Autism & PDD™: Things I Can Say and Do

Feelings & Actions

by Michele Zucker Saunders

Skills	Ages
■ language ■ vocabulary ■ social skills ■ grammar	■ 5 through 18
	Grades
	■ K through 12

Evidence-Based Practice

According to the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA 2006, www.asha.org/members/deskref_journals/deskref/default), the Clinical Guidelines of the Royal College of Speech & Language Therapists (2005, www.rcslt.org/resources) and the National Reading Panel (www.nationalreadingpanel.org), the following therapy principles are supported:

- Children with language difficulties, particularly those with pragmatic impairments, need specific teaching to help social understanding.
- Children with autism need approaches that focus on social functioning. These approaches should be introduced as an ongoing intervention strategy from early years to adulthood.
- Children make sense of the world through the language they use. Graphic and semantic organizers help learners connect a central concept or theme to a variety of related ideas and events.
- Therapy should target the initiation of spontaneous communication in functional activities across social partners and settings.
- Therapy should enhance the initiation of communication for a range of social functions that are reciprocal and promote the development of friendships and social networks.

The communication and activity webs in this book incorporate the above principles and are also based on expert professional practice.

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Printed in the U.S.A.
ISBN 0-7606-0701-X

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Michele has worked in the field of communication disorders for the past 10 years and, throughout her career, has worked with both typically-developing children and those with developmental delays/disabilities, spanning from toddlers to adults. Her past work experience includes clinic/hospital settings, special education preschools, elementary schools, high schools, and currently a public middle school servicing grades 5-7.

Michele, her husband, Michael, and their dog, Romeo, welcomed their first baby, Jayne Isabella, into their family on June 8, 2005.

The *Autism & PDD: Things I Can Say and Do* books are Michele's first publications with LinguiSystems.

Dedication

To all of the children whose lives I hope to touch . . . I hope these books make the difference.

To my students, past, present, and future, who continue to teach me, motivate me, and reward me by giving me the incentive to meet their communication and learning needs.

And to my parents, Sherri and Tom; my husband, Michael; my daughter, Jayne; and my dog, Romeo, whose love, support, and encouragement has meant the world to me!

Acknowledgment

To my colleagues and friends who encouraged me to publish my ideas.

Edited by Lauri Whiskeyman
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Cover photograph from www.photos.com

Table of Contents

Introduction 4

Part 1: Feelings

When I'm Happy
Say Web and Template..... 7
Do Web and Template 9

When I'm Mad
Say Web and Template..... 11
Do Web and Template 13

When I'm Sad
Say Web and Template..... 15
Do Web and Template 17

When I'm Scared
Say Web and Template..... 19
Do Web and Template 21

When I'm Sick
Say Web and Template..... 23
Do Web and Template 25

When I'm Tired
Say Web and Template..... 27
Do Web and Template 29

When I'm Hungry or Thirsty
Say Web and Template..... 31
Do Web and Template 33

When I'm Bored
Say Web and Template..... 35
Do Web and Template 37

When I Need a Break
Say Web and Template..... 39
Do Web and Template 41

Part 2: Actions

During a Game
Say Web and Template..... 43
Do Web and Template 45

During Computer Time
Say Web and Template..... 47
Do Web and Template 49

During Dinner
Say Web and Template..... 51
Do Web and Template 53

At Bedtime
Say Web and Template..... 55
Do Web and Template 57

In the Morning
Say Web and Template..... 59
Do Web and Template 61

When I Get Hurt
Say Web and Template..... 63
Do Web and Template 65

If I Get Lost
Say Web and Template..... 67
Do Web and Template 69

When I Get Home
Say Web and Template..... 71
Do Web and Template 73

When I Get to School
Say Web and Template..... 75
Do Web and Template 77

When I'm in Trouble
Say Web and Template..... 79
Do Web and Template 81

On the Weekend
Say Web and Template..... 83
Do Web and Template 85

On My Birthday
Say Web and Template..... 87
Do Web and Template 89

Parent/Guardian Letter 91

Web Information Form 92

Web Progress Chart 93

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Introduction

As a speech-language pathologist (SLP), I have had the opportunity to work closely with children who have communication disorders and autism/Pervasive Developmental Disorders (PDD). Throughout my experiences, I have observed how demanding it can be for children with language disorders, especially those on the autism spectrum, to access and/or initiate language. Because I recognized that children with autism often present with strength in concrete and literal tasks, and because this population most often exhibits visual learning styles, I designed the *Autism & PDD: Things I Can Say and Do* series. This series provides students on the autism spectrum and students with communication disorders with functional and relevant communication and activity webs that allow them to break the complex code of the English language.

I have used these communication and activity webs with my students and have enthusiastically watched them gain feelings of achievement and success when they realized that they were finally breaking the code and functionally communicating with others.

There are 21 functional topics covered in each book in *Autism & PDD: Things I Can Say and Do*:

Body Parts & Clothing	People & Places
Feelings & Actions	Staying Clean & Healthy
Holidays	Weather, Seasons, & Months

The communication and activity webs are designed to be used together or separately, depending upon your students' abilities and/or focus of therapy. The "Say" communication webs provide students with actual sentences to say in a variety of functional contexts. The "Do" activity webs highlight a variety of actions using the same functional contexts. You will notice that some of the "Do" activity webs include items such as "Tell a friend I am having fun" or "Ask for help finding something." These items help promote a student's expressive language skills by giving a prompt to say something but not providing the actual response. In addition, the format of the communication and activity webs (i.e., square vs. triangle) were designed to help students visually differentiate between what to "Say" and what to "Do."

Autism & PDD: Things I Can Do–Feelings & Actions helps students develop functional language and vocabulary skills for emotional experiences and common activities they may encounter on a daily basis. Through use of the webs in appropriate contexts, students will gain insight and meaning relative to feelings they may experience on a given day. They will also develop understanding of appropriate choices to make when participating in familiar activities with family, friends, and classmates. By focusing on these topics, students will have the chance to acquire functional terminology to use both receptively and expressively in their daily lives.

Suggested Guidelines for Using *Autism & PDD: Things I Can Say and Do*

1. *Open the lines of communication*

   Most professionals in the field of communication disorders recognize that any therapy technique or methodology works best when there is support from parents/guardians, classroom teachers, service providers, and support staff. By working as a team, you are more likely to have an outcome of success and carryover of skills. With this in mind, it is very important to consult with parents and colleagues before, during, and throughout the use of *Autism & PDD: Things I Can Say and Do*.

   You can act as the liaison between school and home by consulting, collecting information, and explaining/demonstrating proper techniques so the communication webs can positively impact your students' language skills.

2. *Familiarize yourself with the forms*

   In each book, you will find a parent/guardian letter, *Web Information Form*, and *Web Progress Chart*. Send home the parent letter at the start of the program. Each time you introduce a new web, send home the information form. The progress chart will help you keep track of webs used and student progress.

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These forms are meant to save you time, promote organization, and simplify your job.

3. *Be functional*

   In order to get your students to use the webs, it is important to make the webs appealing. How do you do this? **Be functional**. The goal is for the web to have more significance to the student than just a sheet of paper with words on it. In order to accomplish this, think about what the student wants, desires, and enjoys. Have the student use the webs at functional and routine times. Initially use webs that will give the student feedback (e.g., tangible or visual response). For example, you may choose to use the web *Things I Can Say When I'm Hungry or Thirsty* (page 31). Have the student choose the option "I want a snack" and wait for the response. Then give him some chips or another appropriate food item. Your student will feel empowered when he realizes that his communication results in a positive reaction from another person. This is bound to motivate him to use the webs again and again.

   Students with communication disorders can also be motivated by being included in a discussion with peers. With this in mind, you might select a web that will allow your student to appropriately share in a circle time activity, a holiday conversation, or simply an exchange between him and a fellow classmate during a structured activity. For example, you might have a student ask his peer, "Will you sit next to me?" When the student sees the physical change (e.g., his friend now sitting next to him) as a result of his question, it will grab his attention, pique his curiosity, and keep him wanting more!

4. *Share with colleagues*

   Remember to make sure that the webs are being used in other locations outside the therapy room; otherwise, your students' skills might improve in therapy but will have little or no change outside the therapeutic setting. Squeeze in the time to talk to the classroom teacher, teachers of special classes, other service providers, and of course the student's parents. Distribute copies of the web(s) across settings to promote carryover, consistency, and awareness. Don't forget to let your colleagues know about the progress and/or changes you've observed and to take the time to ask them what they've observed while working with the student.

5. *Promote conversational exchanges*

   As communication specialists, we dedicate ourselves to creating and providing functional, effective, and an abundance of communicative opportunities for our students. *Autism & PDD: Things I Can Say and Do* provides an assortment of communication and activity webs that address numerous activities of daily living, including common and relevant sentences while promoting social initiation and interaction. All you need to do is to be prepared with the suitable web for a specific context.

   You can motivate a student by using a communication or activity web to initiate interactions between you and the student or between the student and a peer. Using these webs during meaningful times will give your student the opportunity to become a more active participant conversationally.

   For example, you may decide to play a game in therapy using the web *Things I Can Say During a Game* (page 43). After asking the group, "Whose turn is it?," verbally or nonverbally cue your student to say, "It's your turn" or "It's my turn." By using the statements on the web, you can help the student engage and initiate conversation with peers throughout the game. (Note: This is a great scenario in which to train a student to use the webs because of the predictable and routine statements used in a game context.)

   The objective, over time, is to ask a question and have the student independently select appropriate responses from the web. The ultimate goal is for your student to use the information on the webs independently in appropriate contexts.

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Based on this example, you can surmise that when using the books in this series, it is important to be a good planner with regard to web selection, contextual opportunities, and collaborating with colleagues.

6. *Personalize the webs*

   Each completed communication and activity web is accompanied by a blank template that can be filled in with individualized, personal statements regarding your student. You may decide to make changes to the completed web or create a personalized web based on the student's needs.

   Each time you decide to use a blank template, you may send home the *Web Information Form*, page 92, for input. Family members can provide valuable information about the student's experiences outside of school, such as names of family members, places the student goes, activities at home, etc. With this information, you will be able to better design an individualized web that meets the student's communication needs at school and at home.

7. *Adapt as needed*

   The *Autism & PDD: Things I Can Say and Do* series provides black-and-white reproducible pages to allow for flexibility and creativity. Depending upon the student's needs, you may decide to color code the webs to help your student organize them (e.g., feelings may be blue, places may be orange, actions may be green). In addition, you might put some of the webs into a notebook and/or laminate and display them (full-size or reduced versions) strategically in the classroom, library, etc.

8. *Choose your stage and your audience*

   You can use the webs with students during individual therapy sessions and/or group sessions in the therapy room, the classroom, around the school, and in the home. Once you introduce each web, post in the area where the student can most functionally access it throughout the day.

   For example, you might post webs by the calendar that relate to that month (e.g., *Things I Can Say/Do in February*, *Things I Can Say/Do in Winter*, and *Things I Can Say/Do on Valentine's Day*). This way, students have visible and routine access to relevant webs for review.

   Other webs may be posted throughout the classroom to promote initiation and language use. For example, you might post the webs *Things I Can Say/Do During a Game* in the game center of the classroom, *Things I Can Say/Do with Coats and Jackets* by the closet area, and *Things I Can Say/Do When Washing My Hands* near or in the bathroom.

   For group sessions, provide each student with a copy, review the options to choose from, and then have each student perform one of the options. This allows each student to acquire meaning through experience. Each student in the group may learn via observation or may benefit from taking turns saying each option on the web. The repetition can be valuable for all students as you familiarize them with appropriate choices for specific contexts.

Remember that each web targets an array of speech and language goals, such as sentence formation/use, word structures/endings, conversational skills, turn taking, and associated words. Because these webs are so functional, they can also be used with English language learners and with students with other developmental delays, such as language delays, pragmatic deficits, and learning disabilities. Take advantage of these language-stimulating webs as you help your students access language.

It is my hope that the communication and activity webs in *Autism & PDD: Things I Can Say and Do* will help your students in the same way they helped mine. I feel confident that by using these communication and activity webs with your students, you will be providing them with the tools they need to independently interact and communicate successfully with others.

Michele Zucker Saunders

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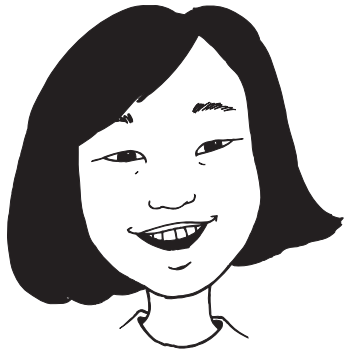
Things I Can Say When I'm Happy

"I like that."

"Hooray."

"I'm so happy."



happy

"This is fun."

"That's funny."

"This is great."

"I'm having a good time."

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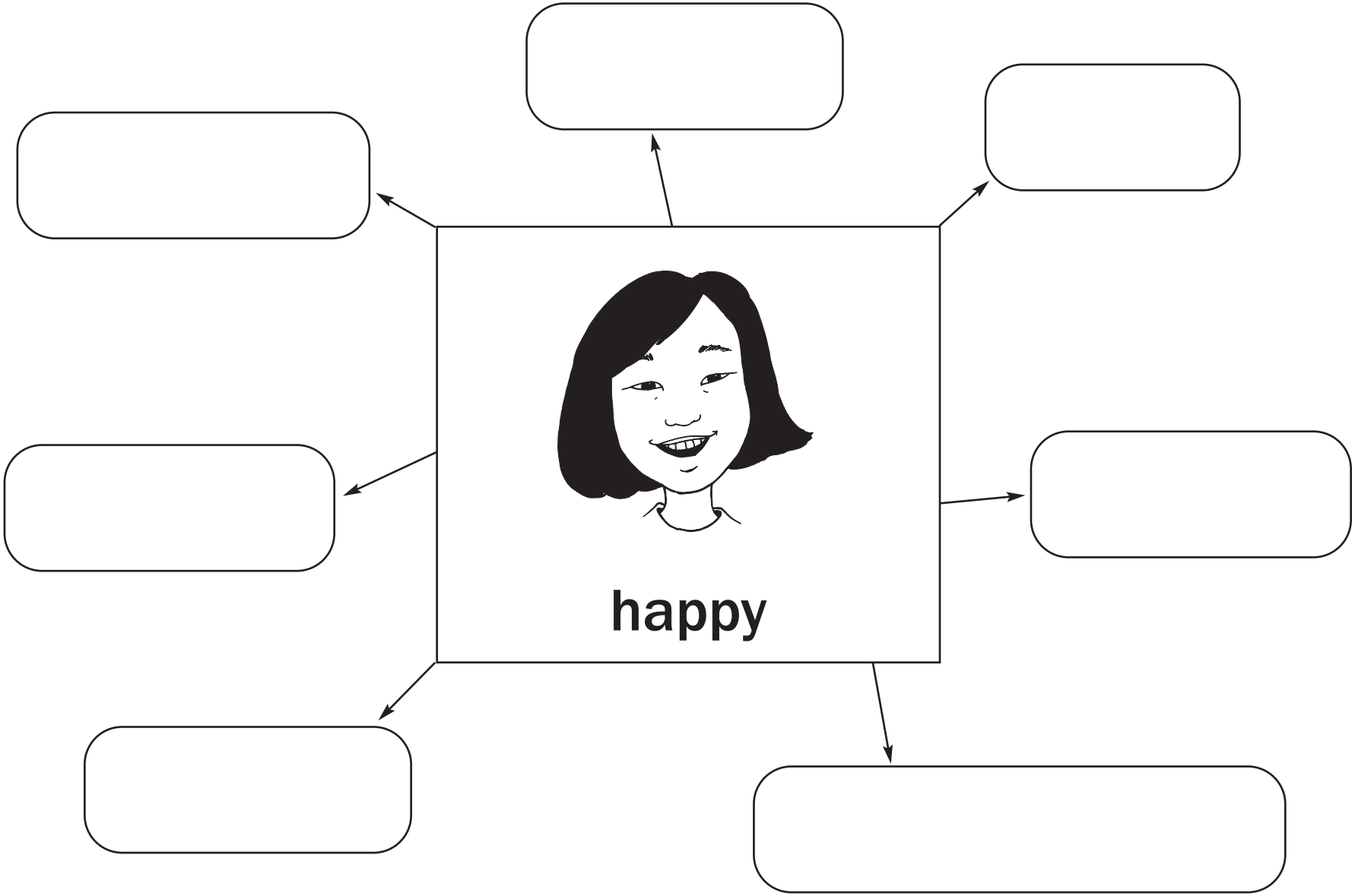
Things I Can Say When I'm Happy



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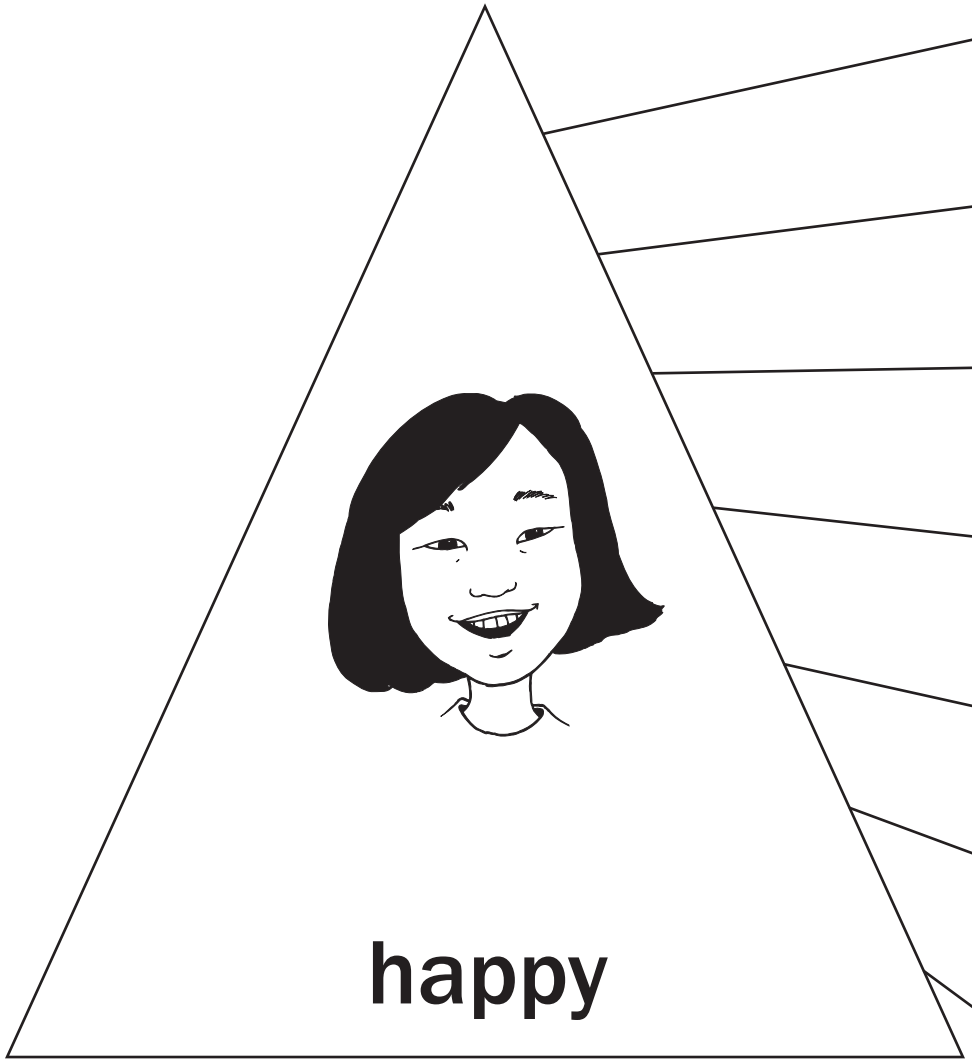
Things I Can Do When I'm Happy



- Smile.
- Shout out loud.
- Laugh.
- Say something positive (good).
- Clap my hands.
- Tell someone I am having fun.
- Tell someone I am happy.

