

# The Learning Circle at Morgana House

## Pilot Program

A home-based learning community for children aged 2–11

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### **Facilitator's Program Guide**

Annual Curriculum Overview · Month One: Connection & Belonging  
Anchor Text: *The Invisible String* · Companion Text: *The Rabbit Listened*

## About This Program

The Learning Circle is a small, home-based learning community designed to offer children aged 2–11 a consistent, relationship-centred space in which to explore ideas, develop language and creativity, and build genuine connection with peers.

Sessions run for two hours each week in a home environment, with mixed-age groups working together. Rather than a formal class structure, this program is built on the understanding that children learn best through story, play, conversation, and meaningful relationship — and that adults who are present, calm, and curious model the very things we want children to develop.

Each month centres on a single theme drawn from the Australian Curriculum, explored through two picture books: an anchor text read every week, and a companion text introduced in Week 3 to deepen or extend the theme. Repetition with depth is an intentional choice: children notice new things on each reading, older children can take the conversation further, and younger children grow in confidence as the story becomes familiar.

### Program Principles

- Mixed-age learning as a feature, not a problem — older children lead, younger children observe and absorb
- Repetition with depth — one anchor text per month, explored across multiple weeks and through multiple modes
- Two books, one theme — anchor and companion texts create comparison, depth, and fresh perspective
- Whole-child engagement — each session moves through cognitive, creative, social, and physical experiences
- Relationship as the curriculum — connection between children, between families, and between child and facilitator is the foundation
- Low pressure, high invitation — every child participates in the way that is right for them

### Group Composition

| Age Group            | Notes   |
|----------------------|---|
| Toddlers (2–3)       | Participate through observation, parallel play, and simple naming. Caregivers remain close. |
| Lower Primary (5–8)  | Fully engaged across all activities. Benefit from older peer modelling.                     |
| Upper Primary (9–11) | Can lead discussion, support younger children, and engage with deeper reflection.           |

## Annual Curriculum Map

The Learning Circle is designed to run as a year-round program, with each month centred on a core theme drawn from the Australian Curriculum and EYLF. Themes are sequenced intentionally: the early months build safety, trust, and self-awareness before moving into more complex social and ethical territory. The two-book model — one anchor text read every week, one companion text introduced in Week 3 — allows for both familiarity and fresh perspective within a single month.

The sequence below is a recommended starting point. Themes may be reordered to suit the group, the season, or emerging needs — though it is worth holding the early arc (Belonging, Emotions, Creativity) as a foundation before introducing more challenging themes such as Fairness & Justice or Difference & Inclusion.

| Month | Theme                | Anchor Text  | Companion Text                                  | Curriculum Strands   |
|-------|----------------------|--|---|--|
| 1     | Belonging            | <b>The Invisible String</b><br>Patrice Karst       | <b>The Rabbit Listened</b><br>Cori Doerrfeld    | PDHPE · Personal & Social Capability · EYLF 1, 2                   |
| 2     | Emotions             | <b>The Colour Monster</b><br>Anna Llenas           | <b>In My Heart</b><br>Jo Witek                  | PDHPE (Mental Health & Wellbeing) · SEL · EYLF 3                   |
| 3     | Creativity           | <b>The Most Magnificent Thing</b><br>Ashley Spires | <b>Beautiful Oops!</b><br>Barney Saltzberg      | Creative Arts · Design & Technology · Critical & Creative Thinking |
| 4     | Courage              | <b>The Lion Inside</b><br>Rachel Bright            | <b>Jabari Jumps</b><br>Gwendolyn Zepeda         | PDHPE (Resilience) · English · Personal & Social Capability        |
| 5     | Kindness & Community | <b>Each Kindness</b><br>Jacqueline Woodson         | <b>Those Shoes</b><br>Maribeth Boelts           | HSIE · Civics & Citizenship · PDHPE (Contributing to community)    |
| 6     | Identity             | <b>Amazing Grace</b><br>Mary Hoffman               | <b>I Am Enough</b><br>Grace Byers               | PDHPE · English · Intercultural Understanding                      |
| 7     | Nature & Environment | <b>The Lorax</b><br>Dr Seuss                       | <b>Wirangi (Our Country)</b><br>Jasmine Seymour | Science · Sustainability · HSIE · Environment & Geography          |

