

Julie Flett

WE ALL PLAY

kimêtawânaw



A COMPANION GUIDE FOR
TEACHERS AND PARENTS

By Jackie Lever



Title: *We All Play*

Author / Illustrator: Julie Flett

Genre: Picture book

Themes: Animal behavior, Movement, Healthy living, Interconnectedness, Indigenous knowledge

Suitable for: Ages 0–7, Preschool to Grade 2

Guided Reading Level: E

Lexile Level: 50

Common Core Standards:

SL.1.1,1a,1b,1c,2,3,4,5,6

RL.1.1,2,3,4,5,6,7,9

W.1.1,2,3,5,6,8

L.1.1,1b,1c,1d,1e,1f,1g,1h,1i,1j,2,2a,2b,2c,2d,2e,4,4a,4c,5,5b,5c,5d,6

Jackie Lever is of Métis, English, and Welsh ancestry. She is a member of the North Island Métis Association (NIMA) and Métis Nation BC (MNBC). Currently, she is the Executive Director of NIMA. She also works in publishing as an Indigenous Consultant and a Cultural Sensitivity Reader. Jackie has a Master’s degree in Education in Curriculum and Instruction from the University of Victoria. She has previously worked in the field of education as a teacher and administrator, as well as a curriculum development contractor.

INTRODUCTION

The importance of Indigenous Peoples' knowledge, culture, history, and community in learning can not be overstated. Everyone lives on the traditional territory of an Indigenous People regardless of where you are. Bringing in the culture and community of our children allows them to see the importance of their own background. Bringing in the culture and community that is not our own brings in a richness of experience and learning that is essential for growth mentally, emotionally, and socially.

You can create rich learning opportunities about Indigenous Peoples regardless of whether you are a member of the community you are discussing. Providing children with the opportunity to learn about a culture and community from someone who is a member of that community is the best method. As teachers and parents, you are facilitators who provide the space and time for community members to be the teachers. Only someone from a community can speak authentically about their culture, community, and experiences. It is good practice to place yourself, state what your background is, if you are not from the culture you are speaking about. We are all from different backgrounds and expanding our understanding is important for building healthy communities.



Elders and knowledge keepers can speak about lived experiences and provide authentic cultural knowledge. Going to community cultural events or attending presentations where an Indigenous person is the speaker are also great learning experiences. Including the works of Indigenous authors, artists, musicians, and storytellers provides authentic Indigenous Voices needed for quality learning experiences.

Often Indigenous texts include Indigenous language(s) as well as English or French. It is important to include the Indigenous words into a reading of a text. There are many dictionaries and websites online that provide additional information such as how to pronounce the words and what they mean. Word translations do not always do a word justice and there is often a deeper meaning and connection to culture that the Indigenous word includes beside just a direct translation. Having a speaker of the language talk about what a word means will provide a greater understanding for the reader. As well, it is important to try the words yourself. Don't let your concerns about wrong pronunciation stop you from trying new words because we are all learners and this is a learning opportunity for both you and the children you are reading this story to.





BEFORE READING

1. Provide an author introduction. Who is Julie Flett?
What is her background? Her lived experiences and interests will give you clues about the story. You can find information on her website, www.julieflett.com.
2. Provide information about Métis culture and community.
This gives context for the reader.
3. Look at the cover of the book. What is happening? Who is included? Describe the scene. Look at the title and the words.
4. Discuss language. What language do you speak? Does everyone speak the same language? In this book, Cree words are used throughout. Practice the words beforehand to become more familiar with them so you are able to read them in the flow of the story. Free access to the audio pronunciation for all the Cree words in the book can be found on the book page for *We All Play* at greystonebooks.com.



DURING READING

1. Story can be “read” without words. Cover the words on each page, showing the images first. Have students discuss what is happening and then predict what the action words are. Or you could keep the word covered and create your own story from the images. Then read the entire book again with the words and see how close the initial reading was to the written story.
2. The story uses paired examples of sounds, such as /sn/ sounds in “sniff” and “sneak.” After each pair, say the words one after the other to identify the specific sound and practice pronunciation. Make a chart or poster with the different sounds heard in the story.
3. Each time a new animal is shown, name the animal. Create a list of all the animals in the story, providing the names for those animals that may be unfamiliar. For reference, a list of the main animals is provided at the end of the book. A few pages have hidden animals (grasshopper, turtle, butterfly, and cricket) that could be included.

