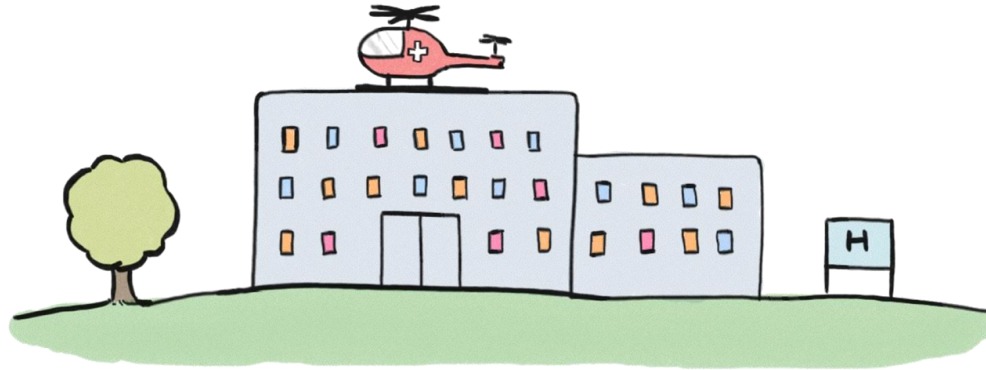


Getting Ready for A Heart Operation

An activity story book to help children prepare for a cardiac operation



Written By: Tanuja Nair, CCLS, CCRT & Nur Shazalyn Binte Abdullah, CCLS

Edited by: Deborah B. Vilas, MS, CCLS, LMSW

Illustrations By: Markéta Královcová

Recommended ages: 4-10 years

Acknowledgements:

Child Life Therapy – Child Life, Art and Music Therapy Programmes (CHAMPs), Cardiothoracic Surgery Service (CTS), Department of Paediatric Surgery (PAS), Department of Paediatric Anaesthesia (PAN), Corporate Communications and Marketing Communications



KK Women's and
Children's Hospital

SingHealth

Published by KK Women's and Children's Hospital (KKH)

KK Women's and Children's Hospital

100 Bukit Timah Road, Singapore 229899

Tel: +6-CALL KKH (+65 6-2255 554)

Website: www.kkh.com.sg

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ISBN: 978-981-18-7020-0 (Digital)

You are a warrior!



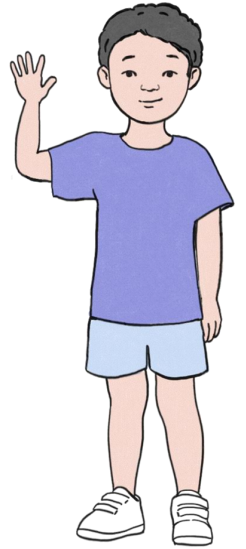
Have you ever wondered what it means to go for an operation?

What happens to you and how does it feel?

Join Jo-Jo as he learns and shares more about what happens to him and his body as he prepares for a heart operation.

Written and edited by certified Child Life Specialists from KK Women's and Children's Hospital, Singapore and from the United States of America, this book gives an insight into the hospital journey from the perspective of a child.

This book also contains useful information to support parents and caregivers on getting their child ready for a heart operation.



Happy Reading!

Foreword

Dear Heart Warrior,

Welcome to this story and activity book!

As you get ready for your operation, you may have many feelings about it. You might be excited about how the operation will help your body work better or you might be nervous because you do not know what to expect.

We are here to tell you that all feelings are normal and okay. Most kids feel better when they know what to expect. Through this book, we will explain what will happen in the hospital, and help you to feel more comfortable and ready for your operation.

Do try out the activities inside this book to help you understand about your operation too. If there is a Child Life Specialist/ Child Life Therapist in the hospital you are going to, please ask your parents/ caregivers to reach out to them so that they can support you. They can answer questions, help you know what to expect and bring you toys/ games to play with.

Take care and be well! 

★ Content Page ★

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★ Suggested “To Do” List Before My Heart Operation ★

1 week before operation

- ☐ Read this book
- ☐ Complete the suggested activities (pages 9-12, 24-25 & 38-41)
- ☐ Watch recommended video (page 7)

3 days before operation

- ☐ Watch the video on page 7 again to remind you of what to expect
- ☐ Go through completed activities (pages 9-12, 24-25 & 38-41)

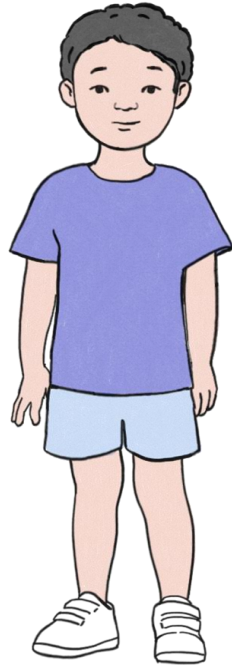
1 day before operation

- ☐ Help your Mum/Dad/Aunty/Uncle pack a bag for the hospital
- ☐ Pack some toys and things that make you feel comfortable and safe (as listed on page 41)
- ☐ Bring a copy of this book along



Hi, my name is Jo-Jo!

