

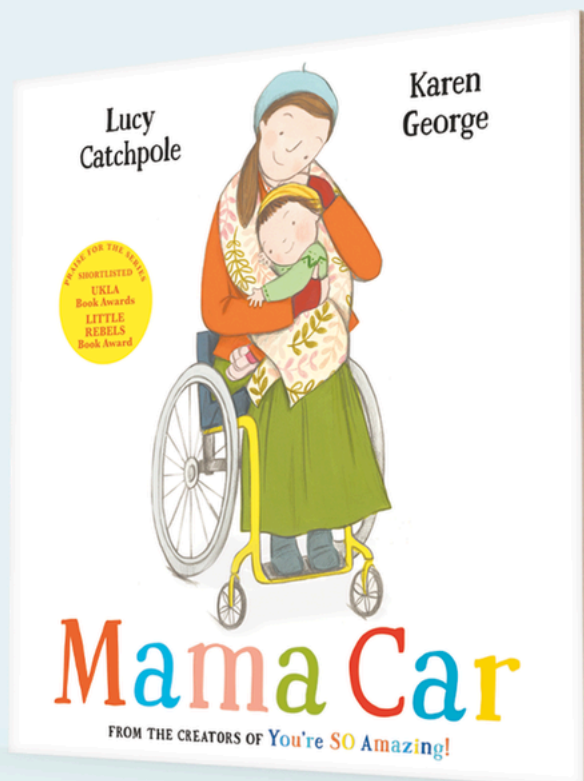
LEARNING RESOURCES EYFS–Year 1 (ages 3–6)

Mama Car provides a valuable opportunity to offer authentic, casual, first person, disabled representation.

Created with the author

This book can act both as a 'window' and a 'mirror', normalising disability for children without personal experience and allowing those with their own close relationship to disability to feel seen and represented. The mother in the story is, first and foremost, just 'Mummy' and the story demonstrates the unique needs, likes, dislikes and roles of all the characters in the story through which the reader can draw parallels to their own life.

The guided reading prompts and suggested tasks focus simply on helping children see the lives of disabled people and their families as normal.



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Suggestion:

- Talk about members of their immediate family and community.

Mama Car features not only a mother who uses a wheelchair but a father who has one leg and sometimes uses crutches (which is incidental and without comment).

Not only will this validate the experience of children who live in families with disabilities but normalise such families for those who do not, while providing the opportunity to discuss different family scenarios.

Suggestion:

- Name and describe people who are familiar to them.

Many children are likely to have encountered people with disabilities out and about in the real world, whether in passing at a supermarket, serving them in a shop or getting out of a car in a carpark. It's important children are given an opportunity to talk about these encounters and expand their concept of what a disabled person looks like and what contexts and roles they might be found in.

Teachers can continue to actively provide representation of people with different disabilities in a variety of different contexts and roles, to ensure children do not form narrow preconceptions of who and what a disabled person might be.



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Disability

It is likely at some point in the book a child might point out that the father only has one leg or notice his crutches. They may also want to know WHY he only has one leg or WHY the mother uses a wheelchair. Generally, the best response is to simply say you don't know, that sometimes people's bodies look or behave a little differently and they use different tools to get around like everyone else.

The book *What Happened to You?* and teaching materials surrounding this may be helpful references.

Further resources to support this discussion:

- Article: [‘How to Talk to Your Child About Disability’](#) 
- For more recommended picture books with disability representation see: [James and Lucy Catchpole’s selective list](#) 
- For more recommended picture books with disability representation see:

[Disability – tropes in children’s picture books](#)



Families

In discussing and sharing anything about parental situations and family life it is important to ensure sensitivity towards those with non-standard or more difficult arrangements.

It is the responsibility of the teacher to consider, to the best of their ability, the context of the class, how it might be received and take into account any difficult circumstances that may trigger comparison or upset.

It is increasingly common practice to refer to ‘adults at home’. In this case, you might say, ‘the little girl in the story has a mummy and a daddy but you might have a granny or a carer or an uncle who looks after you instead.’

When discussing how the little girl feels better after her trike fall be sure to validate and mention other sources of emotional regulation and comfort.



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How to use the guide

The guide offers some simple ideas to be used as prompts throughout reading. These are designed to help children draw parallels to their own lives and engage with the story. These are intended as inspiration only. Not every question should be asked and teachers should use their own judgement as to what might prompt meaningful connections, sharing and learning in their own group.

Part of the purpose of the book is to normalise disabled representation and therefore a lot of the discussion should be natural and generic, drawing parallels to the children's own families and experiences and empathising with ALL characters while not shying away from discussing the things that make us ALL unique.

Variation from the script is encouraged. Respond reflexively to children's questions and comments about the wheelchair but try not to focus or dwell on it.

Success criteria can look like:

- Students participating and sharing respectfully in discussion.
- Students asking relevant questions.
- Students making connections between their own lives and characters in the book.
- Students coming back to look at the book later.

Accommodations & Modifications:

- Blind, D/deaf, and students with vision or hearing impairment should be given a spot closer to the book.
- Students who require a stimming aid should have access.
- Students should be given the opportunity to look at the book independently later. Point out facial cues and discuss what emotions they indicate.



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Front cover



Script:

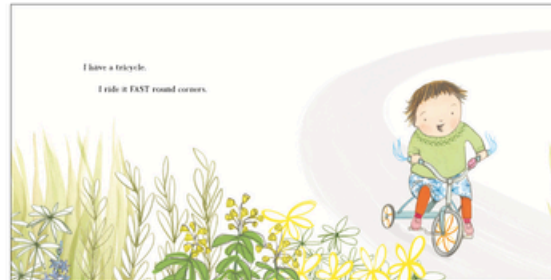
'This book is called *Mama Car*. What can we see on the cover?'

