

Review of *This is A. Blob*, by Lisa Pescara-Kovach, Ph.D.

April 3, 2016

*This is A. Blob* by L.A. Kefalos is a great resource for teachers, parents, school counselors or anyone who wishes to begin a conversation, with young children, about bullying behaviors. It is rare to find a bullying prevention and intervention book that features a character like A. Blob. Upon first glance, A. Blob appears to be a character whose shape and color are geared primarily toward capturing the attention of a young audience. In truth, there is intentionality in A. Blob's design and color. A. Blob is engaging in bullying behaviors, but he does not represent a particular race, size, culture, religion, or gender. A. Blob's ambiguity in appearance allows the reader to apply his or her own experiences to the characters in the book. Further, his appearance lessens the likelihood that particular groups of children will be labeled as bullies. The message is that bullies come in all shapes, sizes, and colors with the additional message that target of bullying come from all walks of life. This is clear with phrases such as 'it hates green,' 'it hates pink' and other references to various types of targets.

Another key feature of the book is the manner in which A. Blob is initially described as a coward, punk, and thug. Right away, I was taken aback by these seemingly negative descriptors, but soon realized those terms are often the way we see bullies from the outside. Kefalos quickly changes A. Blob's behaviors and emotions into those with which young children associate with sadness. The transition lends itself to a follow-up conversation on the causes of bullying. By extension, after reading the book to young children, the adult reader is able to explain that A. Blob was hurting other children because *he* was hurting too. It further reinforces the point that children who bully others might find themselves socially isolated. Overall, A. Blob is colorful, eye-catching, and tackles a tough topic without unnecessary verbiage. It is definitely a case of 'less is more' because this book is just the beginning of what concludes then launches into an Internet adventure and/or a question and answer session. I truly look forward to reading what happens next in the life of A. Blob.