

Sofia Starts School



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This book has been created as part of CYDA's Take Charge of Change project. The project has been funded by the Australian Government to support families of children with disability to manage key transitions throughout their lives.

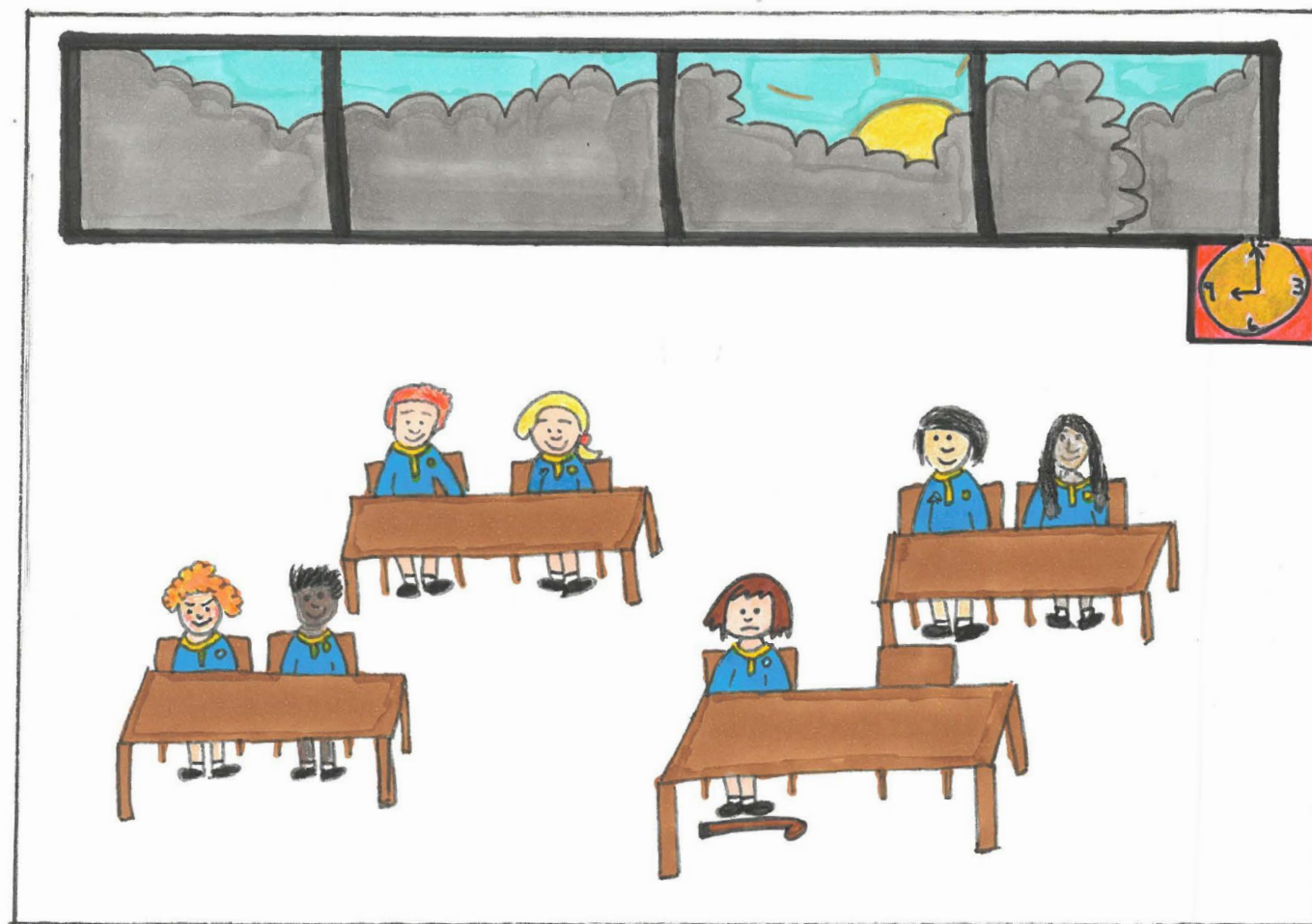
A full suite of resources is available at **cyda.org.au**



On Monday, Sofia started school.
She was so excited!
'You're going to make new friends,
learn new things and have so much fun,'
Nonna told her.



On Monday, Sofia's teacher, Miss Baker, taught them lots, and Sofia was nice to everyone.



