

# The Right to Be Me

## Teacher Guide

Every right for

**every**  
child



# How to use this teacher guide

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*The Right to Be Me* is a story about children's rights written by Allison Paterson and illustrated by Amanda Letcher (JSACreative). The book is targeted at children aged 5 to 10 years and follows the story of Lowanna and Jack who reconnect with their friends and learn about their rights. The story is inclusive of the diversity of the children of Queensland and the locations in which they live. Specific locations include Brisbane, Mt Isa, Kuranda, the Gold Coast, Longreach and Toowoomba.

*The Right to Be Me* is based on the 2021 Children's Week National Theme:

Children have the right to choose their own friends and safely connect with others. (UNCRC Article 15)

The book features the TypeRights font which was inspired by Queensland children who designed the letters as a part of Children's Week 2020.

This guide includes:

- A history of children's rights as declared by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)
- Discussion points for the rights introduced by each of the children in the book
- Activities
- The articles of the UNCRC.



## The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

*The Universal Declaration of Human Rights* was proclaimed by United Nations in 1948. It outlines the things humans must have to live a healthy and peaceful life without discrimination. In 1989, it was realised there was a need to give special attention to the rights of children. The United Nations, along with countries around the world, developed a set of rights to help every child reach their full potential. This document is known as 'The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child'. There are 54 articles which outline the things all children need to live a safe, happy and healthy childhood.

Children's rights are the fundamental things that all children need to be happy, healthy, safe, cared for and to grow to their full potential. These rights include having healthy food to eat and clean water to drink, being able to go to school and learn, having time to play and make friends, having a say about matters that concern them, feeling safe, access to health care, and being able to practise their religion, culture and language.

### Why teach children's rights?

Throughout the early years, a child's understanding of right and wrong and their sense of fairness are rapidly growing and developing. Teaching children about their rights will aid the development of identity and social awareness while assisting children to identify when their rights, and those of others, are not being met.

- Article 42 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child states that all children have a right to learn about their rights. It also states that adults have a duty to teach children about their rights.
- Understanding their rights will empower children to speak out when their rights are not being met.
- Learning that all people have rights will help children to connect with and respect others, behave in a socially responsible way and take action to promote the rights of others.

## Rights and Responsibilities

Rights are fundamental things that are core to who we are and what we need as human beings. With rights also comes responsibilities. It is important for children to understand that we all have a responsibility to help protect the rights of others and create a world in which we all can feel safe, valued and protected. We have a responsibility to make the most of our education, to treat others fairly and with respect, and protect the culture, religion and language of others.



# The Right to Be Me

## Discussion and Activity Guide



### Introduction

Watch one of the videos listed, or do so as a concluding activity to consolidate new knowledge. Alternatively, invite one of the many Children's Rights Queensland Ambassadors to your school to introduce and discuss *The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child*. Contact Children's Rights Queensland to check on the availability of your local ambassador.

### Video Resources:

#### Prep to Year 3

This short video from UNICEF Australia explains the meaning of 'rights' in a fun and engaging way:



#### Years 4-8

This video from Talking Education explains children's rights in a little more detail:



#### Behind the News

ABC Education have aged based short videos explaining children's rights and the UNCRC:



Click or scan QR codes to view.

### The Cover

- Discuss the title – what could it mean?
- What is a right?
- Discuss the illustrations of the children, consider their diversity and the possible interests of each child.



# Lowanna and Jack - Brisbane

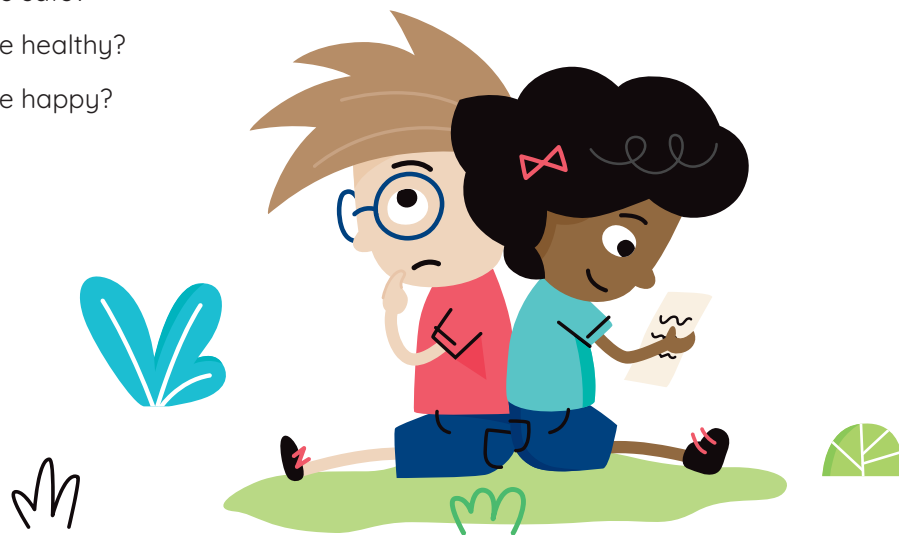
Lowanna and Jack live in Queensland and are best friends. They want to meet with their other friends in Children's Week to celebrate having rights.

