



## Jigsaw, the mindful approach to PSHE ages 3-11. How does Jigsaw approach gender identity?

*This document has been written to outline Jigsaw's philosophy to value all children, and how this is reflected in its approach to gender identity, the use of language referring to boys, girls, males, females etc. and our aim to provide a balanced and inclusive approach.*

At Jigsaw we, of course, understand the difference between 'sex' and 'gender' and adopt the World Health Organisation distinction.

The World Health Organisation states that:

*'Gender refers to the characteristics of women, men, girls and boys that are socially constructed. This includes norms, behaviours and roles associated with being a woman, man, girl or boy, as well as relationships with others. As a social construct, gender varies from society to society and can change over time.'*

*Gender interacts with but is different from sex, which refers to the different biological and physiological characteristics of females, males and intersex persons, such as chromosomes, hormones and reproductive organs. Gender and sex are related to but different from gender identity. Gender identity refers to a person's deeply felt, internal and individual experience of gender, which may or may not correspond to the person's physiology or designated sex at birth.'*

### [World Health Organisation](#)

Jigsaw's underpinning philosophy is to value every child as the unique human beings they are, and from this premise promotes acceptance and respect for self and others.

The relationship children have with themselves is paramount and Jigsaw focuses on developing a strong sense of identity, self-belief and self-esteem, within the whole-school PSHE programme. Jigsaw also includes all the requirements of statutory Relationships and Health Education (DfE England 2019).

The first Puzzle (unit) in Jigsaw is 'Being Me in My World' which is about discovering who I am and how I fit...in my family, my school, my friendship groups and as a global citizen.

The second Puzzle is 'Celebrating Difference' which is about identifying similarities and celebrating difference, returning to the underpinning aim of acceptance and respect for each person's uniqueness. This Puzzle also considers how sometimes difference can be a source of bullying, racism etc, children always being taught how to speak up and get help if needed.

Jigsaw works hard on ensuring age-appropriateness throughout, and we strongly encourage teachers to plan every lesson and tailor it if necessary, to ensure it meets the needs of their pupils.



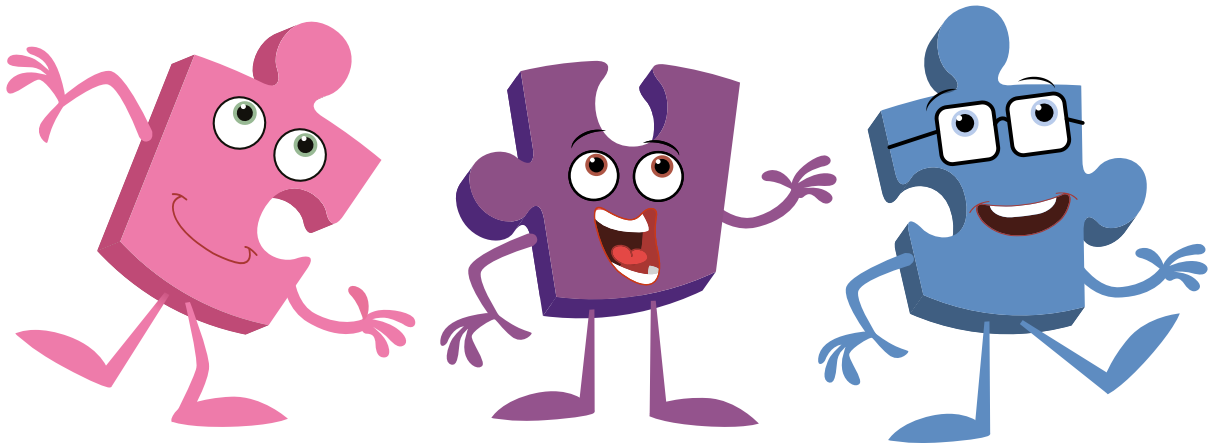
The issue of gender identity is rarely treated as an explicit focus in Jigsaw 3-11 as the programme does its best to create an inclusive ethos as described above. There are opportunities for transgender to be included in classroom discussions at the teacher's discretion, but there are no lessons where this term is used explicitly.

At no point does Jigsaw say there are only two genders but equally it doesn't suggest there are more; neither, in the primary programme does it refer to gender fluidity.

Jigsaw is very aware of the challenge of a binary-focused English language and does its best to use a mix of boy/girl language and gender-neutral language e.g. for names of characters in stories and scenarios etc. Jigsaw tries to reflect the diverse demographic children are a part of, always emphasising the importance of being kind, compassionate and accepting, focussing on the qualities of people as human beings, consequently accepting children who see themselves as boys, as girls, as non-binary etc.

The Jigsaw Friends have gender- and culture-neutral names e.g. Jigsaw Jo, Jino, Jaz which allows each class to develop their own identity for their Jigsaw friend.

The language of 'boy' and 'girl' is used with careful attention not to stereotype.



There are explicit lessons that help children understand what stereotyping is, why it can be damaging and how to avoid doing this, always encouraging children to be who they are and celebrate their own identity and to treat others in the same way.

