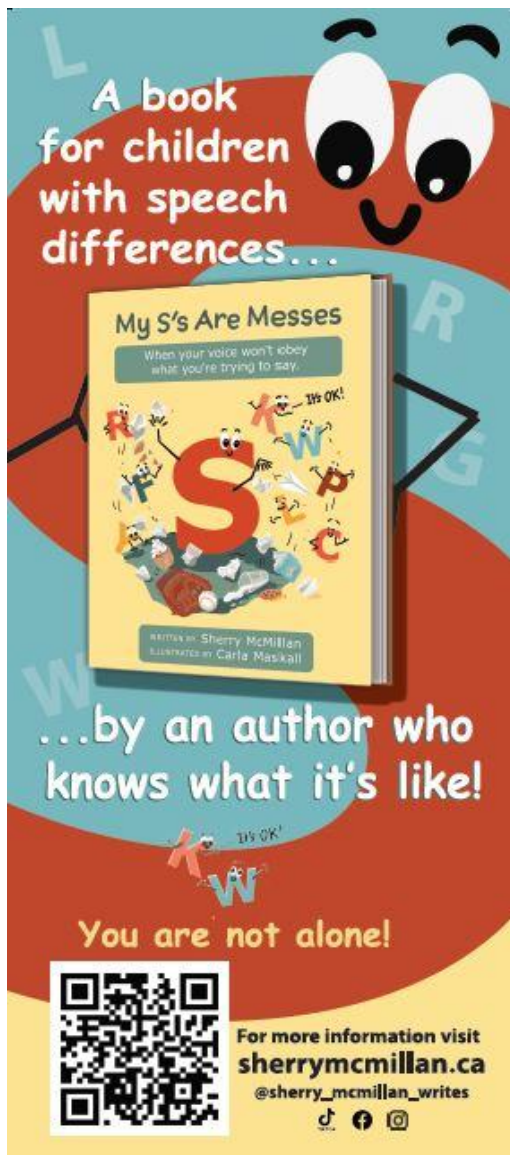


# My S's Are Messes

Companion Resource for Teachers and Parents,  
other Educators, Care-givers, and anyone who supports someone with a speech difference.



## Did you know?

There are many different ways to use the book.

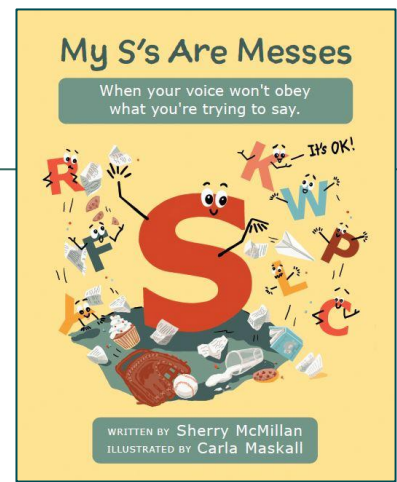
- **Builds Empathy / Social Emotional Learning.** It can tell the story of what it's like to have a speech difference.
- This is conveyed in multiple methods that are helpful for a variety of learning styles:
  - **Auditory** – The poem itself is an empathy-building story.
  - **Visual** – Each illustration is a word picture of what it feels like to have a communication challenge.
- It can help people with a speech difference to not feel alone.
- It can help everyone **think about communication differently.**
- **Kid –approved fun!**

Companion Resources are also available for:

- **Kids!** We have materials specifically designed for children to help them understand that they are not alone and what they can expect when receiving speech therapy.
- **Speech Language Pathologists (SLPs).** The book can also be used as a Speech Therapy Tool by qualified professionals.

