



TEACHERS' RESOURCES

RECOMMENDED FOR

Preschool to lower primary
(ages 3–6; preschool to K)

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KEY CURRICULUM AREAS

- **Learning areas:** English, Visual Arts, Maths
- **General capabilities:** Literacy, Critical and creative thinking, Personal and social capability, Visual literacy

REASONS FOR STUDYING THIS BOOK

- To discuss new vocabulary, respond to texts and share feelings and thoughts about the events and characters in texts.
- To use and experiment with different materials, and create artworks to communicate ideas to an audience.

THEMES

- Families
- Siblings
- Sisters
- Brothers
- Babies
- Birthdays
- Growing up
- Pets
- Fun
- Imagination
- Size
- Measurement

PREPARED BY

Karen Blair and Penguin Random House
Australia

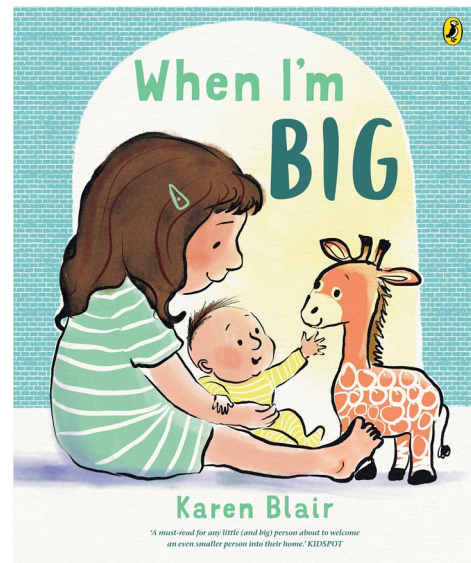
PUBLICATION DETAILS

ISBN: 9781761045813 (hardback)

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When I'm Big Karen Blair

'With its gorgeous illustrations, *When I'm Big* is a completely new and fun take on becoming a brother or sister. Karen Blair has cleverly used a classic case of children taking something adults say literally, as a tool to open up a conversation with your little one about what to expect. It's a must-read for any little (and big) person about to welcome an even smaller person into their home.' KIDSPOT

*Everyone keeps telling me
I'm going to be a big girl soon,
but I wonder . . .
Just how BIG will I be?*

Filled with humour and imagination, *When I'm Big* is a delightful, warm-hearted celebration of becoming a sibling and the perfect book for every every child who has experienced growing older and becoming a big brother or sister.

Plot summary:

In *When I'm Big* multi-award-winning picture book author and illustrator Karen Blair has created a delightfully fresh take on the classic and timeless topic of becoming a big brother or sister, simply and warmly told and inspired by Karen's own family's experiences. This gorgeous book for children perfectly captures the feelings of change and anticipation around growing up and the arrival of a new baby in a family and gives the idea an *Alice in Wonderland* twist.

Karen's work is reminiscent of picture book illustrator greats such as Helen Oxenbury. *When I'm Big* celebrates the excitement children have about being a big girl or boy and growing older and wondering what it all means. Karen depicts family dynamics and children with a beautifully observant eye that has wide appeal and authenticity.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Karen Blair grew up in Perth, Western Australia, where she spent a lot of time drawing and writing. She has always adored picture books and as a child would make her own at school and even in the holidays. Karen was very excited when she was awarded 3rd place in the CBCA Make Your Own Book Competition in Year 8. She was even *more* excited when the first book she illustrated, *With Nan* (by Tania Cox), was awarded Honour Book in the CBCA Book of the Year Awards.

Karen loves to draw characters that are young, old and in between, as well as the wonderful places and creatures that we encounter in Australia – in the bush, the sea, the outback, or at home. She has a background in painting landscapes and loves incorporating this into her illustrations. Karen lives in Fremantle with her husband, daughter and son, cheerful little dog and grumpy old cat. She works from her studio which looks over a garden that attracts lots of local birds.

