

This Teacher's Guide was written by **Larry Swartz**, Larry has been an instructor in literacy as well as dramatic arts at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, University of Toronto for nearly two decades. He is well-known for his use of children's literature to help young people grow as readers, writers, and citizens of the world.



Story Summary

Make-believe + melodrama = comedy as one dramatic little girl learns the new skill of finding a friend

From the creators of *Percy's Perfect Friend* comes an entertaining new journey into social-emotional growth. Leah is looking for a friend to play fairies. But when her invitation fails to sway her classmates, Leah is left all...ALONE.

Poor Lonely Leah! Will she always be the only one standing alone in line? The only one reading fairy tales in the book corner? The AGONY of her SUFFERING is so overpowering that she almost misses the quiet voice trying to get her attention...

Lana Button is an early childhood educator and a children's author who is passionate about supporting and encouraging children through entertainment. Lana began writing children's books after a career in television and theatre. Her books, including *Willow Finds a Way*, have been shortlisted for the Blue Spruce Award, The Shining Willow Award, the Jean Throop IODE Award, the Rainforest of Reading Award, and more. Her most recent book is *Percy's Perfect Friend*. Lana lives in Burlington, Ontario.

Peggy Collins is an award-winning children's book author-illustrator with more than 35 titles to her name, including the Blue Spruce Award-winner, *Harley the Hero*, and the ALA Schneider Family Book Award Honor Book, *A Sky-Blue Bench*. She has also written and illustrated for animated apps teaching math, indigenous history, and education. Peggy lives in Newburgh, Ontario, with her two children.

Juvenile Fiction Ages 3–6 | ISBN: 9781772783025 | Pages: 32

Reading Level Fountas & Pinnell: I | Lexile measure : AD450L

BISAC Codes JUV039060 JUVENILE FICTION / Social Themes / Friendship
JUV019000 JUVENILE FICTION / Humorous Stories
JUV039050 JUVENILE FICTION / Social Themes / Emotions & Feelings
JUV051000 JUVENILE FICTION / Imagination & Play
JUV035000 JUVENILE FICTION / School & Education

Learning Expectations

Students will have the opportunity to:

- Engage with their classmates in an open and respectful way
- Learn what it means to be a part of a team
- Investigate fictional and real stories of exclusion and the impact it has on the social dynamics in a classroom
- Understand the concept of exclusion and how it can impact someone's emotions
- Collaborate with their classmates in active play
- Explore the concept of 'play' and what it means to 'play well'

Key Vocabulary

Alone: to be by yourself

Lonely: feeling sad because you don't have friends or company

Exclusion: a feeling of not belonging; to shut someone out of an activity

Inclusion: to let someone be part of a group (and feel that they are part of the group)

Preparing To Read

In her Authors' Note that appears at the end of this book, early childhood educator, Lana Button writes, "Finding friends to play with can be a daunting task that requires confidence and social skills. Sometimes a child can feel just like Leah in *The Only Lonely Fairy*—convinced that no one wants to play with them."

With this story, it is important to discuss the concept of EXCLUSION. *The Only Lonely Fairy* is written to have students think about including others in their play activities. Discussion may trigger some strong feelings with children who have experienced being excluded from play and they may wish to share their story. You may suggest that students NOT use names if they are recounting an incident about being excluded. You can also invite students to share their stories privately with you.

Display the words **You Can't Play** on a chart or white board.

- To begin, survey the students and ask: Is this a fair rule? Is it okay to say to someone "you can't play with us?" YES or NO (you may also wish to add the qualifier MAYBE).
- Did someone ever say this to you when you wanted to join in and play with them?

- What might you do if you heard someone in your class say, “You can’t play with us,” OR “I don’t want to play with you?”

Before Reading

- Draw attention to the cover and ask: What word would you use to describe the girl on the cover?
- Have students make predictions about what they think the story might be about. Consider both the text and the illustration.
- Point out the illustrations that appear on the end pages and ask: What do you notice? What do you predict? How are these illustrations different than the one that appears on the cover?

