



Every Child
BELONGS™
Stories of Friendship, Inclusion, and Belonging



Every Child Belongs™ Conversation Guide

Emma and Her Special Boy

Pre-K & Kindergarten | Educators, Parents & Caregivers

Stories of Friendship, Inclusion, and Belonging

Before You Read

Invite children to look at the cover.

- What do you notice about Emma?
- What do you notice about the boy?
- How do you think Emma and her boy feel about each other?
- What do you think makes someone a good friend?
- What do you think this story might be about?

For the adult:

There are no “right” answers. Encourage children to notice, wonder, and ask questions. Young children are naturally curious about differences. This story provides an opportunity to help turn that curiosity into understanding and kindness.

While You Read

Pause occasionally rather than asking a question on every page. Let children enjoy the story first.

Meet Emma

- What makes Emma different from some of the other dogs?
- How does Emma feel about her long, fluffy tail?
- What is something special about you?

Meet Emma's Special Boy

- What do you notice about Emma's boy?
- What does his cochlear implant help him do?
- Do all people hear in the same way?



- What are some other ways people communicate?

If children notice the children using their hands to communicate:

- What are these children doing with their hands?
- Did you know that some people communicate using sign language?
- Can people communicate in more than one way?

When Children Ask Questions

- Why do you think the other children are curious?
- How does Emma's boy answer their questions?
- Is it okay to notice that someone is different?
- How can we ask questions in a kind way?
- How would you want someone to speak to you if they had a question about you?

Emma and Her Boy

- What are some things Emma and her boy like to do together?
 - Are there things that may be harder for him?
 - What are some things he can do?
 - How does Emma help her boy?
 - How does her boy help Emma?
 - Does needing help mean you can't also help someone else?
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After the Story

Choose several questions rather than trying to ask all of them.

Let's Talk About Differences

1. What was different about Emma?
2. What was different about her boy?
3. Did those differences stop Emma and her boy from having fun together?
4. Are all of the children in our classroom/family exactly the same?
5. What would the world be like if everyone were exactly alike?



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Let's Talk About Feelings

6. How might you feel if someone kept staring at something that was different about you?
7. What could you do if you noticed another child was feeling left out?
8. What makes you feel like you belong?

Let's Talk About Friendship

9. What makes someone a good friend?
10. How did Emma show friendship?
11. How can we invite someone to play with us?
12. What can we do if someone plays, moves, hears, speaks, or communicates differently from us?

Let's Talk About What Makes Us Special

13. What is something about you that makes you special?
14. What is something special about the person sitting next to you?
15. Can two people be different and still have things in common?
16. What is something you can do to help another person?

Try This: "We All Belong" Circle

Sit together in a circle.

Ask each child to complete one of these sentences:

"Something special about me is..."

"I feel happy when..."

"I am a good friend when..."

"I feel like I belong when..."



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Children may answer aloud, draw their answer, act it out, or communicate in whatever way works best for them.

Finish together:

**We may look different.
We may hear differently.
We may move differently.
We may communicate differently.
We all have something special to share.
And we all belong.**

A Kindness Challenge

Ask children to choose one thing they can do today:

- Invite someone to play.
- Say hello to someone new.
- Help a friend.
- Listen when someone else is talking or communicating.
- Ask a question kindly.
- Notice something wonderful about another person.
- Include someone who is by themselves.

At the end of the day, ask:

“How did you help someone feel like they belonged today?”

When Children Ask About Differences

Children often ask direct questions about things they notice. Their curiosity can become an opportunity for understanding.

Rather than discouraging respectful questions, adults can model language such as:

“Yes, you noticed something different. People aren’t all the same. Would you like to learn more about it?”



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“His cochlear implant helps him hear. People can hear in different ways.”

“Some people communicate by talking, some use sign language, some use communication devices, and some communicate in other ways.”

“His arm is different from yours. Bodies can be different, too.”

Then bring the conversation back to the whole person:

“What else do you notice about him?”

“What do you think he likes to do?”

“What might you have in common?”

The goal is not to teach children to ignore differences. It is to help them learn that **differences are one part of a person—not everything about them.**

For Parents & Educators

After reading, look for opportunities to carry the story into everyday life.

When a child notices someone who looks, moves, hears, speaks, learns, or communicates differently, help them move through three simple steps:

Notice

It's okay to recognize differences.

Understand

We can learn about one another respectfully.

Include

Differences don't determine who gets to participate, play, or belong.

Ask one simple question often:

“What could we do to help someone feel included?”



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Our Every Child Belongs™ Promise

Every child deserves to be seen.
Every child deserves to be valued.
Every child deserves friendship.
Every child has something special to share.
Every Child Belongs™.



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