'We can see a mummy with a wheelchair and a little child a bit younger than you.'

'Why do you think it's called *Mama Car*? ...'

Let's see...'

Pages 4–5



Script:

'Does anyone else have a tricycle?'

'What other things have wheels?'

Pages 6–7



Script:

'Is the mama car actually a car? It does have wheels...'

Discuss similarities and differences and why the child might call it a car.

It does help her get around etc, but it's not quite like a car which has an engine and space for other people to ride.

Observe children's responses and ask if anyone has seen a chair like that, does anyone know what it is called?

If it has not already come up, you may or may not want to ask the class, why might someone use a wheelchair? Children may have preconceived notions of why someone might use a mobility aid but the intent is always to normalise encountering people with disabilities without needing to know the nature of or reason for their disability. As such this is an opportunity to explain that we don't know why the mother uses a wheelchair but that sometimes people's bodies look or behave a little differently and they use different tools to get around like everyone else.

'Now, let's get on with the story'



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Reading Guide: Mama Car

EYFS–Year 1 (ages 3–6)

Pages 8–9



Script:

'What would you bring on an expedition?'

Pages 10–11



Script:

'Do any of you like to play at being little?'

Pages 12–13



Script:

These pages offer an opportunity for discussion around the grabber and hazards and tools.

'Why did they have to stop?'

'What would happen if you stepped on that spiky rhino?'

'What would happen if Mummy didn't stop in her wheelchair and rolled on top of it?'

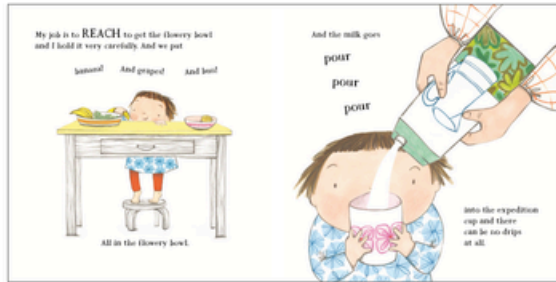
'What is the 'crocodile?'

'Why does she call it a crocodile?'

'Why does Mummy use the crocodile to help her?'

'Do you ever find it difficult to reach things? Maybe the crocodile could help you too!'

Pages 14–15



Script:

'Do any of you like helping in the kitchen?'

Pages 22–23



Script:

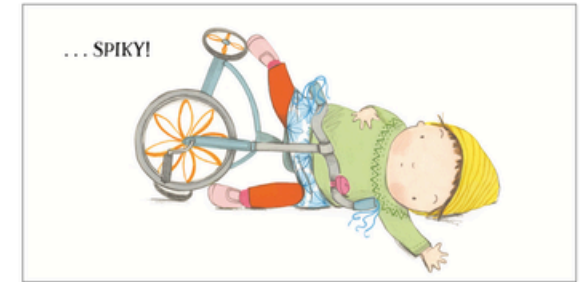
'Where are your favourite places to go?'

'What other ways of travelling are there?'

Taking the bus/train/walking/scooter/plane if
we are going far away.

'What are your favourite things to do in the
park?'

Pages 24–25



Script:

'Uh oh, who's had a fall before?'

'How did you feel after?'



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Pages 26–27



Script:

'The little girl in the story has her mummy to help her feel better. She climbs up onto her lap...'

Pages 28–29



Script:

'And gets all nice and cosy...'

What makes you feel better?

It could be a hug from someone at home or maybe you have a cuddly toy you like to hug or a place you like to go...'

Follow up activities (Age 3–6)*

With my family:

The girl in the story eats expedition snacks with her mother and drives to the park with her parents. Discuss the role of an illustrator and ask children to draw a picture of their favourite things to do with their adults.

As part of a 'Transport' topic:

This book fits well as part of a transport project. See vehicles worksheet.

- Incorporating representation:

Where possible, toys representing different mobility aids should be provided alongside toy cars, buses, and standing figures.

When creating displays or presentations, incorporate images of people of varying visible disabilities, ages, appearances and ethnicities using these forms of transport.

- Song: 'The Wheels on the Bus'

Try adding a line describing how 'the wheelchair on the bus goes up the ramp'

Ask the children, what does it mean? Up the ramp? Use photos to show how wheelchair users may use a ramp or a lift to get on buses.

* For upper EYFS and Key Stage 1, please see our resources for older children: [Tools That Help Us](#).



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Mama Car

- How many wheels? Are they all the same?
- What kind of seat?
- How do you get in or on?
- Do you have one? Can you describe it?

Tricycle

- How many wheels? Are they all the same?
- What kind of seat?
- How do you get in or on?
- Do you have one? Can you describe it?



Big Car

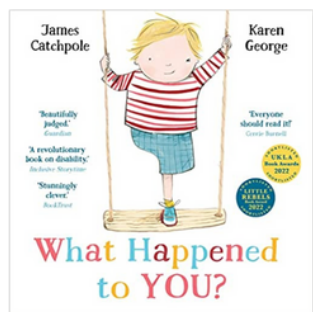
- How many wheels? Are they all the same?
- What kind of seat?
- How do you get in or on?
- Do you have one? Can you describe it?



Find specific guidelines for the curriculum in Wales, England and Scotland at this link: [England Scotland & Wales](#) or the QR code



These learning resources were written by Katie Allison Renker, and edited by Lucy & James Catchpole. Katie is a teacher and wheelchair user. Lucy is a wheelchair user too - and the author of Mama Car.



What Happened to You?
learning resources



Lucy & James Catchpole & daughters



Lucy Catchpole also co-wrote You're So Amazing! with her husband James Catchpole, author of Going Viral and What Happened to You?

Find more about these books at

[Books by Lucy and James Catchpole](#)



All illustrations by **Karen George**



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