|    |                                   |  |  |   |
|----|-----------------------------------|--|--|---|
| 8  | <b>Curiosity &amp; Wonder</b>     | <b>Ada Twist, Scientist</b><br>Andrea Beaty      | <b>What Do You Do With a Problem?</b><br>Kobi Yamada | <b>Science (Working Scientifically) · Maths · Critical &amp; Creative Thinking</b>            |
| 9  | <b>Fairness &amp; Justice</b>     | <b>Enemy Pie</b><br>Derek Munson                 | <b>The Other Side</b><br>Jacqueline Woodson          | <b>Civics &amp; Citizenship · HSIE · Ethical Understanding</b>                                |
| 10 | <b>Persistence &amp; Growth</b>   | <b>Flight School</b><br>Lita Judge               | <b>The Dot</b><br>Peter H. Reynolds                  | <b>PDHPE (Resilience) · Personal &amp; Social Capability · English</b>                        |
| 11 | <b>Difference &amp; Inclusion</b> | <b>A Chair for My Mother</b><br>Vera B. Williams | <b>Not Quite Narwhal</b><br>Jess Keating             | <b>Intercultural Understanding · PDHPE (Diversity &amp; Inclusion) · HSIE</b>                 |
| 12 | <b>Story &amp; Voice</b>          | <b>Wombat Stew</b><br>Marcia K. Vaughan          | <b>The Story of Ferdinand</b><br>Munro Leaf          | <b>English (Literacy) · Aboriginal &amp; Torres Strait Islander Histories · Creative Arts</b> |

### How the Two-Book Model Works

Each month, one book serves as the anchor text and one as the companion. The roles are distinct:

| Anchor Text  | Companion Text                                 |
|--|--|
| Read every week (Weeks 1–4)                              | Introduced in Week 3 only                      |
| Children build familiarity and depth over the month      | Offers a fresh angle on the same theme         |
| Source of all discussion prompts and creative activities | Used for comparison: 'Do these books agree?'   |
| Younger children grow in confidence through repetition   | Older children practise critical thinking      |
| The spine of the month's learning                        | The extension — not required, always enriching |

### A Note on First Nations Texts

The annual plan deliberately includes *Wirangi (Our Country)* by Jasmine Seymour (Month 7) as an anchor text for Nature & Environment. This Darug-language picture book offers children an encounter with First Nations knowledge, language, and Country that is grounded in genuine authorship rather than borrowed imagery.

As the program grows, consider whether further First Nations texts can be woven in — not as a single 'diversity month' but as part of the ongoing fabric of stories children encounter. The ACARA cross-curriculum priority of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures is best met through consistent, respectful exposure rather than a single lesson.

## NSW Curriculum Alignment

While this program operates outside a formal school setting, it is designed with awareness of NSW Early Stage 1 and Stage 1–2 learning outcomes across key learning areas. The following table maps program experiences to relevant curriculum indicators.

| Learning Area   | Outcome / Indicator   | How Addressed   |
|---|---|---|
| Personal Development, Health & Physical Education (PDHPE) | PD1-1: Identifies personal strengths and how they contribute to the community. PD2-1: Describes factors that influence emotional responses. | Reflection activities, circle sharing, and the 'I Wish Everyone Understood' heart activity build self-awareness and the language of feelings.   |
| English — Speaking & Listening (Early Stage 1–Stage 2)    | EN1-1A: Communicates with peers using clear language. EN2-1A: Responds to and composes a range of texts for different purposes.             | Each session involves structured oral language — circle discussion, responding to story prompts, sharing creative work. Older children practise elaborated responses.                 |
| English — Reading & Viewing                               | EN1-4A: Draws on cultural and literary knowledge. EN2-4A: Uses comprehension strategies to build meaning.                                   | Both anchor and companion texts are revisited with comprehension prompts, visual analysis of illustrations, and connection to personal experience. Week 3 introduces book comparison. |
| Creative Arts — Visual Arts                               | VAS1.1 / VAS2.1: Makes artworks in a range of forms. Explores and responds to artworks.   | Open-ended creative activities each week use drawing, mark-making, and construction to express ideas from the story.  |
| Creative Arts — Drama                                     | DRAS1.1 / DRAS2.1: Participates in dramatic play and role play. Uses movement and gesture expressively.                                     | Embodied play activities including the String Web Game and movement-based activities use drama principles: imagination, physicality, and ensemble.                                    |
| Science & Technology — Working Scientifically             | ST1-1WS: Observes, questions, and records. ST2-1WS: Identifies patterns and makes predictions.  | The String Web demonstration (what happens when one person lets go?) uses observable cause-and-effect to explore interdependence.   |