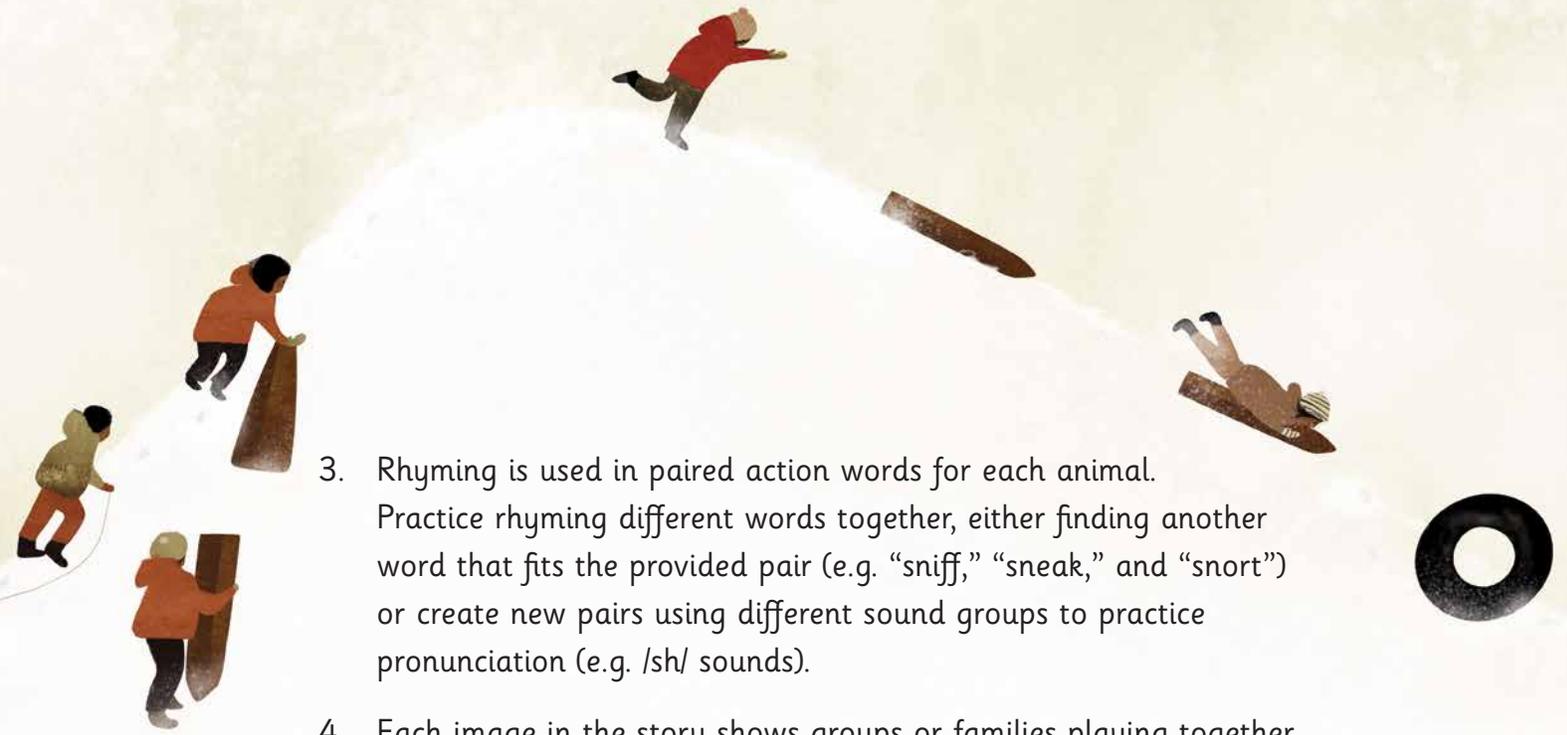
AFTER READING

1. Make a list of all the animals named using both Cree and English words. Practice saying the names of the animals in both languages.

EXTENSION: Include the names of the animals in the local Indigenous language. You may be on the traditional territory of more than one nation, so connect with the community if needed to ensure you use the correct words and pronunciation. For those using this text with a larger group, you could find out what the ancestry or first language is of each child and make a language list for the different languages to represent all.