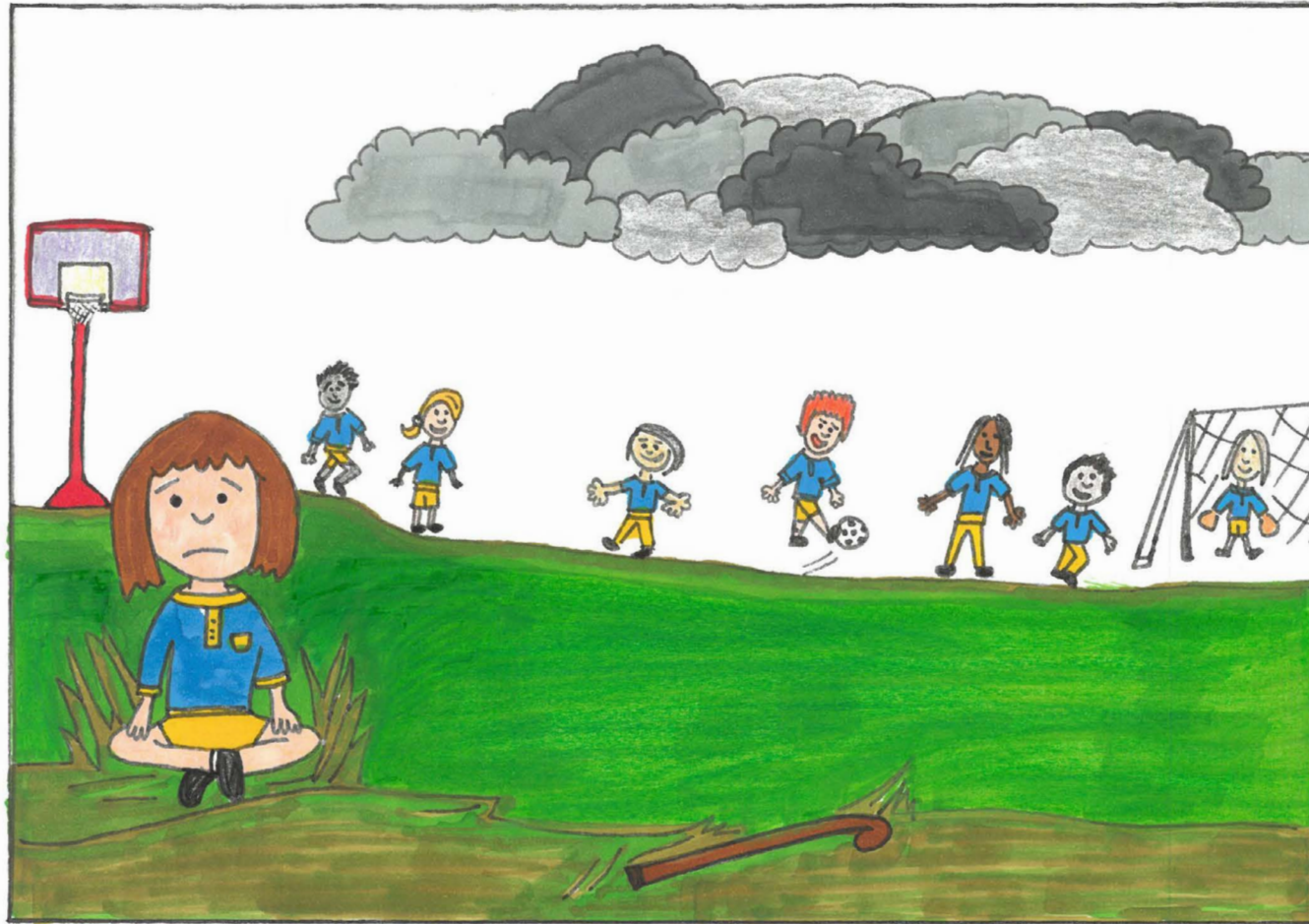
On Tuesday, no one wanted to sit next to her.



At lunchtime, Sofia wanted to play chasey with the rest of her grade. 'Can I join in?'



'Can you even run?' said Neha.
'You're too slow!' said Alex.
'You have a peg-leg,' said Robert.



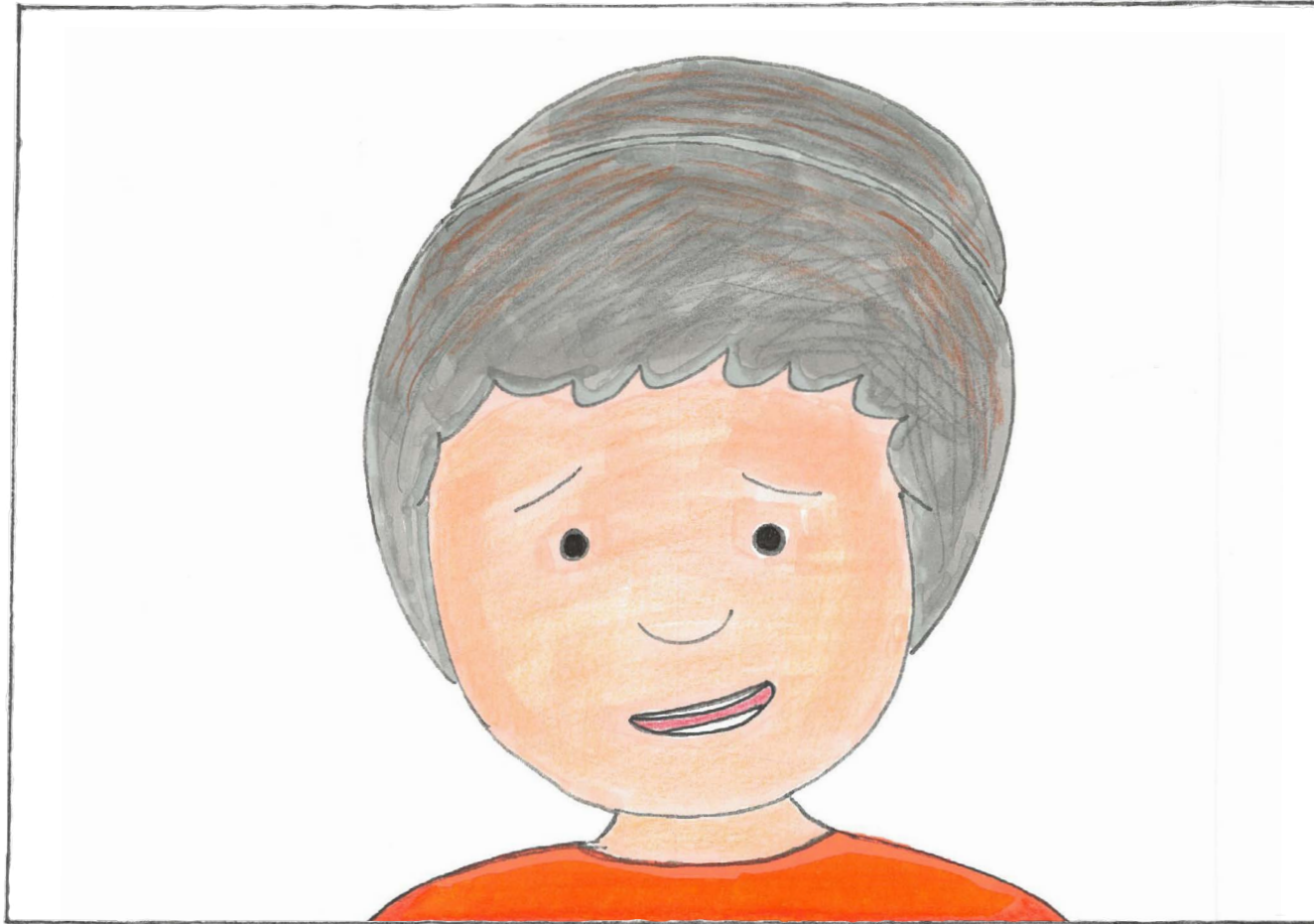
Sofia didn't ask if she could play again.