|                                      |   |  |
|--------------------------------------|---|--|
| Mathematics — Working Mathematically | MA1-1WM: Describes patterns. MA2-1WM: Uses reasoning to explore and connect ideas.  | Mapping activities ('draw all the people you're connected to') involve spatial reasoning, categorisation, and pattern recognition. |
| Social Sciences / HSIE               | GE1-1: Describes the features of places and the connections people have with places. PD1-3: Identifies how communities support belonging. | Conversations about home, family, and community — who we feel connected to and why — directly address belonging and community.     |

## Early Childhood Frameworks

For children aged 2–5 years, this program also aligns with the Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF, V2.0):

- Outcome 1: Children have a strong sense of identity — through recognition of self, family, and community connections
- Outcome 2: Children are connected with and contribute to their world — through belonging, community, and relationships
- Outcome 3: Children have a strong sense of wellbeing — through calm, responsive facilitation and predictable structure
- Outcome 5: Children are effective communicators — through story, creative arts, and oral language experiences

## Program-Wide Learning Outcomes

By the end of the four-week pilot, children are expected to have had meaningful opportunity to:

### Social & Emotional

- Develop vocabulary for emotions, needs, and relationships
- Experience being heard and seen within a consistent peer group
- Build trust and rapport across different ages
- Identify people and places that make them feel safe and connected

### Language & Literacy

- Engage with two high-quality picture books exploring the same theme from different angles
- Participate in guided oral discussion with open-ended prompts
- Use drawing, writing, or speaking to communicate ideas from the story

- Develop comprehension strategies: prediction, inference, personal connection, comparison, reflection

### Creative & Physical

- Produce original artwork in response to literary prompts
- Experience movement as a form of meaning-making
- Participate in co-operative physical activities requiring spatial awareness and turn-taking
- Use imagination and dramatic play to explore abstract concepts

### Community & Belonging

- Experience a consistent, predictable group rhythm
- Practise the social skills of listening, waiting, and contributing
- Build a sense of group identity through shared ritual and repeated story
- See adults as co-participants in learning, not just supervisors

## Weekly Session Structure

Each session follows the same rhythm so children can settle into it quickly. Predictability is a form of safety — especially for younger children and those who find transitions difficult.

| Time      | Phase              | Activity  | Facilitator Role   |
|-----------|--------------------|---|--|
| 0:00–0:15 | Arrival & Settling | Guided play: drawing, building, books available. Children arrive at their own pace. No announcements. No rush.                | Greet each child by name. Observe dynamics. Help young ones settle. Let older kids lead themselves.                |
| 0:15–0:25 | Gathering Circle   | Come together as a group. Introduce the theme for the day with a simple, low-pressure entry question.                         | Hold the circle calmly. Ensure every child is acknowledged. Keep entry questions accessible for all ages.          |
| 0:25–0:45 | Story Time         | Read the anchor text (or companion text in Week 3). Slow pace, pictures shown clearly. Pause gently for connection questions. | Let moments land. Read with presence. Pause only where it feels natural. Adults sit and listen — they do not lead. |

|           |                             |  |  |
|-----------|-----------------------------|--|--|
| 0:45–1:00 | Reflection & Conversation   | Guided discussion. Older children can expand. Younger children point, name, or listen. No child is put on the spot.                  | Facilitate, don't teach. Hold space for silence. Follow threads of genuine curiosity.                              |
| 1:00–1:35 | Creative Exploration        | Open-ended creative activity linked to the week's focus. Supplies set up in advance. No correct outcomes.                            | Move between children. Ask gentle questions: 'Who is this? Where does this string go?' Do not correct or redirect. |
| 1:35–1:55 | Shared Snack & Conversation | Everyone at the table — children and adults together. Facilitator lightly guides conversation. This is active learning, not a break. | Sit with the group. Open with an easy question, then guide gently. Include adults without ceding the room to them. |
| 1:55–2:10 | Embodied Play               | Movement-based activity tied to the theme. Main anchor: The Web of Connection. Everyone participates.                                | Hold the physical space safely. Name the learning as it happens. Guide the key moment.                             |
| 2:10–2:20 | Closing Circle              | Gather back. One optional share each. Consistent closing words. Same ritual every week.  | Keep it short and warm. The closing phrase is the same each week to create continuity.                             |

### Closing Ritual — Use the Same Words Each Week

"Even when we go home, we're still connected. The string is still there. We'll see each other again next time."

