

# My Body, My Rules

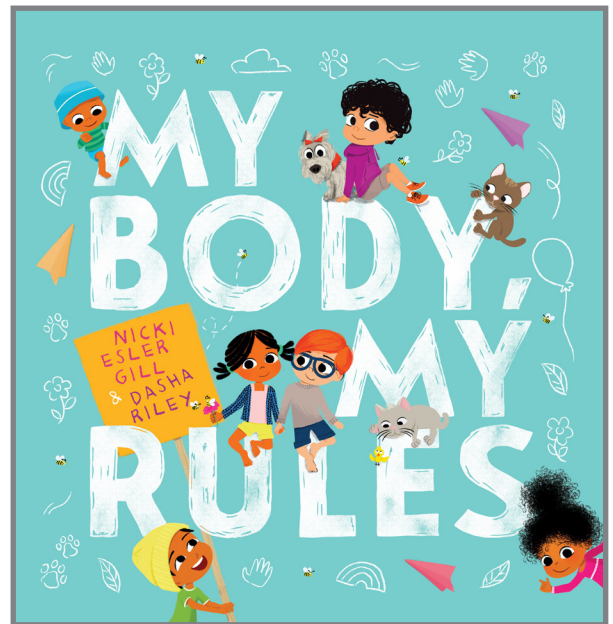
AUTHOR  
**NICKI ESLER GILL**

ILLUSTRATOR  
**DASHA RILEY**

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RECOMMENDED FOR: Lower Primary



## SYNOPSIS

*Have you been tickled or tackled before?  
And then decided that you want no more?*

*You can tell others how they play with you  
It's your body, so it's your rules too!*

A fun and empowering new picture book introducing young readers to consent and positive body boundaries.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Nicki Esler Gill writes books for children. She earned a Masters of Fine Arts in Creative Writing from New York University, where she also taught writing. She believes picture books are a special kind of magic. They inspire flights of fancy and snorts of laughter, facilitate precious bedtime rituals of closeness and connection, and engage readers in big conversations. Nicki is currently at work on a middle grade dystopia which counts Nick Cave and Margaret Atwood amongst its influences. She lives in Melbourne with her husband and three children.

## ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

Dasha Riley is an Australian artist, photographer, and illustrator.

Her images have been widely exhibited, including Getty Images Gallery, London, the Sony World Photography Awards 2016 (Second place National Awards, Australia), and the Murray Art Museum Albury, where three of her works were acquired into the museum's permanent collection.

Dasha has recently rekindled a love for illustration. Inspired by Disney's mid-century era, her focus is on children's book illustration and educational books.

## STUDY NOTES

- Before reading the story, as a class, discuss the book cover and title. Some things to include in your discussion could be:
  - What do you think the title My Body, My Rules means?
  - What can you see happening in the cover artwork?
  - Who do you think that this book is about?

- Who do you think that this book was written for? Why do you think this?
- After reading the back cover of the book, have your ideas about this book changed? Why/why not?
- As a class, discuss what the main message of this book is. Can you summarise it in a single sentence? In small groups, talk about what the most important messages in this book are, and make a poster sharing these messages. Illustrate your poster with artwork inspired by the artwork in the story, then hang your posters around the school for everyone to learn from.
- Have a three-legged race. Before your race, as a class, discuss what the policy should be if someone doesn't want to participate—reread the section of the book that specifically addresses this during your discussion to help you formulate an official policy. After your race, as a class, discuss the experience, and ask the winners of the race to share any tips and tricks with everyone else for running quickly. If they feel like it, some of the participants who struggled can share what they found challenging, and where they think they could improve next time.
- As a class, discuss the difference between welcome touching (like a hug from a friend or from someone that you love) and unwelcome touching (like being tickled when you don't want to be, or hugged when you aren't feeling like it). What are some things we can say or do that can let the other person know that we don't want to be touched? As a class, create a list of sensible and clear statements that we can use to let another person know not to touch us. Reread the book to help you get some ideas to start your list. In small groups or pairs, role-play to practise using these statements, and also practise asking someone else if it's okay to hug, kiss or tickle them.
- What are the two important things that everyone needs to do? In pairs, create an artwork showing these two things, one person illustrating the first, one illustrating the second. Caption your artwork with the important thing you need to do.
- In small groups, create a retelling of the key components of the story.
  - Draw eight equal sized boxes on one or two pieces of A4 paper (folding your pages into quarters works well for this part, or you can research how to create an eight paged zine from a single piece of folded and cut paper), then number each box from 1 to 8.
  - On a separate piece of paper write one sentence for each of eight important points or scenes that you remember from the story.
  - As a group discuss the order that your scenes/point should go in, and then number them from 1 to 8.
  - In your original boxes, write down the eight sentences in their appropriate boxes, then illustrate each sentence to create your retelling. Share your finished work with the class, and discuss the similarities and differences between the different retellings.
- In the story, some of the children were playing twirly whirlies, and having three-legged-races. What are some other games that you play which require you to work with a partner?
- As a class, discuss this and come up with a class list of games and activities that you know which require two or more people working together. Don't forget to include things where you have to take turns such as pushing each other on a swing!
  - Divide your list into two categories of activity —ones where you have to both be OK with touching each other (like a three-legged-race), and ones where you work together at a distance (like going on a see-saw, or playing catch).
  - Once you have two lists of games, talk about which hands-off activities someone might like to suggest playing instead, if they are not feeling comfortable with one of the ones that require touching.
  - In pairs or small groups, practise role-playing scenarios where you can use these sentences eg. Student 1: 'Do you want to do some twirly whirlies with me?' Student 2: 'How about we play handball instead? I'm not really feeling like spinning around right now.'

AUTHOR OF NOTES

**RAE CARLYLE**