2. Animals and nature have great significance in Indigenous ways of being, as can be seen in the saying “all my relations.” All life is connected and this balance requires that we treat people, animals, and the earth with equal respect. This interconnection can be explored through the language and traditions of Indigenous Peoples. The importance of animals can be seen in powwow dances, potlatch masks, clan names, carved wooden poles, and heard in oral stories. Invite an Elder or knowledge keeper from your local Indigenous community to do some storytelling. Invite an artist or dancer to discuss their work. Explore ceremonial traditions of tobacco, left as a sign of gratitude by different First Nations and Métis communities when taking something from nature.





3. Rhyming is used in paired action words for each animal. Practice rhyming different words together, either finding another word that fits the provided pair (e.g. “sniff,” “sneak,” and “snort”) or create new pairs using different sound groups to practice pronunciation (e.g. /sh/ sounds).
4. Each image in the story shows groups or families playing together. Discuss who is a part of your immediate family. This could include parents, guardians, siblings, grandparents, cousins, and so on. Each family is unique in who they consider their immediate family.
5. Create a list of how children play with their friends or family. Have the children choose one of the actions and draw an image of their family or friends playing together.

EXTENSION: Create a book that includes all the images of how the children play with their friends and family. Or have the children make three images of how they play and make it into a book. If possible, use rhyming pairs in the text.

6. Create art using the bold and blocky collage-like style the author uses. Basic shapes for bodies, legs, heads, etc. could be precut or copied on construction or craft paper and used to make an image of the what the child does when they play. The picture could also be of how an animal plays, either one of the listed animals or a new animal. See below for more detailed instructions for a collage art activity.
7. Create a list of animals not included in the story. Discuss which words (rhyming option) could be used to describe how these animals play.

8. Practice the action words used in the story by having the children physically demonstrate how to sniff, sneak, etc. As a group, decide which action best demonstrates the word. These physical actions could be used when re-reading the story, where the children act out the words as the story is read.
9. The story shows animals and humans demonstrating caring behaviors. Discuss what these caring behaviors are. Discuss how we demonstrate caring behavior to our friends, to animals, and to nature. Find another book that also discusses caring behavior and see what behaviors they have in common.
10. As a group, make a list of ways to play inside and ways to play outside. Which activities need toys or equipment? Which games don't need any equipment at all? Have the children make up a new game that doesn't need any equipment. Discuss with the children which activities they'd like to do that animals might like to do too. Read the book again and pay attention to whether the children in the illustrations are inside or outside, and whether their games use equipment or toys, or not. What are some of the hidden details in the book?
11. Ask the children which animal is their favorite. How does that animal like to play? Ask the children to draw their favorite animal playing.





PLAYING WITH COLLAGE

Julie Flett, the author and illustrator, works with paper and computer to create bold and blocky collage-like images. In the following activity, children will learn some collage-making techniques to make a picture of themselves playing.

The first step is to ask the children to think of a game that they like to play. Is it outside or inside? Do they use equipment or not? Is it a game that they play alone or with others? This thinking step is important so encourage them to take their time.

Before they start assembling their collage, they can spend a few days collecting imagery (such as the ones suggested below). These are the materials that they'll use in their collage. Aim to have at least twenty-five things with which to experiment. Store them in an envelope until they're ready to collage.

SUGGESTIONS FOR IMAGERY

- old books or magazines about nature, animals, or the environment, with images (these will be cut up)
- any other papers that could be cut or ripped, such as wrapping paper, wallpaper samples, colored paper for scrapbooking, crêpe paper, or tissue; scrap fabric could also be used
- odds and ends like buttons, photographs, stamps, leaves, petals, small figurines, etc.





THEY WILL ALSO NEED

- a large envelope to hold their imagery

- a surface to collage onto

This could be a sheet of construction paper, or posterboard (white or black paper are good colors for contrast), or cardboard. Or they might want to try a different surface, like fabric, a fan, empty toilet paper rolls, an old shoe, a favorite t-shirt they've outgrown, an empty cereal box, an old board game, a broken tennis racket, etc.