This ritual creates a sense of completion and continuity. Over time, children will begin to anticipate and repeat it.

### Adult Participation

Adults (caregivers) are invited into specific parts of each session. Their role is to be present participants — not co-facilitators, not passive observers. Adults are included during Arrival, Shared Snack, and Embodied Play. During Story Time and Creative Exploration, they step back — listening and supporting without directing.

When adults join the String Web, the activity becomes cross-generational. Parents feel it. Children feel it. If adults begin to over-talk or take over the conversation, gently redirect: 'Let's hear from the kids first.'

# MONTH ONE

## Connection & Belonging

|                          |  |
|--------------------------|--|
| <b>Theme</b>             | Connection & Belonging   |
| <b>Anchor Text</b>       | The Invisible String by Patrice Karst — read every week (Weeks 1, 2, 3 & 4)  |
| <b>Companion Text</b>    | The Rabbit Listened by Cori Doerrfeld — introduced in Week 3 as a comparison read  |
| <b>Activity Resource</b> | The Invisible String Workbook by Patrice Karst & Dana Wyss (used for activity inspiration)   |
| <b>Core Question</b>     | Who am I connected to — and what does it mean to truly listen to someone?  |
| <b>Arc of the Month</b>  | Week 1: Meet the story · Week 2: When someone is far away · Week 3: What listening looks like · Week 4: Celebrating what we've built |

### About the Two Books

#### The Invisible String — Patrice Karst

When a thunderstorm frightens siblings Liza and Jeremy, their mother comforts them with the idea that love is an invisible string connecting us to those we love — no matter the distance, no matter what. The story is gentle, simple, and enormously resonant for children of all ages. Toddlers respond to the warmth and repetition; older children engage with the more abstract concept of love that transcends physical presence. The accompanying workbook by Patrice Karst and Dana Wyss provides excellent activity prompts used throughout this month's lesson plans.

#### The Rabbit Listened — Cori Doerrfeld

Taylor has built a magnificent block tower — and then it falls down. One by one, the animals arrive offering advice, solutions, perspective. The chicken wants to talk about it. The bear wants to yell about it. The snake wants to pretend it didn't happen. Only the rabbit simply sits, and listens, and waits until Taylor is ready. The Rabbit Listened offers the same theme of connection and belonging from a completely different angle: belonging isn't only about who holds your string — it's about who sits with you when things fall apart.

Introduced in Week 3, this companion text allows children to practise one of the most sophisticated comprehension skills available to them: comparison. Do both books agree about what connection means? Is the rabbit's kind of love the same as the invisible string? These are genuinely interesting questions for children aged five and up — and the toddlers simply enjoy two different stories in the same month.

## WEEK ONE

### Week 1 — Meeting the String

|                           |   |
|---------------------------|---|
| <b>Focus</b>              | First encounter with the story. Building safety and familiarity.                |
| <b>Book This Week</b>     | The Invisible String (anchor text — first reading)                              |
| <b>Story Approach</b>     | Read the full text slowly. Show every illustration. Let children absorb.        |
| <b>Gathering Question</b> | "Who did you come here with today?"   |
| <b>Creative Activity</b>  | "Your Invisible Strings" — draw yourself and all the people you're connected to |
| <b>Snack Conversation</b> | "Who did you draw? Who makes you feel safe?"                                    |
| <b>Embodied Play</b>      | The Web of Connection — first introduction. Keep it simple and joyful.          |

#### Detailed Activity Guide

##### Creative Exploration: Your Invisible Strings

Set up: Large paper, pencils, textas, optional wool or string for a tactile element.

