rice, fried chicken, and pickled salad. It looked delicious. I was nervous and did not feel hungry. Anyway in my village it was rude to accept food too quickly. Kira replied, 'No, thank you. Thanks anyway'. In the custom I was familiar with, you had to refuse many times until someone insisted you eat, just to make sure they really had enough to share. But what I did

not know was that for Emma's family and everyone on the island, it was considered strange to refuse food when someone offered. So when I said no to what Emma and her family offered, they looked surprised.



REFUSING FOOD

'Perhaps she thinks our food is not good enough,' whispered her mother, looking hurt.

'She's not hungry, I think,' said Emma. 'Let's go see the dancing, Kira.'

Emma and I went off to watch the dancing. Emma did not say much and I realized she didn't like the way I had refused her mother's food. I didn't know what to say. We stood and watched the people dancing. It looked fun with the music and the lights strung in the trees. But I did not know the dances. I looked on with what felt like a heavy stone in my stomach.

Arrabella danced up to us with her friends.

'Hey, come and dance,' Arrabella said. She grabbed Emma. Emma was really good at dancing. Soon she was smiling and laughing with Arrabella.

'Come on Kira,' she called. 'Come and dance.'

I didn't know what to say. I knew I would look like an idiot trying to learn the dances in front of everyone.

'No thanks,' I said. 'I'll just watch.'

'Oh wow! Talk about being stuck up,' said Arrabella. 'So our dancing is not good enough for you? And I heard you won't eat our food too. Come on, Emma, let's leave Miss Purple Hair. She thinks she's too good for us.'

Feeling ashamed and confused, I went back to join my family at the table where they were having dinner but I didn't feel like eating much. I had gotten everything wrong and now even Emma did not like me. Somehow, I was going to have to put things right at school the next day.

'Isn't this lovely,' said Mom. 'I'm glad you're having fun with your new friends, Kira.'

The next day there was no chance to talk to Emma and say sorry for my mistake about the food. Arrabella had got a group of students together, including Emma, and she told them loudly: 'You are my special friends. No one else can be in our group, especially people who don't belong here. Hey, look at this,' said Arrabella showing them funny things on the phone. 'Of course, only you can see it because you are my special friends. And only my special friends can come to my party. And maybe some of the other students can if I decide they can.'

Soon Arrabella was the queen of the class, telling everyone what to do so that they might be in her special group.

Emma kept glancing over at me with a worried frown as if she did not like what was happening, but she did not know how to stop it.

That was when things started going downhill and I felt anxious about going to school. So many of those in my class seemed to ignore and avoid me. I overheard mean comments, which they probably wanted me to hear. When someone did try to be a little bit nice to me, Arrabella would be mean to them too until they went back to sit with her. I tried to be brave about how no one seemed to like me but it went on day after day, with me sitting on my own at lunch. I felt that they were laughing at my purple hair. I felt like I was disappearing. Why didn't the children like me? What was wrong with me?

I was sitting at home one evening looking in the mirror. 'My hair is horrible,' I said, bursting into tears.

'What are you talking about?' said Mom, 'Why do you say such a silly thing? What is the matter?'



Arrabella tries to get the other children to ignore Kira, but Emma is a good friend to Kira. But then Kira offends Emma's family by following her old island's custom of refusing the food they ask her to share. Emma is hurt and now Kira has no friends and she hates her purple hair.

I did not want to worry Mom about school because she was so busy with her new job so I did not tell her about Arrabella. I thought about telling my teacher but I felt embarrassed. Mom was also a teacher there. They would talk and worry about me. I could not sleep. Each night I lay awake trying to work out what was I doing wrong. How could I change and get the others to like me and be friends with me?

One evening my big brother Joseph came into my room while I was doing homework. 'What's wrong, Kira? You're so moody. What's the matter?'

I burst into tears and then I told him everything that I had been keeping bottled up inside. He listened with a serious face. 'Am I weird?' I asked Joseph. 'No one likes me.' I felt tears running down my cheeks.



