

A Choose to Read Ohio Toolkit

Use this toolkit to plan library programs as well as activities for family time, day care, or the classroom.

Meet Rukhsanna Guidroz and Dinara Mirtalipova! They collaborated to bring us *Leila in Saffron*, a celebration of family and of being yourself.

Explore fun activities that align with Ohio's Learning Standards for kindergarten through grade 3.

Leila in Saffron

By Rukhsanna Guidroz (author)
and Dinara Mirtalipova (illustrator)



About the Book

Sometimes I'm not sure if I like being me.

When Leila looks in the mirror, she doesn't know if she likes what she sees. But when her grandmother tells her the saffron beads on her scarf suit her, she feels a tiny bit better. So, Leila spends the rest of their family dinner night on the lookout for other parts of her she does like.

Salaam Reads/Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers 2019. ISBN 9781534425644.

Ages 4-8.

Leveled Reading: AR Points: 0.5. ATOS Book Level 3.0. 550 Lexile.

simonandschuster.com/books/Leila-in-Saffron

Available as an ebook through the Ohio Digital Library: ohiodigitallibrary.com



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Get Ready To Read!

Encouraging early literacy skill-building in young children.

Many of the activities in this toolkit incorporate **five early literacy practices**, everyday activities that help children get ready to read. These practices are:

Reading - Writing -
Talking - Singing - Playing

Reading to and with children is the most effective way to support reading readiness. Reading aloud develops comprehension and vocabulary, builds familiarity and comfort with books, and is fun for adult and child.

Writing (or drawing and scribbling) helps children learn about print, letters, and vocabulary, and supports fine motor skills.

Talking helps children learn oral language—a critical early literacy skill—and increases vocabulary and comprehension.

Singing slows language down so children can hear the different sounds that make up words, and helps develop vocabulary and phonological awareness.

Playing teaches children to think symbolically, practice self-expression, and put thoughts into words.

All of these practices lead to children being ready to learn how to read when they begin school.

Parents, teachers, and librarians can share these practices with children at home, in the classroom, or at the library. For more information, visit ohreadytoread.org.



Author photo and biographical information courtesy Simon & Schuster and Rukhsanna Guidroz; used with permission.

About the Author

Rukhsanna Guidroz was born in Manchester, England. With a Persian-Indian father and a Chinese mother, Rukhsanna was always drawn to traveling to faraway places. After studying French at King's College, London, and Political Science at the Sorbonne, Paris, she left for the steamy shores of Hong Kong. There, she worked as a reporter for the *Hong Kong Standard* daily newspaper and later as a producer of a current affairs show.

A windsurfing trip to the Hawaiian Islands changed the course of Rukhsanna's life. Swept away by the sheer beauty, relaxed lifestyle, and warm climate of the islands, she decided to make Maui her home. After becoming a mother, Rukhsanna began her teaching career. She particularly enjoys encouraging her students, kindergarteners or high schoolers, to write from a place deep within themselves where creativity has no limits. Inspired by life experiences in Europe, Asia, and now Hawaii, Rukhsanna has many stories she'd like to share.

Author Resources

Rukhsanna Guidroz's Official Website

www.rukhsannaguidroz.com

Twitter: [RGui8](https://twitter.com/RGui8)

For publicity and speaking engagement inquiries

contact shivani.annirood@simonandschuster.com

"Being with my family makes me feel snug and happy inside."

About the Illustrator

Dinara Mirtalipova is a self-taught illustrator and designer. Born and raised in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, she eventually landed in snowy Ohio. Dinara studied Computer Science at the Tashkent State University of Economics; however, her true passion was always patterns and illustration. Raised in Soviet Uzbek culture, Dinara inhabited Uzbek/Russian folklore that still influences her work.

Currently Dinara works from her home studio in Sagamore Hills, Ohio. She uses a wide range of materials and tools, like carving lino blocks, gouache, acrylics and many others. She has been working with many great brands, publishing companies and ad agencies and she continuously looks forward to making new friends.

Illustrator Resources

Dinara Mirtalipova's Official Website

www.mirdinara.com

Facebook: facebook.com/dinaramirtalipova

Instagram: instagram.com/mirdinara/

Pinterest: pinterest.com/mirdinarastudio/_created/

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"Each and every part of me comes together to make me who I am."



Illustrator photo and biographical information courtesy Simon & Schuster and Dinara Mirtalipova; used with permission.

Talk About It!

Speaking and Listening: Share these questions with children to increase comprehension and spark creativity.

