Welcome to the Belonging and Identity Micro Library

Welcome to the *Belonging and Identity Micro Library*. This special collection of ideas explores what it means to feel accepted, supported, and valued in our lives.

Belonging can grow in different ways and through different moments in everyday life. Sometimes it happens quickly, and sometimes it develops slowly over time.

You are seeing this because you have read, are reading, or will be able to read a story called *Where Maeve Fits*. Take your time as you explore these ideas. Read carefully and talk with an adult you trust about what you discover.



Care, Connection and Belonging



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What Does Belonging Mean?

Belonging is the warm feeling of being accepted and cared for exactly as you are. It's that comfortable sense that you fit in and matter to the people around you.

Belonging is often shown through small actions and everyday moments rather than grand gestures. A smile, a kind word, or someone remembering what matters to you can all help create feelings of belonging.



Think About It

People can feel belonging in different ways and at different times. What feels welcoming to one person might be different for another.

Talk with an adult: What kinds of actions help people feel they belong?

People Who Care for Us

Throughout our lives, people are cared for by different adults at different times. The important thing isn't who these people are, but that they provide support, safety, and understanding.

Parents

Adults who raise and care for children day to day

Carers

People who look after and support someone's needs

Relatives

Family members who offer care and connection

Trusted Adults

Teachers, mentors, or others who provide support









What matters most is feeling supported and having someone you can turn to when you need help, comfort, or simply someone to listen.

Talk with an adult: What does being cared for look like in everyday life?

Feeling Safe Helps Belonging to Grow





Feeling safe is like having firm ground beneath your feet. When people feel safe, they can relax, settle, and feel more at ease in their surroundings. Safety isn't just about physical protection—it's also about emotional security and knowing you're in a place where you're respected and valued.

This sense of safety helps belonging grow over time, creating space for trust and connection to develop naturally. When we feel safe, we can be ourselves without worry.

Being Listened To
Having your thoughts and feelings heard without judgement

Knowing Who to Ask
Having trusted people to turn to when you need support

Knowing Routines
Understanding what will happen and when brings comfort



Talk with an adult: How does feeling safe help people focus and settle?

Belonging Can Change Over Time

Belonging is not fixed or permanent—it doesn't always stay the same.
Just as we grow and change, so too can our sense of where and with whom we belong.

People may feel belonging in different places or with different people at different times in their lives. Perhaps you felt you belonged with one group of friends last year, but this year you've connected with different people. Maybe you've moved house and had to find new places where you feel comfortable.

1. **New Situations**
   Starting somewhere new can feel unfamiliar at first
2. **Building Trust**
   Getting to know people and places takes time
3. **Growing Familiar**
   Repeated experiences help create comfort
4. **Feeling Settled**
   Gradually, belonging grows stronger

This change can happen gradually as trust and familiarity grow.
It's a natural part of life and growing up.

Talk with an adult: Why might belonging change as life changes?

Learning About Yourself

People learn about themselves through everyday moments and the things they do.

Understanding who you are isn't something that happens all at once. It develops gradually through experiences, both big and small.

Over time, these repeated moments help shape how people see themselves, what they enjoy, what matters to them, and what they're good at.



Conversations Talking with others helps you understand your own thoughts and feelings	**Interests** Discovering what you enjoy reveals important things about yourself
Routines Regular activities show what brings you comfort and joy	**Small Moments** Repeated experiences gradually build your understanding of yourself



Talk with an adult: How can everyday moments help people understand themselves better?

Shared Moments Build Connection

Belonging often grows through shared moments between people.
These don't have to be special occasions or extraordinary events. Often it's the simple, repeated experiences that matter most.



Spending Time Together

Being in each other's company, whether talking or simply being present



Familiar Routines

Regular activities that create predictability and comfort



Repeated Activities

Doing things together again and again builds shared history

These shared moments can help people feel noticed and connected. When someone remembers what you talked about last time, or when you look forward to doing something together, that's connection growing stronger.

Talk with an adult: Why do shared moments help people feel connected?

Staying Connected Over Time

Life brings changes, and people may not always stay in one place or with the same people.
Friends move away, families change, and circumstances shift.
However, this doesn't mean that belonging has to end or that connections must be lost.

Connections can be kept strong even when situations change. Belonging can remain and even grow, despite distance or time apart.

Messages

Texts, letters, or emails keep communication flowing

Visits

Spending time together when possible strengthens bonds

Shared Memories

Remembering good times together
Keeps connection alive

Ongoing Contact

Regular check-ins show people they're still important to you



Talk with an adult: How can people keep connections strong over time?

Respecting Different Experiences

Everyone's experience of belonging is different, and that's perfectly normal.
What helps one person feel they belong might be different from what helps another person. Where one person feels most comfortable might not be the same for someone else.

Respect Others

Recognise that everyone's feelings and experiences are valid

Avoid Assumptions

Don't assume you know how someone else feels or what they need

Value Your Own Experience

Your own feelings and experiences matter just as much



When we respect different experiences, we help people feel accepted for who they are.
This respect is an important part of helping everyone feel they belong.

Talk with an adult: Why is it important to respect different experiences?

Care, Connection and Belonging

You've explored many ideas about belonging, identity, and connection.
Now it's time to pause and think about what these ideas mean to you and the people in your life.

What Helps People Feel Accepted?

Think about the actions, words, and moments that make people feel they truly belong and are valued for who they are.

How Can People Help Others Feel Included?

Consider what you can do to help others feel welcome, safe, and connected in different spaces and situations.

Take your time with these thoughts. Share them with a trusted adult and listen to their ideas too.





You could say:

'Belonging can grow when...'

'People help others feel they belong by...'





Remember, belonging is something we can all help create for ourselves and others.