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Things I Can Do When I'm Happy

happy

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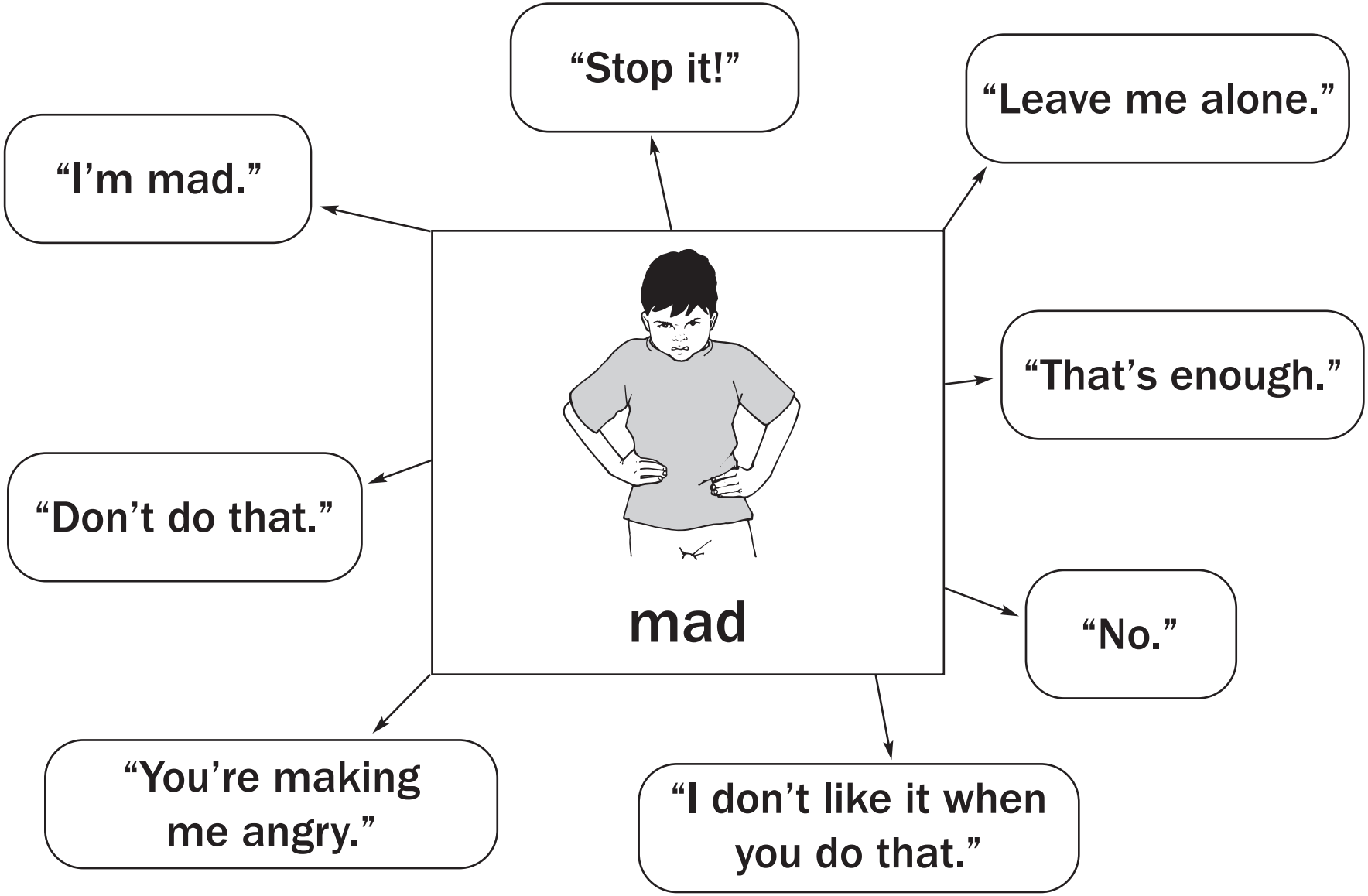
Things I Can Say When I'm Mad



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Things I Can Say When I'm Mad

mad

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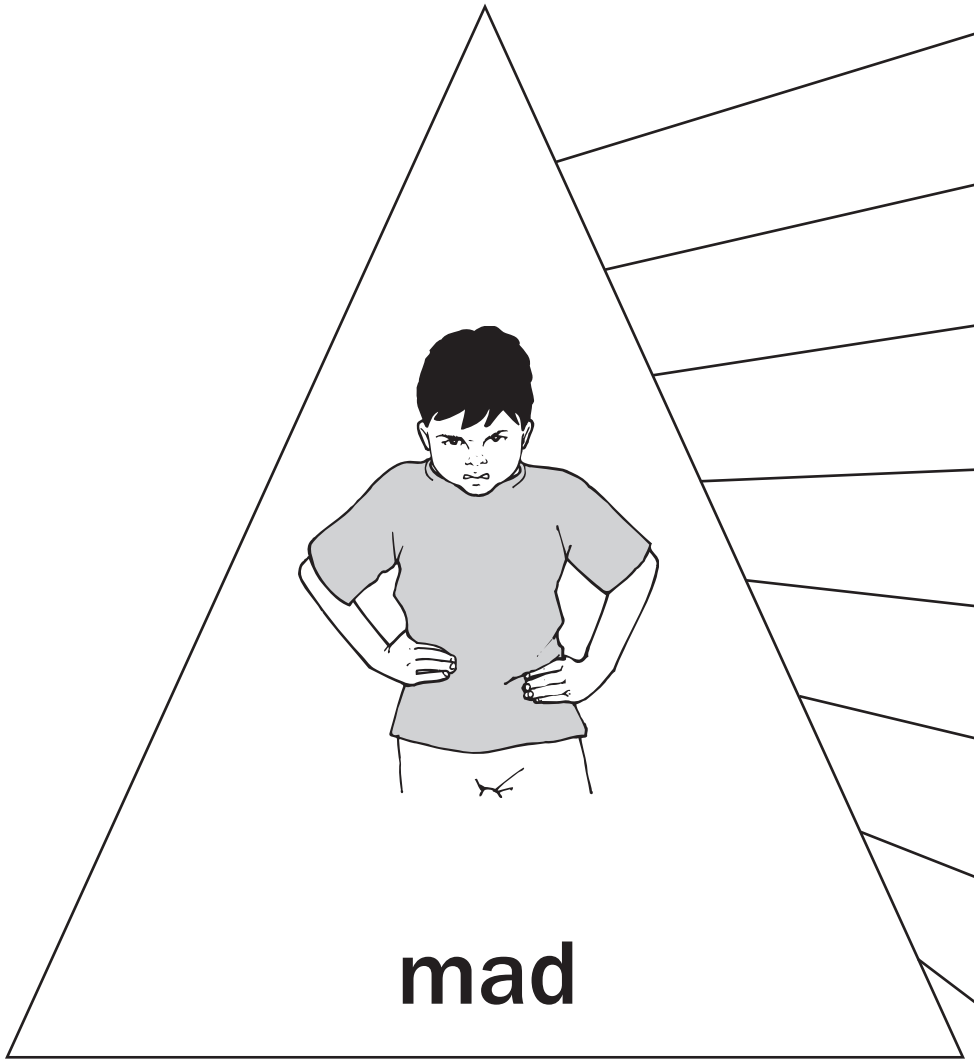
Things I Can Do When I'm Mad



- Tell someone to stop.
- Tell someone that I am angry.
- Make an angry face.
- Make an angry sound.
- Put my hand up for "Stop."
- Stamp my feet.
- Shake my head "No!"
- Tell someone I don't like what he is doing.

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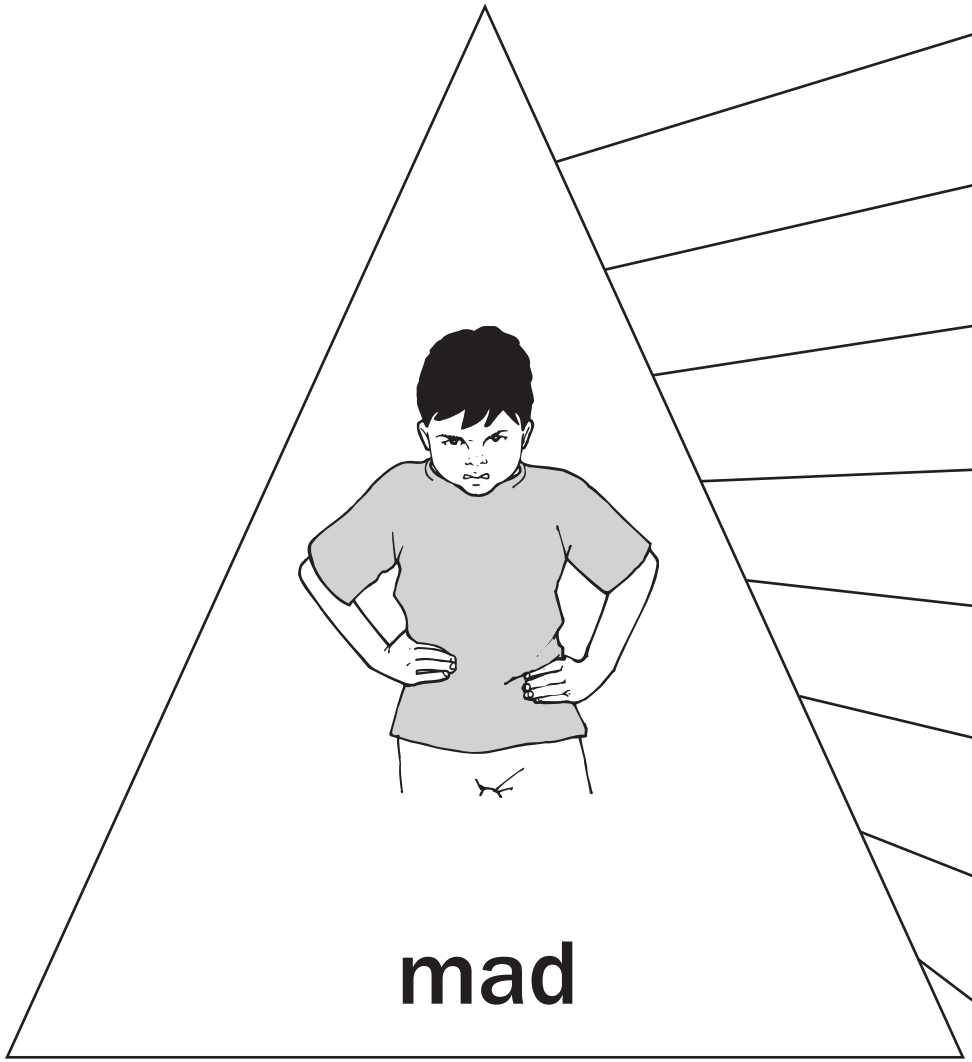
Things I Can Do When I'm Mad



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Things I Can Say When I'm Sad

"I feel sad."

"Be nice."

"I'm sorry."

sad

"I need a friend."

"I feel like crying."

"That's not nice."

"I want my _____."

"I'm upset because _____."

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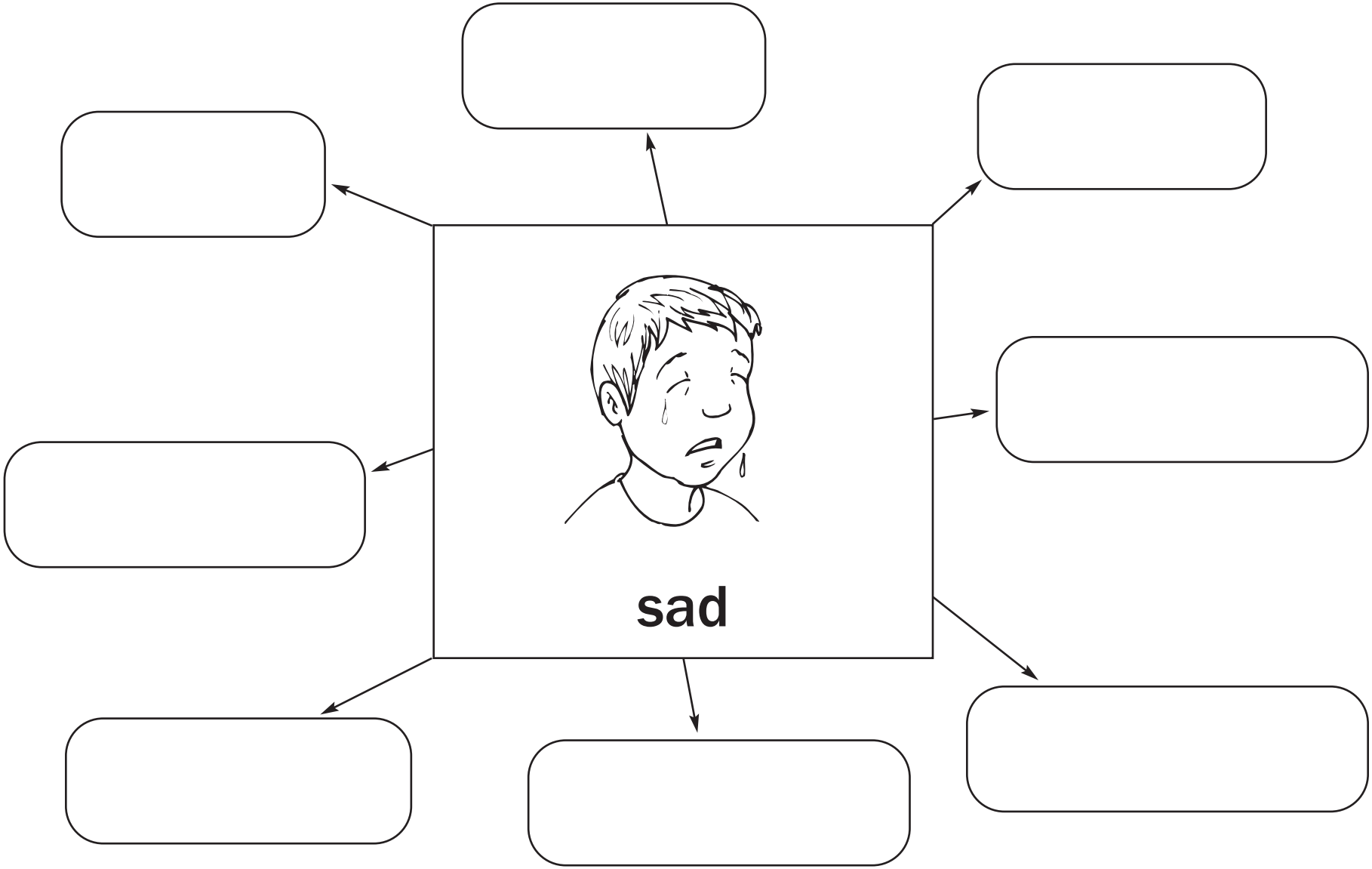
Things I Can Say When I'm Sad



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Things I Can Do When I'm Sad

- Frown.
- Apologize.
- Tell someone why I am sad.
- Show/Tell someone what I want.
- Cry.
- Tell someone if they aren't being nice to me.
- Find a friend to talk to.
- Put my head down.