On Tuesday night, Nonna looked at Sofia.
'What's going on, *bella mia*?'



'I hate my cane!' Sofia said.
'The other kids called me names.
They wouldn't let me play with them because
I'm too slow.'



'I'm sorry that happened.
It's okay for you to feel upset,' Nonna said.
'There's nothing wrong with being different.
Your cane and your disability is part of who you are.'



'It's a good idea to tell someone you trust
when you have a problem.

How about we tell Miss Baker together?'

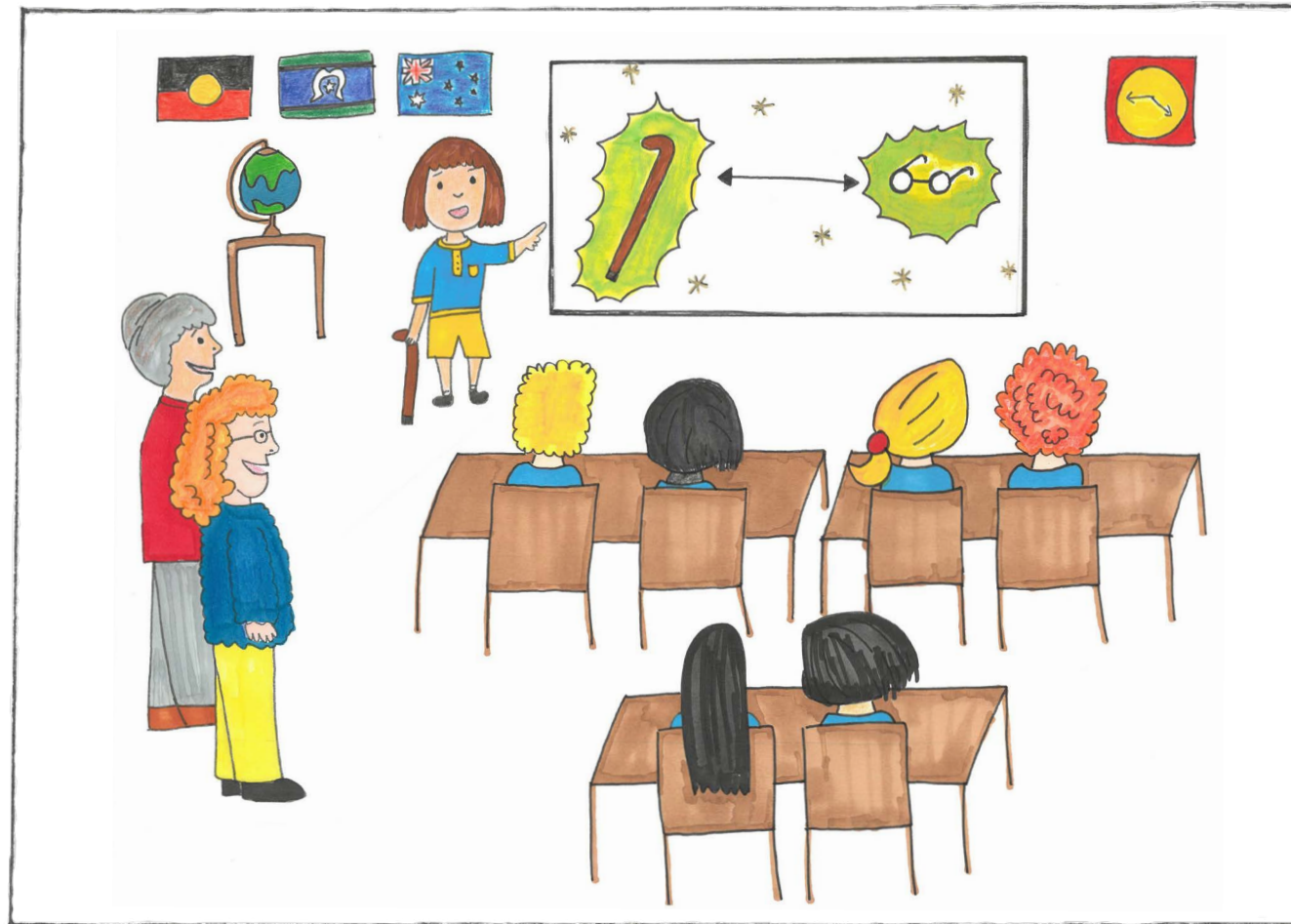
'Okay.'



