



Down by the Creek

Connect with children

This story is intended to support you as you create your own special moments of connection with your child/children. One of the greatest gifts you can give your children is a healthy self esteem. **Children who feel valued and who trust themselves and the adults that care for them, have the tools to develop healthy self esteem.** As a parent or carer, you can help your child/children to feel valued by spending time with them, playing games, reading books or just listening to them.



The **Safer Communities For Children** approach is all about sharing stories that can be used to **start important conversations** with children about safety. Each of the six available stories has important messages for our children about how they can think and talk about safety with trusted grown ups.

The stories also help adults to understand what makes children feel safe and unsafe. **Within the stories you will find questions that may help children to share their feelings with you.** There are also links to activities you can use to continue these important conversations.

We hope this book provides you with another special opportunity to **connect with the children you care for** and that in that connection, you recognise how important you are in their lives and the positive impact you can have in keeping them safe.

STORY 5

THE BIG IDEA

Children do well when their differences, abilities and feelings are respected

All the animals were playing by the creek.

The kangaroos were bounding around the clearing, jumping higher and higher.

The dingoes were playing catch with a stick.

The koalas were racing one another up and down the gum trees.

The eagles were practicing their swoops from the treetops.

The snakes were curling and uncurling together beside an old log.

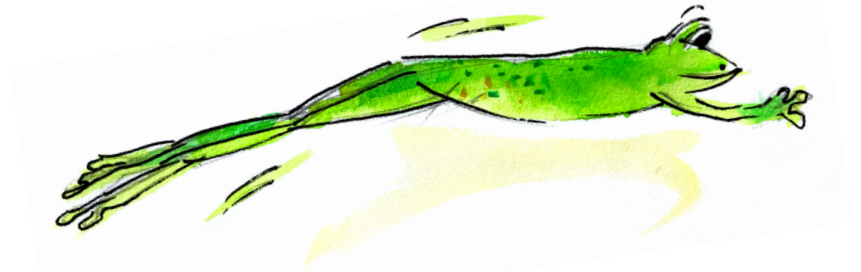
They were all having fun.



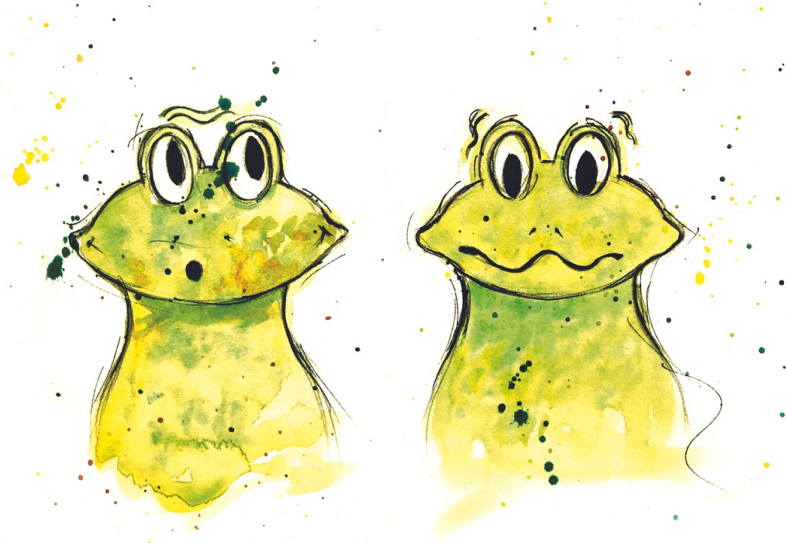


The frogs were lining up to leap over the creek.

Frankie watched as one by one his cousins hopped up and took a big leap all the way across.



It was nearly his turn.



Frankie wasn't sure he felt safe to leap. His body was sweaty and his legs felt wobbly like jelly.

"I can't," he thought.

"It's your turn Frankie,"
smiled his big cousin Jirra.



Frankie gulped.

"But I can't leap. I can only do little hops," he
said in a very small voice.

"You CAN leap Frankie. All frogs can leap!
Go ahead and leap over the creek!"



Frankie just stood there, like he was stuck to the ground.



"Go on!"
tutted the
kangaroos
and joeys.

"You can do it!"
whistled the eagles
and eaglets.



"Come on, Frankie..."
yawned the koalas
and joeys.

"We dare you!"
hissed the snakes
and snakelets.



"Just try it!"
howled the dingoes and pups.



Frankie looked at the creek.
It had been raining and the water was flowing fast.

"I'm only a little froglet," he thought.

"If I fall in the creek, the water might push me into the rocks and pull me under."

HOW DO YOU THINK
FRANKIE MIGHT BE
FEELING?

Frankie was worried.

His heart was beating
fast and he felt a
lump in his throat.



Frankie could hear
the animals calling
for him to go ahead
and leap.

He could see them watching him, waiting for him to jump.
Frankie felt sick in his tummy.

Frankie turned to Jirra.

"Jirra," he croaked quietly, "everyone says I can leap, but I don't want to do it."

"I don't feel safe."



Jirra could see that Frankie was afraid.

"Frankie – you don't have to leap if you don't feel safe – you can decide what feels right for you".

With his big cousin Jirra standing next to him, Frankie spoke to the others.

"I don't want to leap," he said. "I'm not ready."



"Are you sure you don't want to try?" said Kenny.
"I'm sure." Frankie replied. "Not today."

The animals thought about this, and realised Frankie felt pressured.

"Of course," they said.

"You can decide when you want to try.
Just let us know if we can help."



Frankie breathed a sigh of relief.

His heart stopped
beating fast.



The lump in his
throat was gone and
he didn't feel sick
any more.

He felt calm again.

Later, when Frankie told Mum what had happened, she listened carefully.

"Only you can decide if you feel ready," she said.
"It was brave of you to speak up for yourself and speak out like that."



"Mum," said Frankie,
"will I ever be able to
leap across the creek like
the other frogs?"

"I'm sure you will," Mum said.
"One day, when you feel ready."

Frankie smiled at Mum and gave her a big hug.



WHAT DO YOU THINK
MIGHT HELP FRANKIE
TO FEEL READY?

INVITE CHILDREN TO:

- act out some of the things the animals were doing at the beginning of the story (eg. *the kangaroos were bounding and jumping, the dingos were playing catch, the eagles were swooping, and the frogs were leaping*)
- try doing the skill in a different way (eg. *jump from side to side, clap their hands in between catching and throwing a ball*). Ask for their ideas, and invite them to have a try
- think of (and practice) ways they can encourage and support each other (without pressuring)
- think of (and practice) ways they can say 'no' if they don't feel ready to have a go, or want to 'pass' on trying something.

YOU COULD USE BACKGROUND MUSIC OR INSTRUMENTS.

MAKE IT FUN!



ASK YOUR CHILD ABOUT SOMETHING IN THEIR LIFE RIGHT NOW THAT THEY MIGHT BE FINDING DIFFICULT TO DO, LIKE READING OR TYING THEIR SHOES.

**Ask them how you could help them to
achieve that task.**

The key to "mastery" for a child is to start small by maybe breaking a task into smaller tasks and to slowly work your way up. Provide positive, specific feedback to your child as they achieve each step. For example - "You did a great job sounding that tricky word out - that was a tough one!"

Explain to your child that learning a new skill takes time, it can be boring (lots of practice), but its important to keep trying and do so consistently and regularly.



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