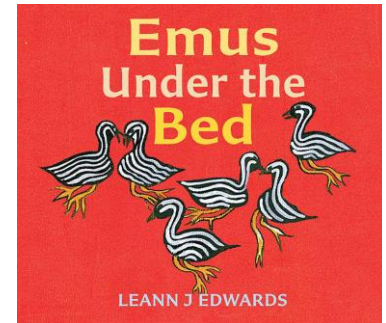


# LEARNING TIME

## Emus Under the Bed by Leann J Edwards

This unique story is about a little girl and the fun she has at her Auntie Dollo's house. It features an indigenous Australian family spending time together making feather flowers and damper. But what's that scratching noise from under the bed? A vibrant story to treasure the connection between culture and family.

This book was produced through the Emerging Indigenous Picture Book Mentoring Project, a joint initiative between Raising Literacy Australia and Allen & Unwin, assisted by the Australian Government through the Australia Council, its arts funding and advisory body.



### Key Message for Parents | Children learn through being engaged and doing

We can help children learn in an engaged and active way by:

- Playing together, some play can be adult led and some can be child led
- Having a collection of simple, everyday, play materials suitable for each child's age to explore
- Spending time together: singing, talking, reading, walking, shopping and involving children in your everyday tasks are all ways that they will learn new skills.

### Australian Early Years Learning Framework | Outcome 2: Children are connected with and contribute to their world

We can help children to feel connected to others within their community by:

- Sharing stories that explore different cultures and traditions. Books are an effective way to transport children to different places or to learn about different cultures.
- Exploring that idea that families are similar and different
- Participating in activities that are inclusive of cultures within the local community.

### Welcome

Ask carers to write nametags for themselves and their children.

Welcome everyone, introduce yourself, remind adults to turn their mobile phones off and that there will be time for adults to chat after the story and songs.

### Welcome Song (or your preferred song)

Have the words available as a handout or written on a board or butcher's paper for the adults to read and join in.

#### Good Morning

*Good morning to you*

*Good morning to you*

*Good morning everybody*

*and welcome to you!*

### Song

#### Kookaburra sits in the old gum tree

Kookaburra sits in the old gum tree  
Merry, merry king of the bush is he  
Laugh Kookaburra, laugh  
Kookaburra gay your life must be

Kookaburra sits in the old gum tree  
Eating all the gum drops he can see  
Stop Kookaburra Stop  
Leave some there for me



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FfpCGmlFJ1g>

### Before Reading

This is a story about an Indigenous Australian family. They really love birds and collecting feathers. Have some materials that the children can touch and feel as an introduction to the story.

Feathers, bird puppets and some pictures of different local native birds will help start a discussion before the story. You can talk about the noises birds make and what the children know about birds. Birds referred to in the story include moorhens, magpies, galahs, cockatoos, guinea fowl and tawny frogmouth. Children may be unfamiliar with these birds and so it is useful for them to be able to see some pictures before you start.

Start the story by reading the title 'Emus Under the Bed' and point out the picture showing some emu chicks. Show the children a picture of an adult emu and asked if anyone as seen one before. Allow time to talk about them, hearing all shared experiences about an emu.

Let's remember the 5 L's of listening when we read a story:  
Look, Listen, Lips closed, Hands in our Laps, Legs are still!

### During Reading

There are many things to look at on each page as you read. The text is short, however on each page there is a large illustration and also some small images of birds and other creatures. Take your time on each page pointing out what you can see. Spend some time on the page that features all of the birds. You can point to them and the children might be able to help you name and describe them. On the page that describes damper for lunch, you could talk about this. Damper is made by combining flour and water into a ball and cooking it in the coals of a fire. It is a simple form of bread that is made in the bush.

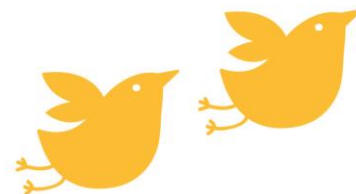
### After Reading

The child in the story had a lot of fun at her Aunty's house. Ask the children to recall some of the things they did together. The children might also like to share times they spend with their extended family or friends and the things they like to do with their Aunty, Uncle, Cousin, Grandparent or friend.

