

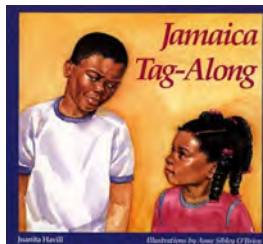
# Book Guide

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## ***Jamaica Tag-Along***

By Juanita Havill

Illustrations by Anne Sibley O'Brien



**Summary:** Jamaica really wants to play basketball with her big brother, but he tells her not to tag along. Jamaica will have to think about how it feels to be left out in order to decide whether to include a younger child in her play.

### **Social-Emotional Themes:**

- Thinking about our own feelings can help us imagine how others feel
- Exploring social acceptance and rejection

### **1st Reading: Learning about the book.**

Point out parts of the story that describe Jamaica's experience and connect it to the children's own experiences by asking questions and drawing their attention to the illustrations.

### **Before reading the story for the first time:**

Display the front cover to the children.

The title of this book is *Jamaica Tag-Along*

**Juanita Havill** is the author of this book. She wrote the story.

And **Anne Sibley O'Brien** created the pictures.

### **What do we think this book will be about?**

Accept answers from the children, then prepare them for the story by introducing them to the main characters through the cover illustration:

**This little girl is Jamaica and this is her brother Ossie.**

**Does Ossie look like he might be older or younger than Jamaica?**

### **While reading the story:**

Here are some suggestions for how to highlight the story when sharing it for the first time.

**Jamaica wants to play basketball with Ossie. Who plays basketball here?**

**Pom, pa-pom, pa-pom, pom, pom.** (Run your finger below the words)

**What does that sound mean?**

**What is making that sound?** (If children need a hint, direct their attention to the illustration and then the basketball.)

### Teacher Tip

Jamaica Tag-Along can be a challenging story for some children to follow. The plot shifts from Ossie excluding his sister, to Jamaica excluding Berto. After Jamaica considers how she felt when Ossie excluded her, she decides to include Berto and then Ossie. These twists and turns in the plot may leave some children confused or lost.

Consider using the strategy of **recapping the plot** occasionally while reading the book aloud. For instance, at the point of the story when Jamaica says, "I still think it's unfair," pause and ask the children:

**Does Jamaica think Ossie is being fair by telling her she can't play?**

When Jamaica tells Berto, "Stay away from my castle," bring the children's attention to the important moment:

**Uh-oh. First Ossie told Jamaica she couldn't play. But what just happened? Did Jamaica tell Berto he couldn't play?**

Now Ossie wants to play in the sandlot with Jamaica and Berto. What's going to happen?

#### After reading the story for the first time:

Ask the children for their opinions about the book and share some key points you would like them to remember.

**What did you think about that story?**

**Did you like the drawings?**

**Was Jamaica sad when she couldn't play with her brother? But did she let Ossie play with her in the end?**

You may need to go back to the book and show the illustration of Jamaica playing with Ossie and Berto to remind children.

### 2nd Reading of the Story: What are the characters feeling?

Provide a stronger focus on the character's feelings and the social-emotional themes of the story.

#### Before reading the story for the second time:

Display the front cover to the children.

**Do you remember this book?**

**I remember that Jamaica** (point to picture of Jamaica) **wanted to play basketball with her brother Ossie** (point to picture of Ossie).

#### While reading the story:

Here are some suggestions for how to highlight the story when sharing it for the second time.

**Look at Jamaica's face as she is walking away from the basketball game.**

**How do you think she feels? Why does she feel that way?**

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Now that Berto wants to build in the sand with her, how does Jamaica feel?  
Let's look at her face.

**After reading the story for the second time:**

Ask the children for their opinions about the book and share some key points you would like them to remember.

**So much happens in this story! Jamaica has a busy day!** Use this opportunity to recap the plot very briefly, leaving opportunities for the children to provide the details.

**Let's remember together. First Jamaica wanted to play basketball with...**  
(Ossie)

**Did Ossie let her?** (No)

**And Jamaica felt...** (Sad, mad, disappointed, etc.)

**Be sure to review the final illustration and ask the children.**

**And then in the end...**(Jamaica, Ossie and Berto all played together and had fun.)

### **3rd Reading of the Story: What does the story make me think about?**

Foster a connection between the social-emotional themes and the children. Help the children consider how Jamaica's experience can help them in social situations.

**Before reading the story:**

Display the front cover to the children.

**Do you remember this book?**

**Who's this girl?** (Jamaica)

**Who's this boy?** (Ossie)

**Do they know each other?** (They're brother and sister!)

**Let's see what happens.**

**While reading the story:**

Here are some suggestions for how to highlight the story when sharing it for the third time.