Karen loves helping children learn new ways to bring their creative ideas to life through art and loves to create picture books that celebrate the joys and adventures of childhood. Karen is a multi-award-winning author and illustrator who has also been a primary art teacher.

Karen says:

When I was creating *When I'm Big* I was thinking about what the essence of becoming a big sister was for my daughter Alice and it was this really magical feeling that she never anticipated. It struck me that she probably doesn't know how much it brought out the best in her. I was inspired by several other books and events as I was writing.

The first influence on this story was the visit to Perth by the French Puppetry company Royale de Luxe in 2015 for the Perth Festival of Arts. My daughter Alice, then nearly 3, was absolutely captivated by the 9-metre tall Little Girl Giant puppet (as was most of the city); it was a really magical time in her life and I think she, and all of us, imagined how small we must have looked to that lovely, gentle, big girl. We all suspended our disbelief for that weekend as we gazed into her big

Photograph of Little Girl Giant puppet, Karen Blair 2015.



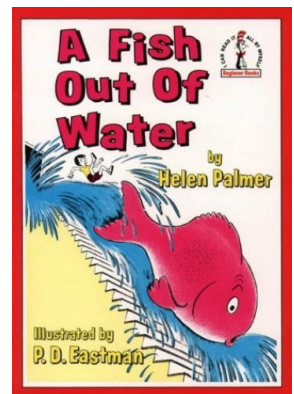
Photograph of Little Girl Giant puppet, Karen Blair 2015.

eyes and watched her go about her business in our city, we were doll or fairy-sized to these enormous characters.

A few books from my childhood influenced the idea of growing too big, as well. Firstly, and most obviously, was *Alice in Wonderland* growing so large she pops out of the building with her arms and legs.



And then as a kid one of my favourite books was Helen Palmer's *A Fish Out of Water*, in which a boy overfeeds his goldfish and it gets so big it doesn't fit anywhere except the local swimming pool. I loved the tension of something getting so out of hand and bursting into the absurd.



I've combined this idea of getting 'too big' with the imminent arrival of a new sibling, which is told only in the illustrations. Being a big girl in this story really means a big sister, a concept which, like parenthood, is abstract until reality hits. My daughter had a few worries about becoming a big sister at age 5 but by the time her little brother arrived she was ready and very excited (and by the way is the most amazing big sister).



Here are some of my initial sketches. I wanted to create a lively, loose and warm feel with an edge of dream-like imagining, since most of the story is illustrating the imaginings of the little girl. I used black ink, watercolour and gouache on paper.



The final artwork was created digitally to emulate this style almost exactly.



The look of the character doesn't change much from these initial sketches, and the swimming pool scene is very similar to the final version, but the others changed or didn't make it into the story.



PRE-READING QUESTIONS

1. Look at the front cover of the book. Read the title together.
Can you see what the title *When I'm Big* is referring to? What do you think the story will be about?
2. Read the blurb at the back of the book. What kind of things are you now expecting to see inside the book? What questions do you have?
3. Just inside the cover, before the title pages and the start of the story, are some illustrated pages. These are called 'endpapers'.

What do the endpapers in the front of the book show you? What do they add to what you've already guessed about the story?

When you've finished reading the book, try looking at the front and back endpapers together. Do they reflect what happens in the story?

KEY STUDY TOPICS

Maths – numeracy and measurement

1. How many characters are in this story? How many people?
How many animals? How many toys?
How many big things? How many little things?
How many big people? How many small people?

Positional Language

1. After reading *When I'm Big*, find all the words that describe size and make a list.
2. Think about siblings and their sizes. How tall are you compared to your brother(s) or sister(s)? To your friends?
3. Write a list of the activities of the main character and of the activities you participate in now and when you were little.
4. Draw a picture of the girl in the story in different positions and places that feature in the story. Experiment with her size, and describe her position and size, as well as her appearance.

