**AUTHOR:**

Giles Andreae

**ILLUSTRATOR:**

Guy Parker-Rees

Gerald the giraffe has long skinny legs which are good for standing still and reaching trees to munch on leaves. However, when it comes to dancing, he isn't very good. Will he dance at the Jungle Dance?

**Ages:** 2 to 9 years**ATOS:** 3.8**Lexile:** AD570L**ISBN:** 9780545392556**Copyright:** 1999

# Giraffes Can't Dance

**Will Gerald dance at the Jungle Dance?**

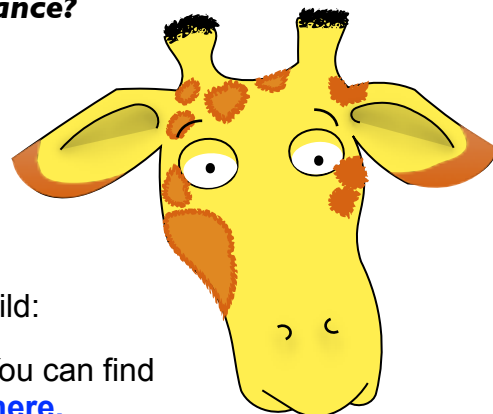
**Topics:** growth mindset

**Activities To Do Together:**

Use the book, *Giraffes Can't Dance* to support a healthy growth mindset.

Before reading the book with your child:

- Talk about a growth mindset. You can find more about a growth mindset [here](#).
- Ask your child to predict what will happen to Gerald the giraffe in the story.

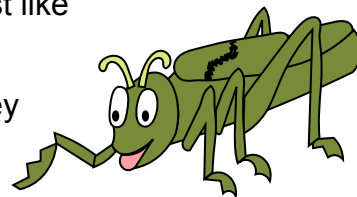


While reading the book, *Giraffes Can't Dance*, ask your child:

- To compare the different animals in the story.
- To point out the position of the animals in relationship to Gerald using positional words like above, next to, under. For example, the butterfly is **above** Gerald's nose.
- Why is Gerald sad?
- How did the grasshopper help Gerald?
- How many animals do you see on each page?
- Why was it important for Gerald to keep trying?

When you have finished reading the story try the following:

- Ask your child what dance they would like to learn from the story? Look it up and have fun learning a new dance.
- Talk with your child about what a growth mindset is and how it may be helpful to have one while learning.
- Ask your child how they would like to be encouraged when they are learning a new or difficult task. Talk about how a lot of things that are important to learn take time, practice, and involve making mistakes. Talk about why it is important to keep trying just like Gerald.
- Talk with your child about a time they almost gave up, but decided to try again and succeeded. How did they feel?



**Questions for Mathematical Thinking:**

1. Why is a growth mindset important when learning math?
2. How can you have a growth mindset when you are learning new math concepts? What does it look like to you?
3. What do you do when something doesn't work out exactly how you planned or you can't get something right? How do you handle it? Could you handle it differently? How?
4. Why is important to believe in yourself?

**Early Math Project Resources:**

Visit [Giraffes Can't Dance Activities](http://earlymathca.org/giraffes-cant-dance) (earlymathca.org/giraffes-cant-dance)

Follow this [link](#) or visit earlymathca.org/external-resources for additional online resources.

**Vocabulary**

**Math words found in the story:** all, amount, eight, long, numbers, one, tall, up, very

**Related math words:** growth mindset

**Words to build reading comprehension:**

buckled, crooked, munching, somersault, splendid, useless, waltzing

**Spanish Title:** *Las Jirafas no Pueden Bailar*

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**Also available in:** French and Polish

**Related Books:** *The Dot* by Peter H. Reynolds; *The Thing Lou Couldn't Do* and *The Most Magnificent Thing* by Ashley Spires

Click this link to the [World Catalog](#) or enter bit.ly/3pKmStv to you find *Cook It!* in the public library.



**Math Connections:**

Use *Giraffes Can't Dance* to discuss the importance of a growth mindset with your child. A growth mindset means a person will not give up when learning something new, even when it gets difficult. Building a growth mindset encourages your child to persevere when learning new topics and skills.

People are born with great potential to learn that can be developed over time. In the book, Gerald the giraffe wasn't born a good dancer; however, he shows that he can learn to dance through practice, perseverance, and with support from friends. Practice and perseverance are important when learning something new. These qualities, along with maintaining a positive outlook, are beneficial to children and adults when learning math.

*Giraffes Can't Dance* also highlights the value of supporting children's efforts while learning something new. Struggling and making mistakes are a part of learning. It is important to encourage children to keep trying when learning something difficult. Provide support to children by asking open-ended, guiding questions. For example, asking "Why do you think that? What can you try next? How did you figure that out? or How could you do that differently?"

After reading, talk with your child about how Gerald didn't give up and why they think it is important that Gerald tried again to dance. Ask your child what they think would have happened if Gerald didn't try one more time. How would Gerald feel if he quit trying? Ask your child how you can best support them when they are learning something new. Talk with them about how it feels when they get support. How do they think they can support and encourage others?

As parents, one of the ways to support children's growth mindset is to acknowledge their effort, emphasize that learning involves mistakes, and that mistakes are an opportunity for learners to grow and learn even more. With a growth mindset it is not about a person's intelligence and innate ability, but about the effort, approach, and process that is demonstrated. Acknowledge your child's efforts rather than their intelligence. For example, "I could see that it was difficult for you to multiply those two numbers, but you kept trying until you got it. That was a great effort!"

Books like *Giraffes Can't Dance* can also be used to support your child's spatial awareness. Explore positional words with your child. Use words like **above**, **next to**, **besides**, and **below** during your daily routines.



Age Level	Related <a href="#">Infant Toddler Foundations</a> , <a href="#">Preschool Foundations</a> and <a href="#">CA State Standards</a>
Infant/ Toddler	<b>Problem Solving</b> The developing ability to engage in a purposeful effort to reach a goal or figure out how something works.
Preschool/ TK	<b>Mathematical Reasoning 1.0</b> Children use mathematical thinking to solve proble
Kindergarten	<b>Standards for Mathematical Practice: 1.</b> Make sense of problems and persevere in solving them.
Grade 1	<b>Standards for Mathematical Practice: 1.</b> Make sense of problems and persevere in solving them.
Grade 2	<b>Standards for Mathematical Practice: 1.</b> Make sense of problems and persevere in solving them.
Grade 3	<b>Standards for Mathematical Practice: 1.</b> Make sense of problems and persevere in solving them.

