

# Elki is Not My Dog

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Elki does not have a home – she is a stray dog who finds kindness in the company of a group of children. They play together during the day, but Elki must stay alone outside every night because dogs are not allowed in their block of flats. One day Elki disappears and is found injured. Who will look after her and how? This is a tender picture book that shows the reader how one act of kindness can change the attitude of other people. It is the ideal story to share with early years children and below are some ideas for its use in an early years setting.

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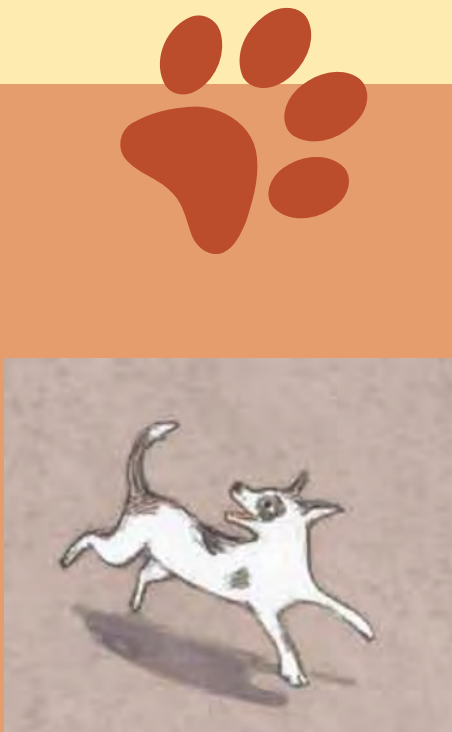
**Role play area** – in 'Elki is Not My Dog', Elki is found hurt and injured. The children care for her. You could set up a role play area as a veterinary surgery where children can explore and play.



**Observe** – develop children's observational skills by noticing details & spotting differences between different breeds of dog: colour, size, length of fur & how they move. Children love to notice the smallest of details given the chance.



**Cross-curricular links** – why not create your own piece of artwork using pieces of paper cut into different shapes. Which colours would you choose? Which shape would make the best head or body for your dog? Once you have placed the shapes on a piece of paper, stick them down to finalise the picture. Combining curriculum areas in this way allows children to make connections and deepen their understanding.



**Caring for others** – it has been shown that children who learn how to care for animals tend to be more considerate towards others. Being responsible for the care of another living creature can help build confidence and bridge social situations that some children find difficult – caring for an animal together can help facilitate friendships. Use 'Elki is Not My Dog' as a stimulus for discussing the importance of caring for others. Ask the children to share ways that they themselves can care for others – giving hugs, sharing toys, helping them with a tricky task and more. Together, draw up 'A Checklist For Looking After Others' and help children decide what should go on the list.



**Caring for all animals** – allow children the opportunity to discuss their own pets at home and how they care for them – link this back to how the children care for Elki. Extend the discussion to help children see that different animals are all around them, and of the steps that humans can take to care for wild animals and their homes. Use an outdoor setting to explore animals in the local area and how we can best care for and protect them.



*Jenny Guest is an independent educational consultant and writer alongside her role as an Assistant Headteacher in a large London primary school. She has been a primary school teacher for ages 3-11. Jenny is also an avid reader of children's literature and runs @bookishwaytoplay on Instagram, which aims to showcase and review the very best children's books, as well as create accompanying supportive learning activities for toddlers, preschool and primary school age children.*

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