On Wednesday, Nonna and Sofia talked to Miss Baker.
'Maybe we can do show and tell about your disability,
to help the class understand?' Miss Baker suggested.

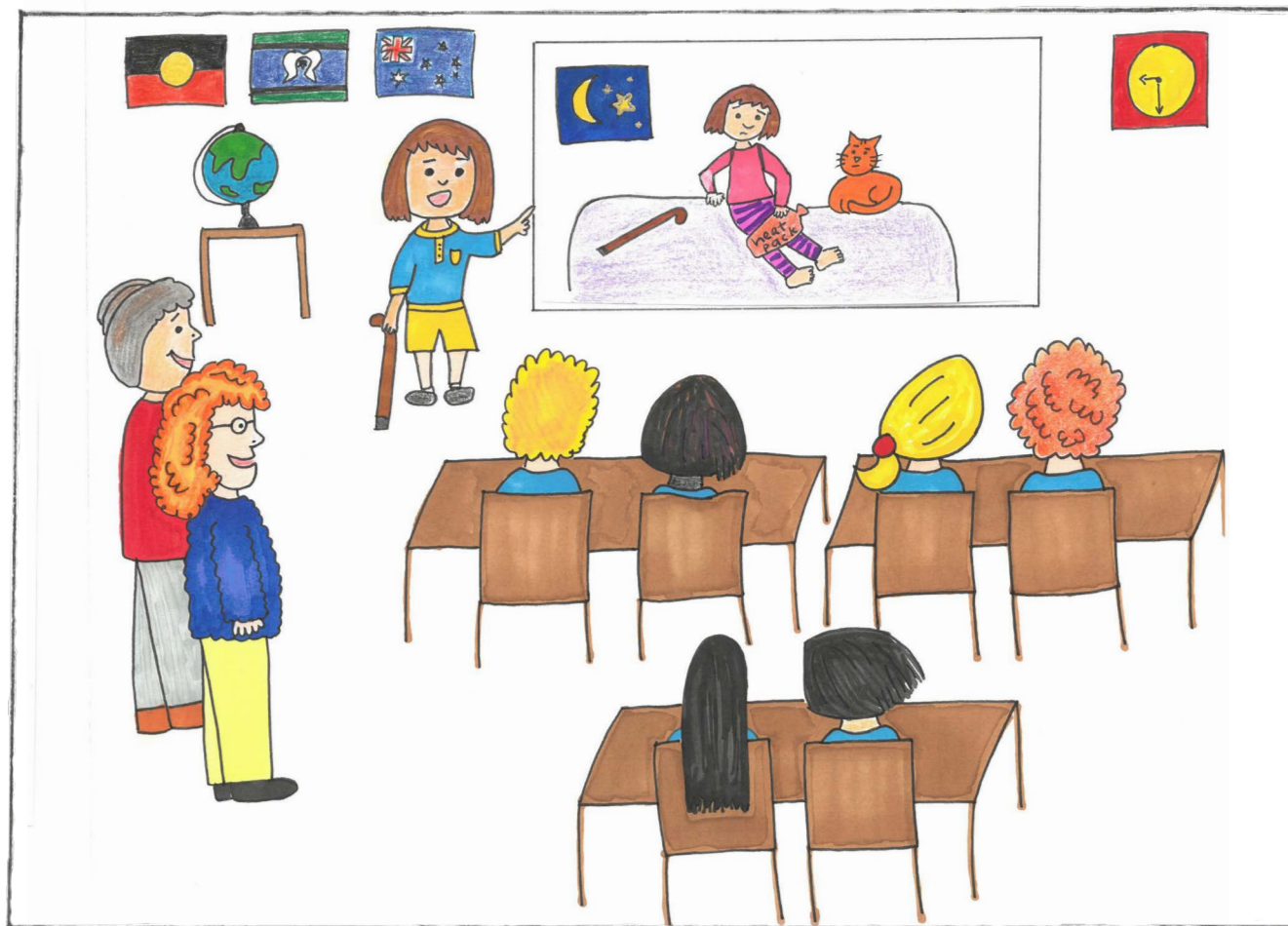


That night, Nonna helped Sophia decide what she wanted to tell everyone.



On Thursday, Sofia did show and tell.

