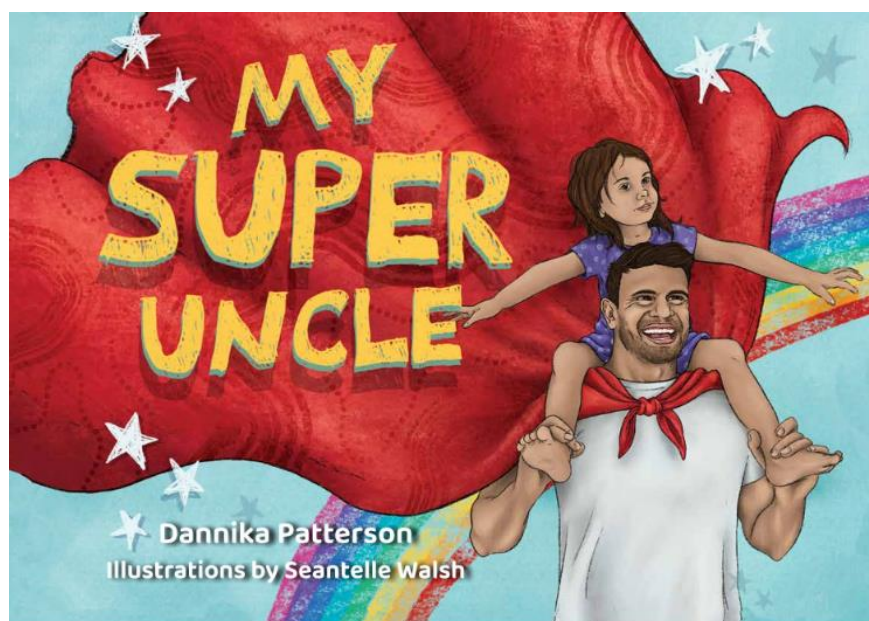


TEACHING NOTES: *My Super Uncle*

Story by: Dannika Patterson

Illustrations by: Seantelle Walsh

Published by: Ford Street Publishing



SUMMARY

My Super Uncle is a picture book that celebrates families whose structure extends beyond the nuclear unit. This story honours the importance of role models and chosen family in a child's life - lighthouse figures who provide guidance, support and safety to children as they grow.

Written in playful rhyme, the story is told through the lens of a child who loves her chosen uncle so much, she suspects he has superpowers. *My Super Uncle* is an age-appropriate conversation-starter about diversity, culture and how different kinds of families can be made, serving as an accessible resource for parents, teachers, counsellors and wellbeing professionals.

BOOK BLURB

*My friends all love my uncle
when he jokes and fools around.
To me, he's super special
'cause he never lets me down.
I don't need x-ray vision,
to see the way he cares.
I don't need super senses,
to know he'll be right there.*

A heartwarming celebration of family bonds and everyday heroes.

KEY CONCEPTS

- ✓ Family/Chosen Family
- ✓ Lighthouse/Significant figures/Role models
- ✓ Diversity/Diverse Families/Diverse Culture
- ✓ Inclusion
- ✓ Community
- ✓ Respect
- ✓ Kindness
- ✓ Love
- ✓ LGBTQIA+

CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS

- ✓ English
- ✓ Art
- ✓ HASS
- ✓ Critical and Creative Thinking
- ✓ Personal and Social Development

BEFORE READING

- Looking at the cover, invite students' observations. First impressions will likely include symbolic elements of the red cape, the rainbow and stars. Prompts:
 - ✓ *Who else might wear a red cape? Why?*
 - ✓ *What can rainbows signify? Likewise, stars.*
 - ✓ *What relationship (to a child) is an uncle, usually?*
- Brainstorm commonly used family relationship words/titles and collate on the class learning wall *e.g. mother, father, sister, brother, aunt, grandmother, uncle, etc.*
- Expand on this brainstorming by generating and listing as many variations/interpretations of 'family' as possible: *e.g. step-father/mother/siblings, single parent, same-sex parents, adopted, foster, First Nations kinship carers, grandparent carers/guardians, older sibling carer/guardians, multi-generational, friends who are like family, etc.*
 - ✓ Emphasise that 'family' takes many different forms. The depth and breadth of such conversation will need to be guided by your setting and school ethos.
 - ✓ If appropriate, have students bring in a favourite family photo for the learning wall or class display. They could annotate or caption their own photo for this gallery.
- Establish the class learning wall and organise a bulk loan of books of other Dannika Patterson titles as well as other books, both fiction and non-fiction, about families (see list of suggested titles in 'Related Resources').

