



KING OF THE PLAYGROUND

By Phyllis Reynolds Naylor

Every time Kevin goes to the playground, he encounters Sammy – a little boy who thinks he’s King of the Playground and won’t let Kevin play. Sammy even threatens Kevin with impossible scenarios, saying he’ll tie him up, bury him or nail up his house. When Kevin goes to his Dad for help, they play a game and come up with ideas for how Kevin can stand up for himself using words and humour.



WITS Connection: Talk it out, Seek help

Questions and Activities



PRE-READING QUESTIONS

1. Take a look at the cover of the book. What do you think the story is about?
2. What does it mean to be a King or a Queen?
3. How do you think the boy with the hand in his mouth is feeling?
4. How do you think the boy with his hand raised is feeling? What do you think he is saying to the other boy?



POST-READING QUESTIONS

1. Why is Kevin afraid to go to the park? What does he do? *He seeks help from his Dad.*
2. What do you think of the idea of kicking dirt back in the hole when Sammy is digging a hole to put Kevin in? *Someone could get hurt.* What is another idea that Sammy could do to stand up for himself?
3. Why do Kevin and his Dad start laughing when Kevin reveals that Sammy threatened to come over to their house and nail all the doors and windows shut?
4. How does Kevin learn to stand up for himself? *He uses his imagination to think of absurd solutions to the absurd threats and he makes a game of this with Sammy. Note: Boys, in particular, use banter and "one-upmanship" to defuse interpersonal conflicts. The idea is that eventually the banter becomes so silly or absurd that everyone laughs.*
5. How can you stand up for yourself without touching a person? *Talking it out, using humour, not backing down, making friends, playing together.*



POST-READING ACTIVITIES

- Ask your students what they like to do on the playground and then have them each draw a picture of themselves doing their favourite activity with a friend.
- Start a round of "what if." Have your students think up common playground conflicts and solutions to them that use humour, seeking support of others, etc. *What if I say, "You can't play soccer with me?" (I will find some other people to play with and ask you to play with us).*
- Use the book's pictures to show how to draw a slide with a ruler. Explain angles and how they work. Visit the playground to look at the angles on the equipment.