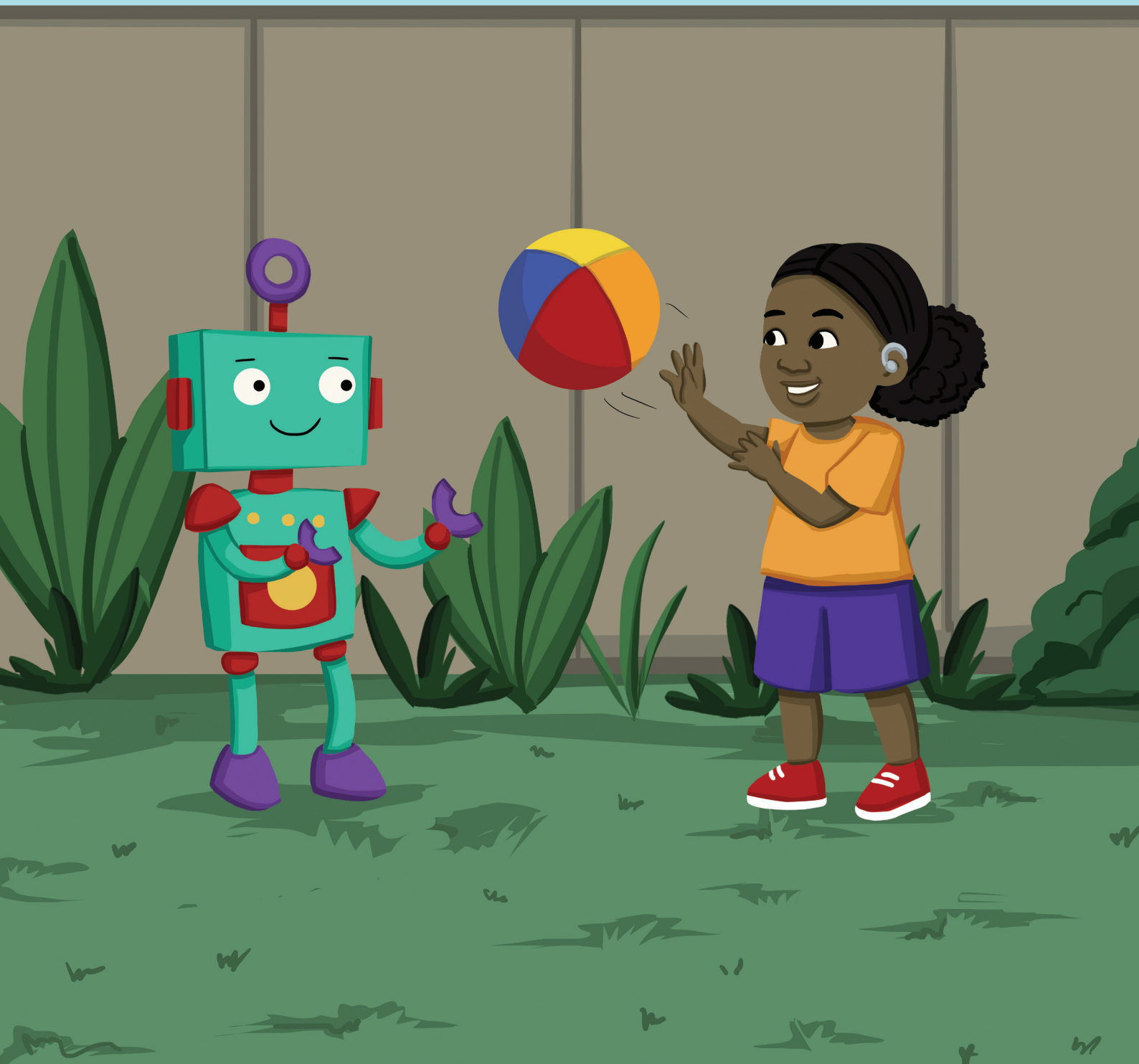


**Will you be  
my friend?**



# Making stories fun!


## Tips for reading books with young children


Children aged 3–5 years will enjoy this story.


National Curriculum Framework Birth to 4 years (NCF) levels:


Advancing further and Towards Grade R

★ **Children love stories! They build important language skills when we read with them, especially when it is fun.** Involve the children when you read, use languages that they know, and talk about the stories together. Here are ideas to make storytime fun for the children ... and for you!