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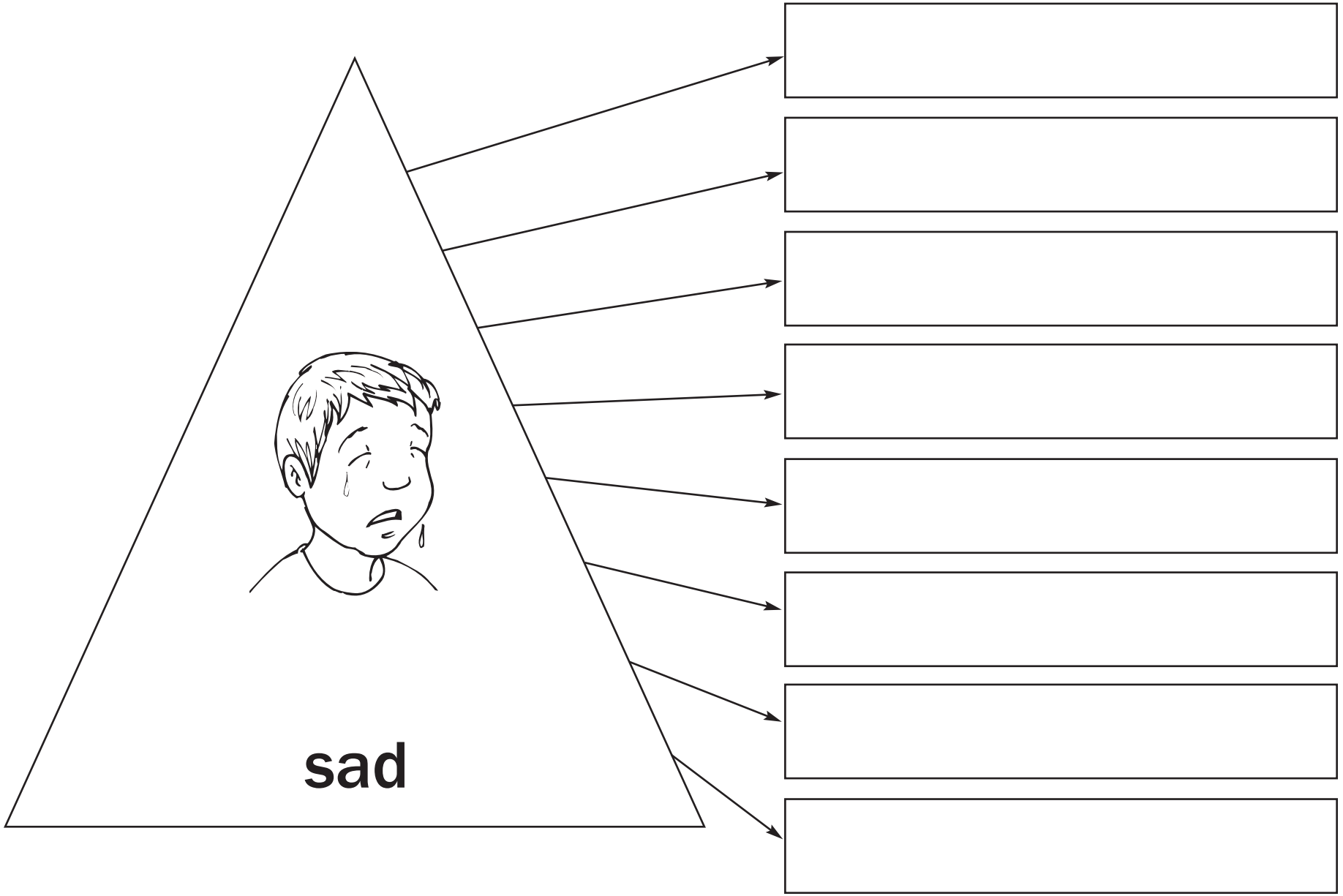
Things I Can Do When I'm Sad



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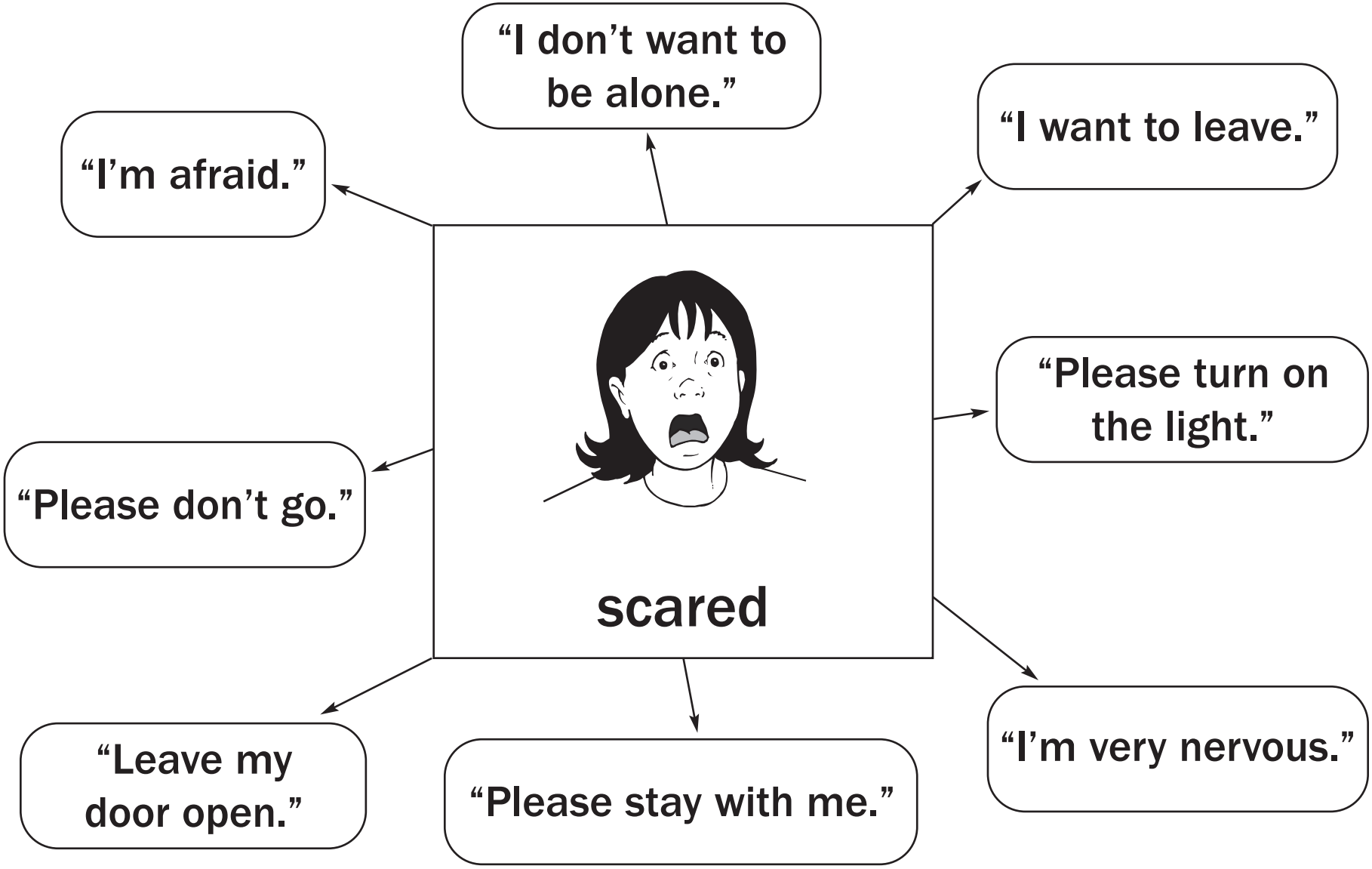
Things I Can Say When I'm Scared



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Things I Can Say When I'm Scared

scared

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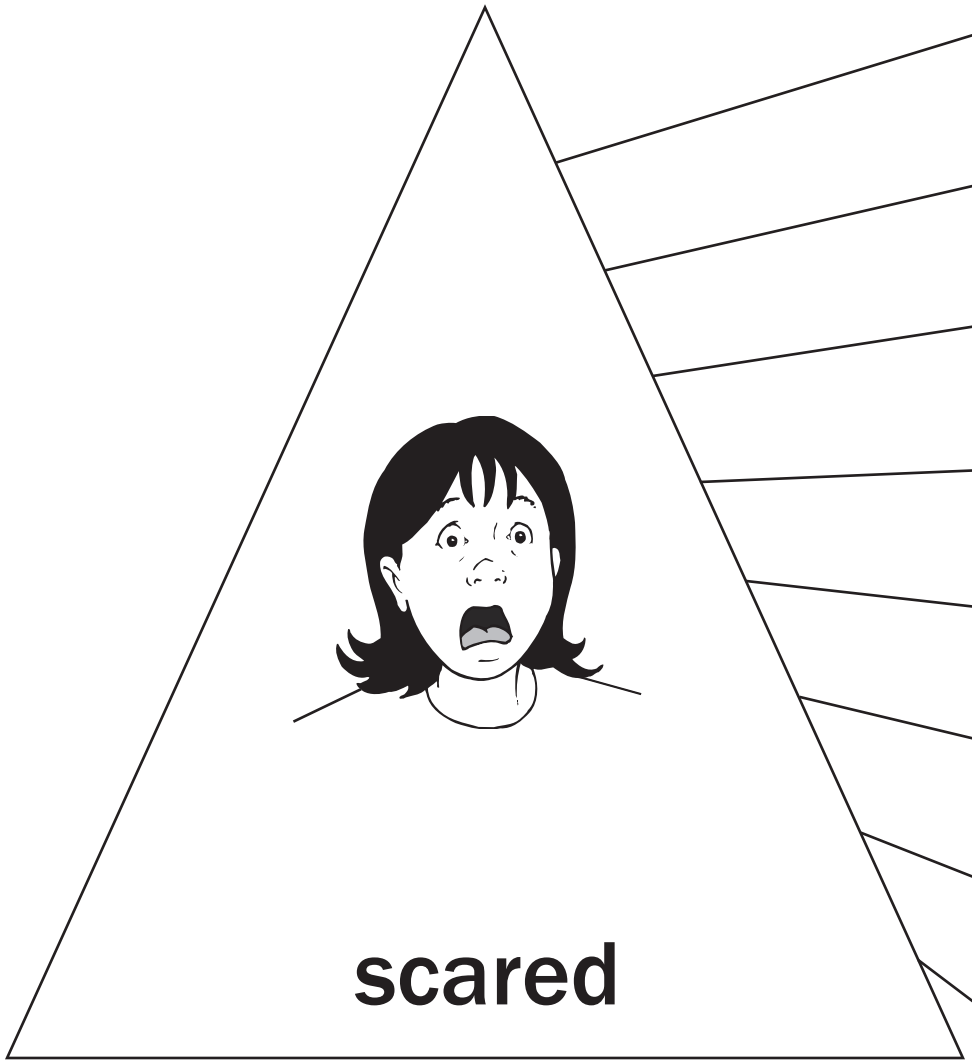
Things I Can Do When I'm Scared



- Shiver or tremble.
- Ask someone to stay with me.
- Hold someone's hand.
- Tell someone that I want to go.
- Close my eyes.
- Turn on a light.
- Leave my door open.
- Tell someone that I am nervous.

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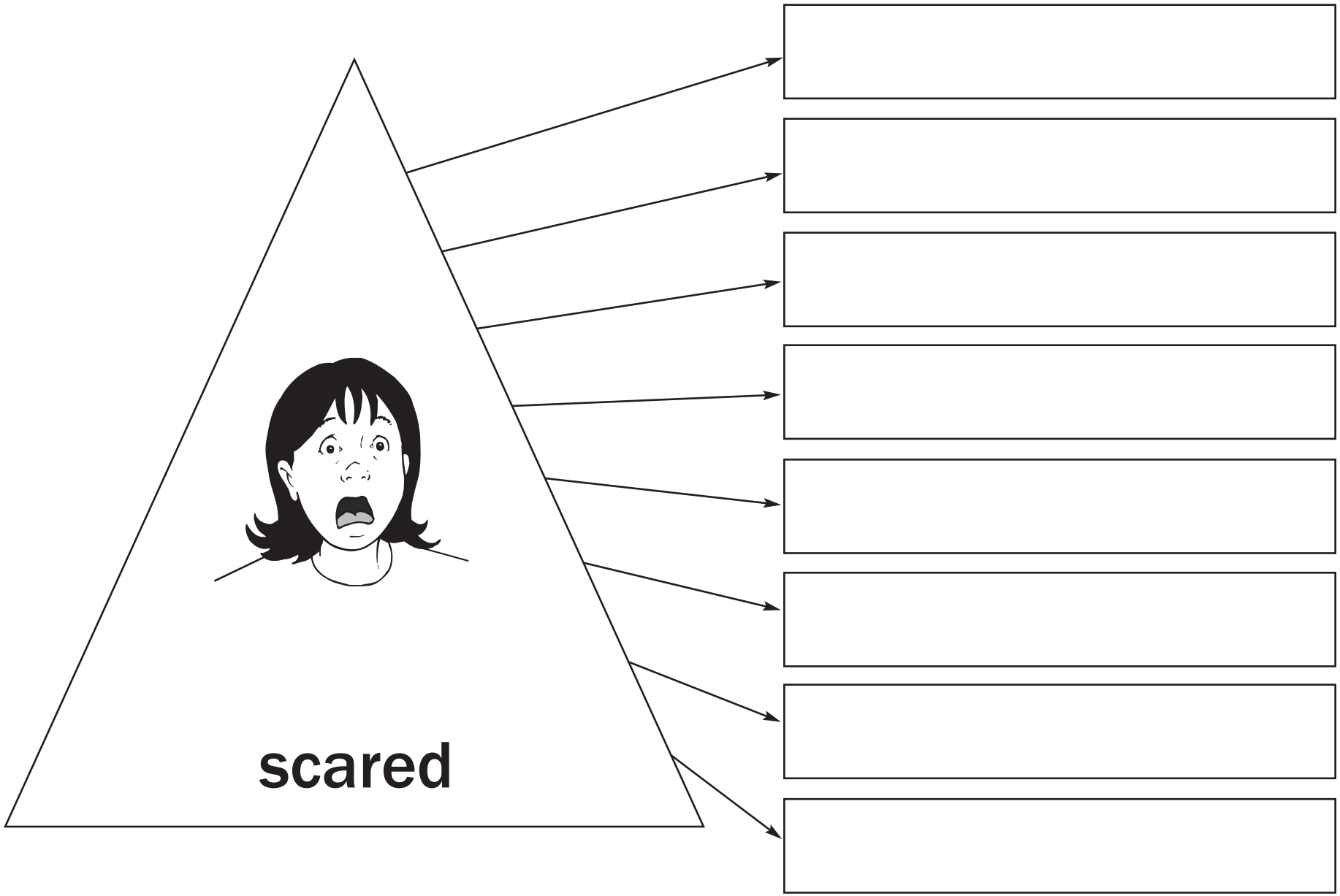
Things I Can Do When I'm Scared



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Things I Can Say When I'm Sick

"I want to lie down."

"My throat hurts."

"I need a doctor."

"I feel sick."

"I have a headache."

sick

"I don't feel well."

"I have a stomachache."

"May I go to the nurse?"

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Things I Can Say When I'm Sick

sick

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Things I Can Do When I'm Sick

- Tell an adult that I am sick.
- Ask to go to the nurse.
- Point to where it hurts.
- Sleep.
- Ask for the doctor.
- Tell someone which part of my body hurts.
- Sneeze or cough.
- Lie down.

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Things I Can Do When I'm Sick

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Things I Can Say When I'm Tired

"Good night."

"I'm tired."

"It's time for bed."

tired

"I'm exhausted."

"It's been a long day."

"I need a nap."

"I can't stop yawning."

"I need to go to sleep."

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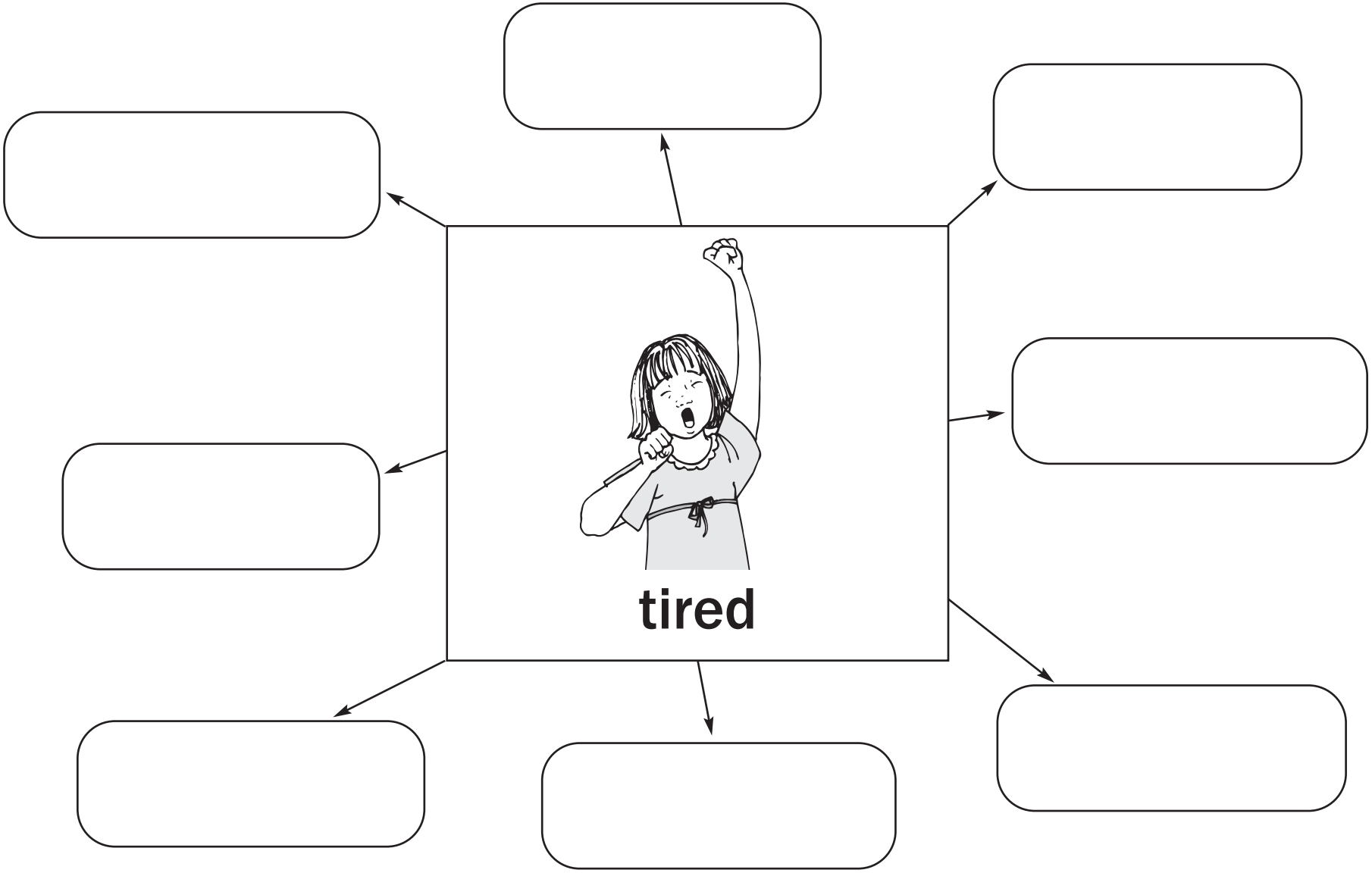
Things I Can Say When I'm Tired



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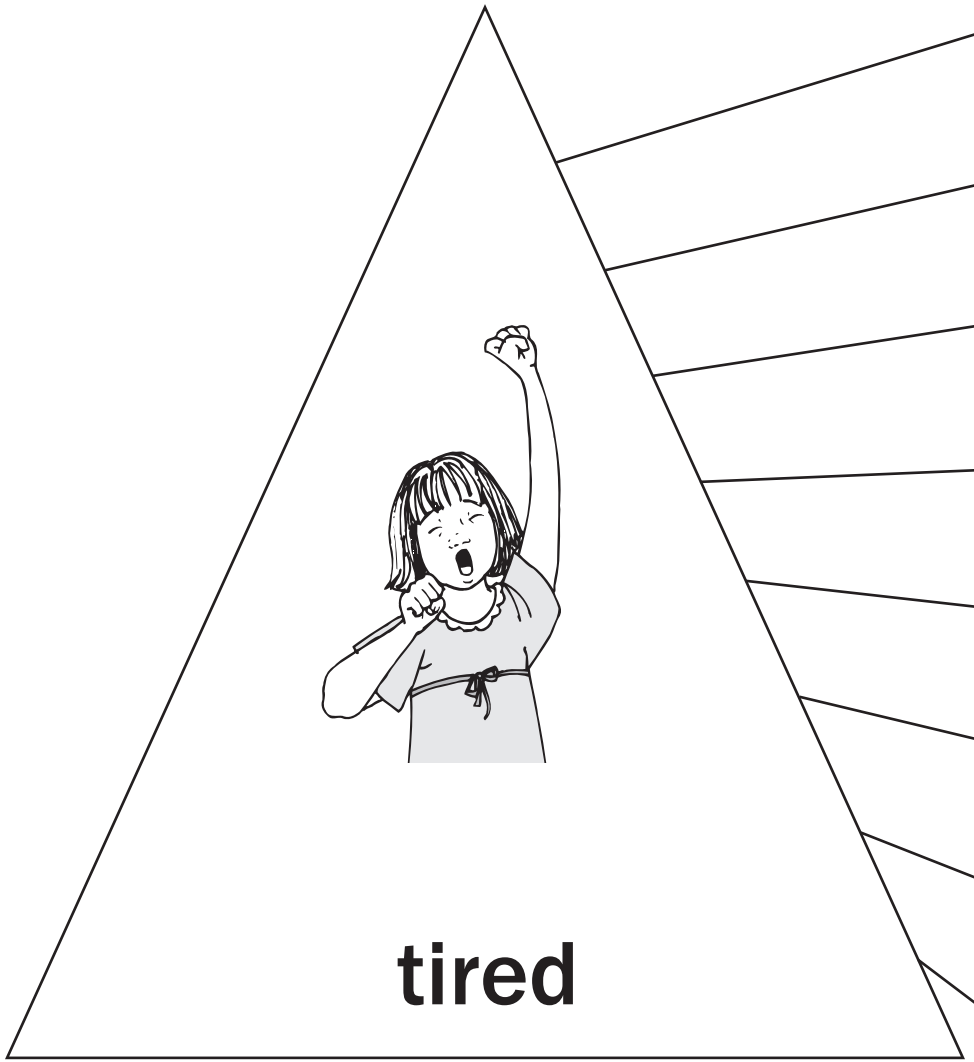
Things I Can Do When I'm Tired



- Take a nap.
- Go to sleep early.
- Sleep late.
- Tell someone I am tired.
- Sit down for a while.
- Yawn/Stretch.
- Close my eyes.
- Lie down in bed.