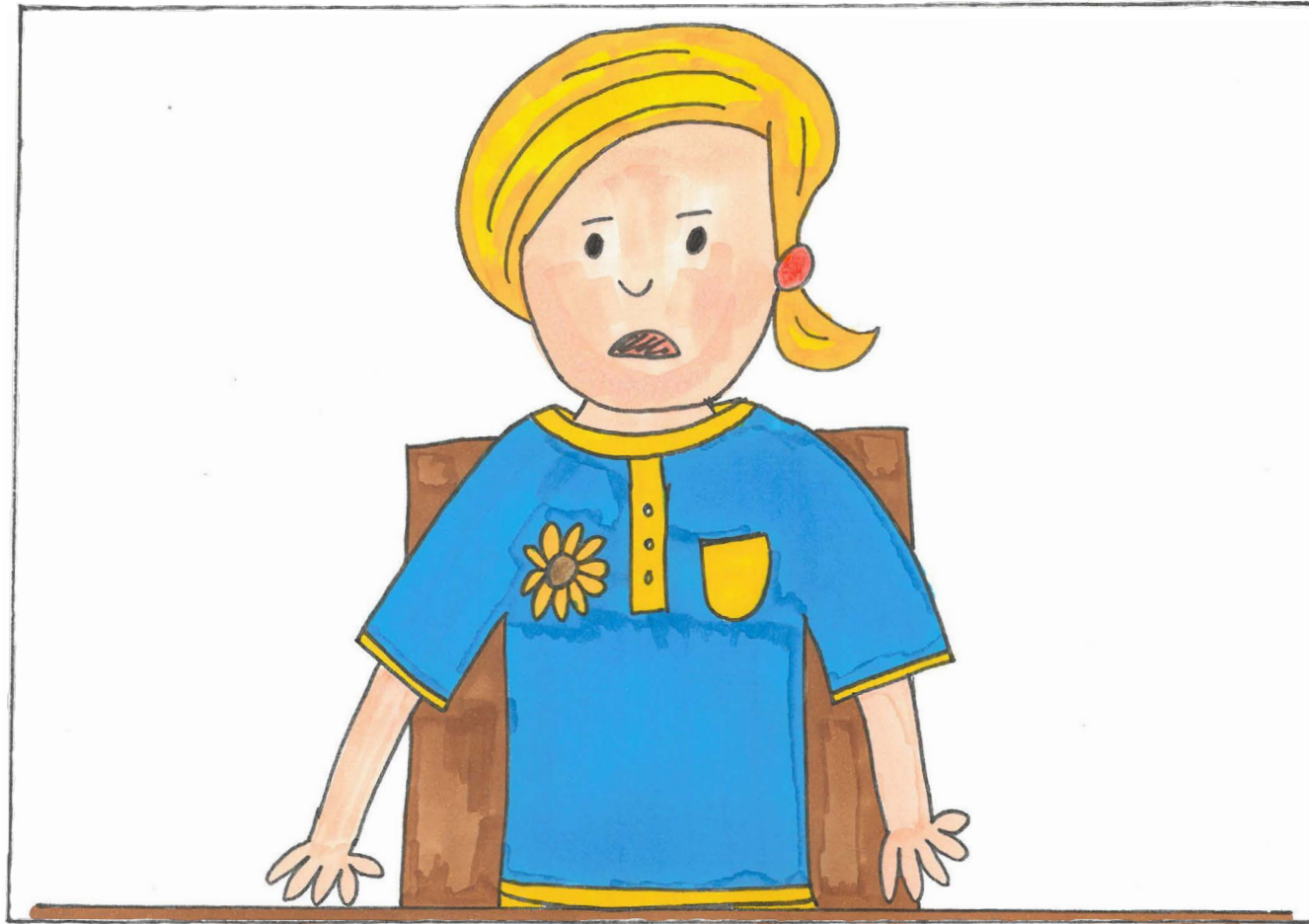
'I am disabled. That's why I use this cane.'
'It helps me walk, just like glasses help
some of you to see.'



'My cane helps me stand up'
'And it means my legs don't hurt as much.'



'It's never okay to leave people out.'
Said Miss Baker.
Or make others feel like they don't belong.'



'Sometimes I feel left out,' said a girl with
a sunflower t-shirt.

'But I don't know what to do about it.'



'We can say hello to everyone,' said Robert.