 **Get ready:** Include time for a story every day. You can read the same book many times! Choose a story, or let the children choose a favourite. Sit together and hold the book so that everyone can see the pictures.

 **Before** you read, introduce the story with the title. Show the front cover and read the story description on the back. Show the first few pages. Ask: Who do you see? What is happening?

 **During** the story, read with expression and use different voices to keep the children interested. Remember to show the pictures. Ask: Can you find Robot? How do you think Lesedi feels? Why does Robot keep disappearing? How does he feel?

 **After** the story, discuss the book. Ask: What did you like about the story? Extend the learning with play-based activities:

**Role play:** Let the children take turns pretending to be Lesedi or Robot. The children who are Robot hide inside the classroom or outside. The children who are Lesedi must call to and find Robot.

**Sharing feelings:** Children can draw and describe their feelings when they play with friends. Do they ever feel shy?

✔ **Let the children use the books.** Children need time to discover the books for themselves. Keep the books in a reading corner. Make it comfortable with a carpet and cushions. Encourage children to look at the books during free-play time.

Sharing books supports the **three themes of the NCF**: (1) I am a competent person, (2) My learning and development is important, and (3) I need strong connections with adults.

Books and reading build children's skills in **all six of the Early Learning and Development Areas (ELDAs)**: (1) Well-being, (2) Identity and belonging, (3) Communication, (4) Exploring mathematics, (5) Creativity, and (6) Knowledge and understanding of the world.

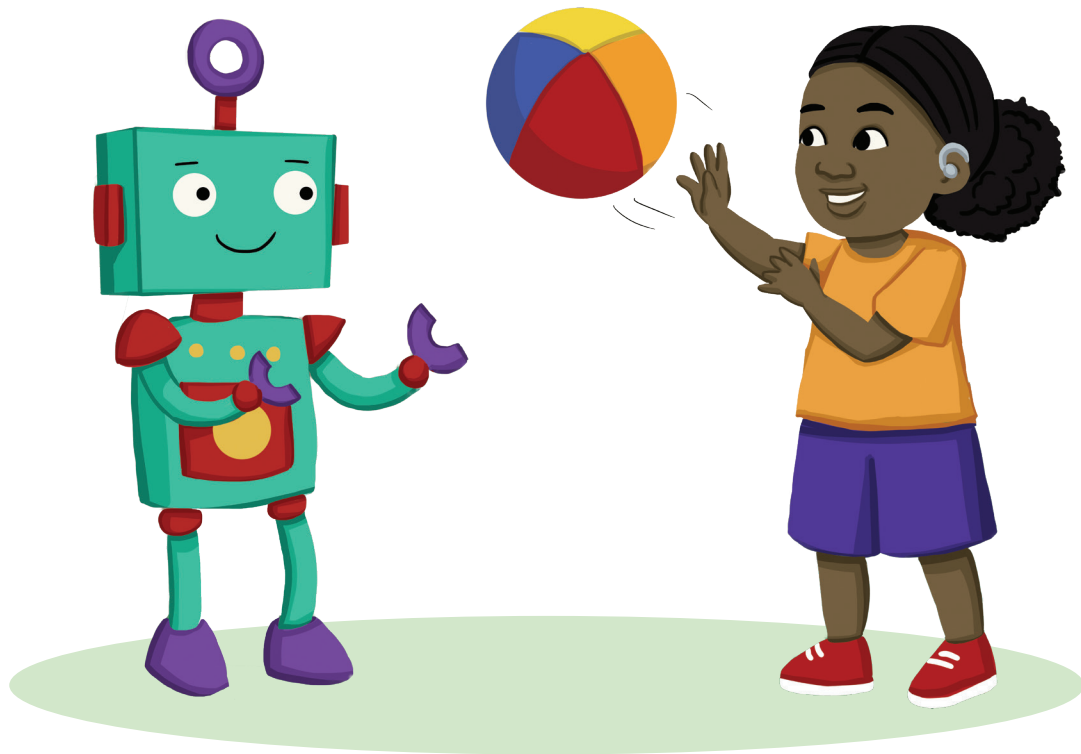
**This story aligns with early learning themes:**

Feelings and emotions

All about me

Robots and rockets

**Will you be**



**my friend?**



One day Lesedi looked out her window and saw someone outside. He looked like a good friend to play with.

