

PLAY WITH PURPOSE — GRADE 2 · BEGINNING TO UNDERSTAND OTHERS

Is This Seat Taken?

Seating Puzzle | Developer: Poti Poti Studio (Barcelona & Brussels) | Publisher: Wholesome Games Presents | 2025

Steam & Nintendo Switch \$9.99 · iOS & Android \$4.99 · Free demo on Steam · Steam Deck verified · Overwhelmingly Positive on Steam (97% of 4,400+ reviews) · Metacritic 79 · 5–7 hours of content across multiple cities and venues

Primary DGO: DGO 15 — Become More Accepting of Others

Supporting DGOs: DGO 5 (Raise Consciousness Above the Collective) · DGO 10 (Slow Down in Study and Consumption)

Best For: Ages 7–10 · Excellent as a shared-play game — parent and child together · Touch controls on Switch handheld and mobile are ideal for younger players

Grade 2 Theme: Beginning to Understand Others — the shift from knowing that people are different to understanding that those differences create real needs that deserve real accommodation

How the Game Works

Is This Seat Taken? places your child in a series of venues — a bus, a movie theatre, a wedding reception, a classroom, a taxi, a stadium — and presents them with a group of colourful geometric characters who each need a seat. The characters are circles, squares, rhombuses, and triangles with faces, accessories, and preferences. One wants a window seat. Another can't stand loud music. A third wants to sit next to their best friend. A fourth wears strong cologne that bothers people nearby. A fifth is a child, and some adults would rather not sit next to children.

Your child's job is to drag each character into a seat that satisfies as many preferences as possible. When a character is unhappy with their placement, their face shows it — immediately and clearly, no explanation needed. When they're happy, they show that too. Your child rearranges people, tests different configurations, and adjusts until the venue is as content as possible. A progress bar fills with thumbs-ups. Your child doesn't need 100% satisfaction to move forward — they just need enough. When a city is completed at 100%, a bonus level unlocks with new mechanics.

Nat's story: Between puzzle levels, a story unfolds about Nat — a rhombus-shaped aspiring actor who sees someone like them on the big screen and sets off across cities to find their hero and discover where they belong. Nat's journey is about fitting in without having to change your shape. It's a story about belonging, told with enormous warmth, woven through every city your child solves.

Why This Game for Beginning to Understand Others

Your 7-year-old already knows that different people like different things. They know that some friends like chocolate and some like strawberry. They know that some people are loud and some are quiet. They know, in the basic way that a 7-year-old knows things, that the world is full of different kinds of people.

What they don't yet know — what this stage of the curriculum is designed to build — is that those differences have consequences. That being different doesn't just mean liking different flavours. It means needing different environments, experiencing the same situation in completely different ways, and sometimes being deeply uncomfortable in a setting that everyone else finds perfectly fine. Acceptance of others isn't just knowing that people are different. It's understanding that differences create needs, that those needs deserve attention, and that making space for someone else's comfort is one of the most important things a person can learn to do.

Is This Seat Taken? teaches this through one of the most relatable scenarios in a child's life: finding a seat. Your child has been on a bus. They've been in a cinema. They've been at a family dinner, a classroom, a waiting room. They know what it feels like to sit next to someone who is too loud, or too close, or eating something smelly. They know the quiet relief of getting the window seat. Seating is one of the first social negotiations children experience — and this game turns it into a logic puzzle that is simultaneously about spatial reasoning and about human empathy.

DO 15 — Become More Accepting of Others — is built through the game's core loop. Every level requires your child to take each character's perspective, understand their specific preference, and arrange the venue so that everyone is as comfortable as possible. By the time they've seated a hundred characters across a dozen venues, the habit of asking 'what does this person need to be comfortable?' is becoming automatic. That habit is the foundation of genuine acceptance: not just tolerating differences, but actively arranging things to accommodate them.

DO 5 — Raise Consciousness Above the Collective — enters through the game's most important design feature: preferences interact. The person who wants a window seat might also be the one playing loud music — which means putting them by the window makes the sleepy person in the next row unhappy. The friends who want to sit together might block the only remaining seat that works for someone else. Every placement ripples outward. Your child cannot think about one person's needs in isolation; they must hold the whole venue in mind simultaneously. This is exactly what DO 5 means for a 7-year-old: beginning to see the group rather than only the individual in front of them, beginning to understand that everyone's comfort is connected to everyone else's.

DO 10 — Slow Down in Study and Consumption — is the habit the game rewards at the level of attention. Characters have preferences displayed as icons and short text. Your child can read these carefully before placing anyone, or they can place based on instinct and adjust when faces turn unhappy. Both work — but the child who reads before acting is practising one of the most transferable skills in learning: paying attention to what someone needs before you decide what to do. This is not just empathy. It is patient, deliberate attention to information that would be easy to ignore. The game's no-timer, no-penalty design creates the conditions for this kind of slowness — and makes it rewarding.

