



Book Title: *I Wish You Knew*

Author: Jackie Azúa Kramer

Illustrator: Magdalena Mora

Ages: 4-8 years

Identities/Lived Experiences/Themes in This Book

- Feelings
- Identity affirmation
- Latino/a/e/x
- Immigration/Migration
- Families separated

Anti-Bias Education

- **Empathy and Understanding**
- **Healthy Complex Identities**
- **Respect Across Differences**
- Notice, Name, and Reject Bias
- Responsiveness and Action

Social-Emotional Learning

- **Self-Awareness**
- **Self-Management**
- **Social Awareness**
- Relationship Skills
- Responsible Decision-Making

Persona Doll Guide Units

- **Creating Safety and Belonging**
- **Understanding You and Me**
- **Valuing Families**
- Building a Community

Persona Doll Connections

- **Foster Families**
 - All About Madison – p. 21
 - Madison is feeling frustrated – p. 34
 - Madison wants to talk about families – p. 89

**Background Information for Educators**

I Wish You Knew is a book about a child who misses their father after he had to leave the country because he wasn't born here. A growing number of children like the one in the story are living apart from their parents, as more and more undocumented immigrants are being detained and deported.

While Madison's separation from her mom is under different circumstances, she is learning to communicate her feelings around her mother's absence, much like the child in this story. Many children are forced to live separately from their parents for a variety of reasons, and this is a story many children will be able to relate to, regardless of the circumstances keeping their family apart.

Note: When sharing this book with children, be mindful of children who may be experiencing a separation in their family, and seek help from their caregivers or other school professionals on how to best navigate this lesson. See also the **Family Structure Resource Guide starting on page 168 of the Persona Doll Curriculum Guide.**

This book also teaches children how to talk about the things they wish others knew about their lives that people can't tell just by looking at them. *I Wish You Knew* invites children to communicate their feelings and needs, and normalizes difficult feelings. Additionally, the book shows the complexity of how, even while experiencing hard things, there can be joy and beauty to remind us of the things and people we love. For more background on the book and the author's experience, read the **Author's Note** at the back of the book.

Reflection Questions for Educators

1. Growing up, what things did you wish others knew about you, your life, and your experience? How would their knowledge of your experience have been helpful to you?
2. What are the various family structures present in your classroom? How does family structure diversity impact your teaching practices or communication with families?
3. How can you support children in your classroom who may be struggling with a separation from members of their family, such as parents or siblings?

**Book Summary: Read this to children before reading the book**

Today's book is about a girl who misses her father. Her father had to leave the country because he wasn't born here. In the story, the girl shares with her classmates how she's feeling, and then others start to share about the things they are thinking and feeling, too. Let's listen to hear about what they share, and see if you can connect with how they're feeling.

Discussion Questions

1. Why was the school garden special to the girl in the story?
2. Where is your favorite place at school? Why? How would you describe that place to the adults who take care of you?
3. What do you do when you miss someone? What is something that brings you joy when you feel sad or you are missing someone?
 - a. Think about someone you miss or that you have missed before. What is something that reminds you of that person?
4. Estrella was separated from her father, and she wished others at school knew more about what she was feeling and thinking when she missed him. In the sharing circle around the oak tree, students and the teacher shared things they wished others knew. What were some of the things people in the book shared?
5. What do you wish to tell a special person in your life or someone who takes care of you?
6. How can we support each other when someone in our classroom is missing someone they are separated from?

Extension Activities**1. "I Wish You Knew How I Felt Today" Sharing Box (ages 5 and up)**

Give children time to write or draw how they are feeling today on a piece of paper. (Ask children to begin their responses with "I wish you knew that I feel _____ today") Then, collect the papers in a box or basket.

Read or show what children drew or wrote. Children may share why they are feeling the way they described in their paper, but be mindful that some children will not



want to share, while others may overshare. This may be tricky to navigate depending on what might be happening outside of school for some children, including undocumented children or those experiencing trauma in their homes. Alternatively, if you have a feelings chart in your classroom, you can use that for this activity rather than the pieces of paper in a box.

After reading their feelings, ask children, *“How did it feel to learn about how others are feeling today? Should we make any adjustments in our day to honor the feelings we have in the room?”* Be sure to check in with children and/or families as needed, depending on what children share.

2. Sowing Sunflower Seeds

Assist children in planting sunflower seeds in small pots and watching them grow. Plant 2-3 seeds per pot, and thin to one plant after they are 1-2 inches tall. Guide children in watering their plants each day, or as needed. Sunflowers need at least 8 hours of light per day, so a sunny window or grow light is best (or outdoors if possible). Plant several extras in case some seeds are not viable or some seedlings don't make it. Have children name their sunflower when it blooms.

3. Imagining the Places and People We Love - Visualization Exercise

Before you begin this activity, take note of the energy in the room. If you think children need to move, do a movement activity first before asking them to sit quietly. Invite children to a comfortable place, such as a rug. Explain that you will be guiding them to use their imaginations by listening to your voice. When they are ready, you can begin:

- *Close your eyes and take a couple of slow, deep breaths, gently filling your body with air and slowly releasing it.*
- *Now, picture yourself in your favorite place. If you don't have a favorite place or are having a hard time choosing, picture a place you love. Try to imagine the sounds you'd hear and the colors you'd see. Imagine what the place smells like. Take a moment to just be in this place, taking in everything around you.*
- *Next, picture someone you love and who brings you joy has joined you. Wrap your arms around your shoulders, and give yourself a hug. Imagine you are giving and receiving a hug from the loved one who has joined you in your favorite place. Notice how you're feeling, take one more deep and slow breath, and open your eyes.*

After children have opened their eyes, ask them how it felt to imagine being in their favorite place and hugging someone they love. Allow children to share. After this sharing, it might help to do another movement activity.

Find more lessons in
Madison's Persona Doll
Book Set, available here:
[https://amazeworks.org/
product/madison-book-set/](https://amazeworks.org/product/madison-book-set/)