*It's their right to choose their own friends and safely connect with others.*

- How has the illustrator depicted that the children live in Queensland?
- Where is Queensland and where do you live?
- What is Children's Week and why is it celebrated?
- What are children's rights?
- What does it mean to be safe?
- What does it mean to be healthy?
- What does it mean to be happy?

Lowanna and Jack organise an online meeting and invite their friends.

- Discuss the different platforms the children may have used to meet their friends online e.g. Zoom, Microsoft Teams. What platforms are the children in the class familiar with and who do they contact?
- Why is an adult helping Lowanna and Jack?
- Why is it important to ask for adult permission when using the internet?
- What right are the children exercising when they organise a meeting with their friends?



# Riley - Mount Isa

Riley lives in Mt Isa with his dad. He enjoys finding out about rocks and is a member of the gem club.

*It's his right to learn about new things and to meet others.*

- Discuss the right to learn and the various ways that children and adults learn.
- Brainstorm and create a list of the people who help children to learn, and the settings in which this occurs.
- What do the children know about Mt Isa? What would they like to know?
- Discuss and list the organisations or clubs which the students belong to. What rights are the children exercising by attending those clubs?

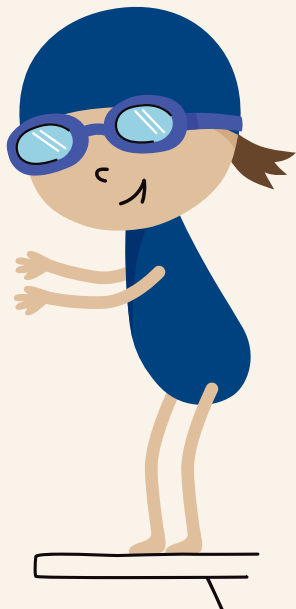


## Miriam – Longreach

Miriam lives with her family on an outback station near Longreach. She is looking forward to attending a swimming carnival and meeting her friends from the Longreach School of Distance Education.

*It's her right to have help getting to activities that keep her fit and healthy and to see her friends.*

- What does being fit mean?
- What does being healthy mean?
- What activities do readers do to keep fit and healthy?
- Why do children need help from adults to be fit and healthy?
- What activities or behaviours could harm your health and fitness?
- List the things we need to be fit and healthy and the people who help us meet those needs e.g. food, water, shelter, medical care.



## Bina Mirri – Kuranda

Bina Mirri lives in Kuranda with his family. Uncle is teaching him about his Country and culture.

*It's his right to enjoy his Country and culture and to learn his language.*

- What does Country mean? How are First Nations children connected to Country, sea, water, islands, rivers and mountains?
- What does culture mean?
- Why is it important to understand and respect the cultural practices of others?
- Why is it important for all children to understand about the culture of Australian First Nations peoples?
- Why is learning about their culture important for all children? Explain that participating in cultural practices enables children to learn their history, stories and traditions, identify with their community, and develop self-esteem, values, skills, knowledge and language.



# Anika – Toowoomba

Anika lives in Toowoomba with her family. She enjoys helping to making traditional dishes for the Food Festival where she will meet new friends.

*It's her right to have a home, enjoy her religion and share her culture.*

- Anika has a new home in Toowoomba and is making new friends. Have you ever moved and needed to make new friends?
- Why might having a home be a right that Anika wants to share and talk about with friends?
- It is important for Anika to be able to share her religion and culture with others. Why do you think this is so?
- Invite the students to share their family history and the different ethnic backgrounds from which they originate.
- Are there other cultures represented in your school or local community?