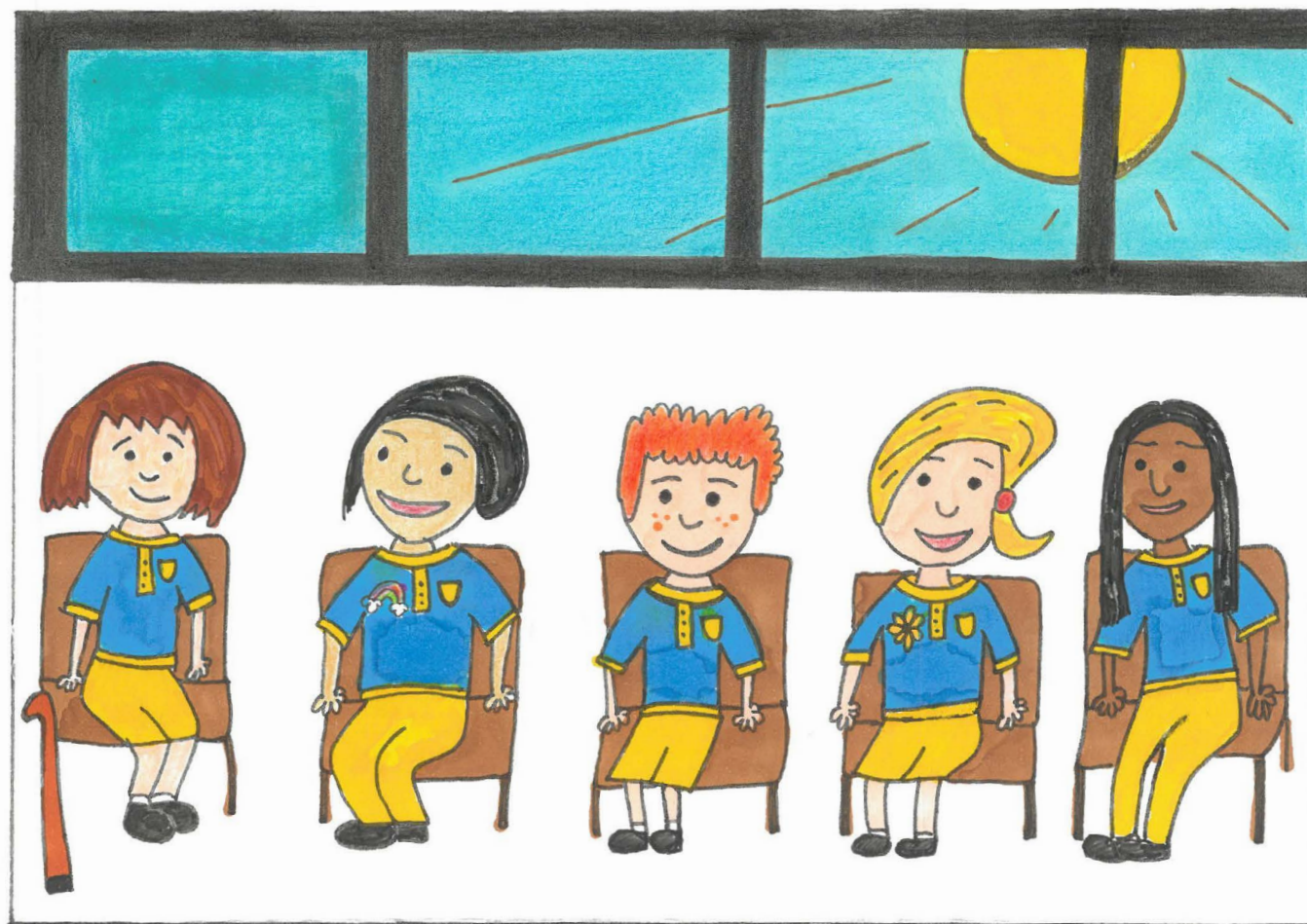
'We can learn about disability,' said Neha.



'We can be kind,' said Alex.



'Excellent ideas! Remember,' Miss Baker added, 'everyone belongs here, and everyone should be included.'



On Friday
The other kids said hello,
They sat with her.
And at lunchtime...

