

Unit Plan and Resource Guide for

You Hold Me Up,
by Monique Gray Smith

Resource Guide
& Unit Plan
Teacher-Author:
Emily Rozitis

Page 1 of 7

Resources used
& possible
concerns

Book: You Hold Me Up, by Monique Gray Smith

Possible Concerns:

- Access to the physical book
*Solutions include accessing the Youtube read-aloud, or borrowing a copy through your local public library.

Author/creator
& literature
background

Author: Monique Gray Smith

Illustrator: Danielle Daniel

Literature Background: "Monique Gray Smith wrote You Hold Me Up to prompt a dialogue among young people, their care providers and educators about reconciliation and the importance of the connections children make with their friends, classmates and families. This is a foundational book about building relationships, fostering empathy and encouraging respect between peers, starting with our littlest citizens." (Smith, 2020)

*This is a direct quote from <https://www.moniquegraysmith.com/writing>

Pre-Literacy Skills
&
Other Targeted Skills for
preschool - Grade 6
(Disabilities
Classrooms)

Pre-Literacy Skills include:

Lesson 1: Picture Walk, Predictions & Shared Reading

Lesson 2: Writing, Conferencing & Making the Writing Block Multilevel

Lesson 3: Writing & Predictable Charts

Lesson 4: Reading, Writing, & Making the Writing Block Multilevel

Other Targeted Skills include:

Lesson 1: Social Skills- small or large group engagement, turn-taking, visual attention, listening skills (strategies may include personalized seating, whole-body listening, or Give me 5 supports.)

Lesson 2: Attention to task, communication, fine motor skills, functional tool use. *Core Word (Love) used in verbal, visual and written contexts. shape & space skills, graphic organizer skills.

Lesson 3: Attention to task, communication, fine motor skills, functional tool use. *Core Word (Love) used in verbal, visual and written contexts. Spatial skills, & graphic organizer skills.

Lesson 4: Attention to task, communication, fine motor skills, functional tool use. *Core Word (Confident) used in verbal, visual and written contexts. Graphic organizer skills, spatial skills, shape & space skills.

*** All Literacy Connections can be found in The Teacher's Guide to the Four Blocks (Cunningham, Hall & Sigmon, 1999.)

You Hold Me Up, by Monique Gray Smith

Page 2 of 7

Materials

'You Hold Me Up' Resource Pack with 5 Activities (Rozitis, 2020)

"This is How You Hold Me Up" Literacy/Art/Fine Motor Activity (1 page)

- "With My Family, I Love..." Literacy/Fine Motor Activity (1 page)

- "I Love..." Predictable Chart Literacy Activity with Prompts (2 pages)

- "What Holds Me Up?" Literacy/Fine Motor Activity (1 page)

***Resource Pack is attached as an Appendix, at the end of this document.

Other Materials:

- Writing tools (pencil, crayon, wide-grip bingo-dabbers, marker, etc.)

- Scissors (or adapted scissors, loop scissors, or mounted loop scissors)

- Glue or tape

Rationale

Big Idea: This unit plan facilitates pre-academic skill development (literacy dominant) in early education and disability-focused learning environments.

Purpose: This unit plan supports classrooms with diverse skill levels, promoting engagement with text, reading, writing, and working with words, in individualized ways. The goal is to create meaningful and authentic interactions with Smith's text, and facilitate connections and understanding about relationships in students' lives. Furthermore, the intention is to connect students and educators with positive and authentic representations of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit experiences (in particular, this personal, Cree experience with love and family, as told by Monique Gray Smith.)

Unit Content

This Unit Plan contains 4 Lessons:

Lesson 1: Picture Walk, Predictions & Shared Reading

Lesson 2: Writing, Conferencing & Making the Writing Block Multilevel

Lesson 3: Writing & Predictable Charts

Lesson 4: Reading, Writing, & Making the Writing Block Multilevel

***Lesson 1 should be completed as the initial lesson. The following 3 lessons may be interchanged, based on the preference of the educator.