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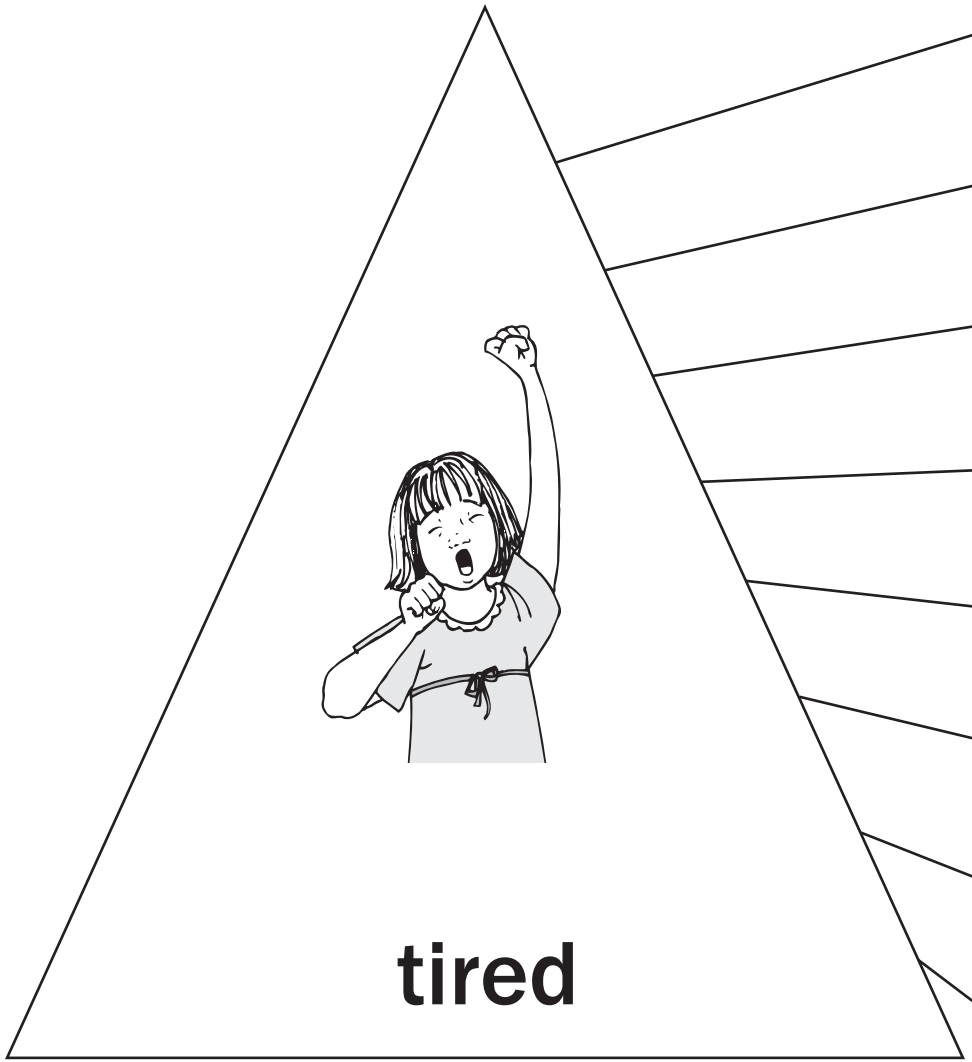
Things I Can Do When I'm Tired



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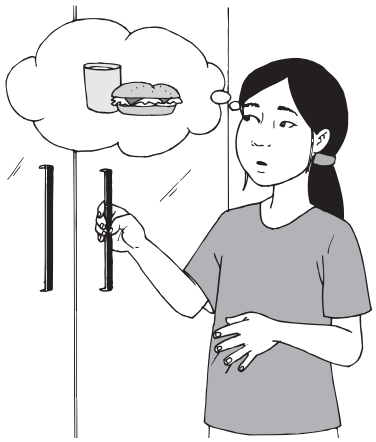
Things I Can Say When I'm Hungry or Thirsty

"May I have more _____?"

"I'm still hungry."

"I'm thirsty."



"I'm hungry."

"I want a snack."

hungry/thirsty

"My stomach is growling."

"I like to eat _____."

"May I have breakfast/lunch/dinner?"

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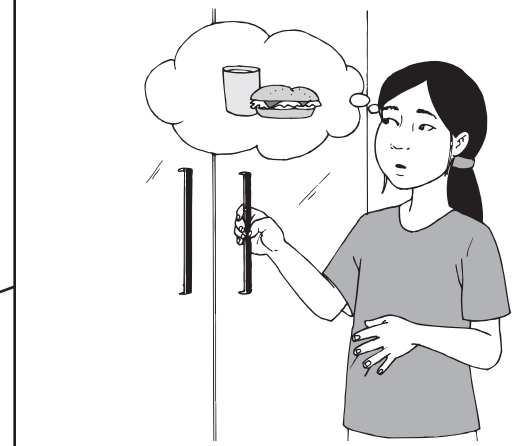
Things I Can Say When I'm Hungry or Thirsty



hungry/thirsty

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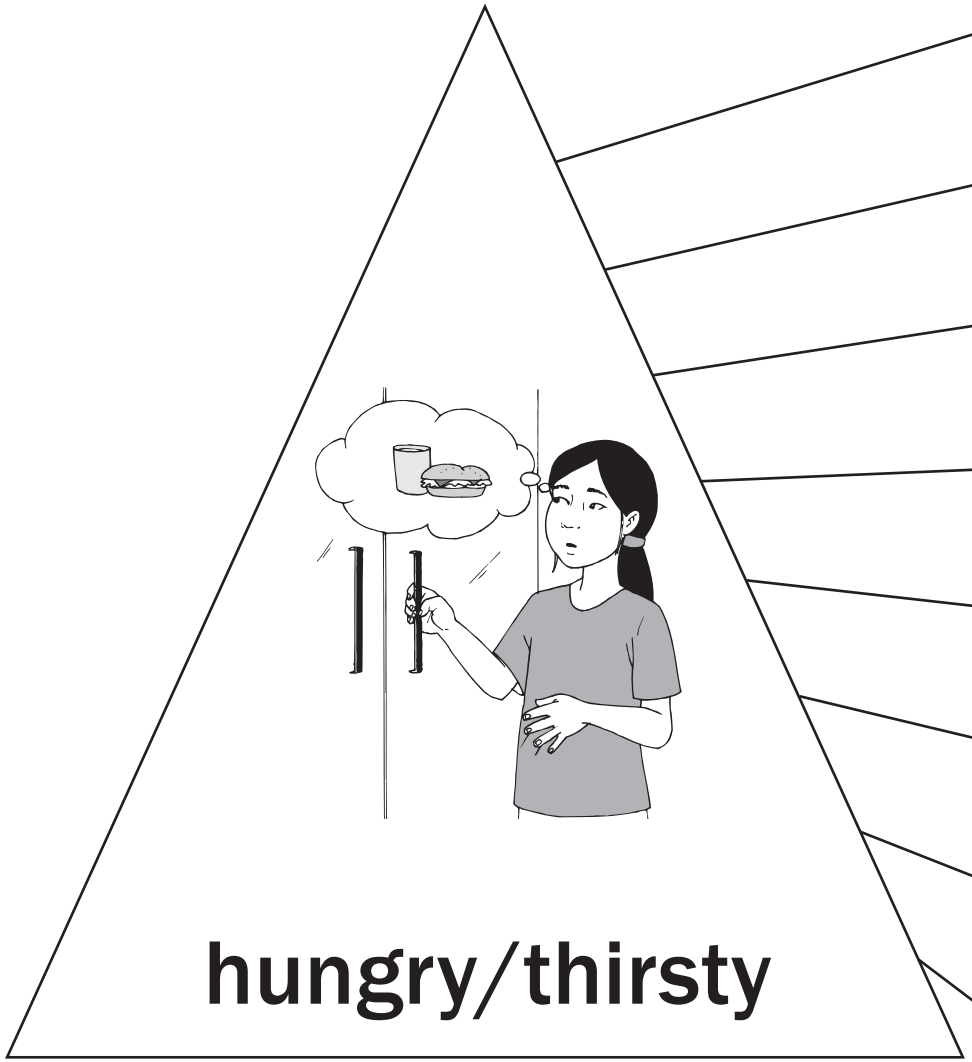
Things I Can Do When I'm Hungry or Thirsty



- Tell an adult that I am hungry.
- Go to the kitchen.
- Ask for something to eat/drink.
- Make something to eat.
- Take out a snack from my lunchbox.
- Tell someone I want more food.
- Tell someone I am thirsty.
- Get a drink.

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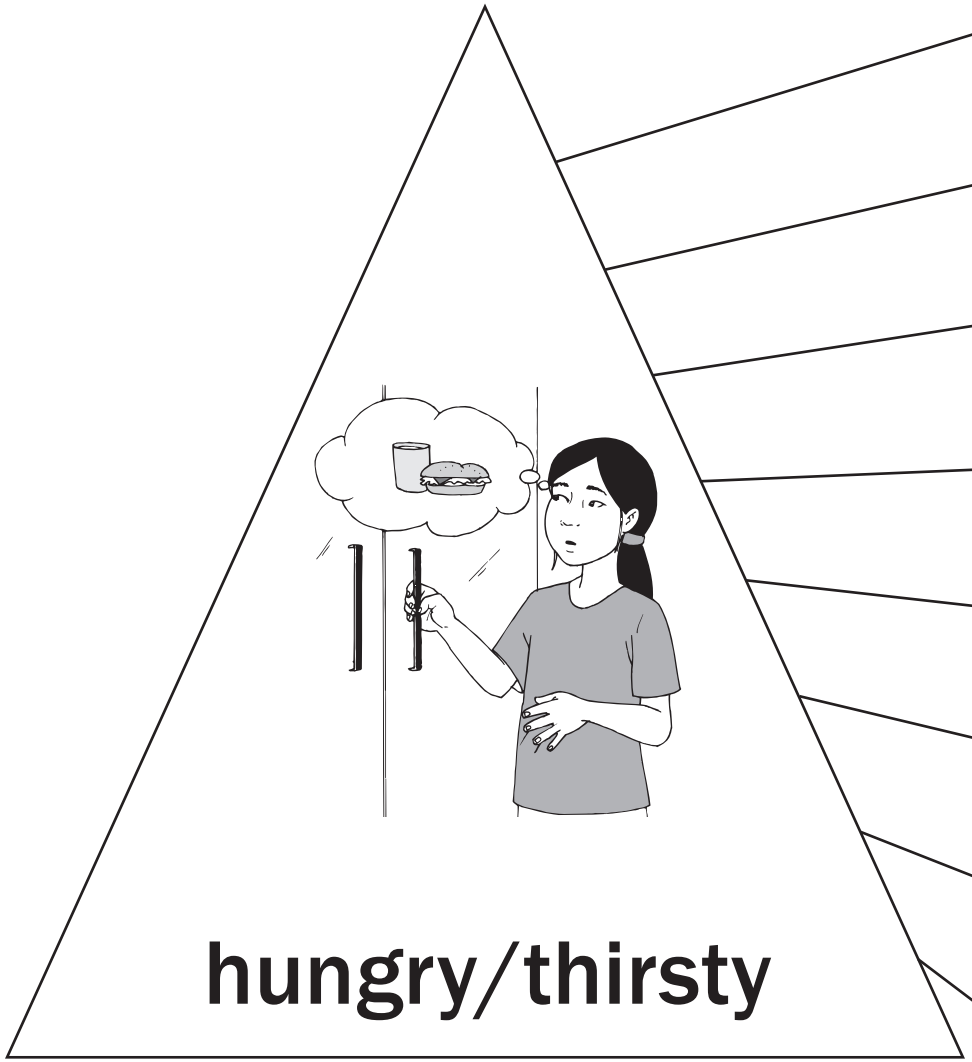
Things I Can Do When I'm Hungry or Thirsty



hungry/thirsty

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Things I Can Say When I'm Bored

"I'm bored."

"I need something to do."

"Read me a story."

bored

"Let's go for a walk."

"Play a game with me."

"I want to go somewhere."

"There's nothing to do."

"Take me for a ride."

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Things I Can Say When I'm Bored

bored

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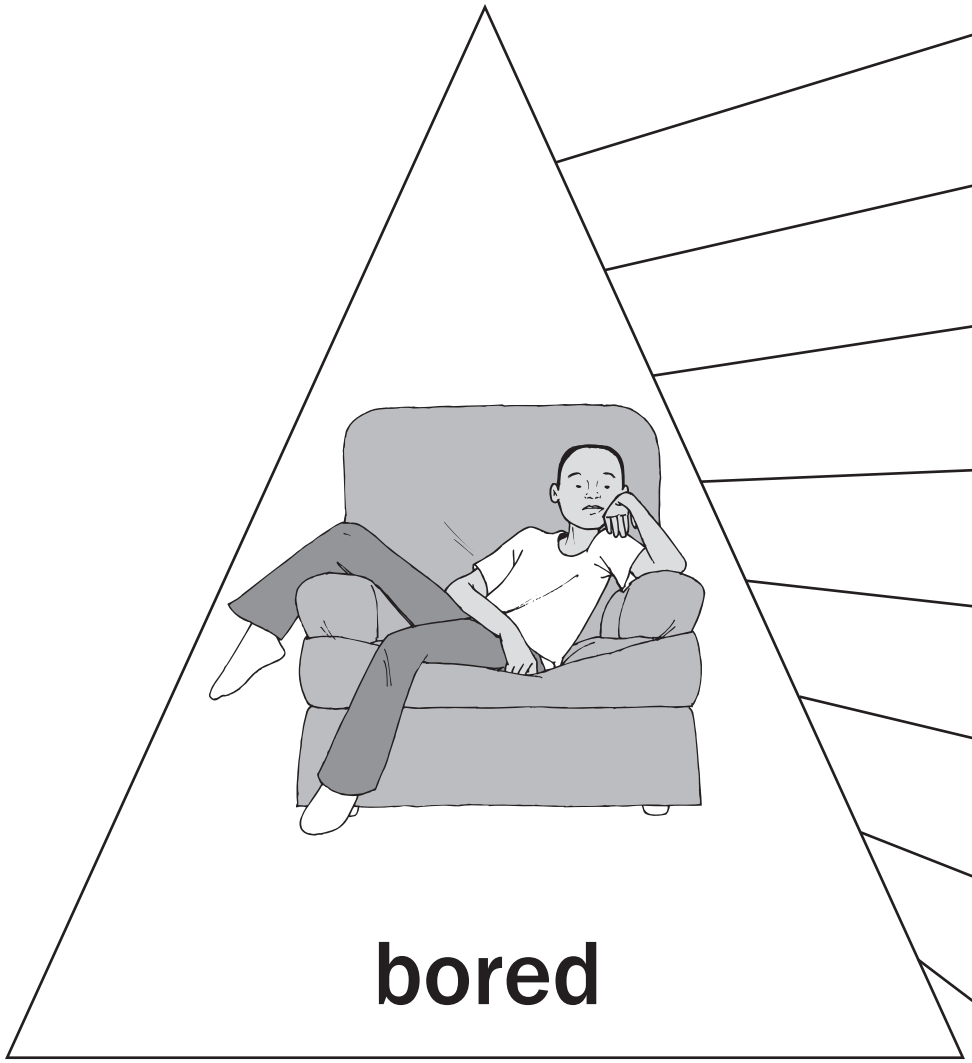
Things I Can Do When I'm Bored



- Find something to do.
- Tell someone that I want to go somewhere.
- Tell someone that I am bored.
- Read or ask someone to read to me.
- Ask someone to play a game with me.
- Go for a ride with my family.
- Go for a walk.
- Call a friend on the phone.