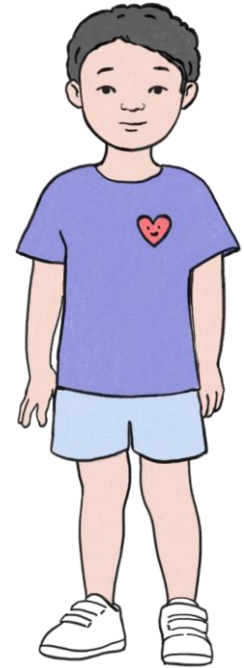


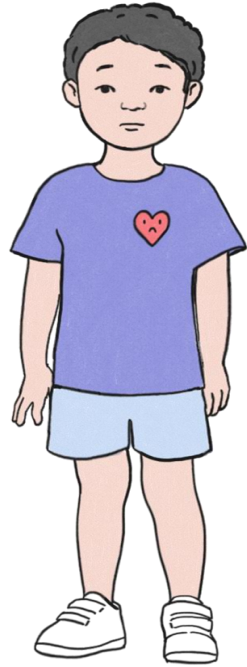


**I would like to share
something with you.**

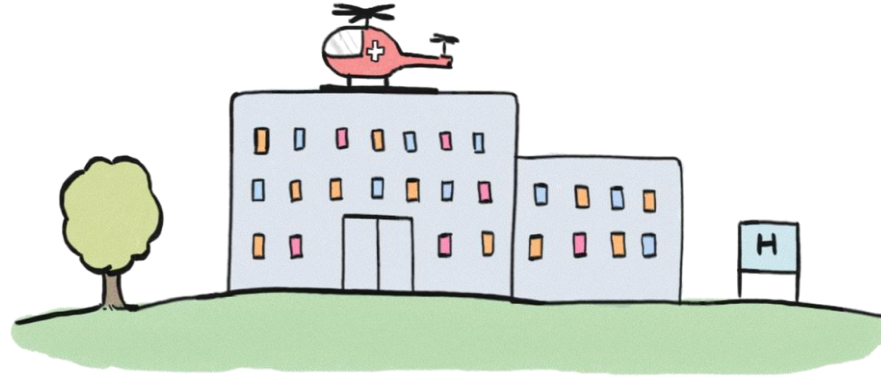
Like everyone else, my heart pumps blood through my veins and blood vessels and helps me love other people.

But my heart is different in some ways too.



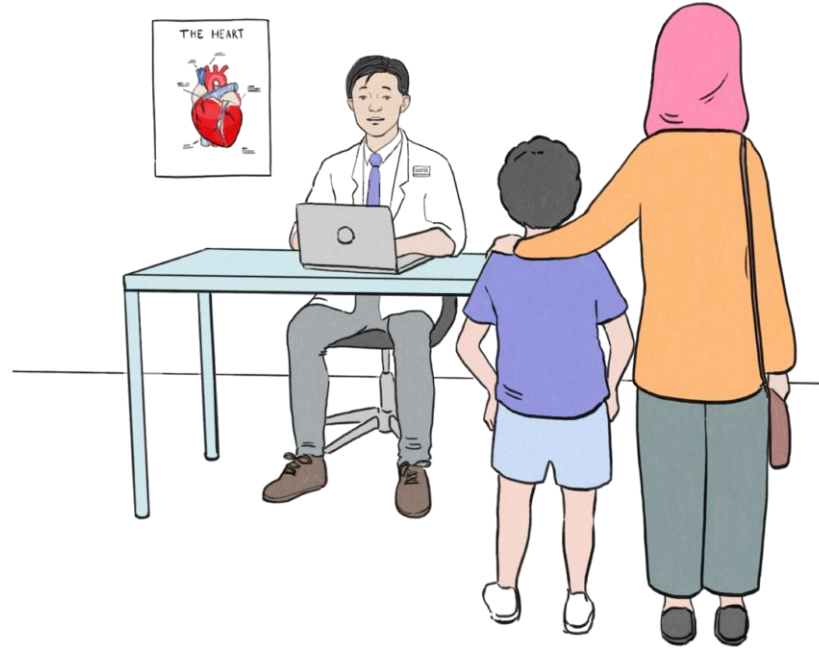


**It is not as strong as
everyone else's.
And because of that, I
cannot run very fast.
I also get tired easily.**



**To take care of my heart, I visit my doctor
at the hospital for check-ups.**

Recently, my doctor said that I need an operation to help my heart feel better.



**My doctor shared a video to explain what an operation is.
You can watch it with me too!**



Preparing for Your Operation at KKH



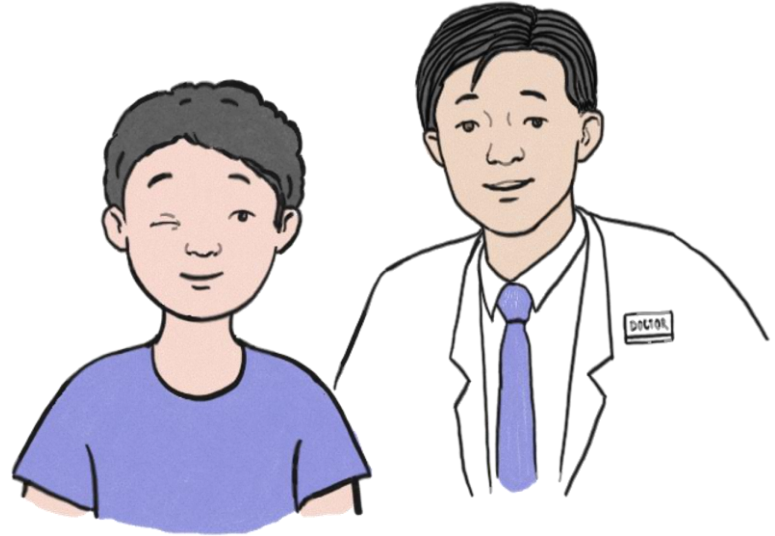
SCAN ME!