You Hold Me Up, by Monique Gray Smith

Page 3 of 7

Lesson 1: Picture Walk, Predictions & Shared Reading

Literacy Connections and Strategies: Picture Walk, Literary Predictions & Shared Reading, from "Shared Reading for Emerging Readers" (Cunningham, et. al., pp 49-67, 1999.)

Other Skills: Social Skills- small or large group engagement, turn-taking, visual attention, listening skills (strategies may include personalized seating, whole-body listening, or Give me 5 supports.)

Preparation: Have a copy of the book, or the read-aloud via Youtube, ready to go. Ask your group of students to sit together, at a table or on the floor. Ensure you have access to any necessary supports, including communication devices or physical equipment to support each student's needs.

Activity (option for one OR two part lesson) :

1. Introduce the Activity: Explain how you will read a book together- show the cover of the book to the students.
2. Take a Picture Walk, flipping through the pages and pointing to what you can SEE in the illustrations.
3. Make a prediction together: Ask students, What will this book be about? Write your ideas down for students to see.
****Some classrooms may choose to end here, and complete the remaining steps at another time, based on attention levels in your given class.*
4. Introduce the theme of the book, by asking students to think about the people that they LOVE. Explain how you will read a book together- this book is written by Monique Gray Smith, and it is about the ways that she loves (and is loved by,) her family.
5. Read the book aloud, showing students the pictures on each page.
6. Ask students:

Did you LIKE this story?

What did you LIKE BEST in this story?

*This can be done with raised hands, votes, or physical, verbal, or visual communication.

Accommodations include:
Communication Devices
& Systems,
Slant boards,
Adapted writing tools
Adapted scissors
Body Breaks
"Chunk" the Activity

You Hold Me Up, by Monique Gray Smith

Page 4 of 7

Lesson 2:

Reading, Writing,
& Making the
Writing Block
Multilevel

Literacy Connections and Strategies: Reading, Writing, & "Making the Writing Block Multilevel" (Cunningham, et. al., pp 113-114, 1999.)

Other Skills: Attention to task, communication, fine motor skills, functional tool use. *Core Word (Love) used in verbal, visual and written contexts. Shape & space skills, graphic organizer skills.

Preparation: Have a copy of the book, or the read-aloud via Youtube, ready to go. Print out copies for all students, or prepare laminates of "This is How You Hold Me Up" Literacy/Art/Fine Motor Activity (1 page) & "With My Family, I Love..." Literacy/Fine Motor Activity (1 page) from Resource Pack. Prepare space with writing materials, handouts, and minimal distractions. Ask your students, one at a time, or in pairs, to sit with you at a table top (or a preferred learning area.)

Activity (option for one or two part lesson) :

*Optional: if completing this activity on a different day than Lesson 1, you may wish to read the story again with your students.

1. Introduce the Activity: Show students the "This is How You Hold Me Up" Literacy/Art/Fine Motor Activity (1 page) and ask them "What makes you feel LOVED?"
2. If students are pre-literate, encourage pre-writing skills like drawing, making shapes, or scribbling. Use enthusiasm as you draw along with your student on your own page.
3. Take turns asking questions like: "What kind of hug does your Mom give? Is it a BIG hug or a SMALL hug? (& draw your own BIG or SMALL shape on your own teacher-page.)
4. When student is satisfied with their work, encourage them to sign their name. A signature does NOT need to be written correctly or be written with letters-encourage ALL students to sign their work, as all artists do!
****Some classrooms may choose to end here, and complete the remaining steps at another time, based on attention levels in your given class.*
5. Introduce the "With My Family, I Love..." Literacy/Fine Motor Activity (1 page) and read the different choices with your student, pointing to the text. Ask your student to circle, cut out, or use a stamp/bingo dabber to identify the things that they love to do with their family. Assist with physical needs only as needed, and encourage independent work.
6. Review your choices together and encourage the use of the core word, LOVE: "I love to _____, _____, & _____ with my family! These are the ways that I feel LOVED."
7. Ask students to sign their work, if they chose not to cut out their choices.