'Of course not, Kira,' Joseph said. 'This isn't your fault. Arrabella just wants to be the most popular person so she feels good about herself. She tries to control people because she is afraid. She does not have real friends if they are only with her because they are scared of her or because she promises them treats. Kira, you are my wonderful and amazing sister! Do not let Arrabella make you feel bad. What she is doing is wrong. And if she is mean to you, then have some respect for yourself and remember that we all respect and love you. That garbage that Arrabella says is not true.'

'But I do have purple hair,' I said. 'That is true. It's horrible like they say. I hate it.'

Joseph led me to stand in front of the mirror. 'Look, you do have purple hair, and it is beautiful.'

You must love yourself and appreciate yourself first. You are beautiful and unique. Be proud of who you are. I promise you that all school bullies come and go. Arrabella is a small part of your life, like an ant. She has no right to hurt your feelings and bully you like this and I bet she would get into trouble if the teachers knew.'

I laughed. Perhaps I could go into school and think of Arrabella as an ant. Perhaps I could even feel proud of the girl in the mirror with bright purple hair -no matter what the other students said about girls with purple hair not belonging.

Joseph could not come to school and stop Arrabella, but at least someone understood and believed in me. It was good to talk about my feelings and realize what I was feeling.

'I was bullied at school for a while,' Joseph said.

'Really, back on our old island?'

'Yes. There are bullies everywhere. Bullies are bullies usually because they don't feel good about themselves. You have to remember that you can decide what they are in your life. Arrabella is trying to be a big part but you can make her a small part. She doesn't get to decide what you are worth.'

'What did you do to make them stop?'

'I talked to the teacher, and I also made new friends from other classes in the sports and chess club. Why don't you join some clubs like you used to do?'

I had loved the science club and volleyball team at my old school. So, that's what I did! I checked out and joined various clubs in my new school. I soon met children from all different classes. They didn't know about Arrabella or care what she thought. It was true – she did start to feel like an ant! I started feeling like I belonged somewhere. I stopped feeling like I was disappearing. This was me, the girl with purple hair who loved science and sports. Soon I had friends. I could stand it better when Arrabella shot me those mean looks under her curly hair.

Kira talks with her brother Joseph who was once bullied at school. Talking about her feelings makes her feel better. He advises her to talk with the teacher and make friends in school clubs like she did at her old school.

I still had not talked to the teachers. Arrabella was clever. She was super nice in front of the teachers and did not let the teachers see her mean side. If I told the teachers, would they believe me? Making new friends at my clubs gave me courage so I thought, I will just ignore Arrabella and say nothing.



SAY IT OUT LOUD

Joseph had helped me think about my feelings and suggested I say them out loud, things like being 'mad' and 'furious' and 'frustrated' because Arrabella would not stop. I felt stronger saying those words out loud and able to cope with my feelings better. Doing this even made me laugh.

At least Lucas seemed happy at school! Then one day I noticed Lucas standing alone in the playground looking sad. I went over and asked him what had happened. Arrabella had told Lucas' friends not to play with him. She had got some bigger boys to push them around and say they would do worse if they played with Lucas.

'Kira, I don't belong here,' he said, crying. 'I have the wrong color hair. Can I dye my purple hair so that it turns blue?'

Wow! I was so angry. I knew I had to do something now! How dare they treat my wonderful brother like that? He didn't deserve it. Lucas was perfect just the way he was.

So after school I spoke with my mom. I told her what was happening with me and with Lucas.



GETTING ANGRY

Mom put her arm around my shoulders. 'I know you feel very hurt and angry now, but remember that book we read to Lucas last year about the starfish?'

Kira frowned. 'You mean the one where the starfish grows his leg back?'

'I remember that story,' said Lucas. 'The part where the starfish was attacked by a sea turtle and lost his leg but then the starfish grew its leg back.'

'So you mean that although I am hurt, I can recover – like the starfish,' said Kira. 'I can grow my happy feelings back?'

'That's right,' said mom.

Lucas beamed and gave me a hug.

'But we must still do something about this,' Mom said. 'This is against the school rules. Principal Sanchez won't like it at all when she hears what's been going on.'

When Kira realises that the bullying had got to Lucas, she then gets very angry. She talks to Mom who reminds her that feelings can heal in time. But they also need to do something to stop the bullying. They decide together to go and talk to Principal Sanchez.

