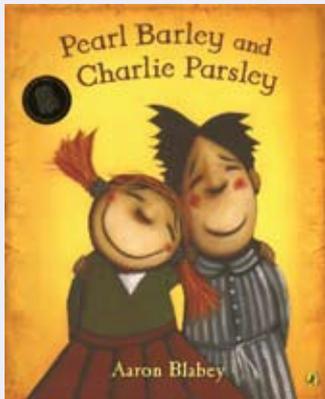


# Resource reviews

by Angela Owens

## Pearl Barley and Charlie Parsley



This simple and beautifully illustrated children's book tells the story of two friends and what makes their friendship special. On the surface it seems odd that two people with such disparate personalities could be great friends, and this is a question

that the author Aaron Blabey identifies at the beginning of the book.

As we get to know them through the book's narrative and the descriptive, humorous illustrations, we learn that Pearl is a confident and boisterous character, while Charlie is a reserved and shy person.

Far from creating difficulties in their friendship, however, it is the complementary nature of their personalities that makes their friendship work so well. When Pearl forgets her mittens, it is Charlie who 'holds her hands and makes them warm as toast'. And when Charlie is feeling 'small or lonely or just plain blue', Pearl makes him feel better by telling him she thinks he's great.

Suitable for children aged four and older, this book will support child care professionals to begin conversations with children about valuing people's individual differences and strengths, and recognising how these differences are often an important part of relationships.

Pearl likes to 'run amok' and 'solve mysteries' while Charlie prefers to 'sit and think' and to 'be safe and sound'. This reversal in what are often considered to be typical gender roles will also provide great opportunities to debate and challenge gender stereotypes with children ■

**Blabey, A. (2007). *Pearl Barley and Charlie Parsley*. Australia: Penguin Books.**

## Questacon website

Questacon, located in Canberra, is Australia's National Science and Technology Centre. The Questacon website presents an assortment of free science and maths-based games, quizzes and activities for children. Promoting 'a hands-on and minds-on' approach to learning, the 'Online Stuff' section of the website includes the pages:

- Incredible Illusions
- Activities
- Puzzles
- Star Lab
- Science In Depth
- Study Resources
- World Community Grid

The Activities page includes online experiments, as well as instructions for simple experiments that could be done at home or child care.

In addition to the Online Stuff section, the Questacon website also has 'Stuff to Read', 'Stuff to Do' and 'Stuff to Play' that have a mix of online experiences and instructions for activities and experiments that could be implemented in child care. These sections provide opportunities for children to develop skills and knowledge in a range of areas including measurement, physics, chemistry, spatial awareness, forensics and natural science.

Depending on their skills and the service's resources, older children could either participate in the online activities or implement some of the experiences described on the site.



The Questacon website also provides child care professionals with great ideas (and instructions) for science and maths-based learning experiences for younger children. Many of these could be adapted to suit children of varying ages and abilities ■

[www.questacon.edu.au](http://www.questacon.edu.au)