*****Option to extend:** Students may glue their cut-out choices onto a card or collage for their family, where they may explore writing, drawing & other fine motor skills.

Accommodations include:
Communication Devices
& Systems,
Slant boards,
Adapted writing tools
Adapted scissors
Body Breaks
"Chunk" the Activity

You Hold Me Up, by Monique Gray Smith

Page 5 of 7

Lesson 3: Writing & Predictable Charts

Literacy Connections and Strategies: Writing & Predictable Charts (Cunningham, et. al., pp 113-114, 1999.)

Other Skills: Attention to task, communication, fine motor skills, functional tool use. *Core Word (Love) used in verbal, visual and written contexts. Spatial skills, & graphic organizer skills.

Preparation: Have a copy of the book, or the read-aloud via Youtube, ready to go. Print out copies for all students of the "I Love..." Predictable Chart Literacy Activity with Prompts (2 pages) from Resource Pack. Prepare space with writing materials, scissors (optional,) and handouts. Ask your students, one at a time, or in pairs, to sit with you at a table top (or a preferred learning area.)

Activity (option for one or two part lesson) :

*Optional: if completing this activity on a different day than Lesson 1, you may wish to read the story again with your students.

1. Introduce the Activity: Show students the "I Love..." Predictable Chart Literacy Activity with Prompts (2 pages) from Resource Pack.
2. Write your own Predictable Chart (3 ideas) to show students what is expected. (For Example, I love our classroom, I love my dog, I love pink.)
3. Read the choices on page 2 together. You may choose to assist your student with cutting out the choices (or prepare some ahead of time,) based on individual needs.
4. Students may choose to write their own ideas, or use the ideas from page 2, to write their predictable charts. If students are pre-literate, encourage pre-writing skills like drawing, making shapes, or scribbling.
5. Encourage your students to complete the chart with minimal adult support.
6. When student is satisfied with their work, encourage them to sign their name. A signature does NOT need to be written correctly or be written with letters- encourage ALL students to sign their work, as all artists do!
7. Review your student's chart together and encourage your student (if verbal, or using a communication system) to read along with you.

*****Option to extend:** Students may read their own, or have a teacher read their predictable chart aloud to the class at the following group literacy lesson, to share their writing. Other extension option is to send this chart as a letter in the mail, to student's families, as a letter-writing activity.

Accommodations include:
Communication Devices
& Systems,
Slant boards,
Adapted writing tools
Adapted scissors
Body Breaks
"Chunk" the Activity

You Hold Me Up, by Monique Gray Smith

Page 6 of 7

Lesson 4:
Reading,
Writing,
& Making the
Writing Block
Multilevel

Literacy Connections and Strategies: Reading, Writing, & "Making the Writing Block Multilevel" (Cunningham, et. al., pp 113-114, 1999.)

Other Skills: Attention to task, communication, fine motor skills, functional tool use. *Core Word (Love) used in verbal, visual and written contexts. Graphic organizer skills, spatial skills, shape & space skills.

Preparation: Have a copy of the book, or the read-aloud via Youtube, ready to go. Print out copies for all students (or make laminates) of the "What Holds Me Up?" Literacy/Fine Motor Activity (1 page). Prepare space with writing materials, scissors (optional,) and handouts. Ask your students, one at a time, or in pairs, to sit with you at a table top (or a preferred learning area.)

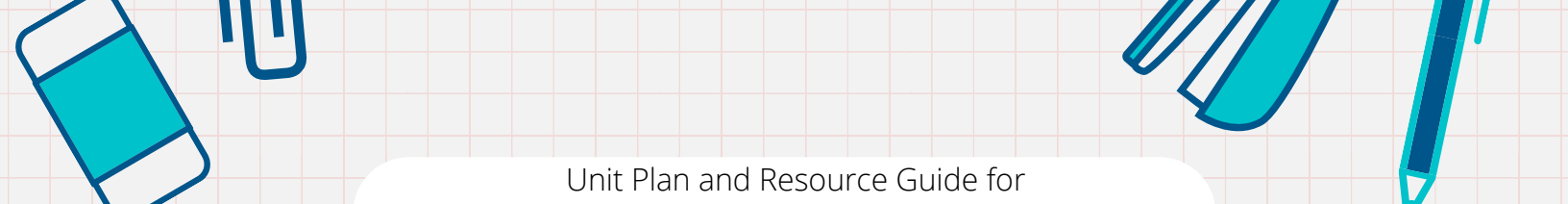
Activity (option for one or two part lesson) :

*Optional: if completing this activity on a different day than Lesson 1, you may wish to read the story again with your students.