Prompt: "Draw yourself in the middle of the page. Then draw — or show — all the people and places you're connected to. Your strings can go anywhere."

##### For younger children

- Scribbles, lines, and simple shapes are the activity. They are not 'not doing it right.'
- Name people as they draw: 'Is that Mum? And who's this?'

##### For older children:

- Encourage them to add places, pets, memories — not just people
- Invite them to write names or short notes alongside their strings

## Embodied Play: The Web of Connection — Introduction

What you need: One ball of yarn or soft string. Setup: Everyone stands in a loose circle, including adults.

### How it works:

1. You hold the end of the string. Say: 'I'm connected to [name] because...'
2. Roll the ball gently across the circle to another person, keeping hold of your end.
3. That person holds their section and says who they're connected to, then rolls to someone else.
4. Continue until everyone holds a section of the web.
5. Pause. Let them look at the web they've made together.

### Key Moment — Do Not Skip

Once the web is built, say:

"What do you notice? What does this remind you of?"

"What happens if one person lets go?" — have someone release.

"What happens when we all hold on?"

This is the concept. Don't rush it. Let it land.

## Week 1 — Learning Outcomes Markers

| Learning Area                  | Outcome / Indicator  | How Addressed   |
|--------------------------------|--|---|
| PDHPE / EYLF Outcomes 1 & 2    | Identifies people they feel connected to. Uses language to name relationships.           | Drawing activity and snack conversation prompt naming of people and places of connection.     |
| English — Speaking & Listening | Responds to simple questions with relevant information.                                  | Gathering circle and reflection prompts invite all children to contribute at their own level. |
| Visual Arts                    | Makes a representation of self and relationships using available media.                  | Open-ended drawing activity with personal prompt.   |
| Drama / Physical               | Participates in co-operative movement activity. Follows simple instructions in sequence. | String Web requires listening, turn-taking, physical awareness, and collaboration.            |

# WEEK TWO

## Week 2 — When Someone Is Far Away

|                           |  |
|---------------------------|--|
| <b>Focus</b>              | Exploring the experience of missing someone. Distance and connection.                                    |
| <b>Book This Week</b>     | The Invisible String (anchor text — second reading)  |
| <b>Story Approach</b>     | Re-read the story. Pause at moments of separation and distance. Ask: 'How do Liza and Jeremy feel here?' |
| <b>Gathering Question</b> | "Has anyone ever missed someone this week? You don't have to say who."                                   |
| <b>Creative Activity</b>  | "A Letter to Your String" — write or draw a message to someone they miss or love                         |
| <b>Snack Conversation</b> | "Who do you miss sometimes? What do you do when you miss someone?"                                       |
| <b>Embodied Play</b>      | String Web (repeat) + new layer: 'Think of someone who isn't here but is still connected to you.'        |

### Detailed Activity Guide

#### Creative Exploration: A Letter to Your String

Inspired by the 'I Wish Everyone Understood' activity from The Invisible String Workbook, this activity invites children to express something about themselves or a relationship that can feel hard to say out loud.

Set up: Paper with a large heart drawn on it (or the heart template from the activity book), pencils, coloured textas.

Prompt: "Inside this heart, write or draw something that you wish someone knew about you — or a message to someone you love or miss. You can keep it private, or share it with someone you trust."

#### For younger children:

- Prompt: 'Can you draw your favourite person inside the heart?'

- Scribe for them if they want to add words

**For older children:**

- Encourage them to think about something that feels hard to share
- Optional: fold the heart and write the recipient's name on the back

**Notes for This Activity**

This is a quiet, inward activity. Keep music low or off.

Do not share these aloud unless the child offers.

Some children may write something vulnerable. Acknowledge it warmly and privately.

Older children may want to keep these — provide an envelope.

**Embodied Play: String Web — Extended**

Repeat the Web of Connection from Week 1, but add one new layer once the web is built:

"Can you think of someone who isn't here with us today — but who is still connected to you? Your string reaches them too, even though we can't see it."

Let children name people silently or aloud. Some may name grandparents, friends from another school, a pet that has died. Receive all of it with the same warmth.