During Reading

- What is Leah looking for in the beginning of this story?
- How do you think Leah felt when her classmates told her they were too “busy” to play, or that they wanted to play “alone”?
- Were the children who wanted to play alone, really alone?
- Do you think Leah’s classmates were rude to her? Do you think this was intentional? Were they *trying* to hurt Leah’s feelings?
- How do you think Allie felt when she wanted to play with Leah and couldn’t get her attention? Was Leah intentionally ignoring Allie?
- Do you think there was a better way for Allie to get Leah’s attention. If so, why do you think she didn’t do that?
- Have there been times in your life when you wanted to play with someone but were too shy to ask?
- How do Leah and Allie’s expressions change from the beginning of the book to the end?
- What did Allie and Leah do when a third child asked to play with them?

After Reading

- How should you respond to someone who asks to play with you?
- Is it OK if we sometimes choose to play alone? What are some times that you have enjoyed playing by yourself?
- Do you think it’s possible to hurt someone’s feelings without meaning to?
- What is the difference between being ALONE and being LONELY?

- Is *The Only Lonely Fairy* a happy or sad story? How did it make you feel?
- Review each of the illustrations in this picture book. What are some play activities that the children have enjoyed?
- If Leah visited your classroom, what are some games you might ask her to play with you?

Activity #1: Let's Play

Students will have the opportunity to:

- Engage with others in a group setting
- Learn about the importance of sharing
- Partake in classroom discussions about play
- Use fine motor skills to build object out of LEGO
- Consider what it means to 'play well' (i.e. rules for playing well with others)

Materials: LEGO

Survey the students with a show of hands by asking “who has ever played with LEGO?” Ask them what it is about LEGO that interests them, and what things they typically like to build.

Split the students into equal groups of no more than four and divide the LEGO amongst them.

Teacher Tip: The word LEGO is an abbreviation of two Danish words, 'leg' and 'godt' which translate to 'play well'. You can explain this translation to your students as you divide the LEGO amongst the groups.

- Ask the students what it means to 'play well'. You can also write the word on a whiteboard and record answers as they are given for later reference.
- Provide an allotted amount of time for the students to play with the building blocks, and instruct them to work together to create one cohesive structure. This can either be a building, animal, object, or anything else that piques their interest. The focus of this activity is their ability to work as a team in a respectful and calm manner.

Extension: have the students reflect on the activity by asking...

- What was enjoyable about this activity?
- What makes this activity difficult?
- Were there any disagreements when deciding what the group wanted to build?
- Were there any disagreements when building the structure?
- How did you move past these disagreements?

- Did you remember what it meant to ‘play well’ together? Did you follow these rules?
- What did your group create?
- Would you have preferred to work alone or with friends?

Activity #2: Class Discussion

Students will have the opportunity to:

- Respond to scenarios that are centred on being excluded from play activities
- Formulate ideas and opinions in regards to inclusion
- Participate in a class discussion

The following scenarios describe children at play. They are authentic scenarios that serve as case studies for discussing exclusion. The students may or may not connect to these stories. Choose one or more of these case studies that are suitable for your classroom and have students share their thoughts about what they would say or do if this happened in their classroom?

Teacher Tip: Before having a whole class discussion, invite students to turn and talk to two or three classmates to discuss the situation by asking “What would you do?”

Scenario #1: A new student from another country has joined the class. She wants to join in and play games with her classmates who don’t seem to include her because they think she doesn’t understand the rules and will spoil the game. What would you say or do?

Scenario #2: At recess, a young girl is seen standing alone. She doesn’t seem to want to join in with the others and play. What would you say or do?

Scenario #3: During free time, the girls in the class always go to the book nook and the boys always go to play with blocks, but one girl really wants to play in the construction center. When she tries to though, one of the boys shouts, “This is for boys only.” What would you say or do?

Scenario #4: A student doesn’t want to share a toy, even though they’ve been instructed to by the teacher. One of their classmates really wants to play with it, but the student is refusing. What would you say or do?

Activity #3: Competition

Students will have the opportunity to:

- Play a competitive game with their classmates
- Practice the rules of playing well
- Learn how to compete in a respectable manner

- Engage in physical activity

Materials: Tug-of-war rope

- Ask the students to divide themselves into groups of five, and encourage them to remember the qualities of good play (no one left out).
- Once the students are divided, number the teams and format a round-robin tug of war tournament.
- Allow the children to compete while continuing to engage the defeated teams through cheering.

Discussion questions:

- What does it mean to compete?
- What does it mean to be a good sport?
- How should an athlete behave when they lose a game?
- Is it okay to lose?
- What are some qualities of a good competitor?
- Who is your favourite athlete? How do they interact with their teammates and peers?

This guide was created with
support from Ontario Creates