### Extension Ideas

#### Read

Re-read the story. Repetition helps children's comprehension and builds vocabulary. Research has found that children who are read the same story several times learn words quicker than those who hear a wider variety of stories with less repetition.



Read more books about birds. Share nonfiction titles as these will introduce new words and concepts.

#### Sing

When we sing it slows down our speech meaning the sounds and words can be heard more clearly. Singing also helps a child's social-emotional development as well being a fun way to build vocabulary

#### Move like an emu

Move like an Emu, move

Move like an Emu, move

Put your hand up in the air just like an Emu

Make a beak to peck everywhere

Peck everywhere

That's what we do when we

Move like an Emu, move

Move like an Emu, move

Stretch out your long legs  
Scratch with your feet  
Fluff out your feathers  
Beak goes up, beak goes down,  
Beak goes pecking all around  
Shake your wings and run around ah, ah, ah

I say move, I say move I say move, I say move

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LruXKECziYI>

### Talk

Toddlers learn language by hearing it and using it. Having lots of conversations with toddlers gives them the opportunity to hear language and to practice using it. The book is a tool to help you in your conversations, and to support back and forth discussion about the pictures and story.

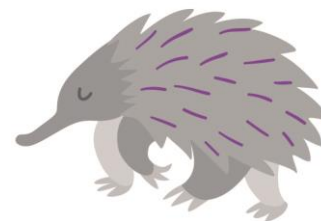
Talk about the places birds live. Do all birds live in a nest/tree? Do all birds fly? Have you ever found a feather on the ground? What colour was it?

Do you have an Aunty, someone in your family, or a good friend you like to do things with?

### Play

Go on a nature scavenger hunt and explore the outdoors. See if you can find:  
A bird, Stones, Sticks, Leaves, Feathers, Bark and anything else in your natural environment

You can make a display with what you find, have some free play with them or make something with them. Some of the exploring and creating can be adult led play, and some can be child directed.



### STEM Focus

Cooking is a fantastic STEM activity. Some of the skills children will learn through cooking include

- measuring, pouring and mixing
- how to follow a recipe, step by step
- identifying similarities and differences of the ingredients

**Make Damper:** <http://www.taste.com.au/recipes/12308/damper>

**NOTE: check for food allergies and ingredient intolerances beforehand**

#### *Ingredients*

450g (3 cups) self-raising flour

Pinch of salt

80g butter, chilled, cubed

185ml (3/4 cup) water

#### *Method*

Preheat oven to 200°C.

- Line a baking tray with non-stick baking paper.
- Combine the flour and salt in a large bowl.
- Use your fingertips to rub the butter into the flour until the mixture resembles fine breadcrumbs.
- Add the water to the flour mixture and use a round-bladed knife in a cutting motion to mix until the mixture just comes together, adding 1-2 tablespoons extra water if the mixture is a little dry.
- Use your hands to bring the mixture together.
- Turn the dough onto a lightly floured surface and knead gently for 1-2 minutes or until smooth. Shape dough and place on tray.
- Dust with a little extra flour and bake in oven for 30 minutes or until the damper is cooked through and sounds hollow when tapped on the base. Allow time to cool and serve warm.

### **Goodbye**

Conclude the session with some suggestions of books that parents might want to share with their children. The Little Big Book Club suggests the following books to support learning in this area. If your library has copies, make them available for families to borrow or include them in your story time session.

For more stories to share, we recommend the following titles:

- **Little Birds Day** by *Sally Morgan and Johnny Warrkatja Malibirr*
- **Clever Crow** by *Nina Lawrence and Bronwyn Bancroft*
- **Busy Beaks** by *Sarah Allen*

An Activity Time for this book is available to download for FREE from our website. This is a great resource to share with families, you are welcome to print and distribute as necessary.

### **Goodbye Song**

Depending on the size of your group, you may wish to insert each child's name in the place of 'you' as it develops a more personal relationship between yourself, the child and the family.

Sung to the tune of (Here We Go Round the Mulberry Bush) or your preferred choice.

**Goodbye**

*This is the way we say goodbye (use a waving action) Say goodbye, say goodbye*

*This is the way we say goodbye*

*To all our library friends (or) (to our friend.....)!*