The next day Mom, Lucas and I went to have a meeting with the principal in her office.

'This is bullying and it's not allowed in our school,' said Principal Sanchez. 'We have a school rule that everyone should treat everyone else with respect. Everyone has the right to come to school and not be hurt with hands or with words. We teach this every year. It seems that some students have forgotten or have fallen into bad habits and so we have to teach it again, and regularly.'

'Kira and Lucas,' could I ask you to come and help me plan what to say to the school about this? Then we will ask your mom to make sure she is also happy with your plan. It's important for you but it's also important for ALL the children. You have been very brave in coming to me about this.'

So over the next week, Lucas and I met with the principal and made a plan. When Mom saw the plan she was pleased. But I know she was nervous too as the principal was going to talk a bit about our personal story.

The next day there was a special assembly in the afternoon.

'Sadly,' Principal Sanchez said, 'I have come to learn that some of the students in our school are being unkind. I am surprised that some of you have forgotten that everyone here has the right to come to school and not be hurt with words or hands. No one is allowed to push you about or say mean and hurtful things to you. And we are not allowed to hurt other people by pushing them or by saying mean and hurtful things to them. In this school we need to show respect for each other. Everyone in our school belongs here, and we enjoy the many differences and talents in our community.'

'Now I am going to go out and fetch a very important person who is here in our school today.'

The children waited for the principal to come back with the important person. Was it another principal from a bigger school? Was it the boy with the most prizes, or the school football champion, or the head of the parents' committee?

Principal Sanchez came back holding a small boy by the hand. She led him to the front. 'This is Justin,' she told the school. 'He is the youngest child in our school, but he is important because everyone in our school is just as important as everyone else, and because everyone in our school deserves to be treated with respect and kindness.'

'Justin,' she asked him, 'Is anyone allowed to hurt you in school?'

He shook his head. 'No, Ma'am.'

'And are you allowed to hurt other people?'

'No, Ma'am, never.'

'That is right, Justin. And am I allowed to hurt the other teachers or hurt the children?'

'Of course not. No, Ma'am.'

'Thank you, Justin, for reminding us about our school rule.'

Justin beamed and just before he skipped back to his place he did a Power V and a big bow in front of everyone and we all laughed and clapped.



THE SMALLEST BOY

Principal Sanchez carried on. 'Now I want you to fill in the blanks in what I am saying: 'Everyone must treat others with...'

'...respect and kindness' we all replied.

'The teachers treat each other with...'

'...respect and kindness.'

'And they treat the students with...'

'...respect.'

'Just as the students treat the teachers with...'

'...respect.'

'And all students treat each other with...'



'...respect and kindness.'

'Everyone here can expect to come to school and know they will not be bullied or hurt. When people bully, then they do not respect themselves or others. Please say that last phrase out loud together 3 times! When people bully, then they do not respect themselves or others.'

So we all repeated together three times: 'When people bully, then they do not respect themselves or others.'

There was loud clapping and laughing.

But Arrabella and her friends looked embarrassed. They looked to see where Kira was sitting.

'I have something else to say,' said Principal Sanchez. 'I want to thank all the students who have helped our newest students to feel welcome in our school. Kira and Lucas came from a far away island. They have been very brave after their father died and they had to start a new life. I am proud of all the children who have helped them and made them feel welcome.'



ARRABELLA ASHAMED

Now Arrabella and her friends were bright red. They did not want everyone to know they had been mean and to think that they were unkind.

'No-one,' said the principal, 'needs to bully people and be mean to have real friends. True friends are kind to each other and respect each other, and that is what we expect in our school.'

Kira, Lucas and their mom talk to Principal Sanchez. The children help Principal Sanchez prepare a talk for a special assembly, reminding the children that everyone, young or old, has the right to come to school and expect not to be hurt with hands or with words. They all agree that everyone must treat each other with respect and kindness.

After the assembly no one listened to Arrabella anymore. The other children did not want to be with her. Her mean behavior had been shown up for what it was. It was clear that Arrabella was now ashamed of herself.

'But I didn't know your dad had died, Kira,' Arrabella said and began to cry. 'Everyone liked me when I was the new girl but when you came along, I thought they would like you better because you were the new girl now. I got bullied in my old school and so I tried to get friends with my phone and my parties, and by being angry with people if they did not do what I said. But now everyone hates me.'