What the Game Builds

The Skill	What the Game Does	What to Look For
Perspective-taking — reading what each person needs	Each character's preferences are displayed before your child places them. The game requires reading those preferences accurately and holding them in mind while making placement decisions. This is structured perspective-taking: understanding someone else's situation before acting.	Watch whether your child reads the preference icons before placing a character, or places first and adjusts when the face turns unhappy. The reader is practising proactive empathy. Both work — but the habit of checking what someone needs before acting is worth naming and encouraging.
Systems thinking — holding multiple needs simultaneously	Because preferences interact, your child must hold the needs of 4–8 characters in mind simultaneously and find an arrangement that satisfies as many as possible. This is constraint satisfaction — the same cognitive skill used in scheduling, planning, and design.	Watch for the moment your child says 'if I put them here, then she can't go there' — this is forward planning, the key systems-thinking move. It means they are thinking about ripple effects rather than placing one character at a time in isolation.
Accepting imperfection — 'good enough' as a legitimate outcome	The game's progress bar fills with thumbs-ups and advances without requiring 100% satisfaction. Some characters will be mildly unhappy no matter what your child does — the best available arrangement still leaves someone slightly uncomfortable. This is an intentional design choice.	Watch how your child responds to an unavoidably unhappy character. Distress at imperfection is a signal worth exploring gently. Comfortable acceptance of 'good enough' is a skill with enormous implications for wellbeing and decision-making.
Social recognition — connecting game characters to real people	Characters are colourful geometric shapes, not realistic people. This abstraction teaches the principle of acceptance without the complexity of specific identity categories. As the game progresses, children naturally begin to map characters to people they know.	Listen for recognition moments: 'That one's like Uncle David — he always wants the aisle seat!' When your child maps a character type to a real person, the perspective-taking skill is transferring from the abstract puzzle to lived social experience.

How to Play With Purpose

Is This Seat Taken? works well as a solo game. But the most powerful version is played together — parent and child sharing the screen, reading preferences out loud, and noticing what happens when someone ends up in the wrong seat.

Read the preferences out loud: When a new character appears, read their preference aloud before placing anyone: 'This one wants a window seat. This one needs quiet. This

one wants to sit next to their friend.' Reading aloud externalises your child's working memory — it helps them hold more needs in mind simultaneously, and it models the habit of paying attention to what people need before making decisions.

When an unhappy face appears, ask before adjusting: 'Why do you think they're unhappy? What do they need that they're not getting?' This turns a feedback signal into an inference exercise. Your child must look at the character's preference, look at their current seat, and work out the mismatch. This is the same skill as reading social cues in real life — noticing that someone is uncomfortable and figuring out why.

Don't skip the Nat story scenes: Between puzzle levels, short scenes follow Nat's journey. These scenes are where the emotional theme of the game lives — finding belonging, discovering that fitting in isn't about changing who you are. A child who is engaged with Nat's story is connecting the puzzle mechanics (arranging people so they fit) to the emotional question (where do I fit?). Ask: 'How do you think Nat is feeling right now? Have you ever felt like that?'

Name what you notice: When your child spots a conflict before it happens, say: 'You thought about both of them at the same time. That's the key skill in this game.' When they comfortably move forward with a 90% solution, say: 'You made most people happy and kept going. That's exactly right.' Naming the specific behaviour — not just praising the outcome — helps your child understand what they are practising.

On session length: each level takes 10–20 minutes with clear stopping points between venues. One venue per session — with a discussion question afterward — is the right pace for most 7-year-olds.

Family Discussion Questions

These questions are designed for after a play session. Keep the conversation light and curious — you're exploring ideas together. The italicised prompts are conversation starters, not scripts. One question per session is enough.

1. Every character in this game wanted something different — a window seat, quiet, sitting with a friend. Did any character want something that seemed weird or fussy to you? What was it?

BUILDS: DGO 15 — NOTICING THAT DIFFERENT PREFERENCES ARE REAL, NOT WRONG

This is the gentlest possible entry into acceptance. Children who find a preference 'weird' are revealing something important: they're measuring other people's needs against their own as the default standard. The question invites them to notice that reaction — and to begin questioning it. Just because I wouldn't need that doesn't mean it doesn't matter to the person who does.

"Can you think of something you like or need that someone else might think is silly? How would you feel if someone ignored it because they thought it was weird?"

2. Some characters were harder to seat than others — the one with loud music, the one with strong cologne, the one who didn't want to sit near kids. Did you ever get annoyed at a character for being too difficult? What happened when you finally figured out where to put them?