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Things I Can Do When I'm Bored

bored

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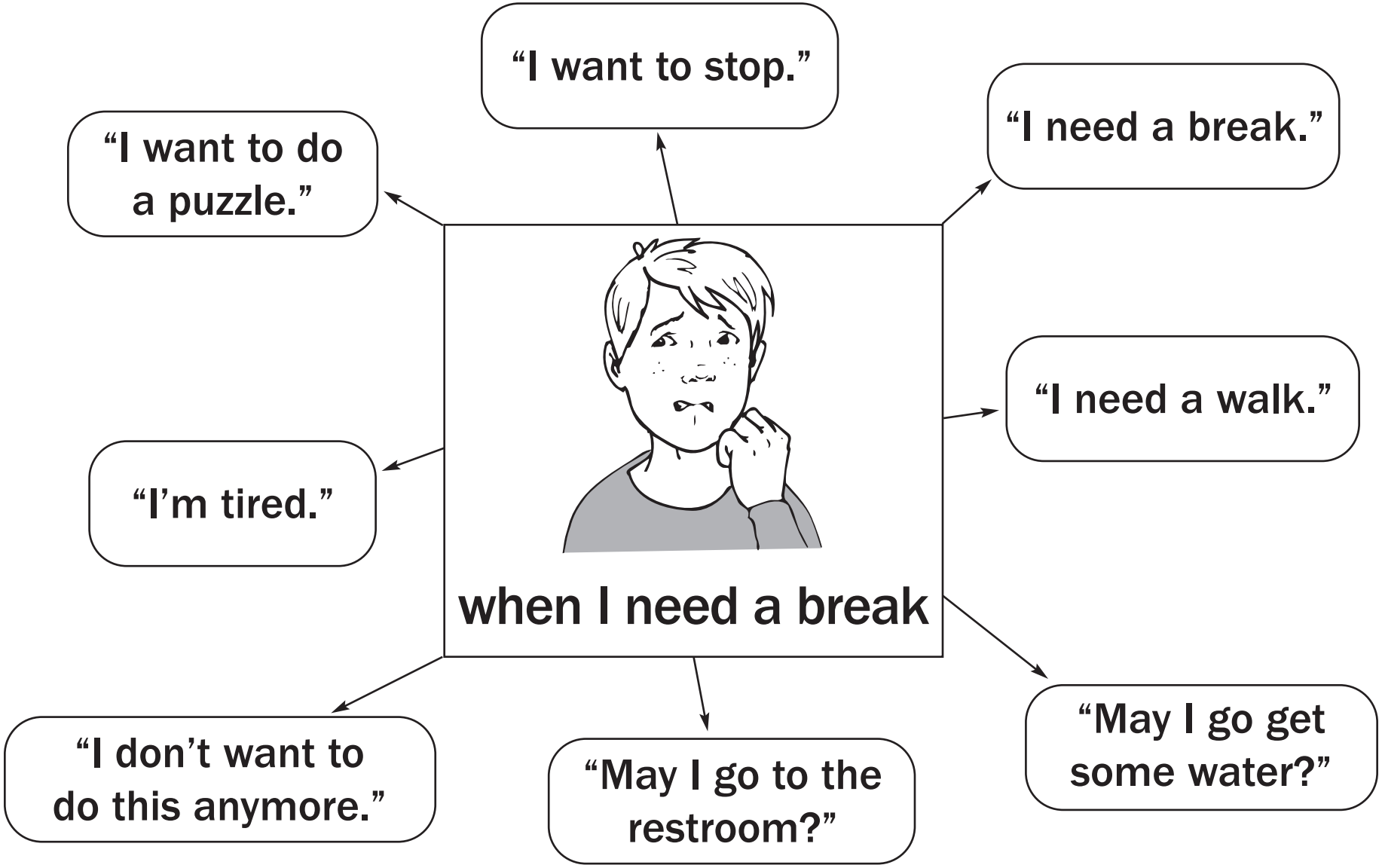
Things I Can Say When I Need a Break



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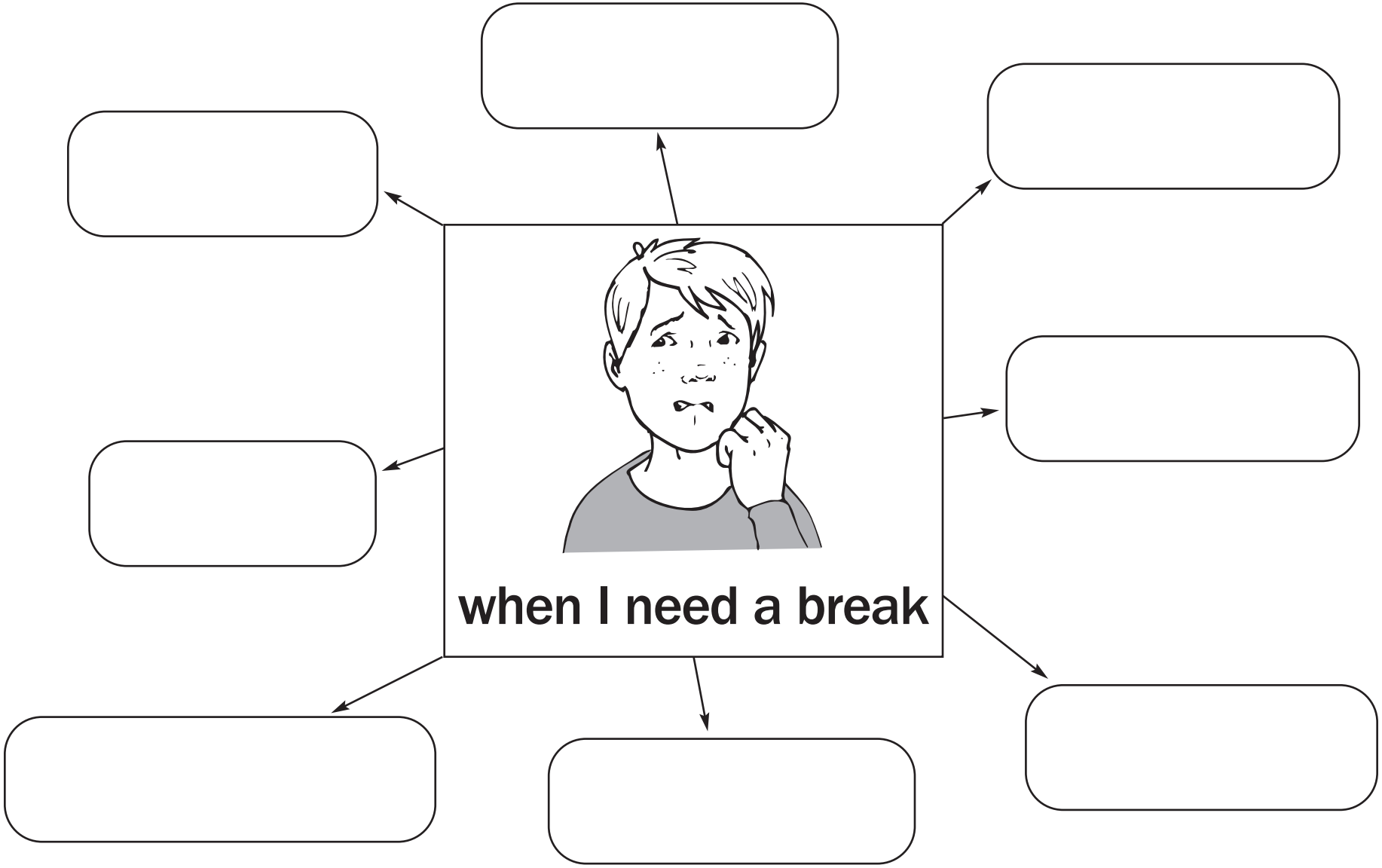
Things I Can Say When I Need a Break



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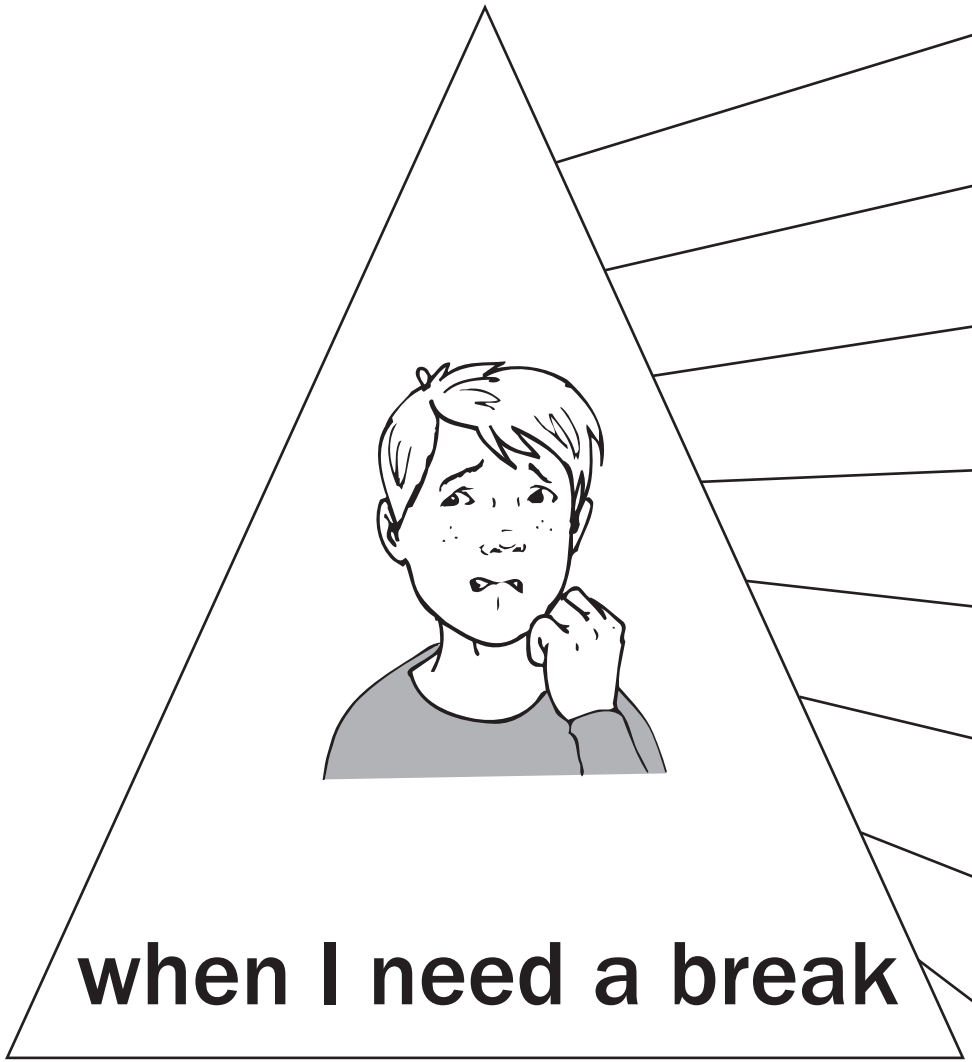
Things I Can Do When I Need a Break



- Stop what I am doing.
- Tell someone I need a break.
- Relax for five minutes.
- Go for a walk.
- Tell someone I am tired.
- Do a puzzle.
- Get a drink of water.
- Use the bathroom.

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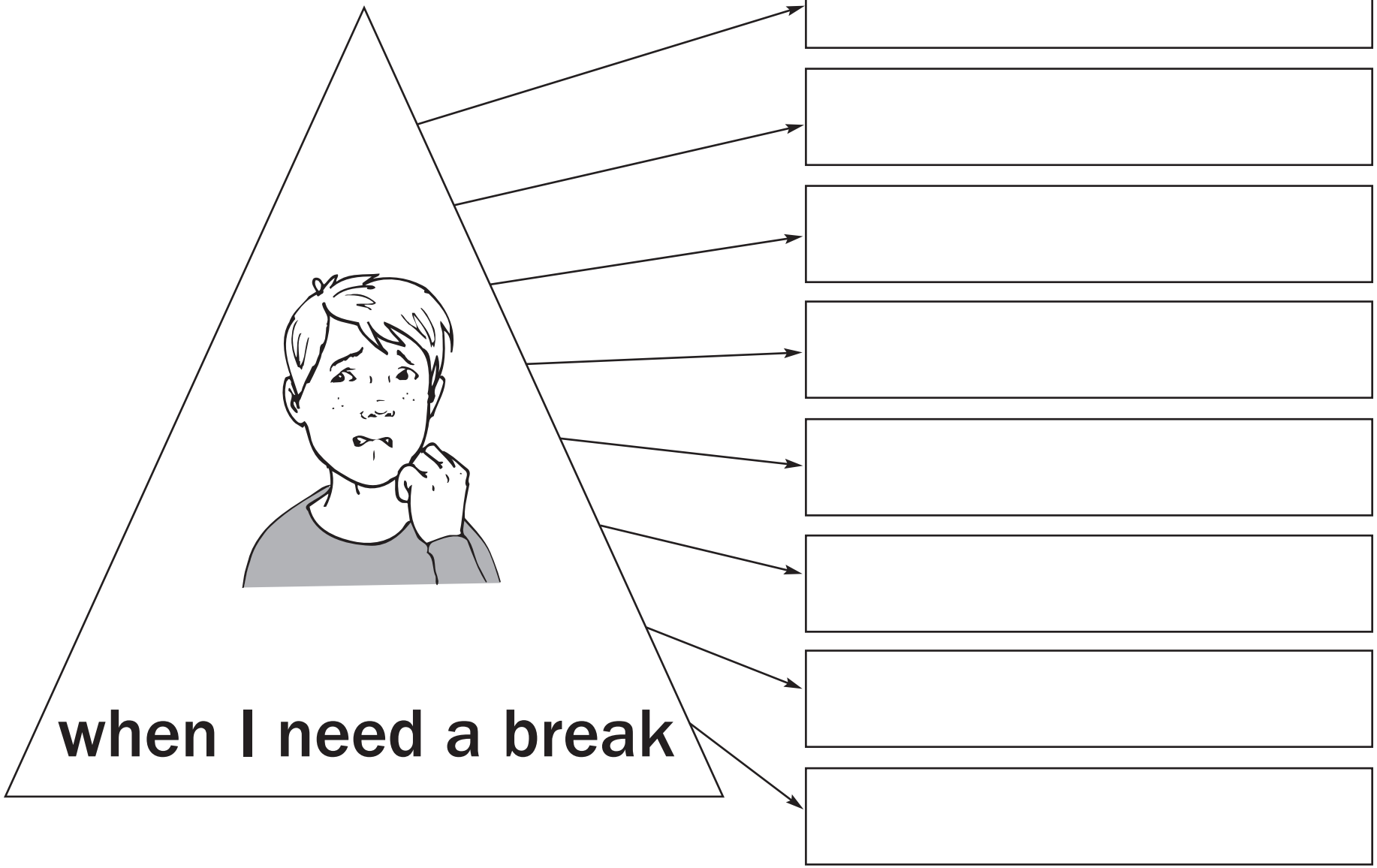
Things I Can Do When I Need a Break



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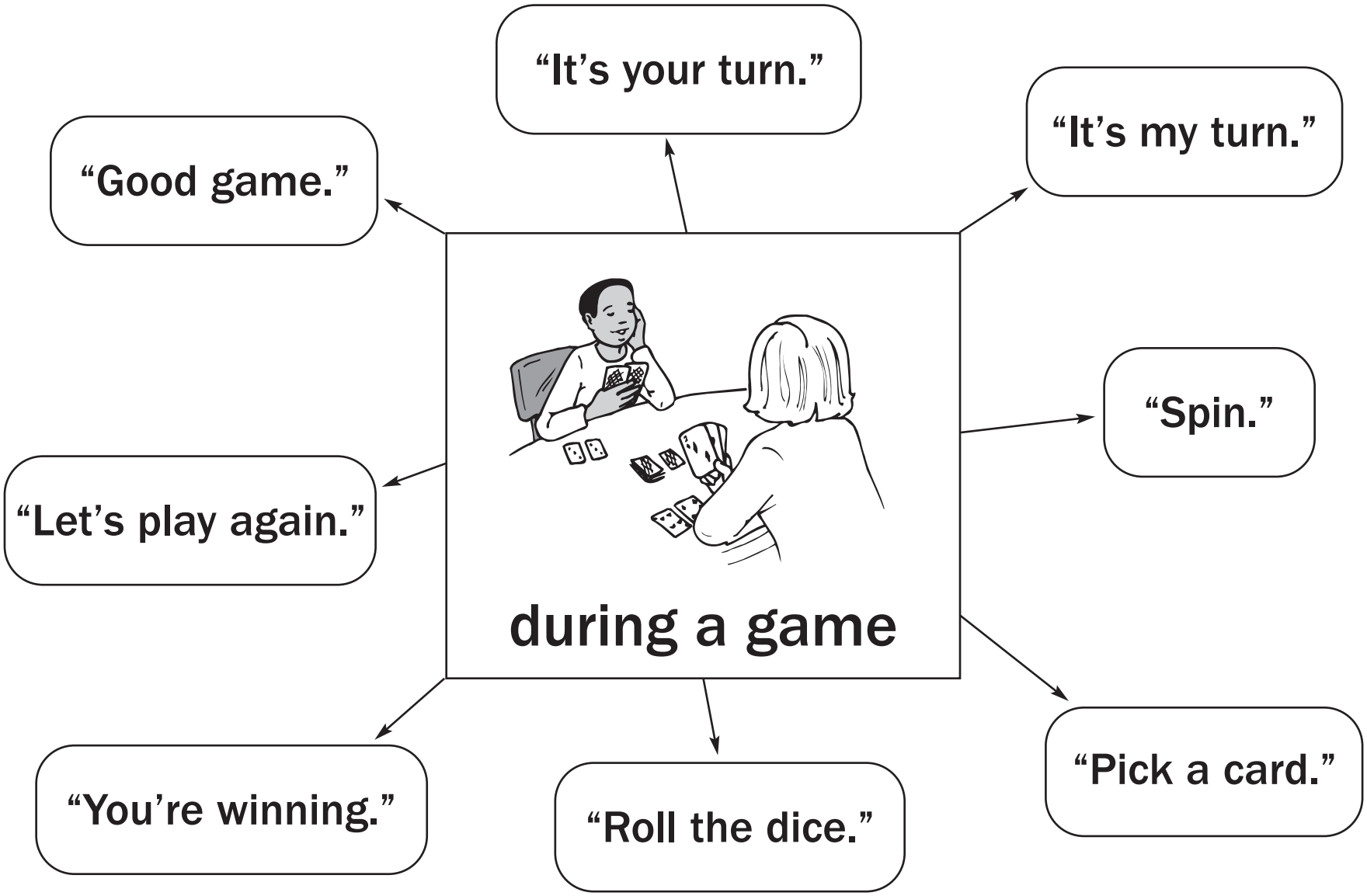
Things I Can Say During a Game



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Things I Can Say During a Game

during a game

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Things I Can Do During a Game

during a game

- Take turns.
- Spin the spinner.
- Pick a card.
- Roll the dice.
- Tell someone that he is playing well.
- Tell someone how I like the game.
- Move my token.
- Win or lose.

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Things I Can Do During a Game

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Things I Can Say During Computer Time

"I like to use the computer."

"I like this game."

"I don't like this game."

during computer time

"I'm typing a letter."

"May I use the computer?"

"I like to play computer games."

"What do you like about computers?"

"Will you help me with this?"