**Week 2 — Learning Outcomes Markers**

| Learning Area                     | Outcome / Indicator  | How Addressed   |
|-----------------------------------|--|---|
| PDHPE / SEL                       | Names emotions associated with separation. Develops strategies for managing feelings of missing. | Snack conversation and heart letter activity provide language and expression for the experience of missing someone. |
| English — Writing                 | Composes a simple text for a personal purpose.   | The heart letter is a purposeful, audience-aware writing task. Children choose whether to share or keep it.         |
| English — Reading & Comprehension | Makes connections between a text and personal experience.  | Re-reading with comprehension prompts focused on character emotion deepens personal connection.                     |
| HSIE / Social Sciences            | Understands that relationships can cross distance.   | Extended Web of Connection and discussion about absent people explore relational geography.                         |

# WEEK THREE

## Week 3 — What Listening Looks Like

|                           |   |
|---------------------------|---|
| <b>Focus</b>              | The companion text arrives. Listening as a form of love and belonging.  |
| <b>Anchor Text</b>        | The Invisible String — third reading (brief, familiar, settle the group)  |
| <b>Companion Text</b>     | The Rabbit Listened by Cori Doerrfeld — full reading, new story   |
| <b>Story Approach</b>     | Read The Invisible String briefly as a warm-up. Then introduce The Rabbit Listened as a surprise: 'We have a new book today that's about belonging too — but in a different way.' |
| <b>Gathering Question</b> | "When you're upset or sad, what do you most want someone to do?"  |
| <b>Creative Activity</b>  | "Be the Rabbit" — draw or show how you listen to someone  |
| <b>Snack Conversation</b> | "Which animal from the story were you most like? Which would you most want with you?"   |
| <b>Embodied Play</b>      | Follow the String — movement activity. Variation: animals moving as they listen.  |

### Reading Guide for Week 3

#### The Invisible String — Brief Third Reading

Keep this reading short and familiar. You do not need to read every word. You can move through the illustrations quickly and ask: 'What do we remember from this story?' Let the children tell you. This builds confidence, comprehension recall, and a sense of group ownership over the text.

Allow three to five minutes. Then say: 'We have a second book today. It's about connection too — but the string looks a little different in this one.'

#### The Rabbit Listened — First Full Reading

Read this book slowly and with full attention. The key to this book is the rhythm — each animal arrives, does something, and leaves. Let children begin to notice the pattern before the rabbit arrives. Ask, as each animal departs: 'Did that help? What was missing?'

When the rabbit arrives and simply sits, let that moment breathe. Then continue. After reading, ask:

- 'What did the rabbit do differently from everyone else?'
- 'Why do you think that helped the most?'
- 'Do you think the rabbit loves Taylor? How can you tell?'
- 'How is the rabbit's way of being with Taylor like the invisible string?'

### Connecting the Two Books — Key Conversation

The core comparison question for Week 3:

"Both of our books this month are about love and connection.

In *The Invisible String*, love is like a thread that holds us together.

In *The Rabbit Listened*, love is like someone staying quiet and close.

Are they the same thing? Or different?"

Older children can hold both ideas at once.

Younger children can simply choose their favourite — and that's enough.

### Detailed Activity Guide

#### Creative Exploration: Be the Rabbit

Set up: Paper, pencils, textas. Optional: animal stamps, stickers, or cut-out animal shapes for younger children.

Prompt: "The rabbit showed Taylor love by listening. Draw a picture of you being the rabbit for someone — who would you sit with? What would it look like?"

#### For younger children:

- Prompt: 'Can you draw the rabbit? What does the rabbit look like when it listens?'
- Point to the illustrations. Let them copy or respond freely.

### For older children:

- Invite them to write a short note alongside their drawing: 'I would be the rabbit for \_\_\_\_\_ because \_\_\_\_\_.'
- Ask: 'Is it hard to just listen sometimes? Why?'

### Embodied Play: Animal Listening Game

This activity turns the book's structure into a movement and drama game — appropriate for all ages.

#### How it works:

6. Choose one child to be 'Taylor' (or the person who needs support). They stand in the middle.
7. Everyone else chooses an animal from the book — or invents one.
8. One at a time, each animal comes to Taylor and offers their kind of help: the chicken talks, the elephant wants to move everything, the bear wants to yell.
9. After each animal, ask Taylor: 'Does that help? What are you feeling?'
10. The last child to arrive is the Rabbit — they simply walk over, sit down next to Taylor, and are quiet.
11. After the Rabbit sits: 'Does this help? What's different?'

