

## Group Hug written by Jean Reidy and illustrated by Joey Chou

*There once was a slug needing someone to hug.  
Along came a beetle, a lonely ol' bug.  
"You need a hug? I have one," said Slug,  
"to keep your heart snug!"*

As more and more dejected animals come along, they are each invited to join the group hug which gets bigger and bigger. But will they dare include a scary-looking bear?

The story is told in catchy verse full of irresistible internal rhyme and rhythm, making it the perfect read-aloud book to cheer up any child - or adult - who is feeling blue. Full of empathy and kindness, with a message of acceptance and affection, the art is adorable with huggable characters and vibrant nature scenes.



This book is ideal for supporting children with their Personal, Social and Emotional Development which supports children to interact with others well and to develop positive attitudes about themselves and others. The suggested activities below support children in the three strands of PSED as detailed on the Early Years Foundation Stage Framework (2021): self-confidence and self-awareness, managing feelings and behaviour and making relationships.

### Self-confidence and self-awareness

In 'Group Hug', Slug is kind to everyone and knows that everyone needs a hug sometimes. Talk or write about the kind things your child has done for other people or their friends today.

Create an 'All About Me' poster – your child could draw or write about themselves: *What do they like? What don't they like? Who is in their family? Favourite colour? Food?*

Using a mirror- can your child draw or paint their own self portrait?

Use a photograph of your child and cut this up into jigsaw pieces, ask your child to put the photograph of themselves back together.

### Managing feelings & behaviour

In 'Group Hug' lots of feelings & emotions are explored; Skunk is sad, Mouse is grumpy and Bear is lonely. What other feelings can your child identify from the pictures? Look at the pictures together & discuss how you can tell what the animals are feeling from their facial expressions & body language.

Ask your child: *what makes you feel sad? Have you ever felt lonely? What makes you feel happy?*

Use modelling play or play dough ask your child to create their own faces that show different emotions.

Give your own child a hug and share stories together – quiet time is really important.

### Making Relationships

Help your child to make a photo collage or poster showing all the important people in their life.

Play games that involve turn taking and following simple rules.

Do some simple tasks around the house together or in the classroom so that you can demonstrate teamwork and cooperation.

Play open-ended games: can you create a den / home for all the animals in 'Group Hug' to live in together?

Create lollipop puppets of each of the characters in 'Group Hug' – ask your child to retell the story using the puppets or retell their own version.

*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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