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Things I Can Say During Computer Time

during computer time

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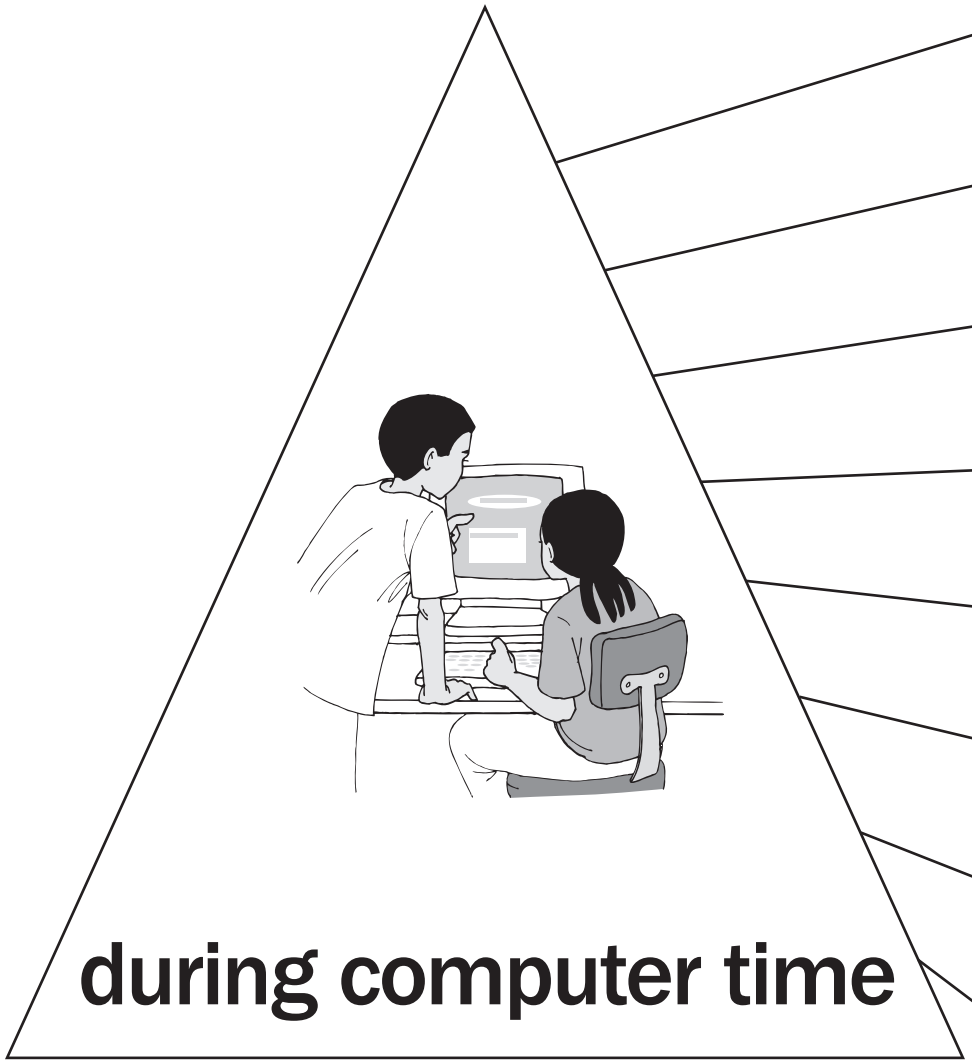
Things I Can Do During Computer Time



during computer time

- Ask permission to use the computer.
- Sit down at the computer.
- Choose a game or activity.
- Ask for help.
- Press the keys.
- Move the mouse.
- Show/Tell someone what I am doing.
- Turn the computer on/off.

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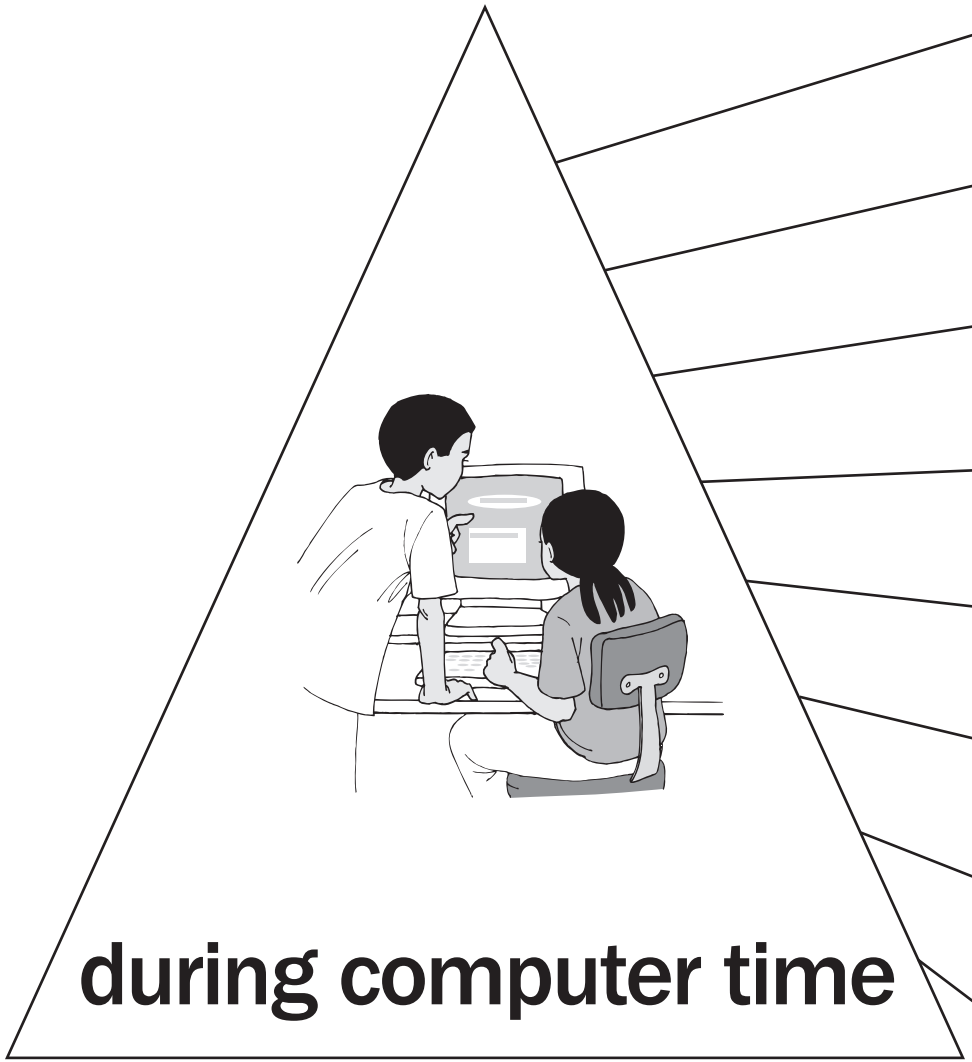
Things I Can Do During Computer Time



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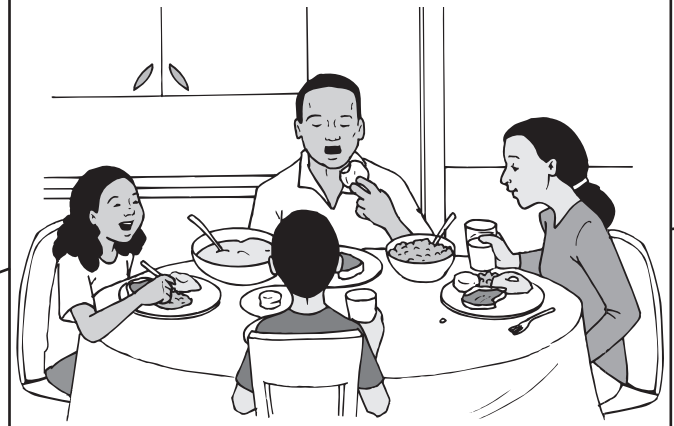
Things I Can Say During Dinner

"Please pass the _____."

"More _____, please."

"Today I _____."



dinner

"How was your day?"

"I'm hungry."

"This is delicious."

"What's for dessert?"

"I like to eat _____."

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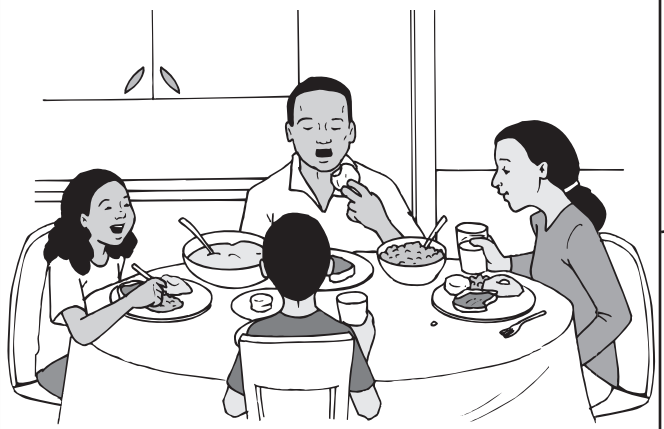
Things I Can Say During Dinner



dinner

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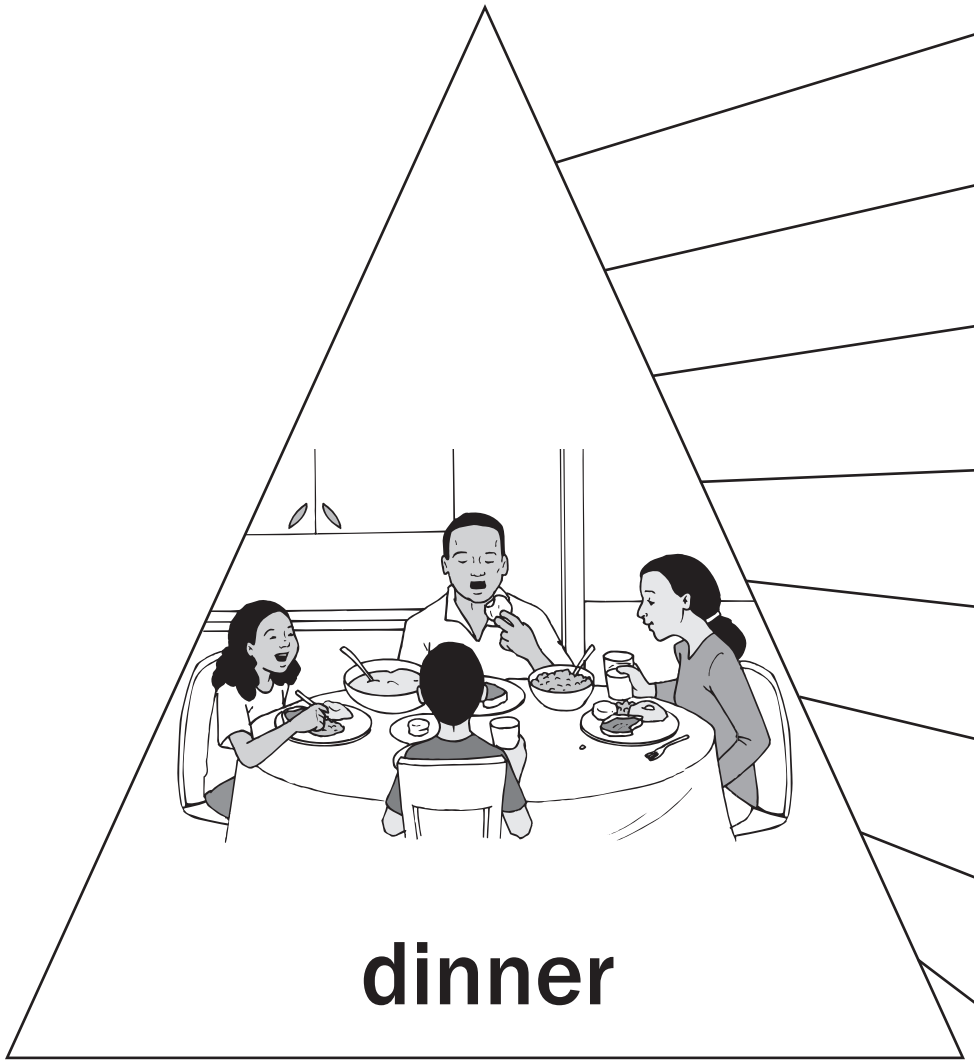
Things I Can Do During Dinner



Sit down.

Eat and drink.

Ask someone to pass me something I can't reach.

Talk about my day.

Ask for more of something.

Talk about how the food tastes.

Ask for dessert.

Pass the _____ .

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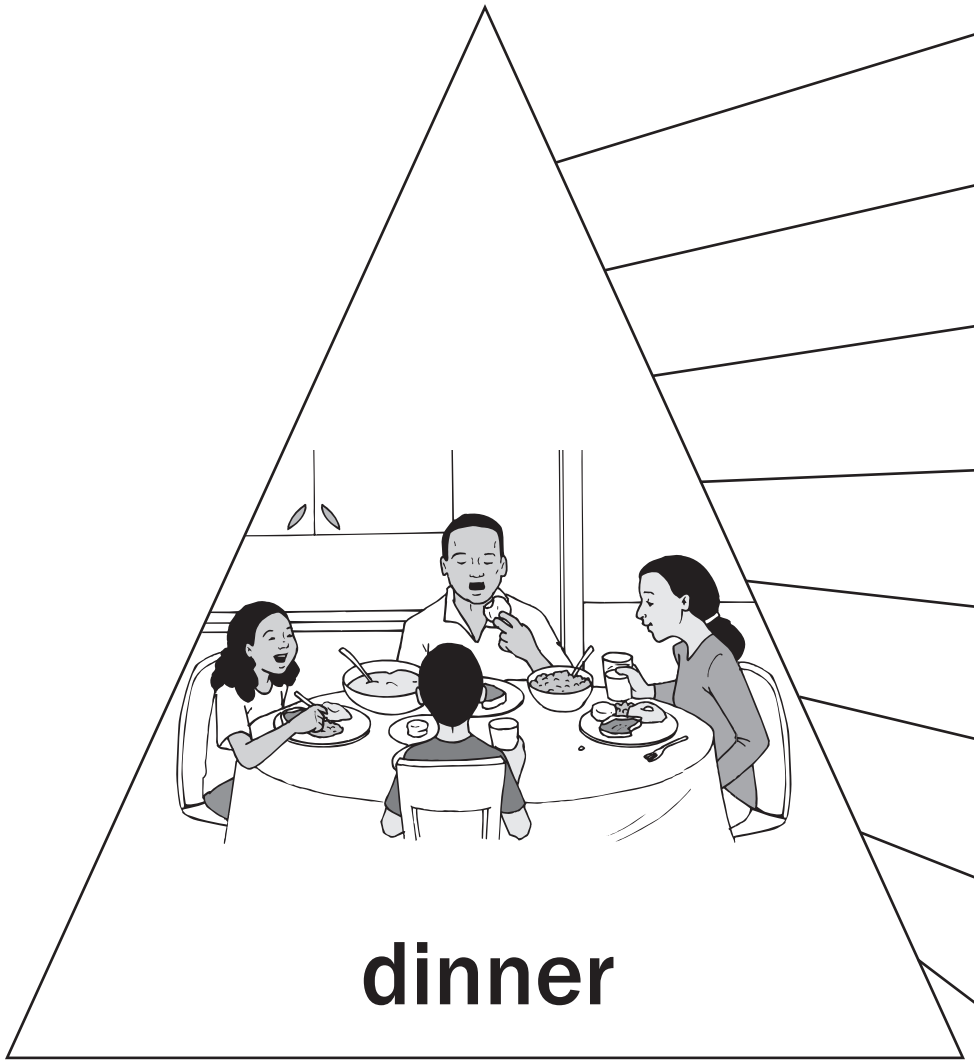
Things I Can Do During Dinner



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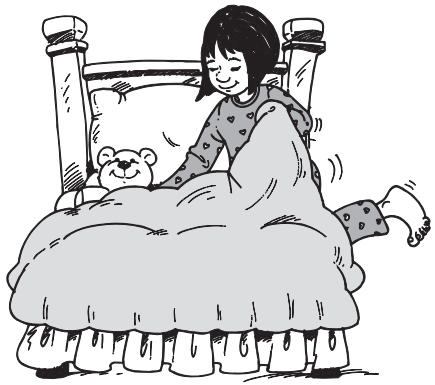
Things I Can Say at Bedtime

"Will you read me a story?"

"Sleep well."

"I need my _____."



bedtime

"Good night."

"I'm tired."

"May I read for a while?"

"I'm going to sleep now."

"I'm ready for bed."

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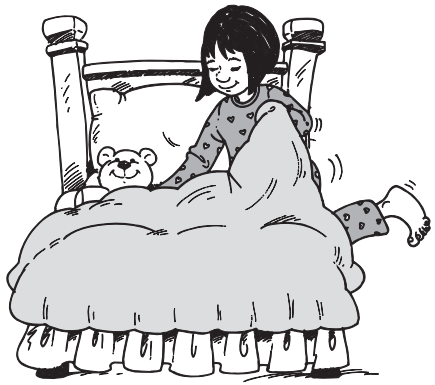
Things I Can Say at Bedtime



bedtime

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Things I Can Do at Bedtime

- Get ready for bed.
- Give Mom/Dad a hug.
- Tell my family “Good night.”
- Brush my teeth.
- Get into bed.
- Read.
- Yawn.
- Turn off the light.

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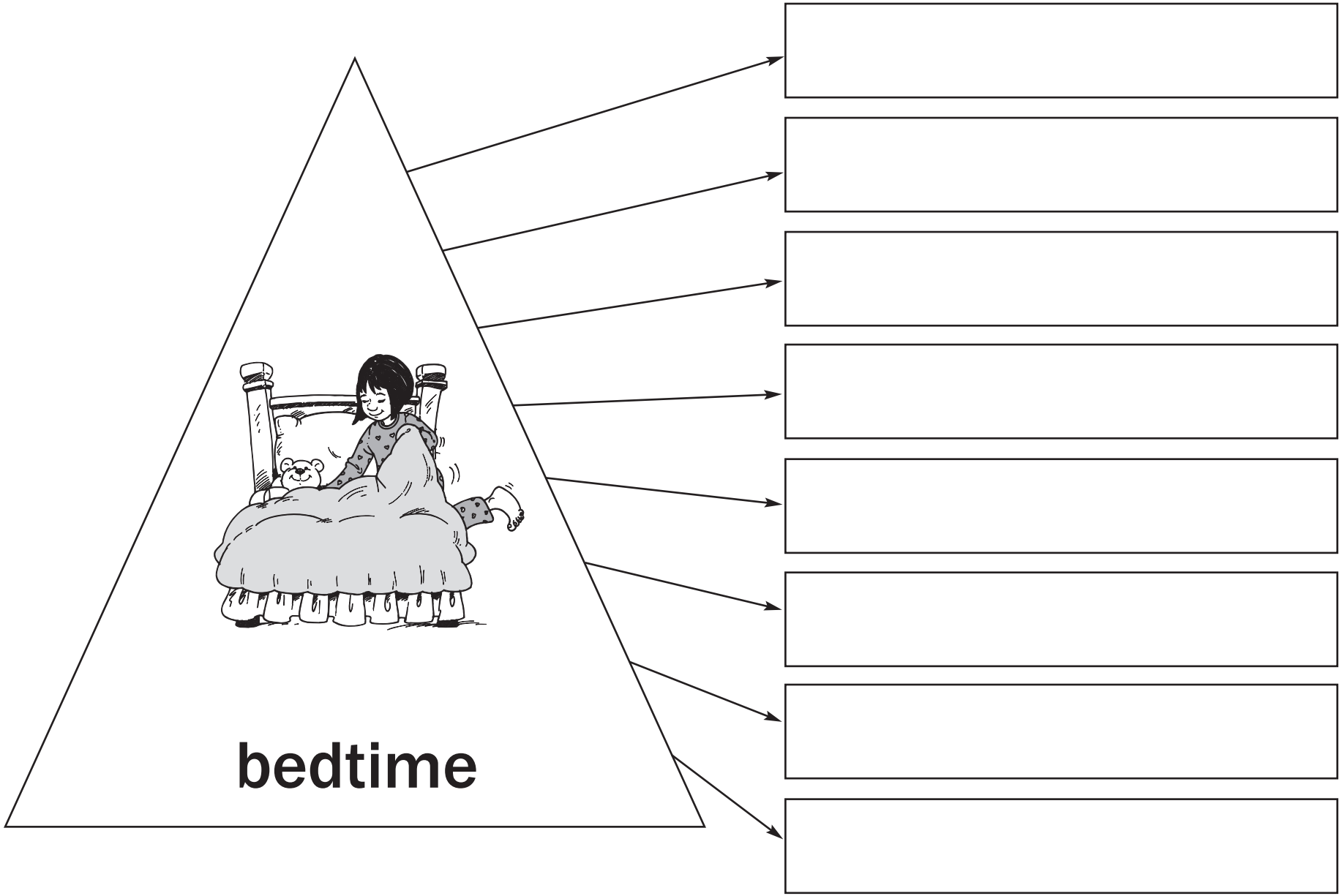
Things I Can Do at Bedtime



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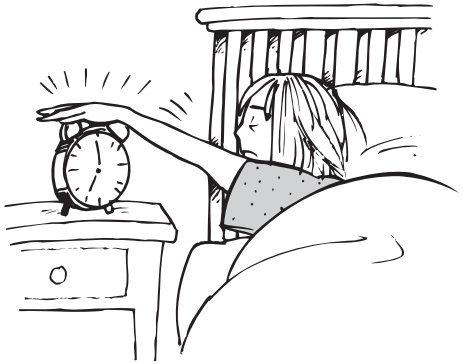
Things I Can Say in the Morning



morning

"I slept well last night."