'So you bullied people because you had been bullied?' said Emma.

'Nobody hates you,' I said. 'You can have real friends by being kind and loyal. Friends that you buy or bully are not real friends. And, yes my dad died but I don't want you to be nice just because you feel sorry for me. There's never a good reason to bully and there's never a reason to stop bullying. No one should bully someone else - that's it.'

Then I had an idea. 'Listen, we have been through a bad time. Let's figure out how to support other children who have felt bullied.'

Arrabella nodded and gave me a small smile. 'That sounds good. We can talk to younger children and teach them how to be kind and friendly.'

'Yes,' said Emma. 'And teach them how to stop bullies getting away with it. Because we are all sorry how we have acted and we don't want to do it again or see it happen to other children.'

So, Arrabella, Emma and I along with some of the other students began to give mini-talks. We helped to give sessions to younger children in other classes.

More children with purple hair and some with yellow hair arrived. We set up welcome schemes with the teachers for the new students and now the school has regular 'circle of respect' sessions to remind the children that bullying hurts everyone and we don't want it in our school.

I enjoyed school now! I hurried to get there each morning, looking forward to seeing my friends.

I felt stronger, too! I had learned that I could get through things that are difficult at first. I realized I was able to help others and make their lives better, too.

One afternoon during the rainy season while it was misty, I was walking home with Arrabella and Emma. We were all talking. Arrabella did not see a car coming. She stepped out into the road. Before I had even realized what I had done, I grabbed her and pulled her out of the way.

'Wow, that car was going so fast,' said Arrabella. 'Kira, if you had not been here I don't know what would have happened. I'm glad that you came to our school with your lovely purple hair and I'm so glad that now I have real friends like you.'



Arrabella feels ashamed, but along with the teachers Kira, Emma and Arrabella set up ways to make sure other children in school never get bullied and in doing so, they become the best of friends.

Our True Colors is a story for children aged 10-14 depending on their reading ability. They can read it to younger children using the red sentences at the bottom of the pages plus the pictures. The themes of the book are about the children learning about bullying and resilience and how to manage feelings.

Ideas for Using the Story Book

1. Ask the children to look at three of the pictures. Ask them to guess what the story is about. The right answer is not needed but this activity helps to develop curiosity.
2. Read the story with the children.
3. Ask the children to read the story to each other or retell the story chapter by chapter.
4. Divide the children into groups. Each group can read, retell or act out their chapter and think about what they learned or like about that chapter.

Add your own ideas!

Ten Comprehension Questions

These are questions suitable for pairs or groups of children to ask and answer or, if writing practice is required, select one or two of the questions and ask children to write an answer. With the discussion or writing approach, children can take it in turns to read or tell their answers to the whole group.

1. Why did Kira have to leave the island home she loved?
2. Was the new school bigger or smaller than the old one?
3. Was Kira nervous about going to school?
4. What was Lucas's new friend called?
5. What was the name of the girl who did not like Kira?
6. Why did Emma stop being friends with Kira?
7. What did Arrabella get the other girls to do to Emma?
8. What did Principal Sanchez tell the school at the special assembly?
9. Why did Arrabella feel ashamed?
10. What did Kira decide to do after the assembly and who helped?

Add your own questions!

Other Questions

These questions ask children to think more deeply about the story and link the story to their own lives. Select one or two questions or ask children to vote for the questions they like the best. Ask children to 'take a question home' to talk about with their friends and family. At the next session, ask them to describe what their friends and family discussed then make up music or songs, draw pictures or dance.

Also, you can use one or two of these questions as a topic for a lesson or a class project. For example:

1. This story is called Our True Colors...what do you think this means and why do you think this phrase has been picked as the title?
2. How do you think it feels if you are bullied?
3. Do people ever have the right to bully others? Do you have the right not to be bullied?
4. Why is an anti-bullying school policy like a circle?
5. At Kira's school they have a Spirit Club. What do you think the children learn in that club? What kind of activities might they do? What sort of club would you like in your school? What would you call your club? Could it teach skills such as self-reliance and how to be a good friend?