<https://bit.ly/3Y3vKXt>

Let's now try some activities to remember what we have learned from the video!

You can ask a trusted grown-up to help you with these activities too.



Operation Word Search

Activity #1

Search for the words and circle them once they are found.



OPERATION

WARD

DRIP

SLEEPY

SURGEON

BRAVE

MASK

NURSE

FRIENDLY

NIL BY MOUTH

HOSPITAL

BODY

SORE



In the Hospital

Fill in the blanks

1. This person will perform my operation. He/ She is known as a:

S U G N

2. I will meet this friendly person in the wards who will help me. He/ She is a:

U R

3. In the wards, my height and _____ will be checked:

I G

4. I will also be given a wrist tag that will show my _____:

N E



True or False?

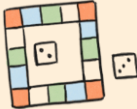




Read the following questions and circle the correct answer.

1. An operation can help my body to get better and stronger. TRUE FALSE
2. The sleepy medicine will help me stay comfortable during the operation. After the operation, I will wake up. TRUE FALSE
3. I cannot bring my favourite soft toy into the operating theatre. TRUE FALSE
4. The Doctor will give me some medicine after my operation to help me to feel better. TRUE FALSE



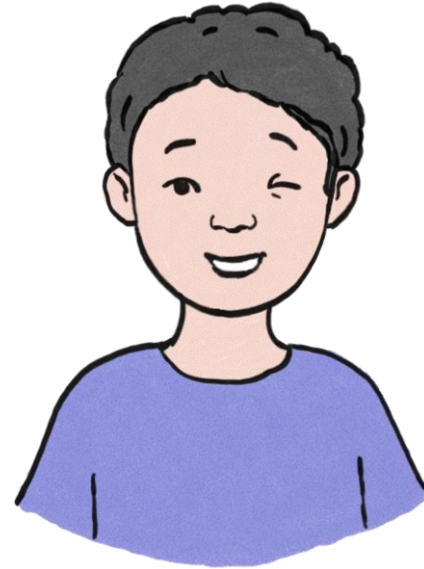
In the Wards

When I am in the hospital, these are some things I can do to relax and feel a little better.

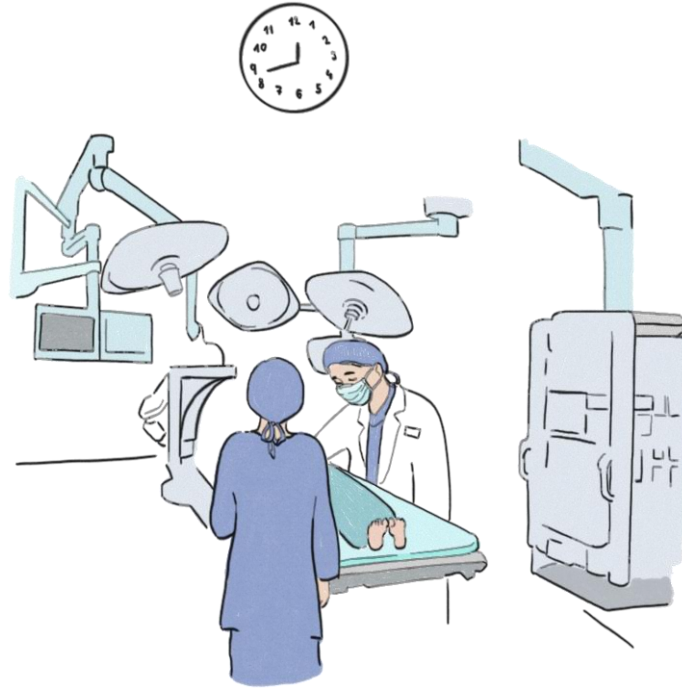
Hint	Things I can do
	
	
	
	
	

**Did you have fun with
the activities? I did!**

**Let's now return to my
story shall we?**



**The operation might take a while.
During this time, I will be sleeping comfortably.**



A doctor called the anaesthetist will place a soft mask over my nose and mouth. I can ask to watch some cartoons while the mask is being put on.

Using this mask, I will breathe in the sleepy medicine which will help me to sleep deeply during the operation.



When I wake up after the operation, I may need to have some help to breathe better through a soft and thin tube in my nose called an oxygen cannula.

Once I feel better, the oxygen cannula will be removed.