After Ossie tells Jamaica she can't play basketball with him ask the children,

**How does it feel to be told you can't play?**

**Look! Berto wants to play now. Do you think Jamaica is going to let him?**

**Jamaica looks like she is thinking hard. What might she be thinking about?**

After Jamaica allows Berto to play with her you could ask,

**Is it always easy to share what you are playing with? It's not always easy, but Jamaica made space so Berto could build in the sand with her.**

**Do they look like they're having fun?**

**Uh oh. Now Ossie wants to play. Will Jamaica let him play too?**

### After reading the story for the third time:

Ask the children for their opinions about the book and share some key points you would like them to remember.

This book makes me think about how we treat one another. Does anybody here think that's important? How we treat each other?

Did Jamaica feel better in the end? She liked finding ways to include Berto and Ossie in her play.

She was kind to Berto because she knew how it felt to be told, "No, you can't play."

## Activity: Discussion about Playing Together

**Objective:** To reflect and plan how the group can be more welcoming to one another in play.

**Space Requirement:** An indoor or outdoor space large enough to accommodate the group when sitting in a circle.

**Materials:** A copy of *Jamaica Tag-Along*, a large piece of paper and marker to record children's responses to the Brainstorming Section.

### Teacher Tip

In order to support this discussion, consider your **timing** and **preparation**. In order to use the lessons learned from the story, the children need to be able to recall the plot and emotional content of *Jamaica Tag-Along*. Therefore it is an option to begin this discussion right after reading the book in its entirety. You may also simply review the story before beginning this activity, provided the children have heard it at least three times. Decide what is best for your group of children by considering the following:

**Has this group ever had a discussion in Circle before?** Like any skill, the practice of productive group discussion is learned over time. If group discussion is new to your group, you might consider having Circle Time discussion about a less emotional topic first. For example, facilitate a discussion about favorite foods.

**When was the last time this group heard this book in its entirety?** Can the children remember the story? Consider the range of ability to recall amongst your group. If you are unsure, ask children how much they remember about what happened to Jamaica.

**How long can this group sit and attend to this story and activity?** This will depend upon the individual needs of the children, the size of the group, and the level of interest in this book. Always try to be sensitive to the length of Circle Time. If you have any doubts, share the book in its entirety during one Circle Time and then briefly review the story and do the activity in a second Circle.

**Directions:** After you have assembled the children as a group and either read or reviewed *Jamaica Tag-Along*, ask the children how the story might apply to their classroom.

Reading about Jamaica made me think about our classroom. Did it make you think about playing at school?

### Teacher Tip

In response to this prompt, the children may share specific events that they have witnessed and been involved in. This is an excellent opportunity to encourage self-reflection and shared reflection. Consider the following:

- Listen to children's responses, encourage the group to give their attention to the child who is talking,
- Try to connect the child's described experience to the story, and
- Acknowledge how those experiences made them feel,
- If the experience involves another child who is present, provide some support to that child as well.

For example:

**Beth:** Anthony was mean to me about the trucks this morning! He said, go away!

**Teacher:** That reminds me of when Ossie told Jamaica she couldn't play. How did it make you feel?

**Beth:** Mad!

**Teacher:** It made you feel mad. I think Jamaica might have felt mad. Anthony, what did you think when Beth wanted to play with the trucks this morning?

**Anthony:** I was driving them. I had them first!

**Teacher:** Sometimes sharing can be tricky. I think it was hard for Ossie to let Jamaica play basketball with him.

This part of the discussion is devoted to reflection. It may be tempting to jump to the resolution of each child's conflict, but try to stay focused on simply remembering these events for now. There is a section of the discussion devoted to brainstorming solutions. Help the children wait until then to discuss strategies for resolution.

Accept children's answers and provide some reflection of your own. This is the time to present the topic of the discussion: **How can we be more welcoming to each other when we play?**

Ask the children what classroom rules are already in place to help us be friendly and welcoming to each other.

**Child:** No hitting!

**Teacher:** That's right! It doesn't feel good to be hit. The "no hitting" rule helps us treat each other in a more friendly way.

If you have your classroom rules posted, you can make reference to them during this part of the discussion, pointing to the words as you read them.

Introduce the Brainstorming Section by asking children to consider other ways to welcome each other. In order to help the children generate new ideas, invite them to think about the following scenario:

**Let's pretend I** (the teacher) **am playing and you want to join me.**

You may want to move to the center of the Circle and/or begin playing with a toy in order to help the children imagine the scenario.

**What could you do to let me know you want to play?**

Accept children's responses, encouraging a variety of verbal and non-verbal strategies. Record the responses on the large sheet of paper.

Some examples might be:

- Sitting beside the child you want to play with
- Tapping the child with the toy on the shoulder
- Calling the child by name
- Asking, "Can I play with you?"
- Asking, "Can I use one of those toys?"
- Asking, "What are you doing?"
- Saying, "That looks like fun."
- Asking, "Can I do that too?"
- Smiling at the child
- Listening to the child's response
- Getting a grown-up's help if you get stuck

**Once the list of responses is complete, discuss with the children where the list will be posted. Consider adding pictures to the list to remind children of the variety of strategies. Make reference to the list when supporting social interactions amongst the children.**

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