Add your own questions!

Reading between the lines questions

1. How do you think Arrabella felt at the beginning?
2. Do you think Kira was brave?
3. Why did Arrabella feel happier in the end.

Add your own questions!

Response to the story questions

1. How can people recover from times when they feel hurt, angry or sad?
2. What would you tell someone who was being a bully?
3. What would you say to someone who was being bullied?

Add your own questions!

'Suppose you were' questions

1. Suppose you were Kira before she started at her new school, how would you feel?
2. Suppose you were Emma seeing your friend bullied, what would you do?
3. Suppose you were helping Kira, Emma and Arrabella set up ways to make sure new children did not get bullied, what would you suggest?

Add your own questions!

Linking the story to real life questions

1. When was the last time someone said something helpful to you that changed your mood or helped you to overcome a problem? Describe this to a friend. Write down how this has helped you grow more resilient.
2. Have you ever seen someone being bullied? What did you do? Were you a bystander or did you help? Did anything good come from it? (If you don't have any examples, ask your teachers or family members about this question.)
3. Describe how you would share this information with others (when, where, how?). How do you think others would react when you did this (friends, younger children, family members)?

Add your own questions!

Other Activities

This story is about feelings, resilience and bullying. Here are a few activities to help you explore the themes of the story. You will have many more ideas. Pick activities that are relevant and important for your group of children. You can also look at the Children for Health book 'Unlocked.'

The Resilience Dance

1. Assemble the group of children outside or in a large indoor area.
2. Teach the children the half-fall-over movement.
3. Then ask them to get up and stand tall.
4. Then ask them to raise their arms and hands in a 'Power V.'
5. Ask the children to follow your instructions as you say '**Fall Over! Get Up! Feel Strong!**' Practice this!
6. Ask the children to say the words '**Fall Over! Get Up! Feel Strong!**' as they are doing the movement.
7. Ask the children to move forward three steps after they have done the movement '**Fall Over! Get Up! Feel Strong!**' Practice this.
8. Ask the children to repeat the movements and then take one step back after they have moved forward three steps. Do not ask the children to vocalise moving forward three steps and moving back one – this is done silently. Practice this.
9. Repeat with the children in a line stepping towards you three steps and moving back one step, repeating the words and gestures '**Fall Over! Get Up! Feel Strong!**'
10. Repeat the whole phrase '**Fall Over! Get Up! Feel Strong!**' (Move forward three steps and one step back.)
11. In pairs, ask the children to practice this 'dance' to each other. Let them practice until you think they have really mastered it, and then do the dance with the whole group. It should look and sound impressive!



Reflection

- After this activity gather the children and ask them to be really quiet as they sit down outside, or it can help to bring them inside. They will like the contrast! In a soft voice ask the children to think about the reason for that activity.
- If some of them have ideas, let them tell the group. Then tell the children, *'This dance is called the **Resilience Dance**. Resilience is something we have and that gets stronger when we overcome difficulties and problems. The more we have the better we are at coping with problems – plus we can help each other develop it.'*
- Ask the children *'What does that dance teach us about something in our own lives?'* If this question is too abstract, take each piece of the dance in turn, and ask the children:
 - What could it mean in life to **'Fall Down'**? For example, a friend or relative saying or doing something you did not like, doing something wrong in a lesson, taking something that did not belong to you and getting into trouble, dealing with a difficult time – like school closing and lockdown because of Covid-19 etc.
 - What could it mean in life to **'Get Up'** when you have 'fallen down'? For example, getting the courage to talk to a friend or relative who has said something you did not like and telling them how you feel, finding ways to keep happy and busy during the lockdown etc.
 - Why might you **'Feel Strong'** once you have 'got up'? For example, feeling good that you have tried what you can to solve a problem between yourself and a friend or a relative – even if it did not work, you tried! etc.
- Ask the children: *Why do you think we also stepped back one step after moving forward? We move three paces forward when we show resilience but often there is an obstacle in our way pushing us back – this might be ourselves or other people or other challenges that come up. Developing and showing resilience is not an easy movement forward. Sometimes we might feel we move more than one step back. When children can fall down and get up in life and not just in dance you are resilient! Falling down can be called a challenge. When we fall over, what's the thing we need most at this moment – someone to help us get up. These people could be friends but there are also people who are not friends who can also help others 'get up'.*
- Tell the children: *Well-being is about managing your emotions. None of us can control what happens to us and we cannot be happy all of the time. But we can recognise our emotions and do things to help and support each other so that we can keep moving forward and keep becoming the best we can be. Resilience is about building our strength by falling and getting up and moving forward.*
- In pairs or in threes, ask the children to talk about the meaning of each part of the dance.
- In their notebooks children can draw and label the four stickperson drawings under the heading, **Resilience!**