“I see you, Robot! Do you want to play?” she shouted through the window. “Wait there. I’m on my way!”

Lesedi rushed out into the garden.

“Where have you gone, Robot? I can’t see you,” she called, looking for him near the tree.

“I am here ... behind the bushes,” whispered Robot nervously. He had never played with a human before and he was feeling a bit shy.







Lesedi heard his whisper and turned to look for Robot behind the bushes. But he wasn't there!

"Where have you gone, Robot? I can't see you here," said Lesedi gently. She wondered why Robot kept hiding from her.

"I am here ... in the wheelbarrow," whispered Robot a little louder than before. Lesedi seemed to be a friendly human.

Lesedi looked in the wheelbarrow, but Robot wasn't there.

"Where *have* you gone, Robot? I just can't find you anywhere," she said in her gentlest voice.

"I am here ... hiding under the leaves," said Robot a little more boldly than before. Lesedi's kind voice made him feel a bit braver.





Lesedi looked in the leaves. She couldn't find Robot there either.

“Please tell me where you are, Robot, and don't be afraid. I just want to be your friend,” said Lesedi in her very gentlest voice.

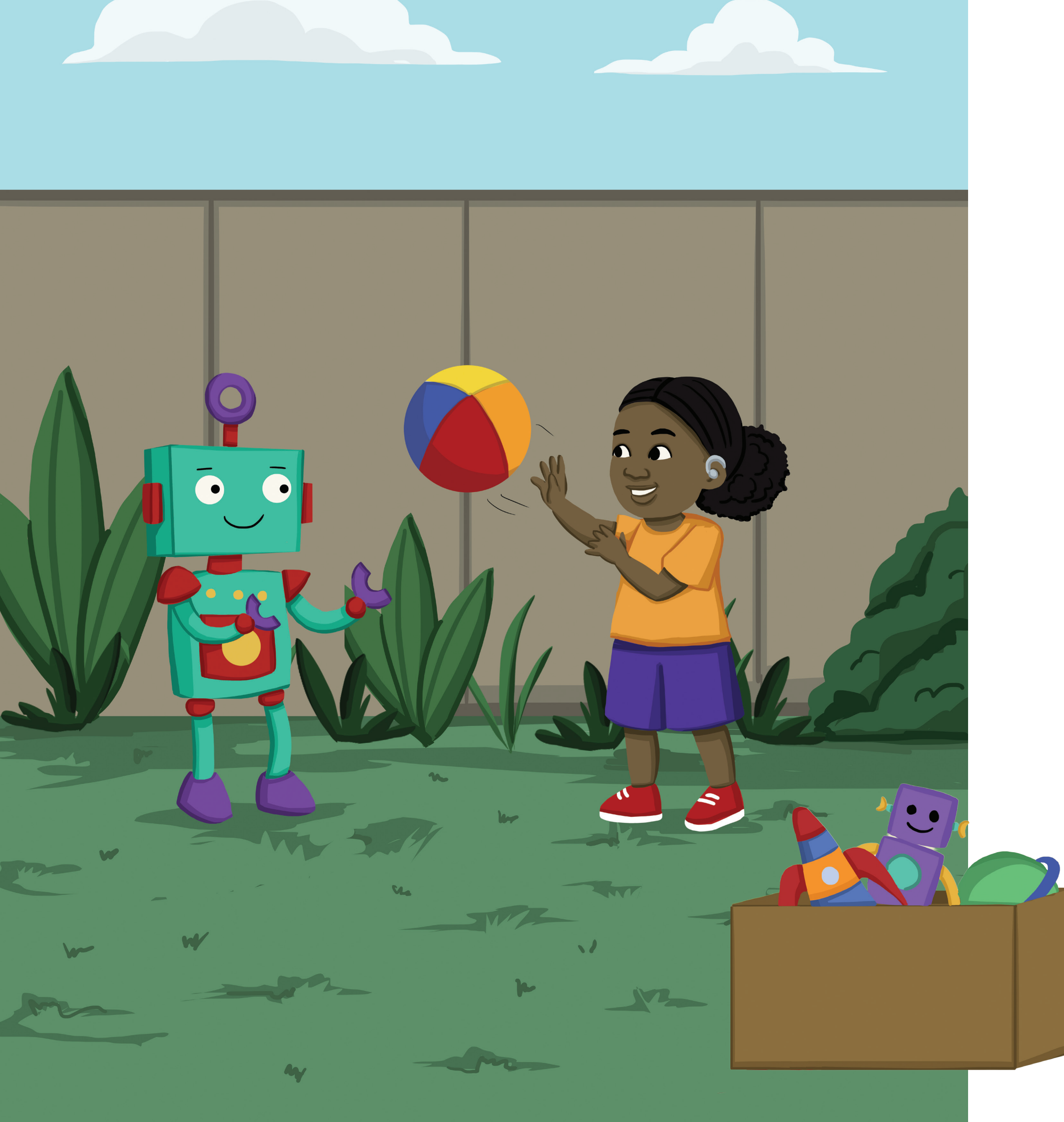


“Look up, Lesedi! I am up here on the roof!” called Robot, who wasn’t feeling shy anymore.

Lesedi looked up.

“There you are! At last, I’ve found you! *Will* you be my friend, Robot?” asked Lesedi beaming.





“Oooh, yes please! You’re my very first human friend!” smiled Robot.

And Robot and Lesedi played happily together all afternoon.

## Will you be my friend?

Story development by Book Dash,  
with Shelley O'Carroll and Arabella Koopman

Additional illustrative elements sourced from  
Vecteezy ([www.vecteezy.com](http://www.vecteezy.com))

Design by Magenta Media

Proofreading by Ilse von Zeuner

ISBN: 978-1-4315-4024-2

This storybook was developed by the  
Department of Basic Education (DBE), in  
partnership with United Nations Children's  
Fund (UNICEF) and Book Dash to increase  
access to quality reading materials and  
encourage reading for joy with children  