- Sharpie markers, black chisel tip and fine tip

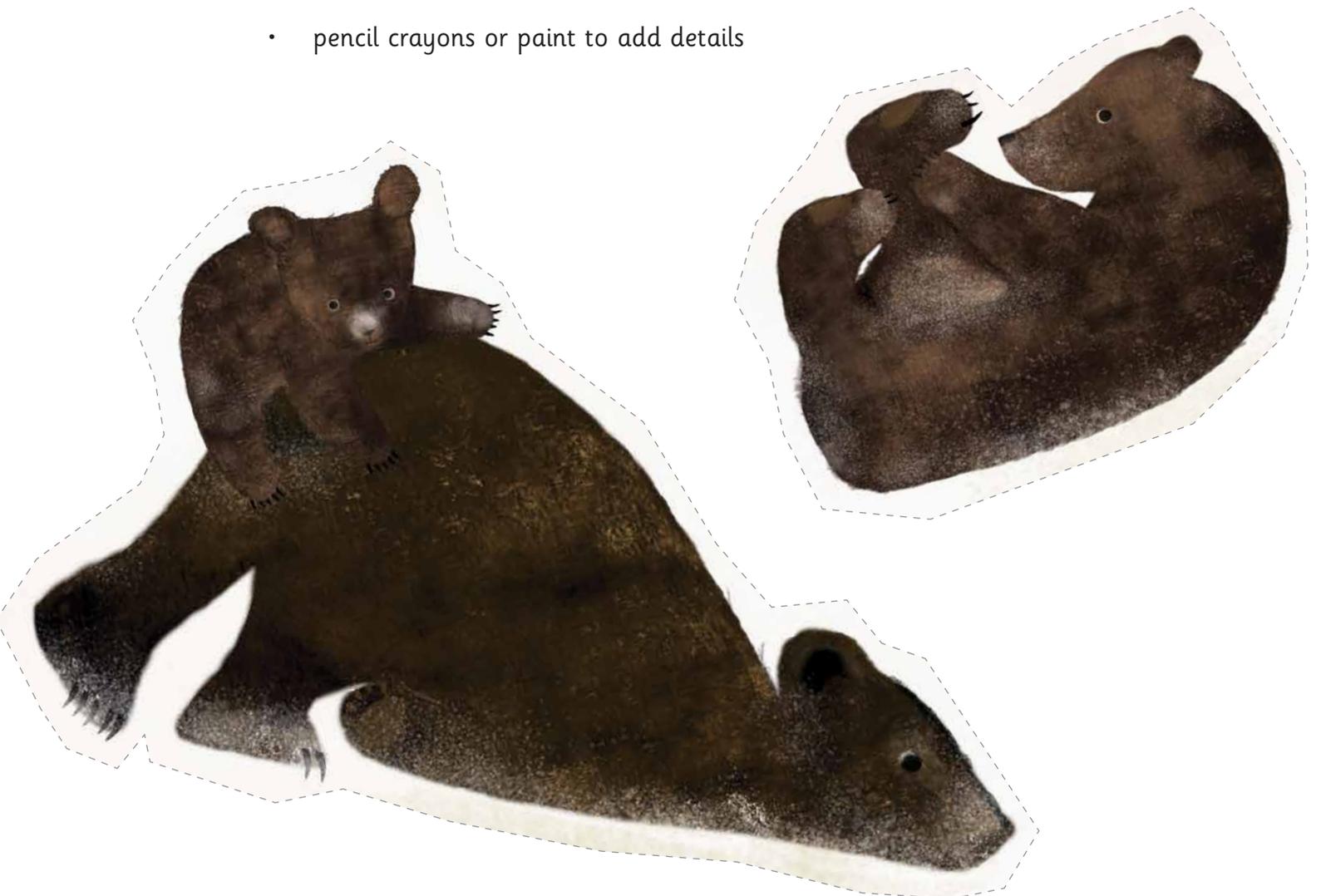
- scissors

- glue stick or liquid glue

Glue stick will work if they are collaging onto a clean, flat surface.

They will need stronger glue (like wood glue) if collaging onto something three dimensional.

- pencil crayons or paint to add details



DIRECTIONS

1. When they're ready to assemble their collage, they can put their surface (paper, cereal box, or whatever it is) onto their work area. Then they can look through the collected imagery in the envelope. Which ones are they excited about using? Which ones fit with their ideas about their game?
2. They can then draw the shapes they need on their materials. Cut them out. Or try ripping the material into shapes.
4. Then they can glue imagery onto their surface. Wait for the glue to dry completely.
6. With a Sharpie or colored pencil, add extra details to the picture. Or use the Sharpie or pencil to outline some or all of the shapes.
7. If they like, they can add details and more decorations with crayons or paint. If using paint, wait for it to dry completely.

How can you display the group's pictures of play?