Extension Activity

- Repeat the movement activity.
- Ask the children to discuss in pairs what each part of the dance means (to revise the last session).
- Then get the children to do the dance in pairs or in threes. One or two of the children in the pairs or threes does the dance but after the first movement of 'Fall Down' they do not move until the other and the other child helps the other(s) to 'Get Up' by straightening them gently.
- After this activity talk about the need for help from others when we, 'Fall Down'. Think of some examples. (These examples can be turned into role-plays.)

Adapt! Adapt! Adapt! Feel free to adapt this Resilience Dance and add your own ideas.

Ask a Good Question

Examples of good questions that children can ask each other in pairs or in groups and at home:

- *What should children do if they see someone being bullied?*
- *What should children do if they feel they are being bullied?*
- *What one thing can we do to be more kind to each other every day?*

Body sculptures to explore feelings

1. Ask the children to work in pairs and complete these sentences (by writing or speaking): Things that make me angry... sad... afraid...happy...Then complete the four sentences starting: When I am angry I..., sad, I... afraid, I...happy, I...
2. Ask the children to share their ideas with another pair.
3. In groups of four, ask the children to make body sculptures to show different feelings such as anger, happiness, sadness, and fear.
4. In the whole group, ask the children to perform the body sculptures while the other children try to identify the feeling each one represents.
5. In small groups, ask the children to practice the body sculptures with each group adding words which are the opposite of what the body is saying. For example, you make a body sculpture showing anger and the words you say are calm. Show these to the whole group.
6. Ask children to talk about situations when they say the opposite of what they feel, and ask them to talk about why they do this.

Head Heart Feet Listening

1. Ask the children what is meant by 'Active Listening.'
2. *Explain: It is a way of listening and responding to another person that improves understanding. The listener deeply listens to the speaker and then repeats what s/he thinks the speaker has said. Then the speaker could find out if the listener really understood. If the listener did not, the speaker then has the chance to say what they mean in another way to increase understanding. Now we are going to practice head – heart – feet listening. The head is the facts, the heart is the feelings, and the feet is the purpose.*
3. Ask the children to move into groups of four.
4. Ask the children to think of a problem they have had with a friend or a family member that bothered them. Ask one person to volunteer as the storyteller.
5. Ask the three remaining participants to choose one of the following roles and explain that they will be asked to share what they heard afterwards:
 - one person in the group should listen only for the facts (head)
 - one person should listen only for the feelings (heart)
 - one person should listen only for the purpose – why the storyteller is telling this story (feet).
6. Invite the storyteller to share their story. Afterwards, ask the participants to share what they heard and ask them to focus ONLY on the information linked either to the facts, the feelings, or the purpose.
7. Repeat, changing the groups and storytellers.

8. Reflect on the activity with the entire group. Questions can include:
 - How did it feel to be listening for the head, heart, feet – what different things did you ‘hear’?
 - Did it help to think about the different aspects of the story?
 - As the storyteller, how did it feel to have individuals simply listen to your story?
 - How could this be used in everyday life?

Speaker-Listener Feelings

1. Give an example of a situation in which they had a strong feeling and describe how they expressed these feelings.
2. Ask the children to discuss an example of their own in pairs with one being the speaker and one the listener. For example, the speaker... ‘I spent a long time getting to my school for an extra class. When I got there, the teacher was not around. I saw another teacher and I lost my temper with her and shouted, as I was so angry and frustrated. I got into a lot of trouble for this.’
3. When the speaker has finished, the listener reflects the story and the feelings in it. ‘From your story, I could see that when you found out that the teacher was not around, you felt very angry and frustrated and you showed it by shouting at someone who was not responsible for this.’
4. Ask the children to swap over the role of speaker and listener.
5. In groups of four or six, share similar stories and responses.