DURING READING

- What do students first notice about the text? They will likely suggest rhyme.
 - ✓ Identify the rhyming pairs and add to the learning wall.
 - ✓ Build rhyming families to go with each pair.

- Readers will likely also notice a lot of rainbows/rainbow colours used in the illustrations. Discuss the possible reason/s for this inclusion.
- Readers should also notice the First Nations artwork/designs on Uncle's clothing and in other illustrations. This can invite inference, prediction and discussion.
- Expand with a discussion on *diversity*: what it means, what it looks like, how we can be empathic and accepting of diverse peoples.
- How many of the activities pictured in the book have the students themselves done *e.g. playing soccer, creating costumes, dressing up, playing cards*? Write a list of all those they identify in the text/illustrations.
- Spend some time on the double page spreads (pp 13-16).
What do readers now know about the Uncle character?
Do they think the child is also First Nations?
Do all First Nations people look alike i.e. skin colour, facial features, hair etc.?
Does Uncle look like the rest of his family? (p. 18)

AFTER READING LITERACY ACTIVITY

- **Word Detectives:** Be Word Detectives and find all the adjective groups that describe or indicate the ways in which the character of Uncle in the book is a *super* uncle. Construct a word wall of positive descriptive words/phrases. Here are some examples:

amazing	crazy strong
winner	levitate
fly	special
magic	x-ray vision

WRITING ACTIVITIES

- **Creative Writing:** Students write a recount of a family experience they have enjoyed such as a holiday, day at the beach or theme park.
- **Write & Illustrate:** Have students choose an activity they do with a favourite relative, write about it and illustrate it. Older readers might try their hand at rhyming text. Some students may enjoy the challenge of a graphic or comic style layout. Encourage creative expression via both text and images, challenging students to include one or more details in their illustration that does *not* appear in the text – e.g. *a pet, a favourite food item, a surprise event in the background, etc.*
- **Looking to the future:** Look at pages 27/28. How does the illustration indicate the child is imagining the future? Invite students to write and illustrate what they imagine they might be doing as they grow up and who would be supporting them in this.

STORY- INSPIRED ACTIVITIES

- **Pavement Summaries:** Use pavement chalk and invite children to work in pairs to create 'one-pager' style summaries of the book.
- **Create a Family/VIP tree:** [[free useful templates](#) – non-traditional included]. Exercise caution with children with sensitive backgrounds. It may need to be simply a diagram of family relationships rather than personal. This can be widened to a community level to include a wider array of important and supportive figures in a student's life such as coaches, neighbours, teachers etc. Resources such as this [YouTube clip](#) can be useful.
- **Magic Potion:** What kind of 'magic potion' might Uncle be making in the story? Invite a local Elder or Knowledge holder to talk about bush medicine and/or traditional paint/mark making. Alternatively, seek out resources online.
 - ✓ Extension: what is Uncle using (i.e. mortar and pestle). *Whose family has one at home?* These objects have a long history and have been used by many different cultures. Do

some class research on this and make a simple information chart or presentation.