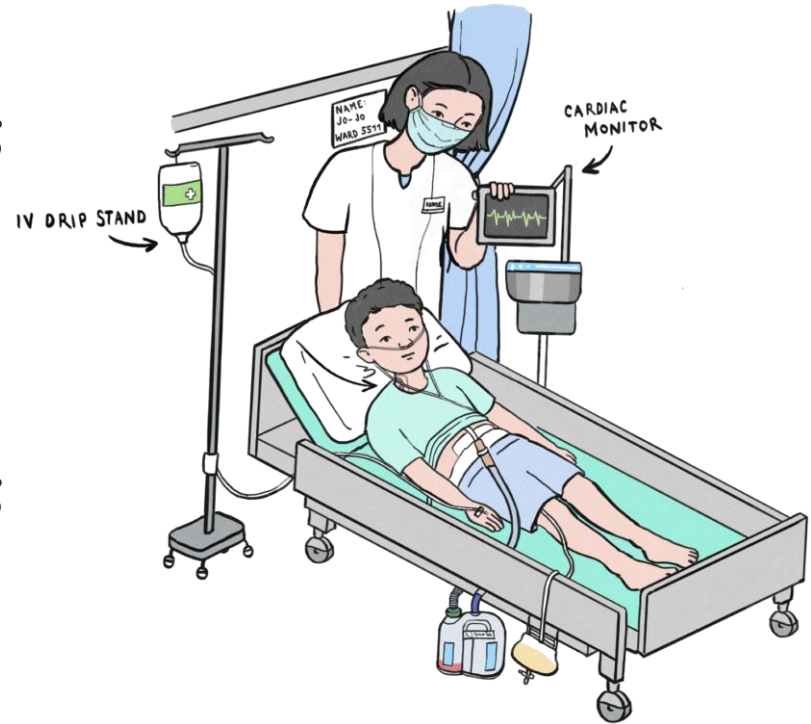
I may also feel tired and dizzy. My stomach may feel a little uncomfortable too due to the sleepy medicine.

If I feel unwell, I can let the doctors and nurses know. They can help me feel better. I can also hug my favourite toy or someone I trust to feel safe.

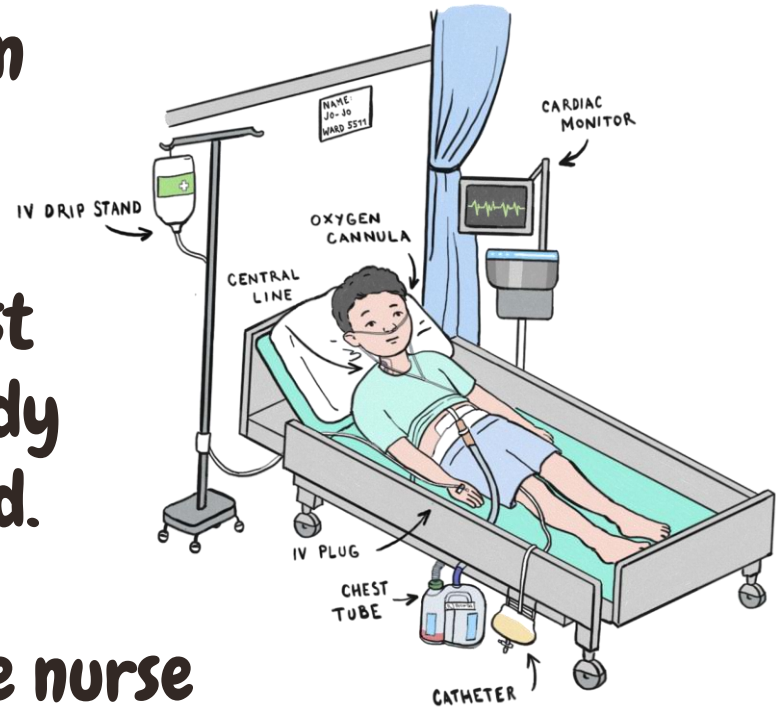


I may notice some machines around me in the ward.

They tell the doctors and nurses how well my body is doing and what it needs to feel better.

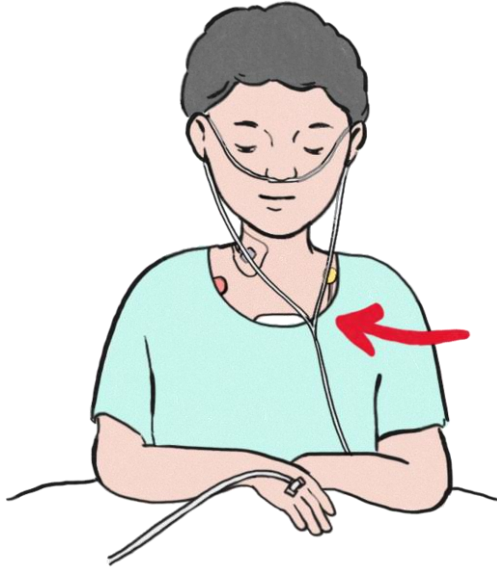


There may also be some tubes in me. Some of these tubes help medicine and liquid go into my veins. Other tubes like the chest tube and catheter, help my body get rid of what it does not need.



When my body feels better, the nurse will help to take these tubes out.