"Good morning."

"I'm still tired."

"I didn't sleep well."

"I have to get ready for school."

"It's time to get dressed."

"May I please have breakfast?"

"It's time to brush my teeth."

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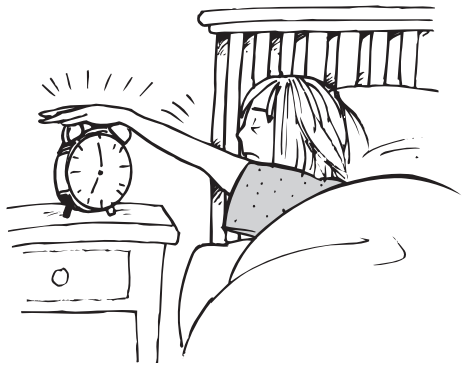
Things I Can Say in the Morning



morning

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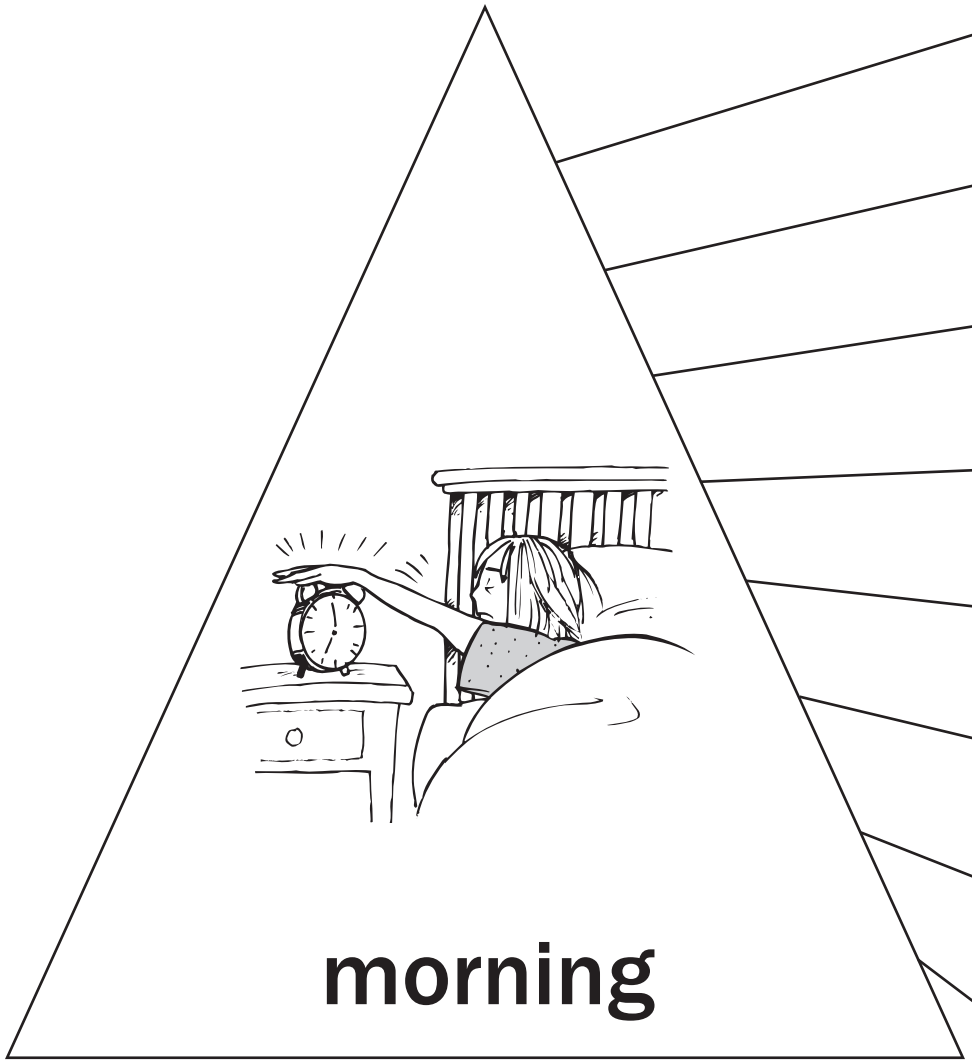
Things I Can Do in the Morning



- Get out of bed.
- Tell my family "Good morning."
- Brush my teeth.
- Eat breakfast.
- Get dressed.
- Get ready for school.
- Tell someone how I slept.
- Turn off my alarm clock.

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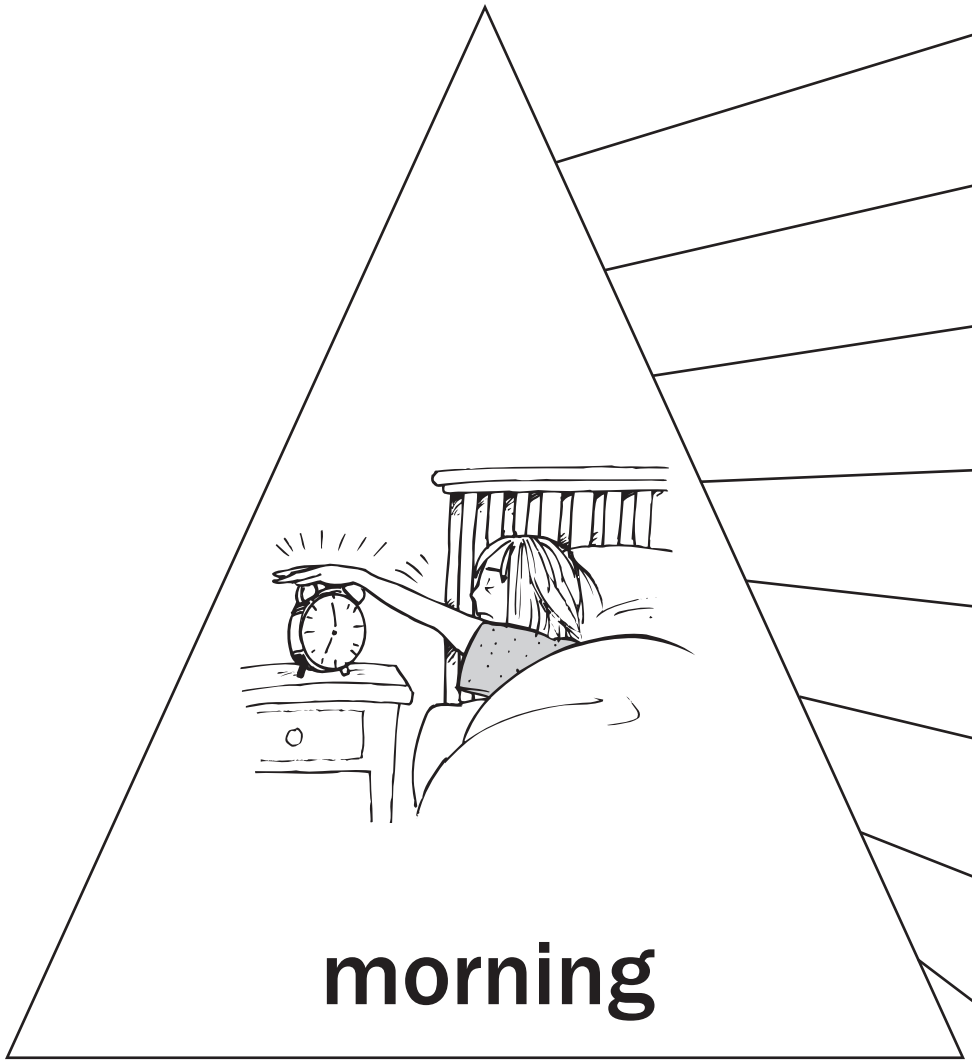
Things I Can Do in the Morning



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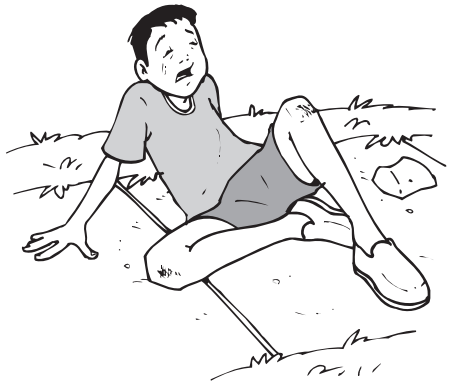
Things I Can Say When I Get Hurt

"Help me."

"I need the nurse."

"I want my mom/dad."



when I get hurt

"It hurts."

"I'm bleeding."

"Ouch!"

"I hurt my _____."

"I need a Band-aid."

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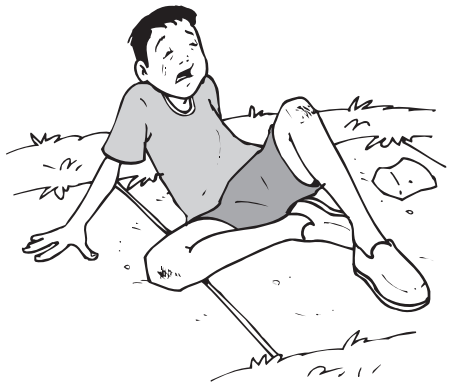
Things I Can Say When I Get Hurt



when I get hurt

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Things I Can Do When I Get Hurt

- Point to where it hurts.
- Ask for help.
- Tell an adult that I am hurt.
- Wash off my cut.
- Go to the nurse.
- Cry.
- Put on a Band-aid.

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Things I Can Do When I Get Hurt

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Things I Can Say If I Get Lost

if I get lost

"My name is _____."

"I can't find my _____."

"I'm afraid."

"I'm lost."

"Can you help me?"

"May I use your phone?"

"My phone number is _____."

"Where is customer service?"

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Things I Can Say If I Get Lost

if I get lost

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Things I Can Do If I Get Lost

- Stay where I am.
- Tell a worker I am lost.
- Ask to use the phone.
- Yell for my mom/dad.
- Go to security.
- Tell a worker my first and last name.
- Go to customer service.
- Tell a worker my phone number.

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Things I Can Do If I Get Lost

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Things I Can Say When I Get Home

"I want to go outside."

"Here is my book bag."

"Can I have a snack, please?"

when I get home

"I had a good/bad day."

"I had fun."

"I have homework."

"I learned about _____ today."

"I have a note from my teacher."

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Things I Can Say When I Get Home

when I get home

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Things I Can Do When I Get Home

- Talk about my day.
- Have a snack.
- Do my homework.
- Go through my book bag.
- Hand over the note from my teacher.
- Go outside to play.
- Tell what I learned about at school.
- Greet my family.

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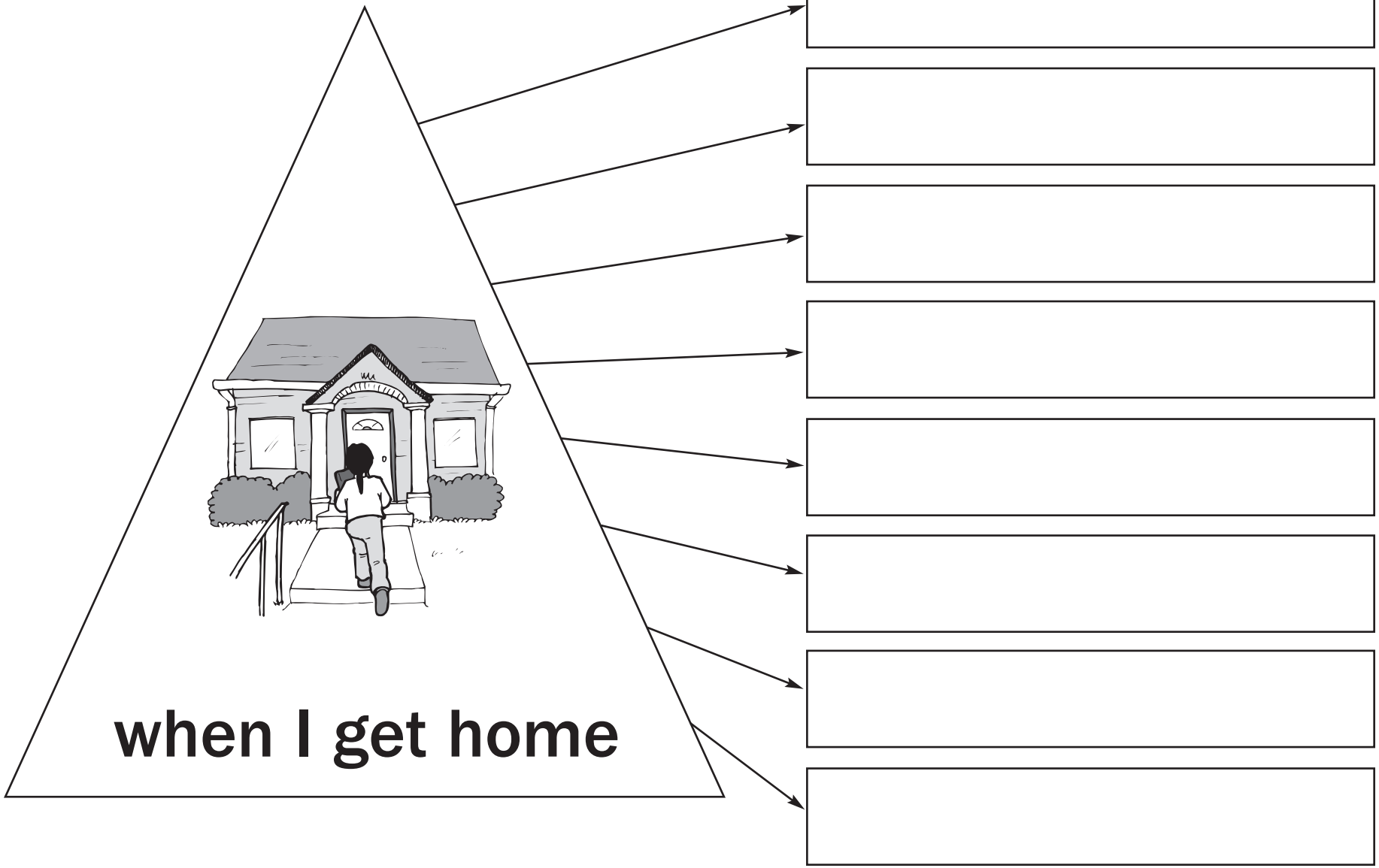
Things I Can Do When I Get Home



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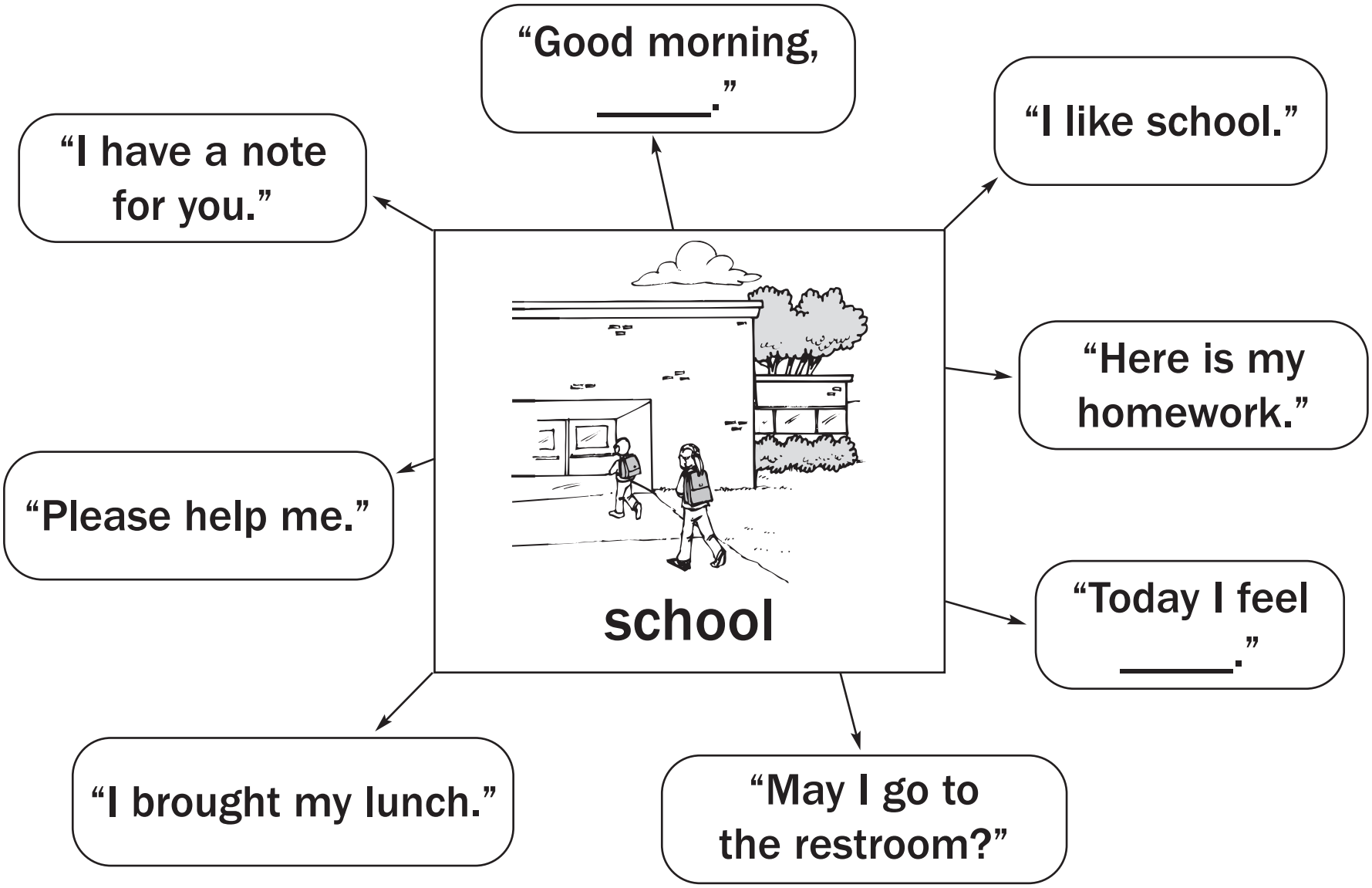
Things I Can Say When I Get to School