- **Land:** In/on which traditional Country are students learning and living? How is this land acknowledged in your school or setting? Consult local First Nations groups or Knowledge Holders where possible and learn some words or a song in local language.
- **Cape-making (upcycled):** Invite students to bring in an old pillowcase, towel, tea towel or other scrap fabric from home. Using a mix of materials (permanent markers, watercolour paints, fabric adhesives, natural dyes like ochre) invite them to create designs for their very own superhero cape that represents who they are. Follow with an informal show and share for students who would like to explain the meaning behind their designs, mark-making, colour choices, symbols, etc.
- **Dress-up:** Use blank people templates to create new dress-up ideas for the main characters of the story. Also/alternatively, hold a dress-up day, inviting students to dress up as their favourite family member, or a super hero, etc.
- **Class Family Day:** Have a class family day which could be an opportunity to showcase story-inspired work created by the students, or just a fun day with a picnic lunch and activities such as those in the book. Students may invite *any* member of their family or chosen family to attend.
- **Science:** Incorporate science topics such as Living Things:
 - ✓ Investigate living things and the environment
 - ✓ Look for patterns that occur in life cycles of living things
 - ✓ Living things reproduce
 - ✓ Living things grow, change and have offspring similar to themselves

ABOUT THE BOOK

Title: My Super Uncle

Publisher: Ford St Publishing

Publication Date: 1 March 2026

ISBN: 978-1-922696-54-0

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dannika Patterson has written numerous books for children that are used widely as resources in homes and schools, helping to open relatable conversations about important topics. Her books encourage children to be explorers of the world outside and to feel good about themselves on the inside. Dannika shares her books and story-driven workshops at schools, libraries and festivals, engaging children of all ages in a warm, joyful way. *My Super Uncle* is Dannika Patterson's 19th published children's book. Her 20th book (*Aidan Versus the Ocean*, Wombat Books) is an ocean adventure story that will be released in July this year, and will mark her debut novel for readers aged 10-12.

A NOTE FROM THE AUTHOR ABOUT THIS BOOK

“I was first inspired to write this story based on the true chosen family story of one of my best friends since childhood. When she started her family, I noticed that there weren't too many books that represented families like the one she was creating. I wrote this story when her daughter, Tully, was born and bringing this story to life in picture book form over a span of almost 5 years has been a true labour of love. This book is dedicated to the real-life Tully, but it is for *every* child.

It felt important to me to write this story on both a personal level and with a broader world view, because I believe that storytelling is one of the most effective ways humans have to increase understanding, spread immunity to prejudice and help decrease negative behaviours, especially towards marginalised peoples.

If someone closes a book and walks through the rest of their life with even a slightly greater capacity to understand, empathise, accept or celebrate the full humanity of those they perceive as different to them in some way, there's power in that story.

My sincere hope in writing *My Super Uncle* is that it will speak to the hearts of children and families of all kinds, helping them feel seen, as well as to recognise the beautifully diverse family units of their friends and peers in the pages, too.

There is always, *always* room – on bookshelves and in life - for more stories of love, acceptance and inclusion.”



ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

Seantelle Walsh is a contemporary Noongar artist, born and raised in Boorloo, Perth (Whadjuk Country). Through her mother, Seantelle is connected to the Perenjori Balardong area and the Wilman Tribe from Gnaala Kala Boodja region. Her diverse practice involves studio-based paintings, digital work, murals and public art.

DID YOU KNOW?

There are a number of significant details included in the pages of this book that honour the real-life family who inspired this story.

These are just a couple of examples. You might discover more on close inspection:

- **Jersey #9:** The #9 jersey that the character of Tully wears in this book is a nod to one of the real-life mums who inspired this story, ex-Matilda player, Sarah Walsh, who wore #9 when she played for Australia.
- **Dreaming** (p14): The mountain range in the background of the Dreaming spread represents Peak Range National Park to honour Barada Barna Country - the Country of real-life Super Uncle Casey.