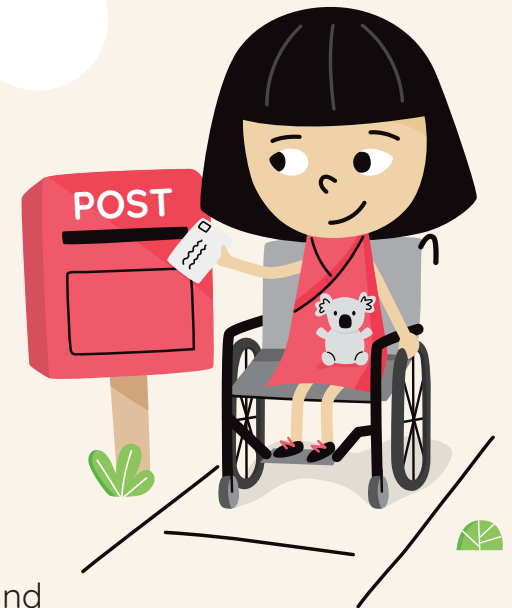


# Anh – Gold Coast

Anh lives on the Gold Coast with her mum. She is in the Environment Club at school and is writing letters to important people about keeping koalas safe by not chopping down trees.

*It's her right to have a say about things that matter to her.*

- Why are trees chopped down?
- How does not removing native trees help koalas?
- Brainstorm any concerns the students have regarding environmental or social issues. What could they do to help?
- Anh is expressing her right to have a say about things that matter to her. Other than environmental or social issues, are there other situations in which you may like to have a say?
- If you needed adult help to have a say about something that mattered to you, who could you ask for help?





## Lowanna – Brisbane

Lowanna lives in Brisbane with her family. She loves reading, writing stories, cooking and helping her parents pack their yummy lunches before she walks to school with her brothers.

*It's her right to have healthy food, go to school safely and to learn.*

- Invite children to share their hobbies and/or their favourite time of day.
- What is healthy food? Why is having healthy food important?
- If you don't have access to healthy food who can you ask for help?
- Lowanna mentions being able to go to school safely. What does this mean?
- What could prevent children from being able to get to school safely? Remind children that there are some places in the world where children do not have access to schools, or where girls are prevented from going to school.



## Jack – Brisbane

Jack also lives in Brisbane with his family. He loves the same activities as Lowanna – reading, writing stories and cooking – he also loves playing handball.

*It's his right to be a child, to be happy and play.*

- What does being happy mean to you?
- Do you have a favourite game you like to play?
- Why is it important for children to have time to play?
- Discuss the possibility that some children do not have time to play. Why would this be so? Is this fair?





# Activities

## The Right to Be Me

This activity focuses on each child as an individual and their right to feel healthy, happy and safe.

1. Students create a self-portrait in the centre of a piece of white paper using pencil, paint or collage. Include the heading *The Right to Be Me – (Child's Name)*.
2. Around the outside of the self-portrait, students draw their favourite healthy foods and activities, and the people that help to keep them safe.
3. Students share and describe their portrait with others during a class meeting.
4. Display the portraits.

## Being Fit and Healthy

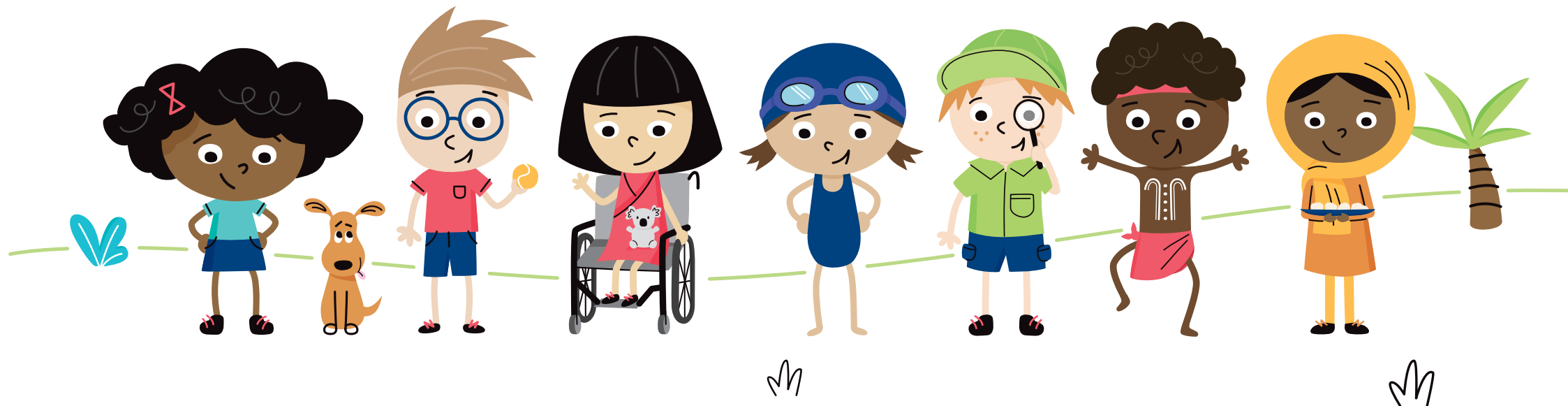
Creating a class mural with the heading *It's Our Right to Be Fit and Healthy*.