With the group you have, the older children make wonderful rabbits — they intuitively understand the role. The toddlers delight in being silly animals. Everyone has a place in this game.

## Week 3 — Learning Outcomes Markers

| Learning Area                            | Outcome / Indicator   | How Addressed  |
|--|---|--|
| English — Reading & Viewing (Comparison) | EN2-4A: Compares two texts on the same theme. Identifies similarities and differences in how ideas are presented. | The direct comparison of <i>The Invisible String</i> and <i>The Rabbit Listened</i> develops critical reading and metacognition. |
| PDHPE / Social & Emotional Learning      | Identifies how others express care. Recognises the value of listening as a form of support.                       | The 'Be the Rabbit' activity and snack conversation build empathy and the language of emotional support.                         |
| Drama                                    | DRAS2.1: Takes on a role and sustains it in a dramatic game. Uses character motivation to shape actions.          | The Animal Listening Game is a structured dramatic play activity with character, motivation, and consequence.                    |
| English — Speaking & Listening           | EN1-1A / EN2-1A: Listens attentively to others. Responds thoughtfully to what has been said.                      | The gathering question, comparison discussion, and drama debrief all build active listening and response.                        |

# WEEK FOUR

## Week 4 — We Are Still Connected

|                           |   |
|---------------------------|---|
| <b>Focus</b>              | Celebrating the group. Reflecting on the month. Closing the pilot.                                  |
| <b>Book This Week</b>     | The Invisible String (anchor text — final reading). Children lead the telling.                      |
| <b>Story Approach</b>     | Re-read the story one final time. Barely pause — let the children lead. See what they already know. |
| <b>Gathering Question</b> | "What's something you've learned about someone in this group?"                                      |
| <b>Creative Activity</b>  | "Our String" — collaborative group artwork. One large piece of paper, everyone contributes.         |
| <b>Snack Conversation</b> | "What's been your favourite part of our sessions? What would you like to do again?"                 |
| <b>Embodied Play</b>      | The Invisible String Dance + Final Web. Both books honoured.  |

### Detailed Activity Guide

#### Story Time: Children Lead the Final Reading

Hold up the book and say: 'I've read this to you three times. I think you might know it now. Can you help me tell it?' Then move through the illustrations, pausing and letting children fill in the story. What do Liza and Jeremy see? What does their mum say? What is the invisible string made of?

This is one of the most powerful moments of the month. Younger children will surprise you with what they've retained. Older children will add nuance and interpretation. It is a concrete demonstration of learning.

#### Creative Exploration: Our String — Collaborative Artwork

Set up: One very large sheet of butcher's paper on the floor or a table. Textas, pencils, oil pastels. A ball of red string or wool.

### How it works:

12. Each child draws themselves somewhere on the paper — wherever they like.
13. Then they take the red string and physically run it from their drawing to the drawings of people they feel connected to.
14. Adults do the same.
15. When finished, step back and look at it together.

"Look at what we made together. Every string is a real connection. This is what our group looks like."

This artwork can be photographed and shared with families. Keep it up in the space if possible. It is also a natural bridge to a brief reference to *The Rabbit Listened*: 'In our other book, the rabbit didn't need a string to show Taylor they cared. What did they have instead? Does that show in our picture?'

## Embodied Play: The Invisible String Dance + Final Web

### Part 1 — The Dance:

16. Put on a favourite song (ask the children to choose).
17. Ask: 'If your invisible string could dance, what would it look like?'
18. Let everyone move freely. Each person shares one movement. The group copies it.
19. Then everyone does all the movements together, flowing.

### Part 2 — Final Web:

20. One last Web of Connection. This time, as each person receives the string, they say: "I'm connected to [name]. And I'm glad we're in this group together."
21. Once the web is built, hold it. Look at it. Then say the closing words together.