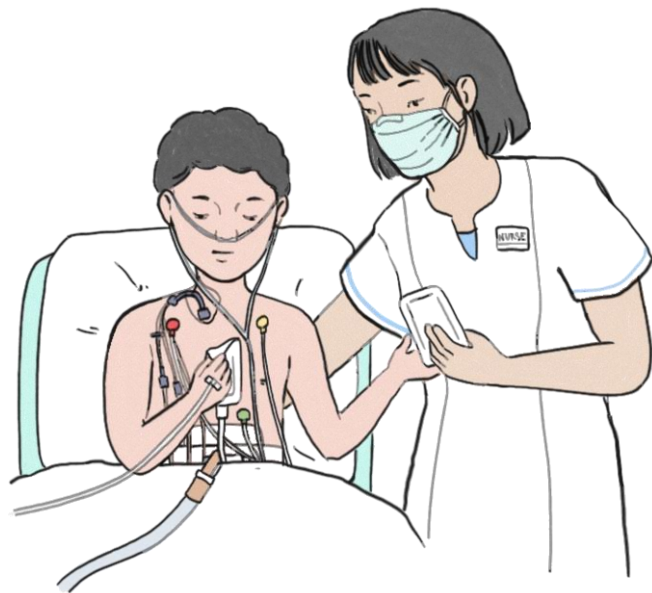
I may also notice a big plaster on my chest which may be uncomfortable for a while.



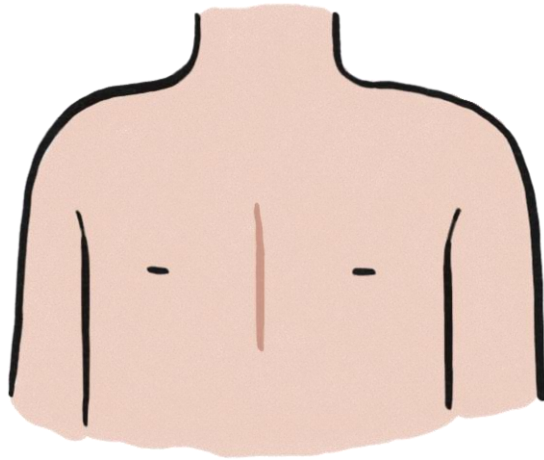
This plaster is placed over the area where the surgeon operated on me.

**The nurse will help to keep this area clean for me.
She will also change the plaster.**

**I can ask the nurse to let
me help with the changing
and cleaning of the plaster
if I want.**

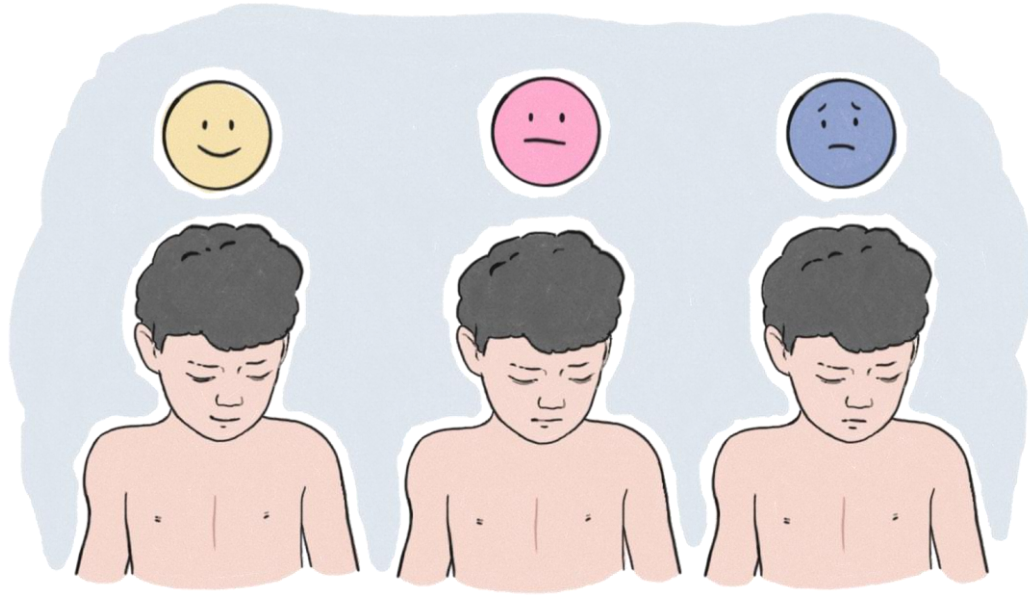


Once the wound has healed enough, the plaster will be removed for good. I may notice a bravery mark on my chest after the plaster is removed.