BUILDS: DGO 15 — SEEING 'DIFFICULT' PEOPLE AS PUZZLES, NOT PROBLEMS

This reframes 'difficult' people as challenges worth solving. Most children will admit to mild frustration with a high-maintenance character — and then acknowledge the satisfaction of finding their right seat. That before-and-after is the DGO 15 moment: the transition from 'this person is annoying' to 'this person has a need I haven't found the solution for yet.'

"In real life, when someone seems hard to get along with — lots of needs, strong opinions about how things should be — what if you thought of them like one of these characters? What would they need to be comfortable?"

3. In this game, you couldn't just think about one person's seat — putting the loud music listener by the window made the sleepy person next to them unhappy. Has something like that ever happened in real life — where making one person comfortable made someone else uncomfortable?

BUILDS: DGO 5 — UNDERSTANDING THAT ACTIONS RIPPLE OUTWARD TO AFFECT OTHERS

This is early systems thinking applied to social situations. Every 7-year-old has experienced a situation where someone getting what they wanted meant someone else didn't — at home, at school, in a group of friends. The game gives them the vocabulary to name and think about this pattern, which is the first step toward navigating it more thoughtfully.

"Think about your classroom, your family, your friends. When one person gets exactly what they want, does it sometimes mean someone else doesn't? How do you figure out what's fair when you can't make everyone perfectly happy at the same time?"

4. The game let you move forward even if not every character was perfectly happy — you just needed 'enough' thumbs up. How did that feel? Was it okay to leave someone a little bit unhappy, or did it bother you?

BUILDS: DGO 14 — ACCEPTING THAT GOOD ENOUGH IS GENUINELY ENOUGH

This question addresses perfectionism directly and gently. Some children find it genuinely distressing to leave even one face unhappy — and that distress is worth exploring. The game is making a deliberate argument: you don't have to make everyone perfectly happy to do a good job. Sometimes the best available arrangement still leaves someone a little uncomfortable. Knowing this — and being okay with it — is an important piece of emotional intelligence.

"In real life, can you always make everyone happy? Is it your job to make everyone happy? What does 'doing your best' look like when there isn't a perfect answer?"

5. The characters in this game were shapes — circles, squares, rhombuses — not real people. But did you start caring about them anyway, even though they weren't real? Why do you think that happened?

BUILDS: DGO 15 — EMPATHY DOESN'T REQUIRE SIMILARITY

This question is about the scope of empathy. Your child cared about geometric shapes with faces because the shapes had preferences and feelings that mattered within the game's world. The insight — that caring for someone doesn't require them to look like you or be like you — is one of the most important foundations of genuine acceptance. You don't need similarity to extend care.

"What does that tell you about caring for people in real life? Do they need to be like you for their feelings to matter to you?"

6. Nat's story is about trying to find where they belong — the right place, the right seat, the right fit. Have you ever felt like you didn't quite fit somewhere? What did that feel like? Did you eventually find where you belonged?

BUILDS: DGO 15 — PERSONAL CONNECTION TO THE THEME OF BELONGING

This question bridges the game's emotional story to your child's own experience of belonging and not-belonging — a central preoccupation of early school years. Nat's resolution is not 'change your shape.' It is 'find the right seat for the shape you already are.' That message — you don't need to become someone different to belong — is quietly powerful for a 7-year-old navigating the social dynamics of Grade 2.

"Do you think people need to change who they are to fit in — or do they need to find the people and places that fit who they already are?"

7. If you were a character in this game, what would your seating preferences be? What would you need to be comfortable — a window seat? Quiet? A friend nearby? What would your little icon look like?

BUILDS: DGO 10 — SELF-AWARENESS AS THE FOUNDATION OF UNDERSTANDING OTHERS

You cannot fully take another person's perspective without understanding your own preferences first. This question turns the lens inward: it asks your child to apply the game's framework to themselves. Understanding what you need to be comfortable — and being able to name it — is the first step toward understanding that other people have equivalent needs that are just as real and just as worth accommodating.

"Knowing what you need is important — not just for puzzle games, but for real life. If you know you need quiet, you can ask for it. And understanding your own needs is the first step toward understanding that other people have needs too."

8. You played this game by looking at what each person needed and trying to arrange things so everyone could be comfortable. That's actually a real skill — it's called reading the room. Can you think of a time when you read the room in real life? When you noticed what people around you needed, even when they didn't say it out loud?

BUILDS: DGO 5 + DGO 15 — TRANSFERRING SOCIAL AWARENESS FROM GAME TO LIFE

This is the bridge from puzzle to world. 'Reading the room' is the real-life equivalent of the game's core skill — noticing what people around you need and making adjustments without being asked. The sleepy character on the bus didn't ask to be moved away from the loud music. Your child just knew. The question asks them to identify a moment when they've done this naturally — and to understand that this is a skill they already have and can deliberately develop.