# My S's Are Messes

Companion Resource for Teachers and Parents



## LESSON PLANS

### Learning Objectives:

- Social Emotional Learning (SEL)
- Language Arts / Poetry

**Social Emotional Learning (SEL) – Social Skills** - Use the book to discuss characters' emotions, motivations, and actions, which can help children understand social cues and develop empathy. Questions to discuss:

- Children and adults with speech sound disorders **may feel** frustration, embarrassment, shame, anxiety, low-self esteem, and isolation. Ask the child how they feel. Validate emotions, using the book as a reference for how people with speech sound disorders may feel.
- Refer to the **book's message** - "You are not alone, we see how hard you're working, and there's no mistaking how we feel when we speak heart to heart."
- Take **positive messages** from the book to help the child feel empowered by their speech differences, e.g. World Champion Listener!
- Read the book to other children or classes** to help gain empathy and understanding for other students who experience speech differences.
- After reading the book, **discuss how the child feels** about their speech delay/disorder.
- Discuss the various people in the book and their **different abilities** (speaking in sign language, using a wheelchair, etc.) Discuss how the human characters are drawn as a silhouette. Ask why the child thinks the Author and Illustrator made that choice.
- Watch videos of the author** on youtube talking about their speech differences.
  - Sherry\_McMillan\_Writes on Instagram and TikTok.
  - Vlogs on Youtube
  - Book Trailer videos on sherrymcmillan.ca

**Narrative Skills** - Encourage the child to retell the story in their own words, helping them to sequence events (beginning, middle, end) and understand the story structure.

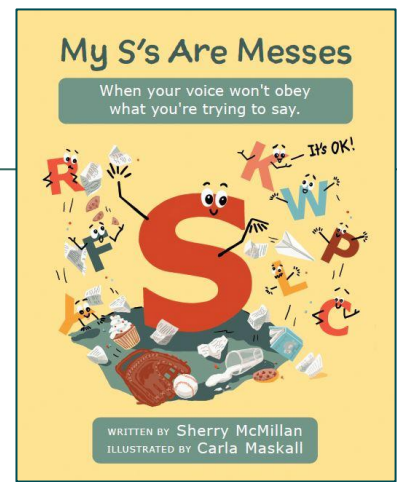
*Send stories to the author at [info@sherrymcmillan.ca](mailto:info@sherrymcmillan.ca) and she will write back. If students would like to have their works published on her website, just let her know!*

# My S's Are Messes

Companion Resource for Teachers and Parents

## LESSON PLANS

See also the [Companion Resource for Kids](#). These materials can also be used as part of the Lesson Plan. In particular:  
**Fun things you can do with My S's Are Messes.**



**Vocabulary Development** - The book can be used to teach children new words, and their meanings, and then they can be used in sentences. Some great tier 2 vocabulary words to teach from the book include:

- Whisk
- Whipped
- Absurd
- Observe
- Tumble
- Defiant
- Disconnected
- Shamble
- Bramble
- Jumble
- Akimbo
- Askew

**Language Skills** - Use the book to enhance grammar, sentence structure, and language comprehension. Discuss the story, ask questions, and encourage the child to describe the pictures and events.

**Poetry and Rhyming Verse** - Discuss poetic devices such as alliteration (e.g., "...what's whipped up by a word.") and assonance (e.g., "...once and done..").

**Poetry and Page Design** – How does the way the words are laid out on the page impact your understanding of the meaning of the poem? Does it help it come alive for you? How do the words and the illustrations go together? This discussion can be followed up with an activity where students write their own poems (or choose a poem they love) and practice different ways to lay the poem out on the page to see how various layouts, fonts, size, and colour will shift the focus. Asking the students to also illustrate their poem will add components of art into the lesson.