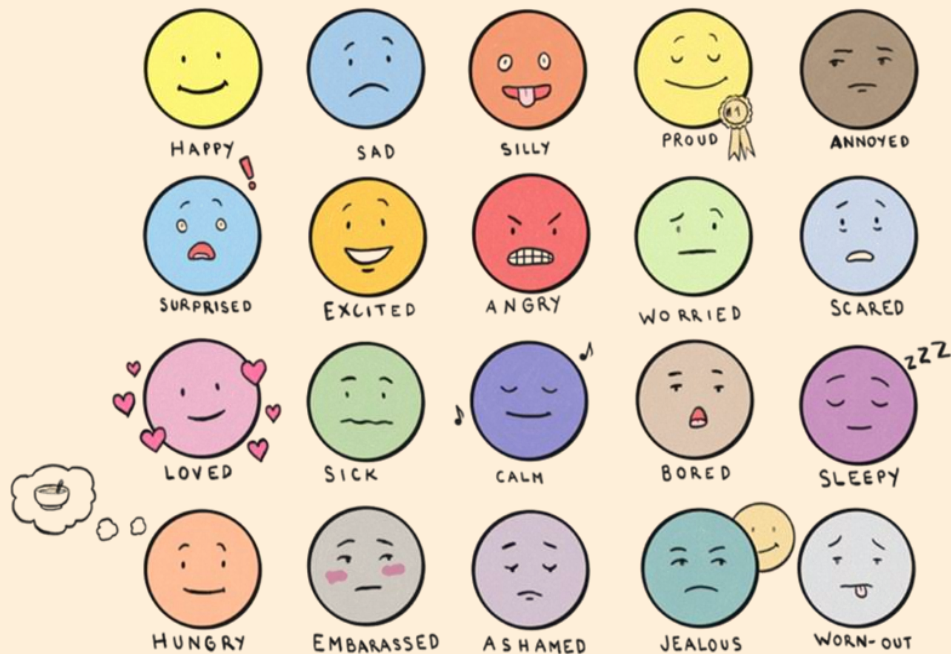
This mark is known as a scar.

**This might be my first time seeing such a mark.
I may have many thoughts and feelings about it.**



Feelings Chart

If you were Jo-Jo, how would you feel about the operation and bravery mark?
Circle the faces that show how you feel.



Coping with My Feelings

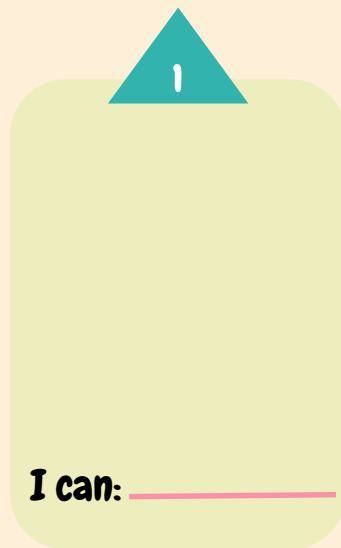
Choose 1 difficult feeling you had from page 24 and draw it in the circle.

Can you think of 3 ways to help yourself feel better?

You can write or draw your answers below.

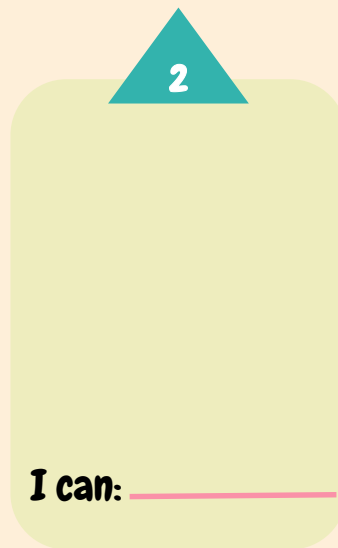


**Difficult
Feeling:** _____



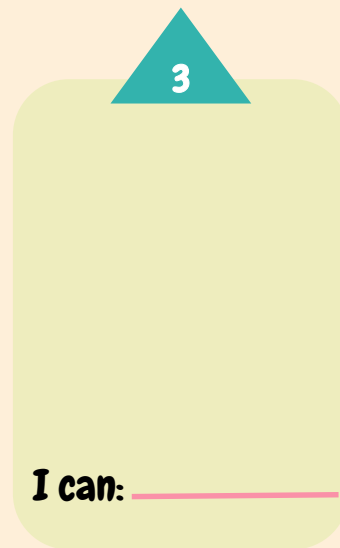
1

I can: _____



2

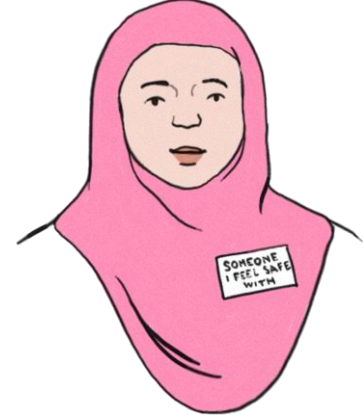
I can: _____



3

I can: _____

I can also talk to the child life specialist or any other grown-up I feel comfortable and safe with when I feel this way.



They can help me to cope with my feelings and thoughts.

My bravery mark will be on my chest for the rest of my life. As a result, I may feel that I look different from my friends.

?



Hmm... I look different.
Is that okay?
What will people say?