Extension

1. Children could write a story about their brother or sister. Are they bigger than them? Or smaller? If they're smaller, do they remember when they were a baby? What was it like meeting them for the first time? What would they tell other kids expecting a new brother or sister?
2. Children could write a story with themselves and a pet changing sizes.
3. Children could draw their home with all of the people and objects that are in it.

Art and craft activities

Build a model of a city

Using boxes and recycled elements build a city skyline that can be painted, so children can play at being a 'big girl or boy' in a literal sense.

Draw a house

Who is in your house?

Draw a house and let children decide who is in their house.

Their family? Their pets? Their friends? A big sister or brother? A little sister or brother? A new sibling? Or some or all of the above?

Children can draw everything inside the house and colour the drawing. Draw a garden too! Who is in the garden? Are there any animals? Any toys?

Sibling or friend's sibling portrait

Draw a picture of your sibling or a friend. Draw them at different ages and sizes, including imagining how they will be in the future. What will they be like? What do you think they will enjoy?

Animal collage

Discuss animals and their different sizes. Create artwork of them using cut pieces of coloured paper. Use pop sticks or paper straws, as well as pieces of mixed collage paper for decorations.



FURTHER READING FROM PENGUIN RANDOM HOUSE AUSTRALIA



Train Party
by Karen Blair

Why this story? A delightful rhyming picture book that captures all the fun of a birthday at a miniature railway park.

Join in all the fun of a preschooler's train-themed party at a miniature railway park.

**Red, blue and green,
yellow and black.
Here come the trains!
Clickety-clack.**

All aboard the train party!

[Teachers' resources available.](#)



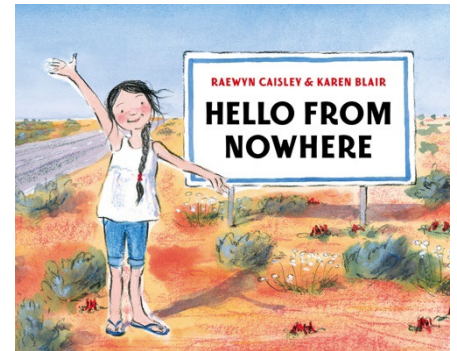
How Big is Too Small?
by Jane Godwin
and Andy Joyner

Why this story? A delightful, rollicking story that explores concepts of big and small from these award-winning creators.

**My brother was making a game
with a ball,
Bouncing and throwing up high
on a wall,
When I asked to join in, he
straightened up tall.
And I knew what he'd say,
he said, 'You're too small.'**

Poor Sam! He always gets left out of his big brother's games. But one day when the big boys leave him out again, Sam gets to thinking . . . How big is too small?

[Teachers' resources available.](#)



Hello from Nowhere
by Raewyn Caisley and
Karen Blair

Why this story? A celebration of the Australian outback and the special connections between grandparents and grandchildren, illustrated by award-winning illustrator and the creator of *When I'm Big*, Karen Blair.

Eve thought that living in the middle of nowhere was better than living anywhere else in the world . . . Only one thing made Eve sad. She hadn't seen Nan since they left the city long ago.

Eve lives in a roadhouse in the middle of the Nullarbor and when her Nan visits one day, Eve shows her all the things that are special about where she lives.

[Teachers' resources available.](#)



ORDER FORM

TITLE	AUTHOR	ISBN	SCHOOL YEAR	RRP	QTY	TOTAL
When I'm Big	Karen Blair	9781761045813	Pre-K	\$19.99		
Train Party	Karen Blair	9781760899578	Pre-K	\$19.99		
How Big is Too Small?	Jane Godwin and Andy Joyner	9780143784449	Pre-1	\$16.99		
Me and You	Deborah Kelly and Karen Blair	9780670079247	Pre-K	\$24.99		
Hello from Nowhere	Raewyn Caisley and Karen Blair	9780670075003	Pre-K	\$24.99		
Something Wonderful	Raewyn Caisley and Karen Blair	9780670078455	Pre-K	\$24.99		
TOTAL						

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