# My S's Are Messes

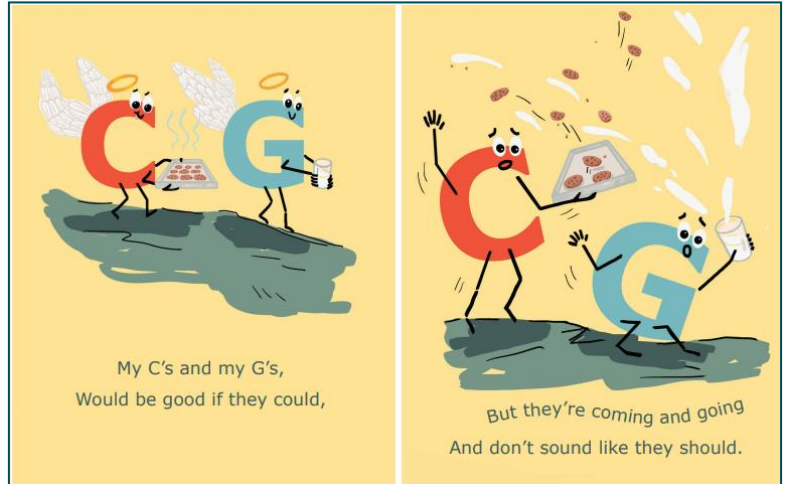
Companion Resource for SLPs

## ARTICULATION WORD PICTURES

Use the verses to practice specific sounds. *For example:*

My **C's** and my **G's**  
Would be **good** if they **could**  
But they're **coming** and **going**  
And don't sound like they should.

Try making your own Articulation  
Word Pictures and verses!



## WORLD CHAMPION LISTENERS

Use the word pictures to open a discussion about **Listening Skills**. Here are some prompting questions:

- What does it mean to be a 'World Champion Listener'? What is Active Listening?
- Who are what do you suppose the child is wrestling in this picture?
- What character traits can you develop to become an even better listener? (patience, curiosity, empathy)
- Tell me about a time that someone really listened to you and how that made you/them feel.
- Tell me about a time when you really listened to someone and how that made you/them feel.
- Tell me about a time someone didn't listen to you and how that made you/them feel.
- Tell me about a time when you had trouble listening to someone else and how that made you/them feel.
- Tell me about a time when you heard something wrong. What happened? How did you find out that you hadn't heard it right? What did you do to fix it?



# My S's Are Messes

Companion Resource for Teachers and Parents



## FELT STORIES

An **Alphabet Felt Story** is a fantastic tool to accompany the book! Grown-ups can use the letters to help tell the story. Or, children can place the letters on a blanket or felt board as a grown-up reads the book. This is especially helpful for active children who want to be involved.

Felt Stories are great for Story Walks as well! Letters can be placed on tree trunks and other surfaces!

Contact the author at: [info@sherrymcmillan.ca](mailto:info@sherrymcmillan.ca)

See also: [Felt Stories](#) | [Sherry McMillan Writes](#)

## ALPHABET YOGA

Taking an Alphabet Yoga break during your lesson is a fun way to keep engagement high while respecting the energy level of the class. Lead the class in forming letter shapes with their bodies. (I've seen some amazingly creative ways of forming the Letter 'S'! )

## TONGUE TWISTERS

The Whisk verse is a tongue-twister intended to build empathy. The intent is to subtly remind the reader that *everyone* finds some things difficult to say.

- Ask the class (or family) to say it together faster and faster.
- Share and try your favourite tongue twisters. A tongue twister game!

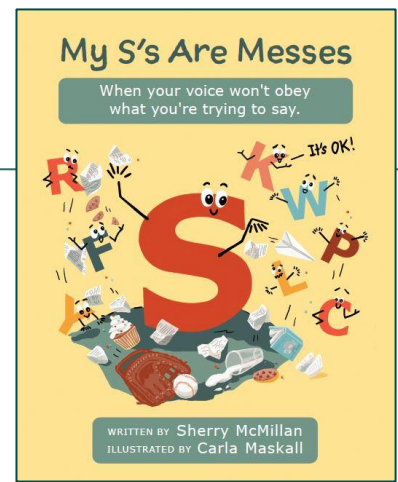
## EASTER EGGS

There are several easter eggs hidden in the book. You can ask the child/ren:

- There are 2 illustrations that include a book. Can you find the book titles?
- Why does the hockey stick say CSM? (It's the Author and Illustrator's initials. BTW: The Author played floor hockey for 15 years.)
- Can you find any other easter eggs?