1. Discuss and list examples of healthy food.
2. Discuss and list activities that students are involved in that keep them fit.
3. Each child is allocated an activity or food to illustrate on white A4 paper.
4. Students cut around the illustration.
5. Display the illustrations to create a class mural.

## Safety Hands

This activity can help children identify people who they can go to when they need help or feel unsafe.

1. Students trace their hand on a piece of paper.
2. On each finger of the hand print, invite students to write the names of, or draw the people they can ask for help if they do not feel safe, or need help for other reasons.
3. The students can decorate the hand.

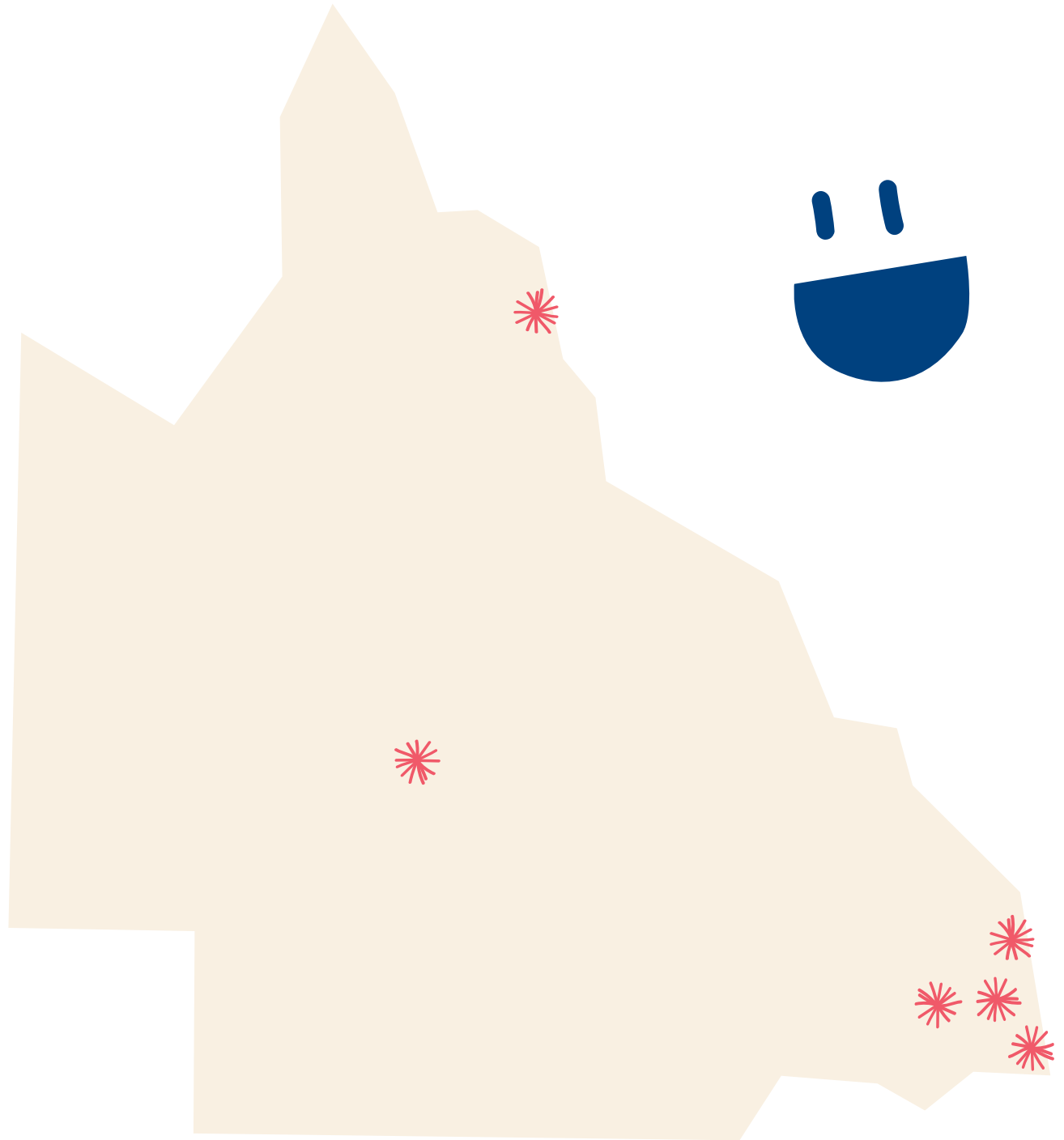


# Activities

## Mapping

Queensland is a big state! Help the children to identify their location and that of the children in *The Right to Me*.

1. Using the template map of Queensland, students individually label the locations of those places mentioned in *The Right to Be Me*.
2. Students draw each child from the book at the location where they live.
3. Students then mark and label their own location and include an illustration of themselves.
4. Illustrate the map with iconic images of Queensland e.g. the beach, sun, outback, rainforests, pineapples, crocodiles.



# Activities

## Class Cultural Activities

Celebrate the various cultures of the children in your class by inviting parents or community members to visit the classroom to talk about their customs and traditions.

Complete an activity that is specific to the cultures of the student. It could be related to a festival, food, dance or specific tradition.

## Celebrate Australia's First Nations People

*The Right to Be Me* includes an Acknowledgement of Country. Begin the day by acknowledging Country in your classroom by using your preferred Acknowledgement or that from the book.

Further activities that acknowledge and show respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures could be developed. Art, song, dance and ceremonies are significant to First Nations peoples.

