



The mindful approach to PSHE

Same sex relationships and homophobia in Jigsaw

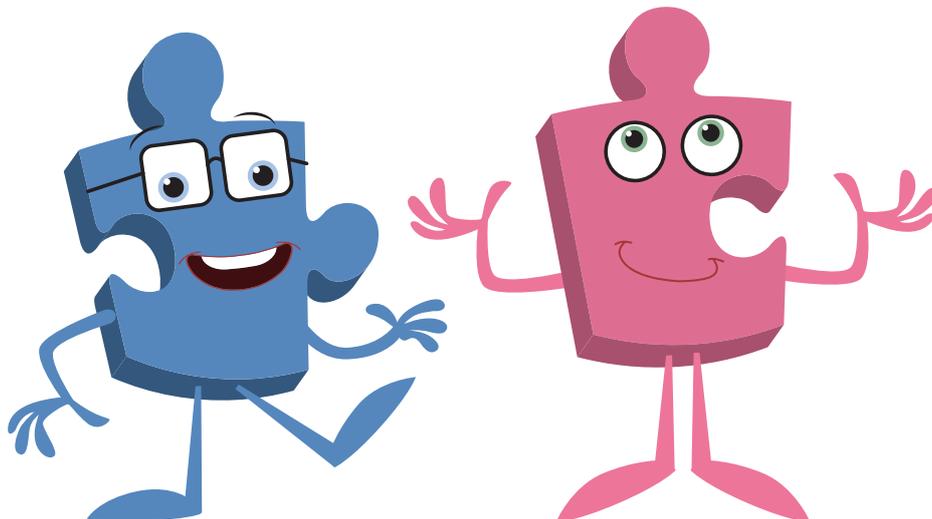
Celebrating Difference – Jigsaw PSHE

The concept of 'difference' is covered throughout Jigsaw in all of the Puzzles, consistently encouraging children to examine how they are similar and how they are different from those around them – and how to accept everyone's right to 'difference', regardless of their circumstances or choices. In Celebrating Difference, the second Puzzle that is taught from November to December in a school year, differences in families are covered throughout and this looks subtly at all types of families including same-sex parents, which will be a reality for some children in all schools, irrespective of whether other parents/carers know about this.

Year 2 begins by examining how bullying is sometimes about difference – and that other people's ideas about you may influence how they treat you.

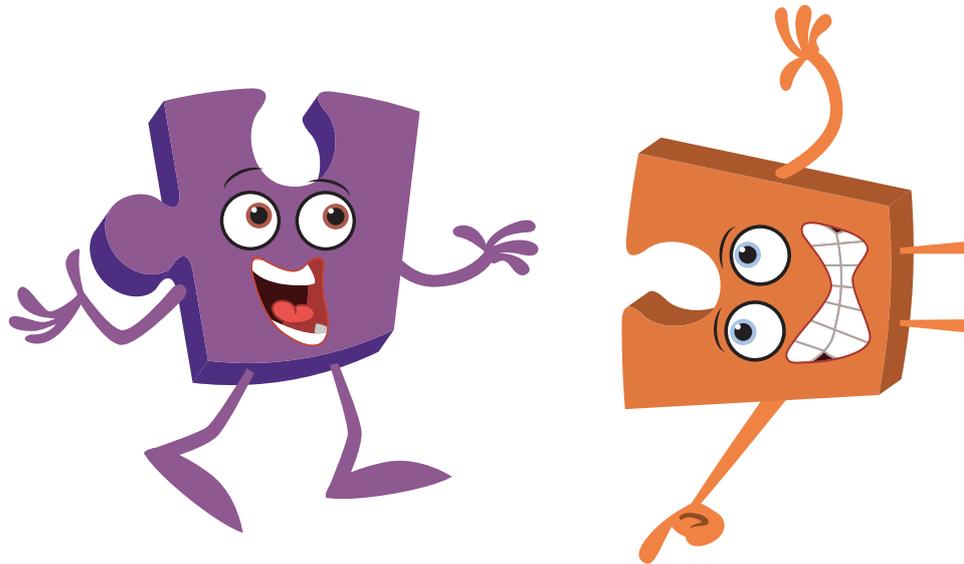
Year 3 builds upon this and starts looking at the various types of 'different' that mean something to children. The first lesson of **Celebrating Difference** has the following learning intentions:

- Please teach me to understand that everybody's family is different and important to them
- Please teach me to appreciate my family/the people who care for me



The activities in the lesson encourage children to explore similarities and differences in families, and to notice what is positive about the similarities and differences. They are shown pictures of the following:

- Mixed race family
- Cat and kittens
- Mum, dad and child family
- Single-parent family
- Extended family
- Single-sex family
- Herd of cows
- Older couple
- Class of children
- Single person
- One man and his dog
- Mum with children



The children are asked to say which pictures show a family and which don't and why. After discussing all the pictures, groups of children are asked to write a definition of what a family is to them. Then the children work as a class to draw out common definitions. They then look at the pictures that, to them, are not families and discuss why.

Next, the children will be read 'The Family Book' by Todd Parr, which celebrates the love we feel for our families and all the different varieties they come in. Whether you have two mothers or two dads, a big family or a small family, a clean family or a messy one, the book assures readers that no matter what kind of family you have, every family is special in its own unique way.

The children are then invited to draw a picture of their families and to share what their families mean to them. The lesson ends with reinforcing the learning that there are many different types of families and that this is normal. The teacher will state again that, usually, a family is a group of people who are related and who care about each other. The children will be encouraged to appreciate their own families and appreciate the differences between families.

Lesson 2 explores differences in families again, this time using the book 'And Tango Makes Three', by Justin Richardson, which tells the story (based on truth) about two male penguins who raise a chick together.

Lessons 3-4 look more specifically at bullying, and this is where homophobic bullying (as well as other types of bullying) is explored. The teacher notes in these lessons state that children often use the word 'gay' as a derogatory term, sometimes without understanding what it means. Often, children think it means 'stupid'. The most important thing is to emphasise that no words should be used to hurt people. However, it may be necessary to give an explanation of what the word actually means. It is not necessary with Year 3 children to add sexual connotation to the word. It is usually enough to explain to children that being gay means being attracted to/loving someone of the same sex in a boyfriend/girlfriend-style relationship.

Using the word 'gay' in a derogatory way is seen as homophobic and as such is completely unacceptable. Teachers need to be as vigilant about this as they would if racist language were used.

These lessons have been written as a direct response to help teachers work with children to eliminate this unacceptable language – regardless of whether understand about the concept of homosexuality or not. Children may have heard the word 'gay' in the playground or from older siblings/friends and may repeat it without knowing what it means. Indeed, it does not matter so much when children hear about homosexuality for the first time: what is important is that it is dealt with sensitively and respectfully – as should be the case for any 'difference' that children may experience in their lives now or in the future.

Lesson 5 looks more closely at the consequences of using unacceptable language, helping children to recognise that some words can be used in a harmful way and that we can all try not to use these words. By starting to look at differences early on in a child's education, it is hoped that children will grow up to be accepting and tolerant of other people's choices and situations.

Years 4-6 consolidate what has been taught in Year 3, and move children's understanding, values and skills on to other areas in a more sophisticated way. For instance, Year 4 covers judging others by their appearance, disability, understanding how other people can influence us, problem-solving in bullying situations, being unique (and valuing everyone's 'uniqueness'), finishing with celebrating how everyone looks different.

Year 5 examines different cultures, racism, rumours and name-calling, understanding different types of bullying, and celebrating difference across the world. All of this work builds on the values and skills that have been explored in earlier year groups.

Year 6 starts with examining 'what is normal?' (the answer to which, of course, is that there is no such thing), then explores understanding disability, power struggles and cyber bullying, why people might bully others, celebrating differences in physical abilities, and differences that might cause conflict.



In many teachers' experiences, children will very often have heard of concepts such as homosexuality but they might not be aware of what each of these concepts means. It is the responsibility of the teacher and the school to ensure that these concepts are explained in a way that is appropriate to the age and stage of development of each child. And, of course, it is not just within the realms of PSHE Education that this might occur. It is vital that an explanation is approached in a sensitive way – to ensure children have sufficient information for their age and stage of development. It does not mean that adults need to share all their knowledge of a subject with a child, as that would, no doubt, be inappropriate.

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