Fishbowl Game

This game is a useful problem-solving game. Children make an inner and outer circle with partners facing each other.

1. Children in the inner circle think of a problem and ask their partner in the outer circle to suggest advice. The partner makes a suggestion.
2. After a few minutes, all the people in the outside circle move one place to the right. The children with problems ask the same question to their new partner in the outer circle.
3. The game continues.
4. The circles can change places so the other half is asking the questions.

What is Bullying?

1. In pairs or in threes, ask children to complete the sentence that starts... ‘**A child feels bullied when...**’
2. Go around the group listening to all the suggestions.
3. Explain four types of bullying and ask children to give details of each type.
 - **Verbal** - *teasing, name calling, threats, intimidation, demeaning jokes, rumours, gossip*
 - **Physical** - *pushing, shoving, hitting, kicking, biting, hair pulling, inappropriate touching, breaking-objects, and taking or damaging another’s possessions*
 - **Emotional** - *leaving someone out, putting someone down, threatening to hurt or harm, telling lies to hurt a person’s reputation, or humiliating someone in front of others*
 - **Sexual** - *Speaking badly about someone’s gender or sexuality, unwanted or inappropriate touching or physical contact, sharing personal information about relationships, or sharing private messages or photos*
4. Explain that bullying is more than disagreements, differences of opinion, or conflicts that occur between friends and classmates. It is about the intentional harm or humiliation of another with words or

behaviour that are repeated (or threatened that it will be). It's hard to stop or prevent as it is carried out by those with more power, physically or socially, or it is done by group to an individual.

5. Repeat the activity again, this time asking each pair or three to choose bullying that is verbal, physical, emotional or sexual.
6. Explain: *Bullies can be any size, age, grade, or gender. There are three roles in most bullying situations:*
 - *Targets = Those who are bullied*
 - *Bullies = Those doing the bullying*
 - *Bystander = Those who see or know about the bullying ('standing by'!)*
7. Explain: *We can play different roles throughout the day. For example:*
 - *Peter was bullied on the bus in the morning and then made fun of Sam that afternoon.*
 - *John laughed while watching a fight yesterday and then asked the new kid with no friends to sit with him at lunch today.*
 - *Sarah who was the target of a rumour on social media, that she stole some money might then spread gossip about Jane who used to be here friend during lunch the next day.*

When thinking about who is involved in bullying, we all are, and we are also able to change how we behave and prevent bullying.
8. Explain: There are three steps to take which you saw in this story, **Our True Colors**:
 - *Tell someone, especially an adult*
 - *Develop an action plan*
 - *Assert your rights*

In the story, Kira told her brother and then told her mom who took it to the school. They made a plan and made it a school issue. As a result of her action Kira made it a safer school for everyone.

9. In pairs ask the children to:
 - Think of a bullying incident that they know about;
 - Write down what is happening, when and where it takes place, and who is involved;
 - Imagine you are the target, what could you do and who do you need to help you?
 - What could be done so everyone feels safer and bullying is prevented?
10. If possible, show children the laws and school policy in handling bullying situations.

Processing Sensitive Topics like Bullying

Talking about these topics can cause children some stress and discomfort. This is ok! But make sure you process the activity at the end of the lesson or workshop. Try asking the questions below. Allow enough time for children to answer. Try not to rush it. Maybe get children into groups or into pairs so that all the children have a chance to discuss the questions for example, 'what did you learn about the topic of bullying today?'

- *Can you think of times in your life when you or someone you know was bullied?*
- *How do you think being bullied makes people feel?*
- *If you or someone you know is being bullied, what are some things that they can do to get help or to stop the bullying?*
- *If someone started bullying you, who would you talk to about the situation? Who are some of the people that would help you?*
- *What does it mean to be a bystander? (Watching someone being bullied without stepping in or getting help.) Why are some people bystanders when it comes to bullying? How can you go from being a bystander to someone who helps the situation?*
- *Now that you know more about bullying, what do you think you can do to make a difference at school? What are some ways that you could help someone who was being bullied?*



