

# A Handful of Unique Children

**Pillar: Positive Social Environments**

**Division I**

**Grade Levels: ECS – Grade 2**

**Core Curriculum Connections: Social Studies and Language Arts**

## I. Rationale:

*The Berenstain Bears* is an educational children’s program that promotes socio-emotional competence through helping children navigate the complex developmental issues of their personal and social lives. Each episode features at least one socio-emotional issue (such as peer pressure, diversity, fear, or friendship). Resolution of these conflicts provides clear payoffs for both the series characters—and viewers at home. Social and emotional competence go hand-in-hand for young children as they learn and grow from their expanding web of relationships and interactions. To support their socio-emotional development, kids need access to people and situations that model: effective behavior, healthy expression of emotions, and positive social interactions. To experience these concepts first-hand, children need scenarios in which they can think about and experiment with their own ways of dealing with everyday life challenges.

This lesson explores the concepts of individuality, diversity, and peer pressure. In the episode, “*The In Crowd*”, a fashionable, new bear cub convinces Sister and all her friends that they should think, dress and act alike. Sister quickly realizes that, while fads are fun, being true to yourself is more important.

## II. Activity Objectives:

*The students will:*

- listen to a story about individuality and peer pressure.
- view the accompanying Berenstain Bears episode, "The In Crowd".
- discuss peer pressure and individuality.
- make hand trace pictures and identify three things that make them unique.
- compare and contrast the differences and similarities between one another.

## III. Curriculum Outcomes:

Language Arts	Social Studies
<p><b>1.2 Clarify and Extend</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Consider others’ ideas</li> <li>- Combine ideas</li> <li>- Extend understanding</li> </ul>	<p><b>K.2 I Belong</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>K.2.1 value how personal stories express what it means to belong</li> <li>K.2.2 value and respect significant people in their lives</li> <li>K.2.3 appreciate how their participation in their communities affects their sense of belonging</li> <li>K.2.4 examine the characteristics and interests that bring</li> </ul>

	K.2.5 examine ways in which people create a climate of cooperation by exploring and reflecting upon people together in groups
<b>2.1 Use Strategies and Cues</b> - Use prior knowledge - Use comprehension strategies	<b>1.1 My World: Home, School, and Community</b>
<b>2.2 Respond to Texts</b> - Experience various texts - Construct meaning from texts	1.1.1 -value self and others as unique individuals in relation to their world
<b>2.3 Understand Forms, Elements and Techniques</b> - Understand forms and genres - Understand techniques and elements	1.S.5 demonstrate skills of cooperation, conflict resolution and consensus building
<b>2.4 Create Original Text</b> - Generate ideas - Elaborate on the expression of ideas - Structure texts	1.S.6 develop age-appropriate behaviour for social involvement as responsible citizens contributing to their community
<b>3.1 Plan and Focus</b> - Focus attention	1.S.8 demonstrate skills of oral, written and visual literacy
<b>3.3 Organize, Record and Evaluate</b> - Organize information	1.S.9 develop skills of media literacy
<b>3.4 Share and Review</b> - Share ideas and information	
<b>4.1 Enhance and Improve</b> - Expand knowledge of language - Enhance artistry	
<b>4.3 Present and Share</b> - Present information - Enhance presentation - Use effective oral and visual communication - Demonstrate attentive listening and viewing	
<b>5.1 Respect Others and Strengthen Community</b> - Appreciate diversity - Celebrate accomplishments and events	

### III. Materials:

- book about individuality and peer pressure, wall space or display chart, marker, stapler or tape, white paper, colored construction paper, crayons, writing utensils, scissors, glue, and a copy of the episode, "The In Crowd".

### Suggested Reading Home Connections:

"A Bad Case of the Stripes" by David Shannon  
"The Practically Perfect Pajamas" by Erik Brooks  
"Mr. Pine's Purple House" by Leonard P. Kessler  
"Odd Velvet" by Mary E. Whitcomb

#### **IV. Procedure:**

1. Read a book to children about individuality and peer pressure and view the episode, "The In Crowd."
2. Discuss peer pressure with them: Ask if they've ever been pressured into doing or saying or wearing something that they didn't want to. What happened? How did they handle it? What would they do if someone tried to pressure them into doing something?
3. Explain that one reason not to let someone talk you into doing something their way, is that we're all different, and that's okay. If we weren't all different, we wouldn't get to learn from each other! Ask students if they think we all need to be the same to get along. Why or why not? Ask what it would be like if everyone were the same: thought the same way, wore the same clothes and hair styles, had the same skin color, etc.
4. Have students make hand-pictures by tracing an outline of their hand onto white paper, cutting it out, and pasting it toward the top of a piece of colored construction paper.
5. After this is done, ask children to write their name at the top of the page. Then, underneath their hand-print, they should either write or draw three things that make them unique. (Explain the concept of "unique" as necessary.) Offer suggestions such as a special interest, skill, hobby or talent, etc.
6. Staple or tape these onto the wall or display chart. Then encourage individual students to discuss what they wrote and/or drew as making them special. Allow children to examine the display and look for similarities and differences between classmates' hands, interests, and unique qualities, etc.

#### **V. Assessment Ideas:**

- Orally assess students' understanding of the concepts presented in this lesson by asking them to describe what they wrote or drew about (chosen interests, skills, and hobbies, and talents), checking that they understand the importance of uniqueness and have developed an appreciation for the differences of their classmates.
- A rubric that evaluates their ability to verbally express their comprehension of the concepts in this lesson would be useful.

#### **VI. Source:**

- lesson adapted from the PBS.org web site.



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