# My S's Are Messes

Companion Resource for Teachers and Parents



## ABOUT ANXIETY AND BULLYING

Any child that has a speech difference will have some degree of anxiety and self-consciousness about it. They will also be very susceptible to bullying.

## Some ways that you can help:

- When speaking about bullying and anxiety, **include speech differences in the conversation.**
- Have conversations with the child about their speech differences with an emphasis on **removing stigma.** Is there anyone else in your family or school that has, or used to have, a speech difference? It can be very reassuring to know that, e.g., the Principle has trouble with her R's, or that Grandpa used to stutter.
- Empower the child in feeling more comfortable with speaking in social situations, in class, and in Speech Therapy. You can discuss the **Companion Resource for Kids.**
- Being corrected or having others speak for us can be a really difficult part of having a speech difference. You can make a conscious decision with the child to **set aside times or activities in which no attempt to correct speech will be made.** E.g., you can decide as a family, that speech differences will not be corrected at the dinner table. This can really help to lower anxiety.
- Be aware that children with speech differences may also have environmental sensitivities and specific triggers. E.g., sometimes SLPs will need to sit close to a student, make prolonged eye contact, or will want to have the child repeat a sound on a finger snap. For some children, this can lead to **sensory overload** and methods should be amended.
- Be particularly sensitive to any situations for the child that have to do with **being heard or understood.** This can bleed over into situations that are not strictly about speech differences.
- **Watch for signs of bullying and address them quickly.**

# My S's Are Messes

Companion Resource for SLPs



## SCHOOL & CORPORATE EVENTS

- On-site or virtual
- Classroom visits fine-tuned for various ages
- Professional Development Days
- Conferences and Corporate Events

Contact the author at: [info@sherrymcmillan.ca](mailto:info@sherrymcmillan.ca)

See also: [Speaking | Sherry McMillan Writes](#)

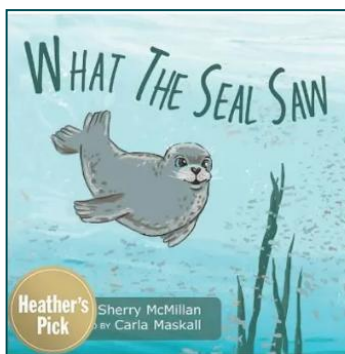
## Did you know?

All of Sherry McMillan's poetry and picture books, including *My S's Are Messes*, use a **dyslexic-friendly, easy-to-read** font.

## ABOUT THE NATURALLY CURIOUS BOOK SERIES

The same Author and Illustrator are in the progress of publishing a series of books about animals in the Pacific Northwest. These books describe that magical moment when you see an animal in nature and wonder if it sees you too – and what else it sees.

The first of these books, *What the Seal Saw*, is an Indigo Chapters Heathers Kids Pick. There are many fun and free companion resources for these books as well.



- Lesson Plans
- Colouring Pages
- Character cut-outs for crafts
- How to Draw a Seal
- More!

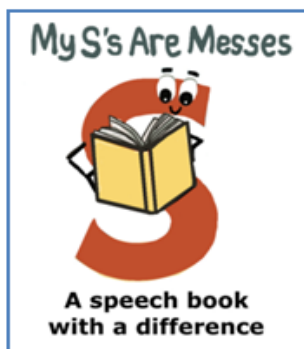
See [Free and Fun \(sherrymcmillan.ca\)](https://sherrymcmillan.ca)

# My S's Are Messes

Companion Resource for Teachers and Parents

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It means the world to me!

I hope you found these resources helpful to you and your child and/or students.

If so, **please take a moment to give the book a review online.**

Or you can send your review directly to the author in an email or via social media. It makes a HUGE difference for an independent author.

Reviews help get the book into the hands of more children who need to know that they are not alone.

**Do you have any suggestions** for improvements or additions to these resources, please feel free to reach out to me at:

[info@sherrymcmillan.ca](mailto:info@sherrymcmillan.ca)