"Where in your life can you practise reading the room like you did in the game? Who in your family, your class, or your group of friends might need a different 'seat' than where they are right now?"

DGO 15, DGO 5, and DGO 10 in This Game

The table below maps what happens in the game to what the curriculum is building — and gives you specific language to use while playing together.

DGO	What the Game Practises	The Bigger Skill	What to Say While Playing
DGO 15 — Become More Accepting of Others	Taking each character's perspective before placing them. Actively arranging the venue to accommodate needs that are different from your own. Treating 'difficult' characters as interesting challenges rather than annoying obstacles.	The shift from knowing that people are different to understanding that those differences create needs worth honouring — and making arrangements accordingly.	'What does this one need? Let's read it before we place them.' Say this at the start of each character, every time — it builds the habit of checking before acting.
DGO 5 — Raise Consciousness Above the Collective	Holding multiple characters' needs in mind simultaneously. Noticing that placing one character affects the options available for others. Planning placements two or three moves ahead rather than one at a time.	The capacity to see a group rather than only the person in front of you — to understand that everyone's situation is connected to everyone else's, and to factor those connections into your decisions.	'If we put her there, what happens to him?' — ask this before confirming any placement. It trains the forward-thinking move that is the heart of systems awareness.
DGO 10 — Slow Down in	Reading each character's preference carefully before placing them. Pausing to	The habit of gathering information before acting — paying attention to	'Let's read everyone's preferences before we place anyone — then we'll have a

DGO	What the Game Practises	The Bigger Skill	What to Say While Playing
Study and Consumption	survey the whole venue before beginning. Adjusting thoughtfully when something doesn't work rather than placing and replacing rapidly without reflection.	what someone needs before deciding what to do. Patience as a strategy, not just a virtue.	plan.' This one sentence teaches survey-before-act, a habit that transfers directly to reading comprehension, problem-solving, and interpersonal intelligence.

Parents' Note

Is This Seat Taken? was developed by Poti Poti Studio — a two-person team based between Barcelona and Brussels — and published by Wholesome Games Presents in August 2025. It holds an Overwhelmingly Positive rating on Steam, a Metacritic score of 79, and was ranked among the best Nintendo Switch games of its release year. It is available on Steam, Nintendo Switch, iOS, and Android.

Why Grade 2. At seven, your child understands that people are different. What they're developing — slowly, through experience — is the understanding that those differences have practical consequences for how people should be treated. DGO 15, 'Become More Accepting of Others,' begins this work, and Is This Seat Taken? provides the gentlest possible entry point. The game never lectures about acceptance. It simply gives your child a world full of different people with different needs and says: arrange things so everyone's comfortable. By the time they've seated a hundred characters, the habit of thinking 'what does this person need to be comfortable?' is becoming automatic. That habit is the foundation of everything the Grade 2 theme builds toward.

The abstraction advantage. Characters are geometric shapes — circles, squares, rhombuses — not realistic people. This is ideal for a 7-year-old because it teaches the principle of acceptance without the complexity of specific identity categories. Your child isn't navigating racial or cultural differences (those come later in the curriculum). They're learning something more foundational: that every person has preferences and needs, that those needs deserve attention regardless of whether they make sense to you, and that accommodating them is both a challenge and a kindness. The abstraction lets the principle land clearly before the specifics make it complicated.

The constraint-thinking bonus. Beyond the social-emotional learning, this game develops genuine logical reasoning. Each level is a constraint satisfaction problem — multiple conditions that must be met simultaneously, each affecting the others. Your child is learning to hold several requirements in mind at once, test solutions against those requirements, and adjust when something doesn't work. This is the same cognitive skill used in scheduling, planning, coding, and design. The game wraps it in a social scenario that makes it emotionally intuitive, but the logical architecture underneath is real and transferable.

On imperfection. The game's decision not to require 100% satisfaction is one of its most thoughtful design choices — and one worth discussing explicitly with your child. Some levels cannot be solved perfectly. Some characters will be mildly unhappy no matter how carefully you arrange things. The game advances anyway, because life advances anyway, and the lesson is real: you don't have to make everyone perfectly happy to do a good job. Sometimes the best

available arrangement still leaves someone a little uncomfortable. Understanding this — and being genuinely okay with it — is a piece of emotional maturity that many adults are still developing.

The deeper value. Your child spends hours arranging other people's seats — finding the right place for each character based on who they are and what they need. And then Nat's story tells them: someone is doing that for you, too. The world is full of people making room for each other's shapes. Every classroom, every family, every community needs someone who pays attention to what others need and quietly arranges things to accommodate it. Your 7-year-old is learning to be that person — the one who reads the room, the one who notices, the one who asks 'is this seat taken, and would this one work better for you?' One puzzle at a time.