

How Do You Hide a Hippo?

Educator Notes



Written by Rebecca Grant
Illustrated by Jemma Robaard

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Recommended for: ages 3-5
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Plot Summary

How DO you hide a ginormous hippo?

The shed is too small, the beds are too low, and the hippo? He's not great at blending in.

A playful story with a cozy twist... this hippo might be fluffier than he looks!

Themes

- Rhyme
- Imagination
- Home life
- Play
- Size and spatial awareness

Rich and interesting words: shrink, queue, disguise, camouflage

Key Curriculum Learning Areas

Early Years Learning Framework:

Outcome 5 - Children are effective communicators

The rhythm and repetition in this story lead children to chant rhymes and engage with the rhyming aspects.

Outcome 2 - Children are connected with and contribute to their world

The home setting in this book is easy for children to relate to in their own world. Stories based around relatable settings and home environments help children to foster a sense of belonging and comfort in their environments.

Outcome 4 - Children are confident and involved learners

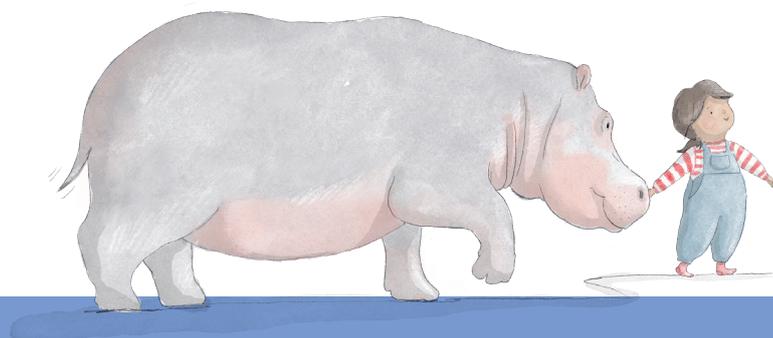
This story has a clear problem that needs to be solved – how do you hide a hippo? It encourages readers to be curious and initiate play experiences emerging from their own ideas.

Australian Curriculum

Learning Area: English

Foundation

<p>Language: Language for expressing and developing ideas</p>	<p>Explore the contribution of image and words to meaning in stories and informative text (AC9EFLE07)</p>
<p>Language: Language for expressing and developing ideas</p>	<p>Recognise and develop awareness of vocabulary used in familiar contexts related to everyday experiences, personal interests and topics taught at school (AC9EFLE08)</p>
<p>Literacy: Phonic and word knowledge</p>	<p>Recognise and generate rhyming words, alliteration patterns, syllables and sounds (phonemes) in spoken words (phonological awareness) (AC9EFLY09)</p>
<p>Literacy: Examining literature</p>	<p>Recognise different types of literary texts and identify features including events, characters, and beginnings and endings (AC9EFLE03)</p>



Conversation Starters

Before Reading

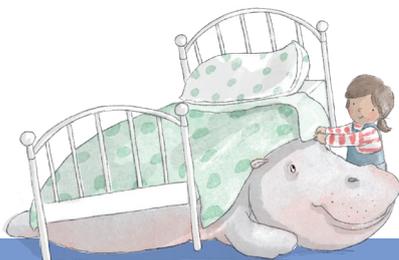
- 'This book is called *How Do You Hide a Hippo?*. I wonder, how DO you hide a hippo?' Using 'I wonder' statements and open-ended questions allow for language-building opportunities and back-and-forth interactions.
- What clues does the front cover give us? What is hippo short for? Can you think of any other shortened words?
- Ask children to make predictions about what they think this book is about based on the front and back cover.

While Reading

- There is repetition on each page, with the phrase 'How do you hide a HIPPO?' You can encourage children to actively participate, joining in at the end of each page.
- Use the illustrations to provide context for words children may not have come across before. 'Would he disappear wearing camouflage gear?' provides a good example to highlight the word 'camouflage' and its meaning.
- This story is full of rhyming words. Use points in the story to slow down and stop to identify the words that rhyme.
- You may like to highlight emotions and feelings when the child in the story thinks she might have to say a final goodbye to her hippo. How do you think she's feeling here? What might she be thinking?

After Reading

- It turns out that Harry is a *toy* hippo, which makes him perfect for snuggling at night. 'Do you have any toys that you like to snuggle with?'
- 'Where else do you think would be a good place to hide a hippo?'
- Encourage children to practice narrative recall by discussing the order of events. Where did the hippo try to hide first? How many places can you remember?
- Children may relate their own favourite toys to this story. You might like to explore creating your own book covers and titles such as, *How Do You Hide a Bunny?* Or, *How Do You Hide a Monkey?*



FURTHER ACTIVITIES AND DISCUSSIONS

Hippos are interesting animals:

- Hippos spend most of their day in water, to stay cool in the African heat. They can see and breathe under water.
- Hippos' sweat acts as a natural sunblock.
- Hippos are herbivores, meaning they eat plants. In just one night, they can eat up to 35 kg of grass!
- Mother hippos are called cows, and a baby hippo is called a calf.

You may like to explore some more fun facts about hippos and non-fiction texts together.

Older children may like to make a 'hippo habitat' – a diorama out of a shoebox for a place for a hippo to live. Will you make it a natural African habitat for a real hippo, or a bedroom habitat for a toy hippo?

Extend the story further into real-life play with a toy hippo that children can take turns in bringing home. They may like to share images and stories of Hippo's adventures at home.

Check out the activities on our website littlebookpress.com.au

About the Author

Rebecca Grant is a children's author based in Perth, Western Australia. A former physiotherapist, Rebecca now channels her creativity into writing playful, rhyming stories that capture the humour and charm of everyday life. Her debut picture book, *Potion Commotion*, was published by Affirm Press in September 2025.

About the Illustrator

Jedda Robaard is a bestselling Australian author and illustrator who has created over 50 children's books. Her work is sold internationally and has been translated into numerous languages, including French, Dutch, Turkish, Greek, Italian, Korean, and Chinese. Jedda's most recent publication *The Littlest Penguin* was the winner of the 2024 Environment Award for Children's Literature.