1. Introduce the Activity: Show students the "What Holds Me Up?" Literacy/Fine Motor Activity (1 page) and read the choices together, pointing to the text.
2. Introduce the new core word: CONFIDENT. Explain how confidence is when we feel happy, proud and ready to take on new challenges. Give them an example of when you feel confident.
3. Ask your student to circle, cut out, or use a stamp/bingo dabber to identify the things that make them feel confident. Assist with physical needs only as needed, and encourage independent work.
4. If students are pre-literate, encourage pre-writing skills like drawing, making shapes, or scribbling.
5. When student is satisfied with their work, encourage them to sign their name. A signature does NOT need to be written correctly or be written with letters- encourage ALL students to sign their work, as all artists do!
6. Review your student's choices together and encourage your student (if verbal, or using a communication system) to read along with you.

*****Option to extend:** Students may glue their cut-out choices onto a card or collage for their family, where they may explore writing, drawing & other fine motor skills, and further promote a discussion about emotions.

Accommodations include:
Communication Devices
& Systems,
Slant boards,
Adapted writing tools
Adapted scissors
Body Breaks
"Chunk" the Activity



Unit Plan and Resource Guide for

You Hold Me Up, by Monique Gray Smith

Page 7 of 7 - References

Supporting
Sources/
APA references

Cunningham, Patrica M., Hall, Dorothy P., & Sigmon, Cheryl M. (1999.) *The Teacher's Guide to the Four Blocks: A Multimethod, Multilevel Framework for Grades 1-3*. Carson-Dellosa Publishing Company.

Rozitis, Emily. (2020.) *You Hold Me Up' Resource Pack with 5 Activities*. Self-Published.


Smith, Monique Gray. (2017.) *You Hold Me Up*. Orca Book Publisher.

Smith, Monique Gray. (2020.) *Monique Gray Smith Webpage-Books*. Web. <https://www.moniquegraysmith.com/>

About the
Teacher-Author:

Emily Rozitis has a Bachelors of Arts in French, and a Bachelors of Education in Inclusive Education from the University of Calgary. She is a practicing elementary school teacher who works in a severe disabilities classroom with non-verbal students (ages 6-12.) Emily uses a variety of communication supports in her classroom to promote a differentiated and inclusive literacy-rich environment. Her multimodal communication approach to learning includes the use of digital and paper-based communication devices, American Sign Language, assistive technology, and both verbal and visual methods of communication.

Emily believes that literacy, and learning, are for everyone. This resource is designed to be used in a multiple-disabilities classroom to support pre-literacy and pre-math skills for every student, at every developmental level. Lessons are easily adapted to the typical Pre-K, Kindergarten, and Grade 1 classroom.