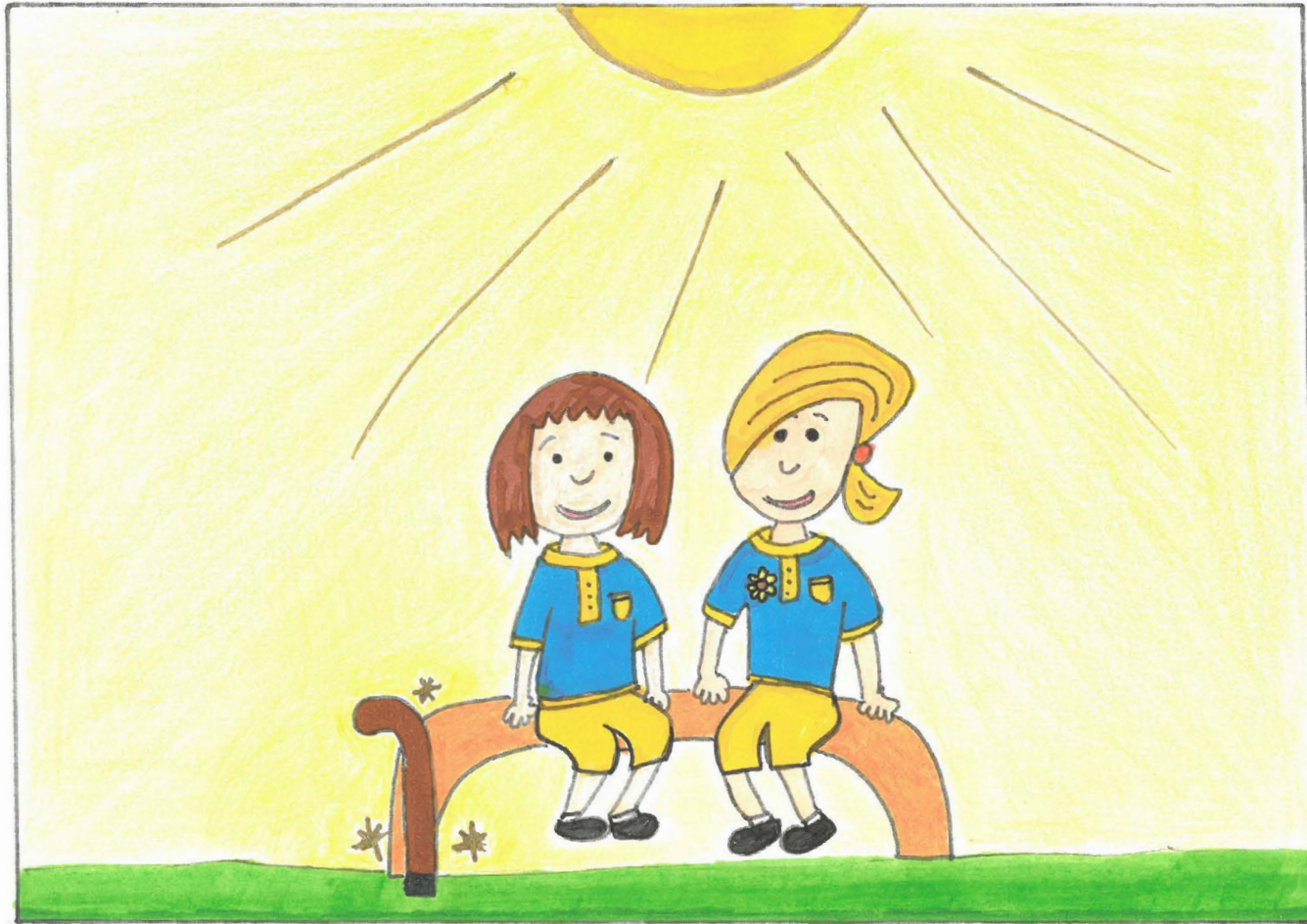


'Sorry, Sofia,' said Robert.

'We shouldn't have said those things to you,'
said Alex.



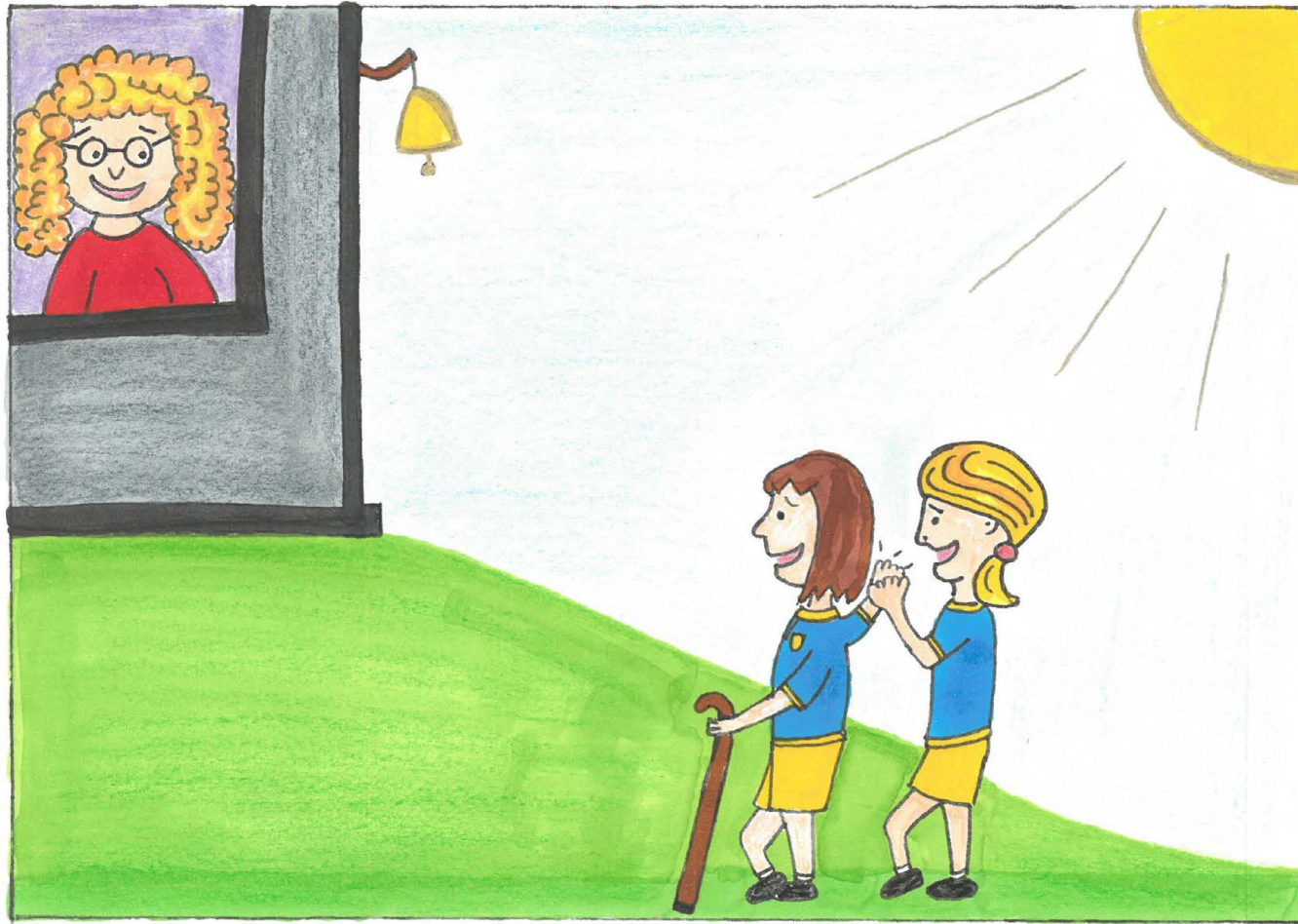
'We made a new game that we can all play.
Want to join?' Asked Neha.