## Week 4 — Learning Outcomes Markers

| Learning Area                  | Outcome / Indicator   | How Addressed  |
|--------------------------------|---|--|
| English — Speaking & Listening | Reflects on and evaluates personal experiences. Contributes meaningfully to group discussion. | Gathering question and snack conversation invite children to reflect on and articulate their own learning.             |
| Visual Arts — Collaborative    | Contributes to a shared artwork. Understands how individual contributions combine.            | The group collaborative artwork requires negotiation, spatial awareness, and shared ownership.                         |
| Drama / Creative Arts          | Devises and shares a movement sequence. Works co-operatively in performance.                  | The Invisible String Dance requires children to create, share, and repeat each other's movements.                      |
| PDHPE / Social & Emotional     | Reflects on relationships and group membership. Articulates what makes a community feel safe. | The final web and closing ritual bring the month's social-emotional learning to a point of celebration and completion. |

## Practical Notes for the Facilitator

### Space Setup

- Floor space for circle activities — clear enough for the full group to move freely
- Table area for creative work — set up before children arrive
- Books, blocks, and drawing materials available during arrival
- Snack ready and at the table before that section of the session

### Managing Mixed Ages

#### What to Expect and How to Hold It

Expect movement throughout. Stillness is not the goal, engagement is.

Toddlers will wander during story time. This is fine. Their presence is enough.

Older kids will sometimes roll their eyes. Give them a role: 'Can you help River with his drawing?'

If energy runs high: slow your own voice down. It will bring them with you.

If the group fragments: bring back to circle using the gathering phrase: 'Let's come together.'

You do not need to manage every moment. Some of what looks like chaos is connection.

### The Facilitator's Role — A Reminder

You are not teaching. You are holding space. The difference:

| Teaching looks like: | Holding space looks like:          |
|----------------------|------------------------------------|
| Directing outcomes   | Being curious about what emerges   |
| Correcting answers   | Asking 'What made you think that?' |
| Managing behaviour   | Adjusting the environment          |
| Filling silence      | Letting moments land               |

Reassuring adults

Trusting the process

## Materials List — Full Month

- The Invisible String by Patrice Karst (1 copy — anchor text)
- The Rabbit Listened by Cori Doerrfeld (1 copy — companion text, needed from Week 3)
- The Invisible String Workbook by Patrice Karst & Dana Wyss (1 copy, for activity inspiration)
- Large sheets of paper — butcher's paper for group artwork, A3 for individual activities
- Drawing supplies: pencils, textas, crayons, oil pastels
- Red yarn or soft string — at least 5–6 metres for the Web of Connection
- Scissors (facilitator use only)
- Envelopes (Week 2 — for heart letters)
- Snack supplies — simple, allergy-aware, set up before sessions
- Optional: loose parts (blocks, fabric, natural objects) for arrival play

## Pilot Feedback Guide

After the four-week pilot, you'll want structured feedback from participating families. The following questions can be sent via a simple form or discussed informally.

### Questions for Families

22. Did your child look forward to coming each week? What did they talk about at home?
23. Was the two-hour session length right — or would you prefer shorter or longer?
24. How did you find the adult participation component? Too much, not enough, or about right?
25. Was \$25 per child per session reasonable? What would feel fair for the value?
26. What would you most like to see continued in the next month?
27. Is there anything that didn't work well for your family?

### What You're Looking For

Beyond what families say, pay attention to:

- Which children settled quickly — and which needed more time by Week 3 or 4
- Where the energy dipped — this tells you where to adjust pacing
- Which activities generated the most spontaneous conversation
- Whether adults left feeling part of something, or like spectators
- Your own energy at the end of each session — a well-held session should leave you tired but not depleted
- How children responded to the companion text in Week 3 — did the comparison generate genuine curiosity?

## Looking Ahead to Month Two

Month Two is Emotions, anchored by *The Colour Monster* by Anna Llenas and companioned by *In My Heart* by Jo Witek. The groundwork laid in Month One — circle trust, creative routine, the Web of Connection, the closing ritual — carries forward. Children who were uncertain in Week 1 of the pilot will arrive at Month Two already at home.

The two-book model will feel more natural to children from the start — they'll be ready to compare, to say 'this one is different because...' That's the arc working.

# The Learning Circle

Annual Curriculum Overview · Month One Pilot Program

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This document is for facilitator and family use within the pilot group.

Anchor text: *The Invisible String* by Patrice Karst

Companion text: *The Rabbit Listened* by Cori Doerrfeld

Activity inspiration: *The Invisible String Workbook* by Patrice Karst & Dana Wyss, PhD