This means our Jigsaw approach is one we feel will fit most schools and most children, valuing children from all types of families, including those with family members who do not fit typical gender stereotypes, and those children who may struggle with their own sense of how they fit in.

When schools are aware of children who are questioning their gender, or have family members who are transgender, we know that schools want to ensure that they can acknowledge these children's experiences positively in the classroom as they do for all children in all sorts of different family compositions.

Sometimes there are children or family members who may be transgender or questioning their gender, that the school will not know about. We also know that as primary children get older, they will become increasingly aware of people and stories in the media about transgender people.

Consequently, it is important that Jigsaw PSHE materials are able to provide a safe classroom environment where children feel all differences are valued. This supports transgender people as equally important members of the community and allows safe and age-appropriate discussion around the concept of transgender for primary aged children if and when it is appropriate for a class, at the teacher's discretion.

We would expect children to then feel more comfortable to take any further questions they may have home to their own families.

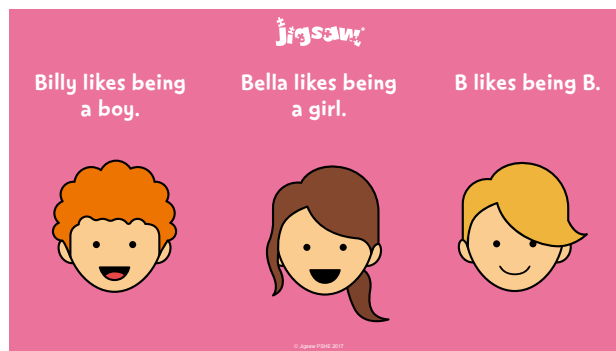
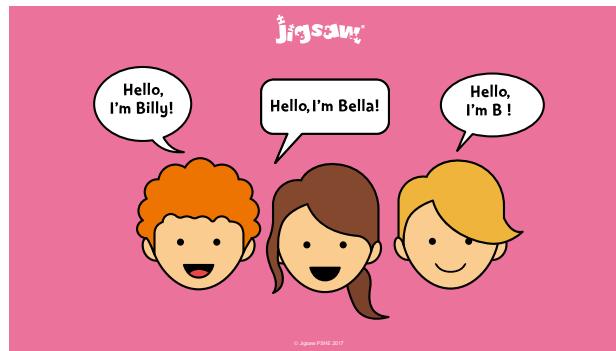
There are more than 250 lessons in the primary Jigsaw Programme. There is one lesson in KS1 and a few in KS2 where transgender identities could be naturally introduced into the lessons if a school feels it is appropriate. At no point does Jigsaw relay a 'wrong-body' narrative, nor does Jigsaw introduce any use of the term *transgender* or *transitioning*.

So, what is in these lessons?

**Age 6-7 years, Celebrating Difference, Lesson 5, 'Gender Diversity'.**

This lesson looks at whether being a boy or a girl makes a difference when choosing friends and toys. The lesson includes a character who the children do not know is a girl or a boy to help stimulate discussion about whether this makes a difference to the toys, clothes and activities that we choose. There is no reference to LGBT+, but if a school does have a child who is questioning their gender identity, or a family member who is transgender, it may help to reflect that child's experience of the world and provide a safe classroom environment for the children to discuss any issues they have questions about. The safe learning environment is reinforced each lesson by the Jigsaw Charter established with children's ownership in the very first Jigsaw lesson.

The following slides are **an excerpt** from this lesson which focuses on being kind to each other and being individuals. The main aim of the lesson is about treating everyone as individuals and that it is fine to be who you are, to have your own identity. Teachers use their discretion, knowing the children in their classes, and are encouraged to focus the lesson accordingly.



## Age 10-11 years, Celebrating Difference, Lessons on Understanding Difference

The teaching and learning in this year group helps pupils to consider the different types of people that we have in our communities and how it is important to treat all other people with kindness and empathy, and to understand that there are some groups of people who are sometimes discriminated against. If schools feel it is appropriate to include content about any other protected groups, such as any of the Protected Characteristics listed in the Equality Act 2010, they may wish to extend or adapt the content here or in the surrounding lessons to do this in line with their school policy.

Jigsaw pays careful attention to the images it uses in its materials and is mindful of reflecting diversity and not promoting stereotypes, so all children can resonate with what they see.

Distancing techniques are also used in Jigsaw e.g. cartoon characters from the Planet Zarg, enabling learning messages to be free from the risk of stereotyping. This is a consistent approach from age 3 years upwards allowing all children to see themselves and their families and friends represented in our classroom resources and discussions, whatever our differences in our appearance, outlook or of course, gender identity.

Understanding puberty and human reproduction, at primary school, of course needs knowledge of both the male and female body. Jigsaw uses the words: male, female, boy, girl in such lessons and suggests teachers use terminology like 'birth-body' if they deem this is appropriate to ensure that all children understand and learn about the changes that will happen to their own bodies as they grow from a child, to a teenager and then into an adult..

Jigsaw is all about preparing children for the world they live in and supporting them to be happy in their own identity and respectful of others.

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