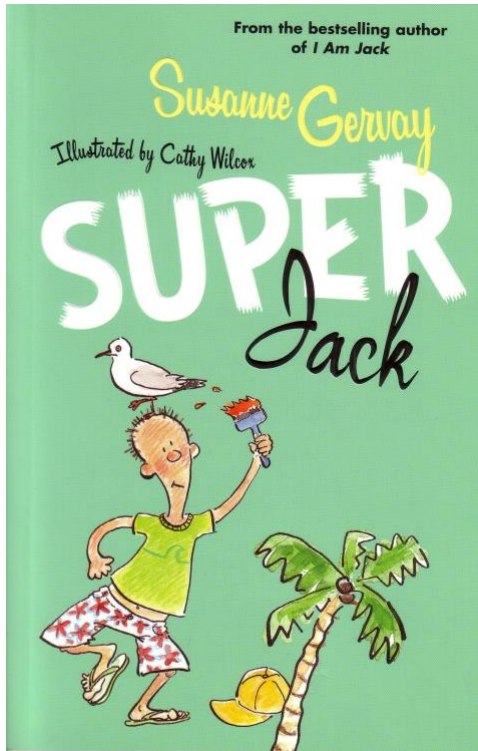


## READING NOTES

SUPER JACK is a friend to kids, parents and families.



Families are changing with great increases in divorce, sole parent families, blending and step parenting. How does *SuperJack* help kids caught up in it all?

It presents a real situation, that kids and parents can relate to. Kids understand fighting with your sister, laughing until you're sick, pillow fights. They know why their mother is too tired to cook and it's pizza for dinner. Kids joke and play handball, tease, go to school, discover, have fruit fights. That is the family life in *SuperJack*.

When children and parents read *SuperJack*, they feel the honesty. So when Jack and his family have to work out challenges, they feel it's a true life situation. They feel there are answers inside the pages of the book.

Jack's family is changing and we enter the mind of 12 year old Jack and the problems. How does Jack feel about his father who never sees him? His mother who has Rob now? Is Rob there just for his mother, but what about Jack? Jack wants Rob to be his father. But does Rob want to be Jack's father. His sister runs into Rob's arms and Jack feels jealousy. Then there is Rob's son.

Step families are complex for everyone. However *SuperJack* opens the communication, revealing the pressures and the human need to be loved and safe. *SuperJack* is a friend working it out with kids and parents.

Kids caught in changing families without strategies of dealing with the changes, can be left with low self-esteem and unresolved anger. The family can become stretched to the limit.

*Super Jack* offers insight and strategies.

1. What problems do parents and children face in stepfamilies? How does *SuperJack* deal with them?

- Competition between the step children for attention
- Conflicts between the parents about favouritism over the kids

- Feelings of rejection by both father's natural son and step-son
- The anger of the divorced parent over the marriage break-up flowing onto the child when he visits the new family
- New family relationships
- How the parents can work out the conflicts
- Others

## 2. SuperJack is grounded in the mix master families.

Today, families are mixed with nuclear, extended, sole parent, blended, defacto, step-parenting relationships and combinations of these.

Divorce, raising kids alone, creating a new family is difficult for children, parents and communities.

45% of first marriages end in divorce  
 65% of second marriages end in divorce  
 75% of third marriages end in divorce

20% of children under fifteen will be raised in a sole parent family.

8% of children live in a step or blended family.

30% of children will be born outside marriage.

There are increasing numbers of aged parents.

*Super Jack* engages young people enabling them to develop insights into their families, other and different families to create positive and workable outcomes.

## 3. The story of Nanna is really important in *Super Jack*. Why?



With an aging population, the baby boomers who have had their children later, are often faced with raising children and looking after aging parents. It can be tough but also joyous.

Kids are caught up in it as aging parents become dominant issues in the family. Jack gets angry at Nanna because she's old, but then he loves her too and wants to help her. It is okay to be angry at the responsibility sometimes, as long as you love Nanna. Life is always complex with a range of emotions, conflicting feelings and choices.

#### 4. Why does Life Education Australia endorse *SuperJack*?



Life Education Australia is a major anti-drug education body in Australia reaching children from Kindergarten to year 12. Life Education Australia endorses and promotes both *I Am Jack* and *SuperJack* because Life Ed believes that the most effective way of kids making positive decision, including NO to DRUGS, is through building self-esteem and developing strategies to make informed choices.

The *I Am Jack* books provide a safe and real setting through story for young people to test their judgements and work out answers that help them make positive choices in life.

*Life Education Australia helps Kids and endorses SuperJack – a book that helps kids.*

*Life Education Australia proudly endorses Susanne Gervay's I Am Jack and SuperJack because these books acknowledge the unique and special quality of each child and their right to be happy and healthy. These books recognize the real life issues facing kids, offering them ways to deal with life in a safe and positive way.*

*Life Education Australia uses the most effective drug education and prevention strategies, known as the 'social competencies' or 'social influences' approach. This interactive approach uses the real social settings and experiences of students, schools and families, to teach and practice social skills in decision-making, communication, negotiation and peer resistance and refusal, as well as providing accurate information for safe choices.*

*Susanne Gervay's books are set in real social settings, with real kids, families and schools. The challenges are real – bullying, blending families, making friends, aging grandparents, coping with a world in crisis. The kids are real – loving and fighting siblings, making jokes, adventuring, experimenting, having mates, wanting your parents to love you ... the stuff of life. Her books are a safe place to work out decisions.*

*SuperJack is beautifully written with humour, love and a recognition of the uniqueness of children.*

Life Education endorses *I Am Jack* – [www.lifeeducation.org.au](http://www.lifeeducation.org.au)