- Leila looks in the mirror and sees “skinny arm and knobby knees.” What features do you see when you look in the mirror?
- Leila feels “snug and happy inside” when she is with her family. How do you feel when you're surrounded by your family?
- Meeting at Naani's for dinner every Friday is a weekly tradition. What are some traditions in your family? Do you frequently see your extended family (grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins, etc.)?
- In the kitchen, Leila helps her Naani cook dinner for her family. Who do you help around the house and what do you do together?
- Leila has the same smile as her aunt. Who in your family do you look like?
- Leila's family enjoys the meal she helped her Naani cook and “a wave of pride” washes over her. What do you do that makes you feel proud?

Practice It!

***Leila in Saffron** is a story about celebrating family and a little girl finding reasons to be proud of herself! Here are some fun ideas for extending the story to include the five practices for younger children.*

Read

Read **Leila in Saffron** together, then find a nonfiction title about Pakistan to learn about the country's geography, wildlife, history, people, and culture.

Read about Malala Yousafzai, the youngest Nobel Prize-winning activist, who is from Pakistan.

Check out **Leo, the Snow Leopard: The True Story of an Amazing Rescue**, by Craig Hatkoff, Isabella Hatkoff, and Juliana Hatkoff. Leo, an orphaned snow leopard found in Pakistan's Himalaya mountains, is rescued by a shepherd and his family, then transferred to the Bronx Zoo in New York, where snow leopard specialists care for and breed this endangered animal.

Write

Leila sees brass camels on a shelf “all lined up as if ready for a trek over desert sand dunes.” Find pictures of real camels and write about their adventures. Where are they going? What do they see?

Talk

Leila uses all five senses—sight, touch, hearing, taste, and smell—at her Naani's. Can you find what Leila sees, feels, hears, tastes, and smells?

Saffron is a spice, but also a unique shade of yellow and orange. Talk about other unique and rarely used colors. What color is vermilion? Chartreuse? Persimmon? Ochre?

Sing

Singing is a great way to reinforce early literacy. The rhythm and rhyme of music helps children form a better understanding of syllables, sentence structure, and other mechanics of reading. Listen to familiar tunes like “Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star” and “Itsy Bitsy Spider” in Arabic.

Play

Leila helps her Naani cook dinner in the kitchen, but needs to visit Miguel's garden first to ask for some cilantro. Use dramatic play to grow vegetables, fruits, and herbs. How do different vegetables and fruits grow? What is the life cycle of a plant? Use dramatic play to cook a meal. What ingredients and tools do you need?

Tie It In!

Using this book with Ohio's Learning Standards.

Educators: Every CTRO book may be used to support Ohio's English Language Arts reading, writing, and speaking and listening standards. Other Learning Standards also apply. These activities using *Leila in Saffron* align with Ohio's Learning Standards for Kindergarten – Grade 3.

Librarians, parents, and others: These activities are also for library programs, family activities, and other projects. Learning Standards define what students should know and be able to do at each grade. For more information, see the Ohio Department of Education website, education.ohio.gov. From the Topics dropdown menu, click on "Learning in Ohio."

These activities are also great for library programs, family time, and playgroups.

Science

Life Science: Observations of the Environment: Physical and Behavioral Traits of Living Things; Basic Needs of Living Things; Interactions Within Habitats.

Leila uses cilantro from Miguel, her Naani's neighbor, in her curry dish. Grow a small herb garden with cilantro, mint, or basil in small pots. Track and chart the growth of your plant with daily observations.

Fine Arts

Visual Arts: Artists utilize creative thinking and reasoning skills to perceive concepts and ideas to develop works.

Leila tries on many of her Naani's scarves, but settles on a saffron-colored one. When she looks in the mirror, she finally sees herself, "a beautiful girl dressed in a sweet saffron scarf." Task students with creating a self-portrait using a mirror and a variety of different mediums.

English Language Arts

Vocabulary Acquisition and Use: Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on kindergarten reading and content. There are many Arabic words scattered in the text of *Leila in Saffron*. Using the glossary in the back of the book, learn how to pronounce them, what they mean, and how to use each of them in a sentence.

Craft and Structure: Identify words and phrases in stories or poems that suggest feelings or appeal to the senses.

Leila uses her five senses during her time at her Naani's house. What senses does she use and what does she experience? What other sights, sounds, smells, tastes, and touches might she have experienced?

Social and Emotional Development

Social Awareness: Participate in cross-cultural activities and discuss differences, similarities and positive qualities across all cultures and groups.

What activities does Leila's family do together? How are their activities similar to activities your family does together? How are they different?

Leila's family enjoys a meal together. Plan a meal with your family. Decide what you would prepare and eat.

Choose to Read Ohio, a project of the State Library of Ohio, the Ohioana Library Association, and the Ohio Center for the Book, encourages public libraries, schools, families, and others to build a community of readers and an appreciation of Ohio authors, illustrators, and literature. CTRO is adaptable for use in classrooms, libraries, bookstores, by book discussion groups, families, and other community groups.

Explore Choose to Read Ohio resources & toolkits: library.ohio.gov/ctro.

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