from birth to five years.

© DBE and UNICEF, Pretoria, 2025

The original story "Lesedi and Robot play  
hide and seek" was first published in *Big  
Book 2: Early Learning and Development  
from the Start (NCF-LTSM for 2- to 3-year-old  
children)*, DBE and UNICEF, 2024.

Storyline by E!SH Production Services

Illustrations by Tanika Cronje

### Get more books

You can find this book, as well as  
other books in the *Stories for Joy*  
series along with materials to support  
emergent literacy and the National  
Curriculum Framework for  
Children from Birth to Four,  
at [www.ecdinfohub.org](http://www.ecdinfohub.org).



## The licence of this book allows you to:

- ✓ **Print out or photocopy:** You **may**  
print out or photocopy as many copies  
of this book as you like, on your own  
printer or at a print shop. For "How to  
print", see [www.ecdinfohub.org](http://www.ecdinfohub.org).
- ✓ **Translate, change, adapt or quote:**  
You **may** translate, adapt or make  
changes to this book. You **may** also  
quote or use extracts from it. You must  
credit the creators of this book.
- ✗ **Sell:** This book is free. You **may not** use  
it commercially or charge anyone to  
use it.

**How to credit this book:** *Will you be my  
friend?, Early Learning and Development  
from the Start: Stories for Joy* series,  
Department of Basic Education,  
Pretoria, 2025.

Department of Basic Education  
222 Struben Street, Pretoria, 0002  
Private Bag X895, Pretoria, 0001

Telephone: 012 357 3000

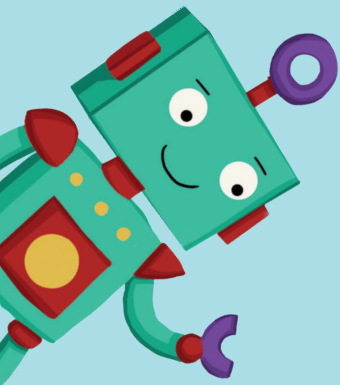
Fax: 012 323 0601

Email: [ecd@dbe.gov.za](mailto:ecd@dbe.gov.za)

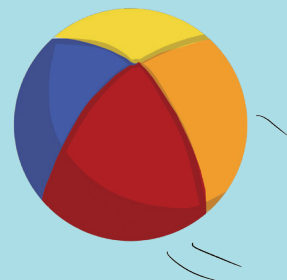
Website: [www.education.gov.za](http://www.education.gov.za)







One day, Lesedi sees something in her garden. It's Robot! He looks like he could be a great new friend to play with, but he keeps disappearing. Lesedi looks everywhere. Where will she find him?



basic education

Department:  
Basic Education  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

unicef   
for every child

English



9 781431 540242