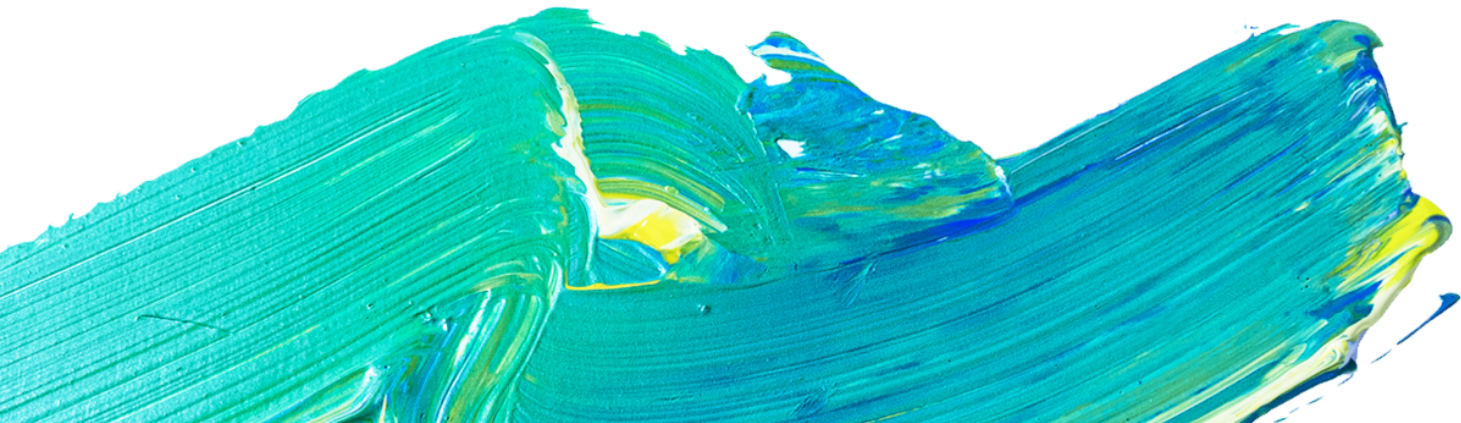
**Appendix:
Resource Guide**

Supports for the children's book:

YOU HOLD ME UP

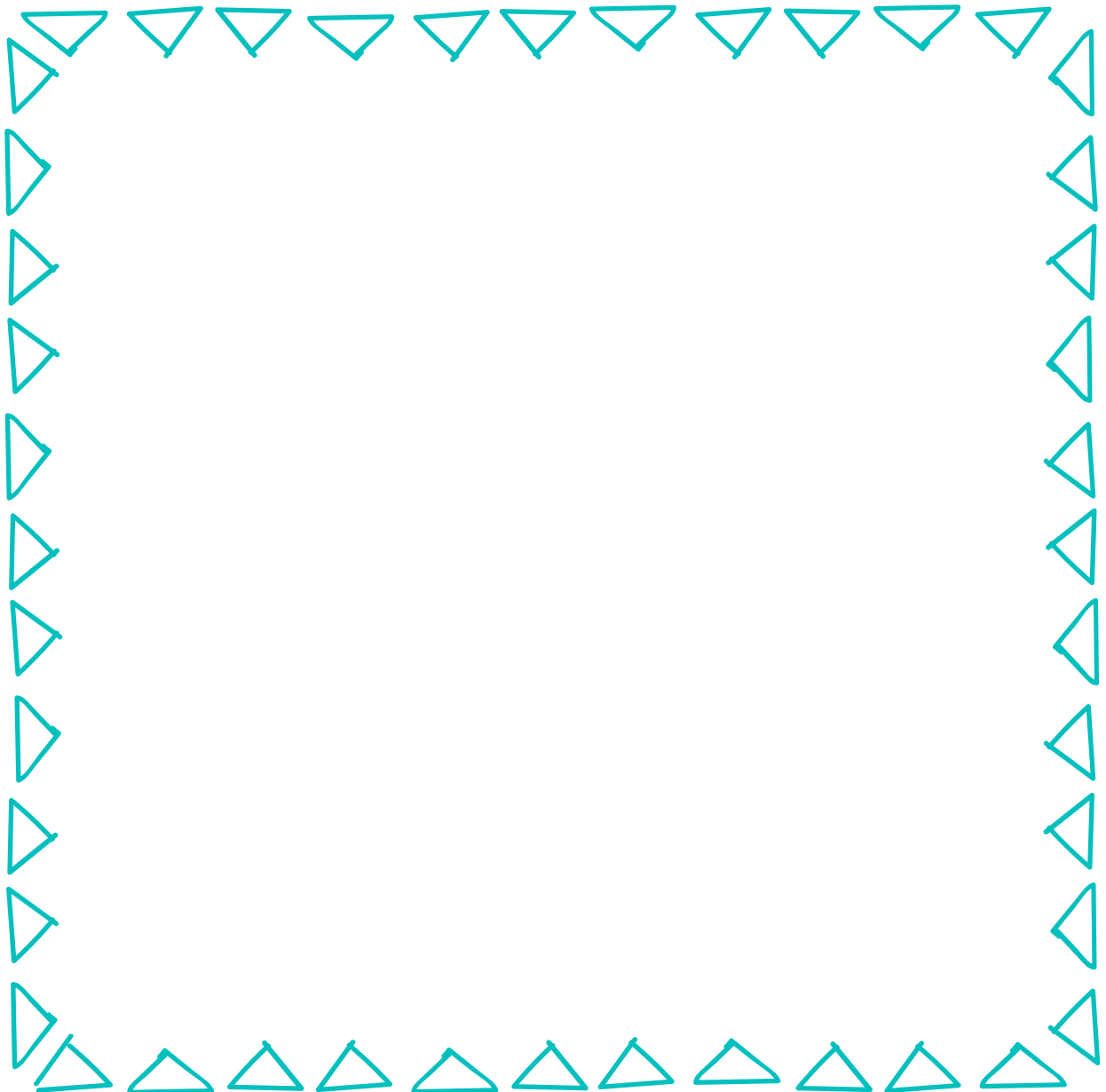
BY MONIQUE GRAY SMITH

This pack includes the following 5 Activities:

- "This is How You Hold Me Up" Literacy/Art/Fine Motor Activity (1 page)
 - "With My Family, I Love..." Literacy/Fine Motor Activity (1 page)
 - "I Love..." Predictable Chart Literacy Activity with Prompts (2 pages)
 - "What Holds Me Up?" Literacy/Fine Motor Activity (1 page)
- 

THIS IS HOW YOU HOLD ME UP...

Draw or write about what
makes you feel LOVED.



WITH MY FAMILY, I LOVE...

Circle or cut out the things you love to do with your family.



hugging each other
(& our pets)



seeing my grandparents



going for walks
together



playing games
together



playing outside
together



reading books
together



dressing up
together



walking dogs
together

PREDICTABLE CHARTS:

I LOVE...



Use this page to write about things that you love to do!
Write your own answers, or cut/glue from the choices on the next page.

I love...

I love...

I love...

I love...

I love...

reading books

playing outside

playing & listening
to music

hugging my family

dancing

I LOVE...

singing

Cut & glue these ideas on your
predictable chart, or use them to help
inspire your own writing!

cooking with
my family

running

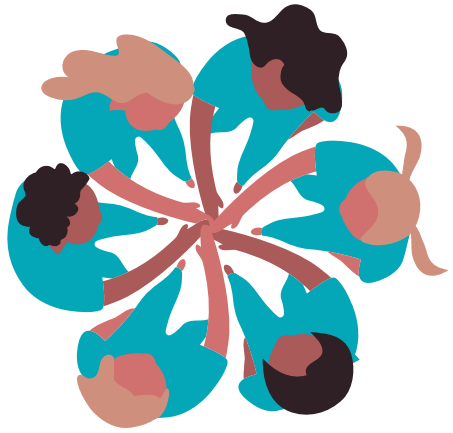
making art

climbing the
playground

seeing my
grandparents

playing with my
sister or brother

watching movies



WHAT HOLDS ME UP?

Colour or cut out the things that
make you feel CONFIDENT.



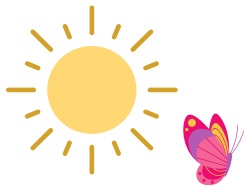
hugging
someone
I love



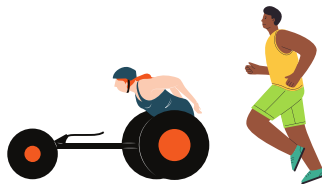
playing or
listening
to music



seeing my
friends



going outside



moving my body



making art



being alone
sometimes



sharing my ideas



using my voice