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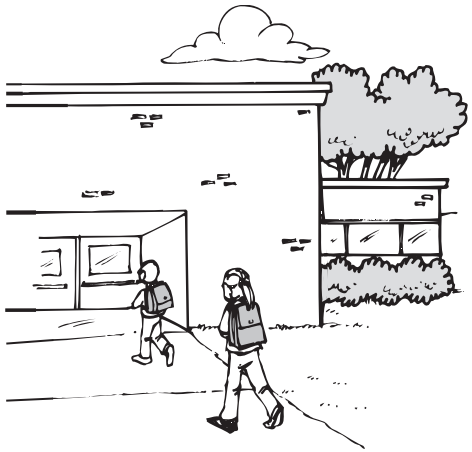
Things I Can Say When I Get to School



school

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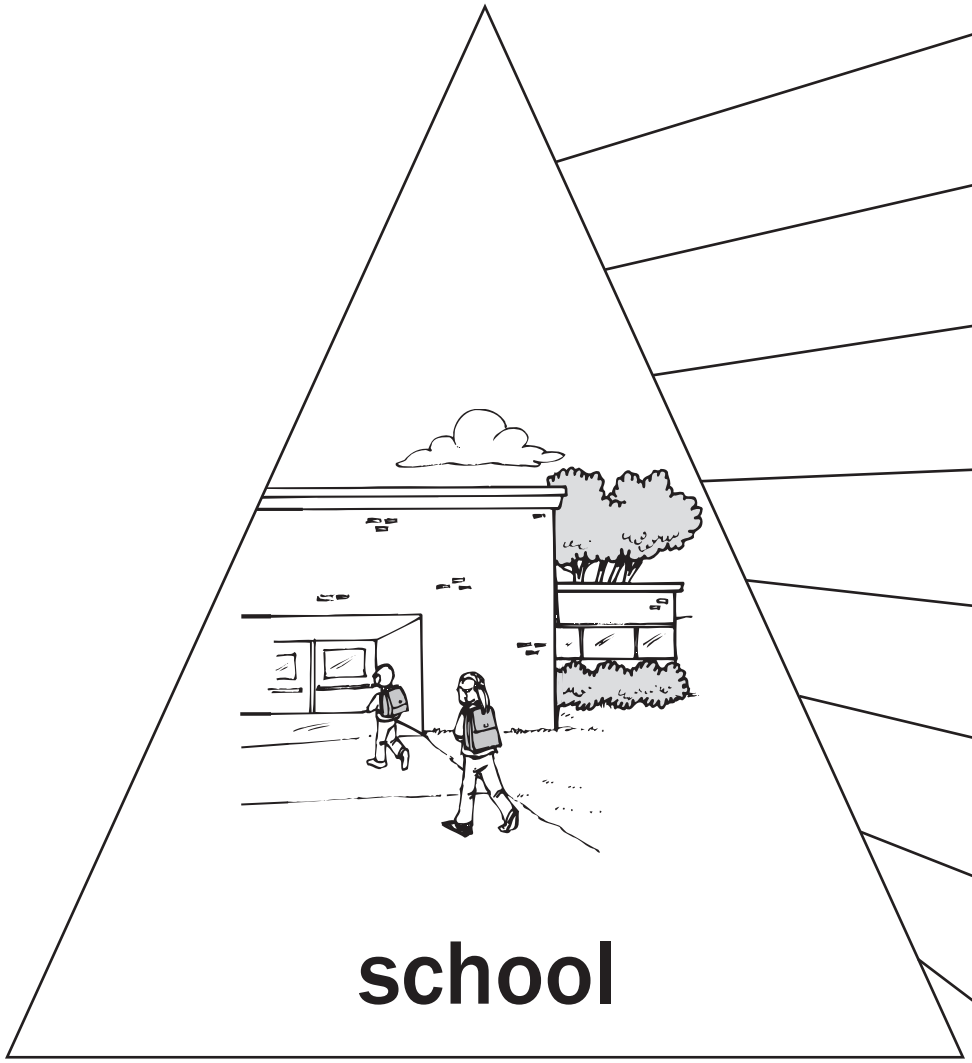
Things I Can Do When I Get to School



- Hang up my coat.
- Greet my teacher and classmates.
- Unpack my book bag.
- Hand in my homework.
- Ask to use the restroom.
- Show that I brought my lunch.
- Sit at my desk.
- Look at the schedule for the day.

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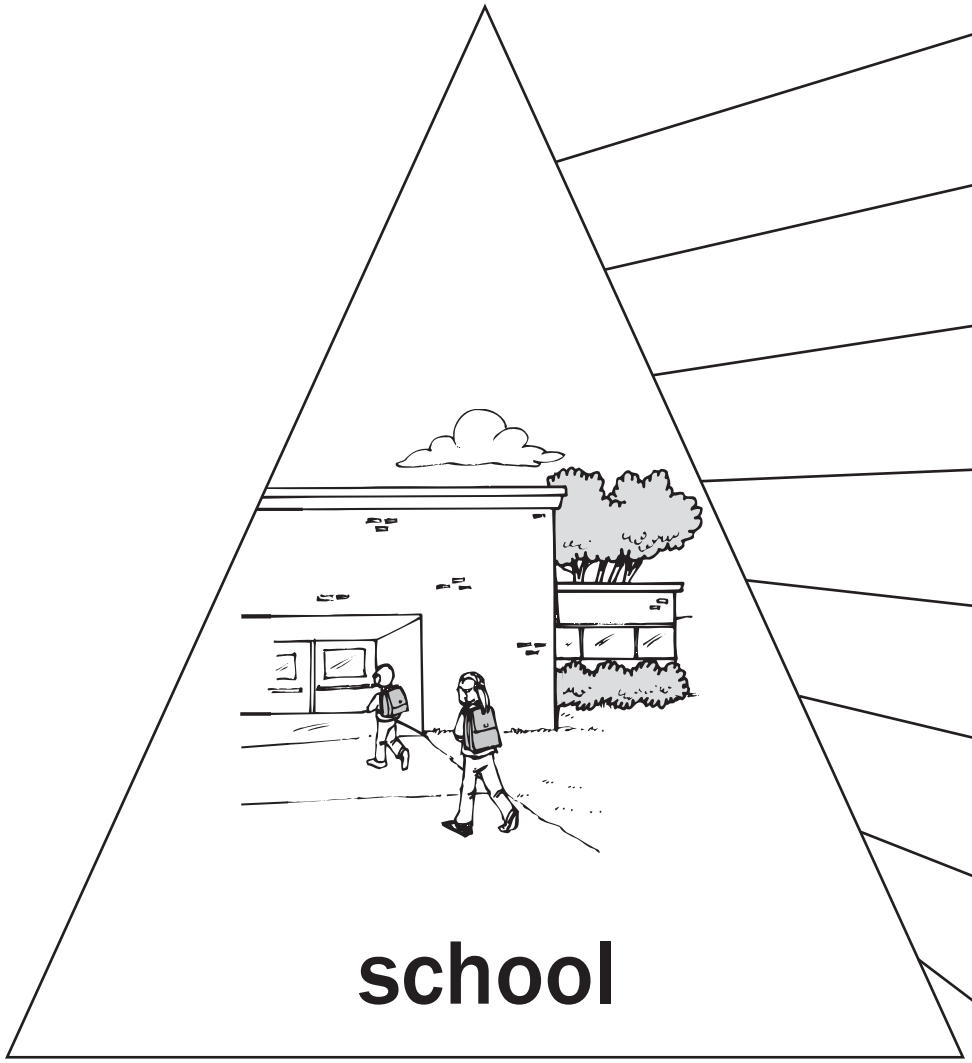
Things I Can Do When I Get to School



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Things I Can Say When I'm in Trouble

"Why are you mad at me?"

"What did I do?"

"I'm sorry."

when I'm in trouble

"I wasn't the one who did it."

"I didn't mean it."

"I won't do it again."

"It was an accident."

"Please forgive me."

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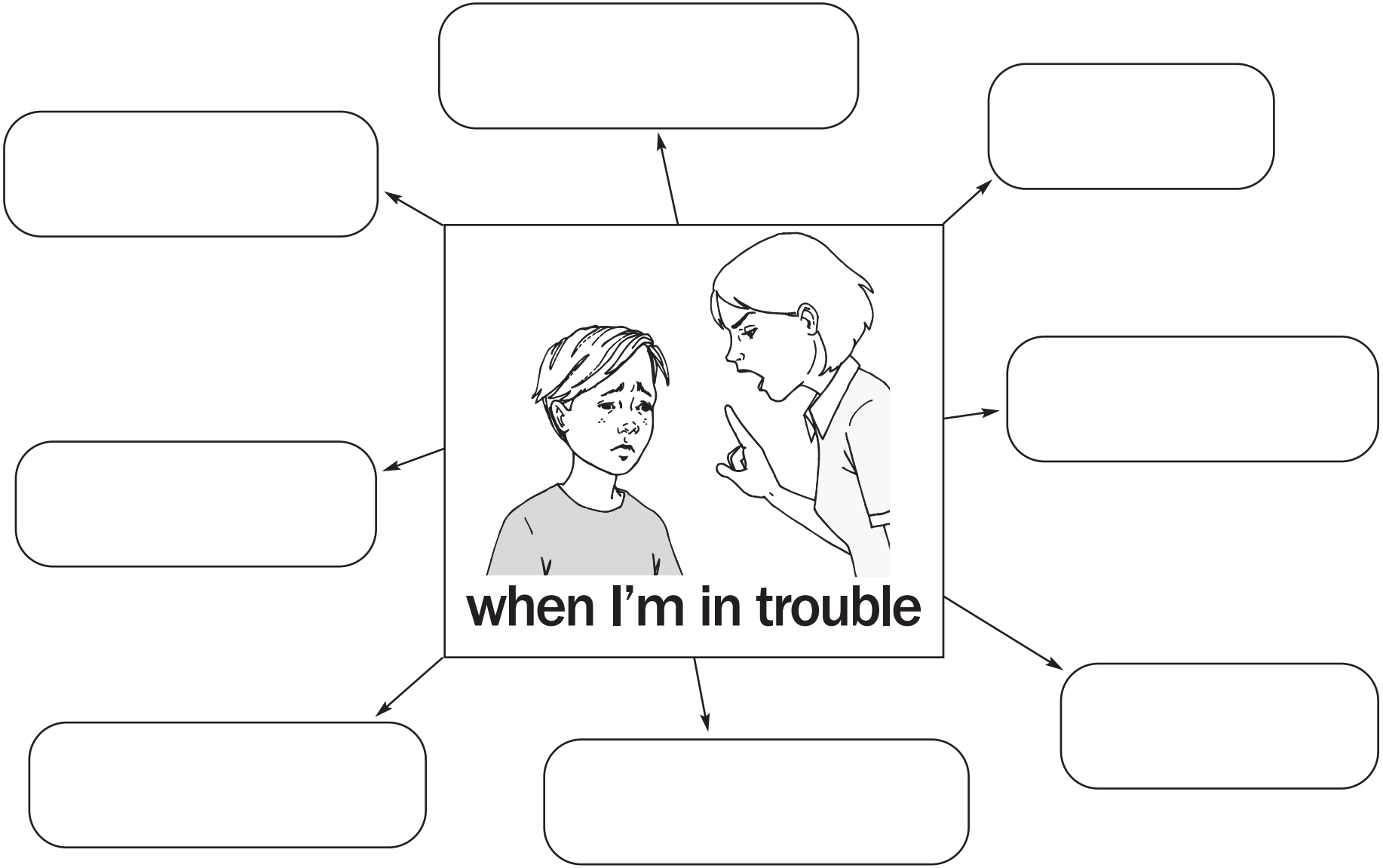
Things I Can Say When I'm in Trouble



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Things I Can Do When I'm in Trouble

- Ask what I did wrong.
- Try to make things better.
- Apologize.
- Tell someone it was an accident.
- Think about what I did.
- Tell someone it won't happen again.
- Ask for forgiveness.
- Cry.

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Things I Can Do When I'm in Trouble

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Things I Can Say on the Weekend

weekend

"Today is Saturday/Sunday."

"Let's go to the library."

"Let's see a movie."

"I want to go shopping."

"Can we go to the park?"

"Let's visit _____."

"I want to play with _____."

"There is no school today."

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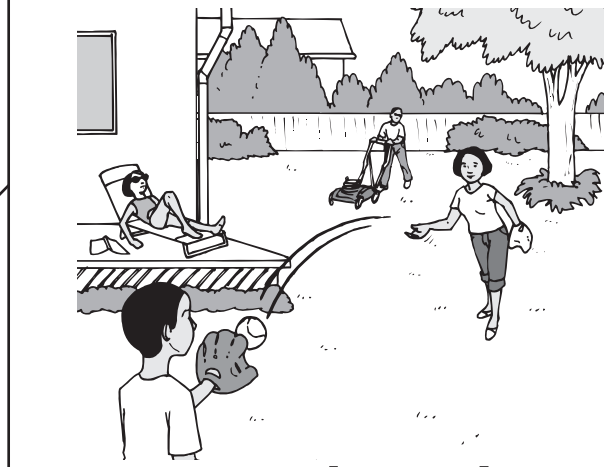
Things I Can Say on the Weekend



weekend

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Things I Can Do on the Weekend

Go to the library.

Go shopping.

See a movie.

Go to the park.

Play with _____.

Stay home.

Go to _____'s house.

Relax.

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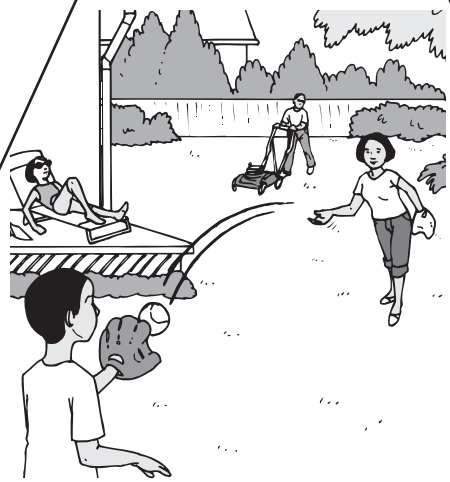
Things I Can Do on the Weekend



weekend

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Things I Can Say on My Birthday

"I will blow out my candles."

"Let's open my presents."

"Let's eat cake."

my birthday

"Thank you for my gifts."

"Today is my birthday."

"I will have a party."

"Happy birthday to me!"

"I am _____ years old."

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Things I Can Say on My Birthday

my birthday

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Things I Can Do on My Birthday

Open presents.

Have a party.

Tell someone that it is my birthday.

Listen to the "Happy Birthday" song.

Blow out the candles.

Eat cake.

Tell someone how old I am.

Talk about birthdays.

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Things I Can Do on My Birthday

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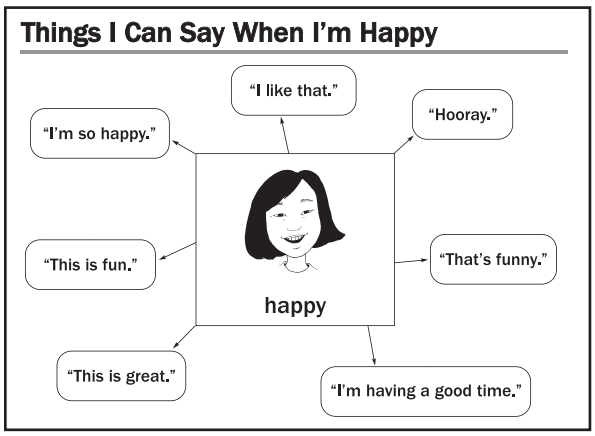
Dear Parent/Guardian,

I am pleased to tell you about a technique I will be using to help your child with language development and verbal expression. We will be using a collection of communication and activity webs filled with common, functional phrases and statements about situations, people, places, feelings, routines, and holidays that your child may experience in daily living.



The webs are designed to provide your child with specific examples and options of "things to say" or "things to do" during everyday activities and experiences, such as at lunch, during a game, and on holidays.

Each time I present a new communication or activity web in therapy, I will send home a copy for you to use with your child. I may also ask you to complete a form about the web's topic so I can design a separate, personalized web to better meet your child's communication needs. The form will ask for information regarding experiences your child has outside of school, such as vocabulary he/she has difficulty with or that is commonly used, names of family members, places you go, activities at home, etc.

By working together as a team, I am confident that we will positively impact your child's language development.

If you have any questions regarding the webs, please do not hesitate to call me at _____ during the hours of _____. I will be happy to answer any questions and/or concerns.

Sincerely,

_____

Speech-Language Pathologist

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Web Information Form

This form will help me create a personalized web for your child as we continue therapy.
Please fill in any information that you feel will help your child further understand the topic below.

Communication/Activity Web Topic _____

List words/vocabulary you use at home related to this topic.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____

List phrases/sentences you use at home related to this topic.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____

List places you go and/or activities at home related to this topic.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____

List any family members related to this topic.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____

Please share any additional comments about your child and this topic that may help in future therapy sessions.

_____
_____
_____

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Web Progress Chart

Name _____ SLP _____

Therapy Start Date _____

Date/Time date and time the web is used

Web Topic name of the web

Location **TR**—Therapy Room, **CR**—Classroom, **L**—Library, **SP**—Special (PE, Art, Music), **C**—Cafeteria/Lunchroom, **O**—Other (specify)

Cueing

Did the student need assistance using the web? If so, what kind of support was used?

NV—Nonverbal (e.g., gesturing, pointing)
V—Verbal (e.g., semantic cueing, question, carrier phrase)

Did the student use the web independently/without assistance?

NA—No assistance needed

Date/Time	Web Topic	Location	Cueing

1-06-987654321

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