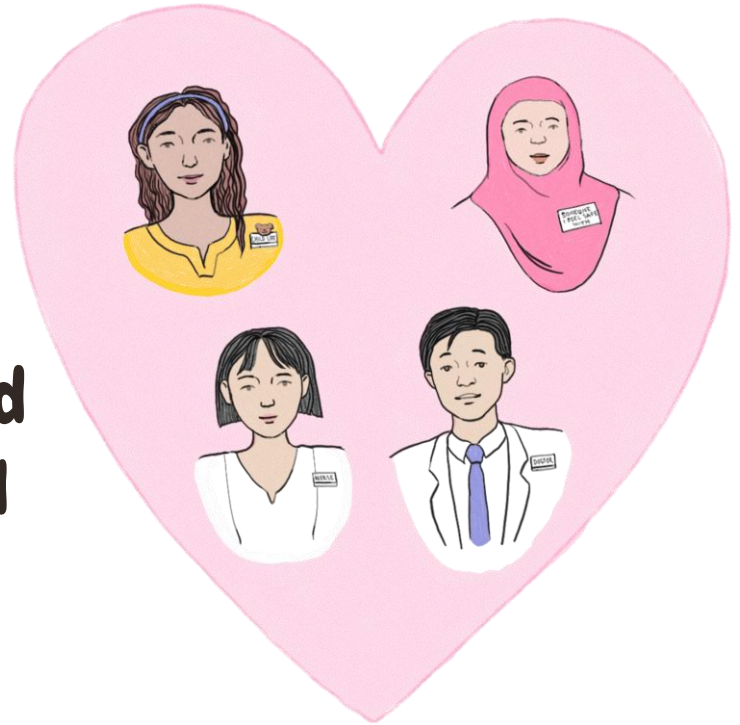
Being different is not a bad thing.

Just like how we all have different hairstyles and clothes, we can be different from one another too.

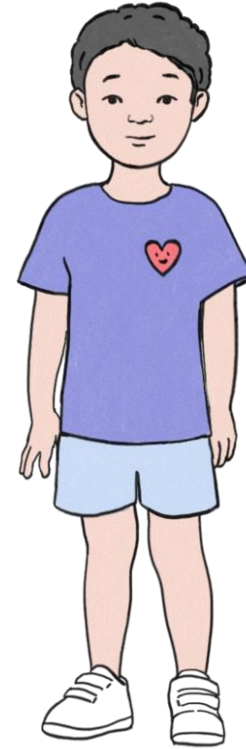


**I am not alone in this journey.
I may get a little scared
sometimes and that is okay.**

**I am just glad that I have trusted
grown-ups to talk to when I feel
this way and activities to do to
feel better too.**



**I am ready for my operation.
I look forward to having a strong
heart and feeling better soon!**



Glossary

**Here's a list of some of the new words that
I have learnt about from this book !**



Word

Illustration

Explanation

Anaesthetist

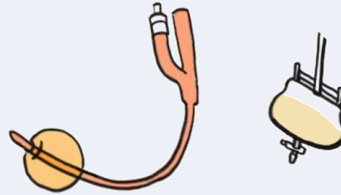
Page 15



**A doctor who gives me
sleepy medicine so that I can
rest during an operation**

Catheter

Page 19



**A temporary tube that
helps to remove waste
from my body (e.g. urine)**

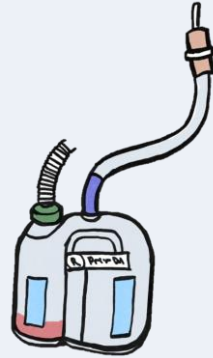
Word

Illustration

Explanation

Chest Tube

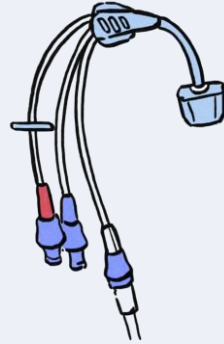
Page 19



A temporary tube that helps to drain liquid from my chest after an operation

Central Line

Page 19



A temporary soft line that gives medicine to help me feel better

Word

Illustration

Explanation

Heart

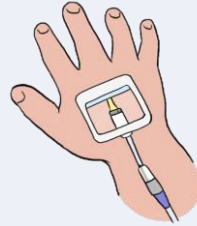
Page 3



A pump that provides blood to my whole body so that I can be strong

IV Plug

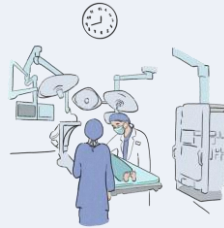
Page 19



A tiny straw that is placed under my skin to help spread medicine into my body more quickly