### Make Your Own Clapsticks

Clapping sticks come in many sizes and are also known as music sticks or tapping sticks. They are made of wood and decorated by painting or burnt wire markings.

1. Collect lengths of thick dowel cut to different sizes, or purchase pre-cut dowel lengths.
2. Show the students what clapping sticks look like and the various symbols that First Nations people use in their artwork. There are several online sources which can be explored. This YouTube clip from Channel 7's Get Arty program is excellent: .....
3. Students paint half the dowel in a plain earthy or wood colour and allow to dry by standing in a bucket of sand.
4. Paint the other half and allow to dry.
5. Decorate the sticks by using a cotton bud with coloured paints or drawing on designs using coloured markers.
6. Use the sticks to explore the various sounds the different lengths make. Use in music lessons for rhythm and beat activities.



## Persuasive Letter

Older students can write a persuasive letter to exercise their right to have a say about an environmental or social issue that matters to them. Students will need assistance to identify an appropriate community leader to whom to address the letter.

# Other Resources:



Children's Rights Queensland have a range of resources which can be accessed:  
[childrensrightsqld.org.au/](http://childrensrightsqld.org.au/)

The Mighty Girl website [www.amightygirl.com/](http://www.amightygirl.com/) has age-based and thematic book recommendations for social justice issues.

## **Books:**

*I Have the Right to Be a Child* by Alain Serres and illustrated by Aurélia Fronty

*Welcome* by Barroux

*There's a Bear on My Chair* by Ross Collins

*Alfie's Big Wish* by David Hardy

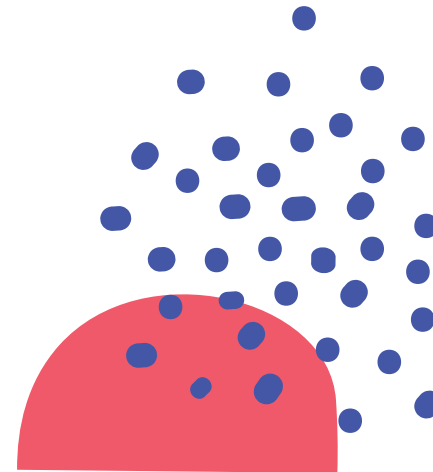
*The Little Corroboree Frog* by Tracey Holton-Ramirez and illustrated by Angela Ramirez

*Respect* by Fay Stewart-Muir Sue Lawson and illustrated by Lisa Kennedy

## **Additional Templates**

Children's Rights colouring page based on the front cover

TypeRights font



This teaching guide has been developed by author Allison Paterson.

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