As they played, the girl with the sunflower t-shirt sat next to Sofia. 'I'm Layla,' she said.

'Your cane is awesome. Can we be friends?'

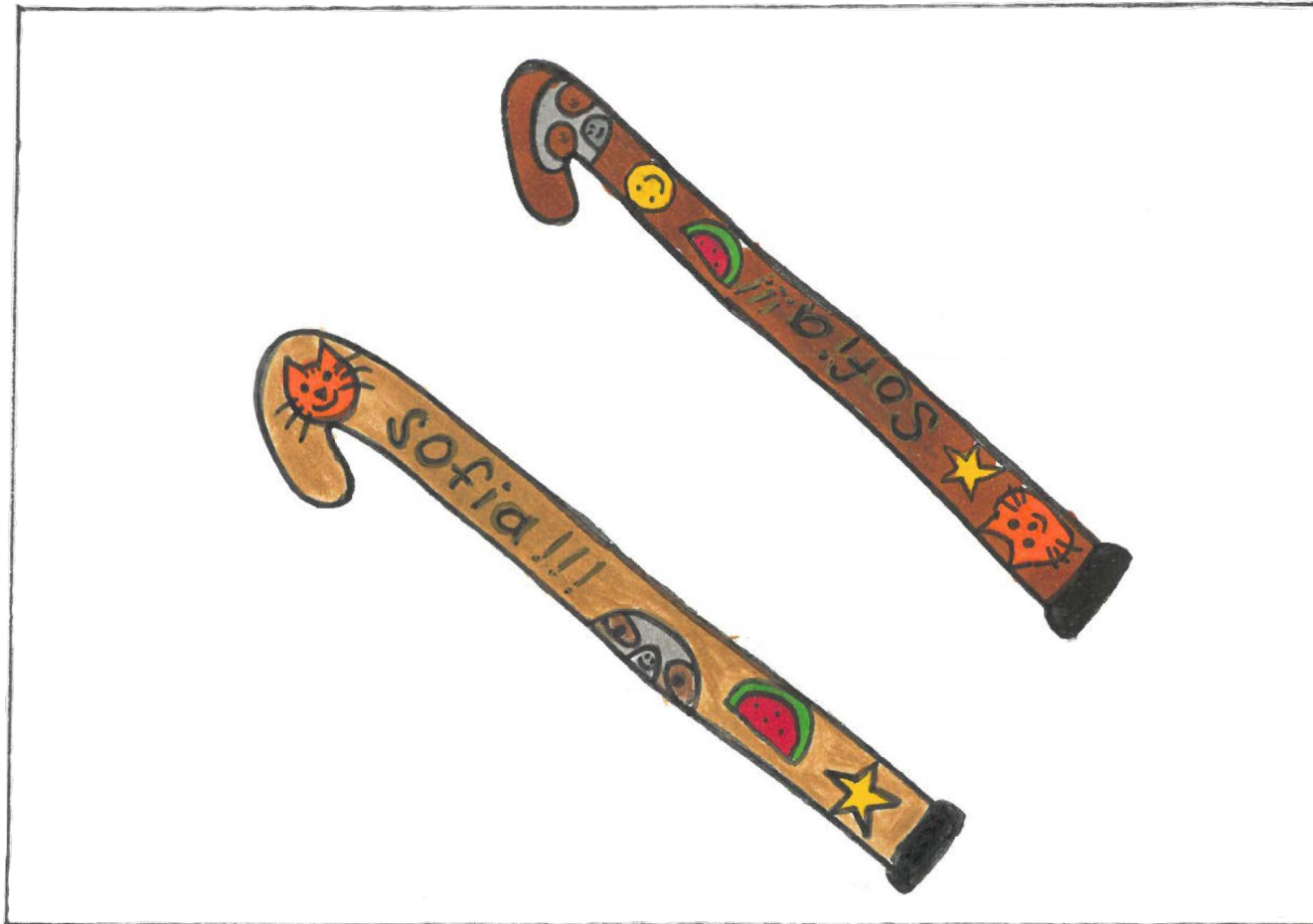
'Forever friends!' Sofia promised.



Sofia walked back to class, chatting with Layla.
There was nothing better than being herself.



'Nonna, I had such a good day!'



'I can't wait to go back to school!'

Useful Words

Ableism

Means people with disability get unfair treatment from people or systems.

Access needs

Are what someone needs to join in, like ramps, breaks or quiet spaces.

Disability pride

Means we celebrate disability identity and rights.

Dignity of risk

Means everyone can make choices and try things, even if mistakes happen.

Inspiration exploitation

Means calling someone with disability “inspiring” just for living their life.

Reasonable adjustments

Means changes that let people with disability take part in a fair way.

Spoon theory

Means thinking about energy like spoons. Each task uses a spoon, and when they're gone, it's time to rest!



Tex Paynter is a 12-year-old artist, student, gamer and sports fan who also has Cerebral Palsy. He lives in South Australia.



Laura Pettenuzzo is a disabled writer living on Wurundjeri Country. You can usually find her with a book in one hand and a cup of tea in the other, and her cat, Giles, by her side.