RELATED RESOURCES

Other Books written by Dannika Patterson

- 2018 Picture Book: Jacaranda Magic (Australia)
- 2019 Picture Book: My Tribe (International)
- 2019 Poetry Collection: SeaSpray17: Ocean Photography & Haiku Poetry (Aust)
- 2019 Graphic Novel: Project Volcano (Pacific Island Region)
- 2019 Graphic Novel: Between the Cracks (International)
- 2020 Picture Book: Scribbly Gum Secrets (Australia)
- 2020 Picture Book: Day & Night - DMind Educational Publishing (Hong Kong)
- 2020 Picture Book: Giving - DMind Educational Publishing (Hong Kong)
- 2020 Picture Book: Beach Kindy (Australia)
- 2020 Early Reader: A Cyclone Called Celia (Pacific Island Region)
- 2021 Picture Book: Sera, The Shell & The Storm (A Save The Children Int'l Project)
- 2022 Early Reader: Look At That! (Library for All - Solomon Islands Series)
- 2023: The Last Library (The School Magazine, Department of Education NSW)
- 2023 Picture Book: Hedgehog the Wonder Dog (Australia)
- 2023 Picture Book: Heavy (Australia)
- 2024 Picture Books: Zoom (Australia)
- 2024 Picture Book: The Silverback's Song (Australia)
- 2024 Picture Book: The Big Book of Rights (Australia)
- 2025: CRQ Colour & Learn Activity Book (Australia)
- 2026 Middle Grade Novel: Aidan Versus the Ocean (July 2026)

Other Books illustrated by Seantelle Walsh

- Our Mob

Books About Families

- A Family is a Family is a Family – Sara O'Leary/Qin Leng

- Family Tree - Josh Pyke/Ronojoy Ghosh
- What Makes a Family? – Molly Potter/Sarah Jennings
- Making A Baby: An Inclusive Guide to How Every Family Begins – Rachel Greener/Clare Owen
- We Are Family – Patricia Hegarty/Ryan Wheatcroft
- Is That Your Mama? – Patrice Lawrence/Diane Ewen
- Family Forest - Kim Kane and Lucy Masciullo
- Abbie’s True Colours - Abbie Jane with Claire Thompson/Elliott Bulpett
- Guess How I Was Born? – Suzanne Gurvey/Carolyn Daly

Websites

- [Bush Medijina](#)
- [Talking to Children About Diverse Families](#)
- [Family diversity: How to teach children](#)
- [The Rainbow Shoelace Project](#)
- [Yarrabil: First Nations Songs](#)
- [10 Ways to Rethink the Family Tree Project – And Be More Inclusive to All Students!](#)

CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS

English
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • navigate, read and view learning area texts • listen and respond to learning area texts • interpret and analyse learning area texts • compose spoken, written, visual and multimodal learning area texts • use language to interact with others • deliver presentations.

Critical and Creative Thinking

HASS:

- pose questions
- interpret the past
- identify and clarify information and ideas
- organise and process information.

ART:

- making and responding to artworks
- draw on their curiosity, imagination and thinking skills
- express their ideas, concepts, thoughts and feelings creatively
- consider and analyse the motivations, intentions, factors and biases when responding to artwork

Personal and Social Capability

- recognise emotions
- appreciate diverse perspectives
- communicate effectively
- work collaboratively
- make decisions
- identify and assess personal strengths, interests and challenges

BOOK REVIEWS



MY SUPER UNCLE
Dannika Patterson & Seantelle Walsh

First Review: an excerpt

"A charming picture book ...
While the book's grounding in First Nations heritage and culture makes it especially resonant for Australian children, its celebration of queer families and being an everyday hero has universal appeal.

It will be a useful tool for families and educators wanting to foster inclusivity and acceptance."

Books + Publishing

Read the full review at Books+Publishing

AUTHOR VISITS & WORKSHOPS

Dannika Patterson loves visiting schools, kindergartens and libraries to present author talks, story time sessions, and curriculum-linked workshops using her books as springboards for inspiration and units of enquiry. Schools can choose from a pre-developed range of curriculum-linked workshops focussed on areas like science, creative writing, etc, or work with Dannika to create a custom session to support specific learning goals or community engagement.



Visit dannikapatterson.com for details
or get in touch via [Creative Net Speakers Agency](#)
or [Speakers Ink](#).