Operation

Page 14



Something the doctor has to do to my body to help get it better and stronger

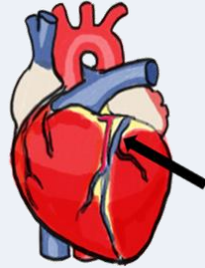
Word

Illustration

Explanation

Veins

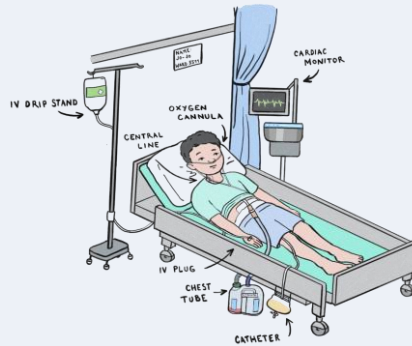
Page 3



A part of the body that carries blood to the heart

Ward

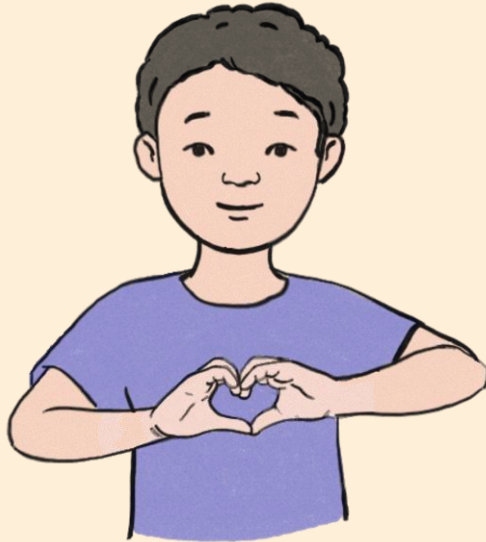
Page 18



A place where I will stay when I am in the hospital

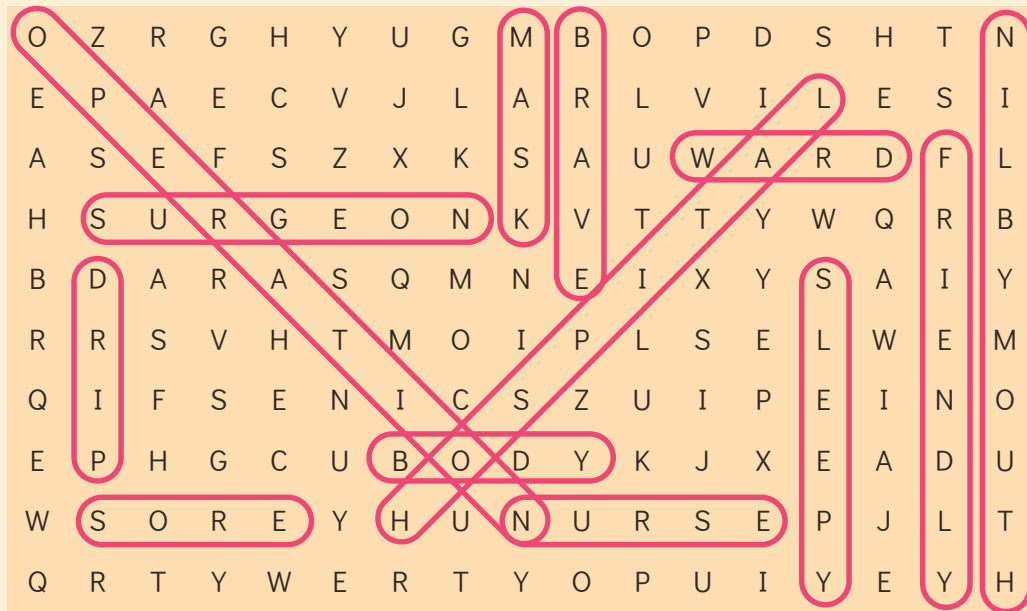
Answer Key

Here are the answers to the activities in this book!



Operation Word Search

Search for the words and circle them once they are found.



OPERATION

WARD

DRIP

SLEEPY

SURGEON

BRAVE

MASK

NURSE

FRIENDLY

NIL BY MOUTH

HOSPITAL

BODY

SORE

Answer #1

In the Hospital

Fill in the blanks

1. This person will perform my operation. He/ She is known as a:

S U R G E O N

2. I will meet this friendly person in the wards who will help me. He/ She is a:

N U R S E

3. In the wards, my height and _____ will be checked:

W E I G H T

4. I will also be given a wrist tag that will show my _____:

N A M E



True or False?

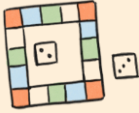




Read the following questions and circle the correct answer.

1. An operation can help my body to get better and stronger. TRUE FALSE
2. The sleepy medicine will help me stay comfortable during the operation. After the operation, I will wake up. TRUE FALSE
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4. The Doctor will give me some medicine after my operation to help me to feel better. TRUE FALSE



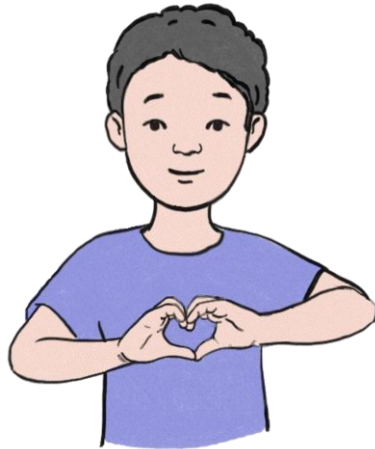
In the Wards

When I am in the hospital, these are some things I can do to relax and feel a little better.

Hint	Things I can do
	Play a game
	Read a book
	Listen to music
	Draw and paint
	Watch a show/ Play on handphone

Tips for Caregivers

The following section provides caregivers with some helpful ideas and strategies. Engaging in medical pretend play and open communication can help children understand and prepare for their operation better.



Medical Play- Origami Mask

Let's fold an origami anaesthesia mask and practice how to use it!

You can use the template provided on the next page.

1



Fold the square paper into 3 equal parts. Unfold.

2



Fold it into another 3 equal parts. Unfold.

3



Fold it diagonally. Unfold.

4



Fold it diagonally on the other side. Unfold.

5



Use the folds in each corner to guide you in this step.

6



Repeat for all 4 corners.

7



Fold the corners inwards and tape them down!

8



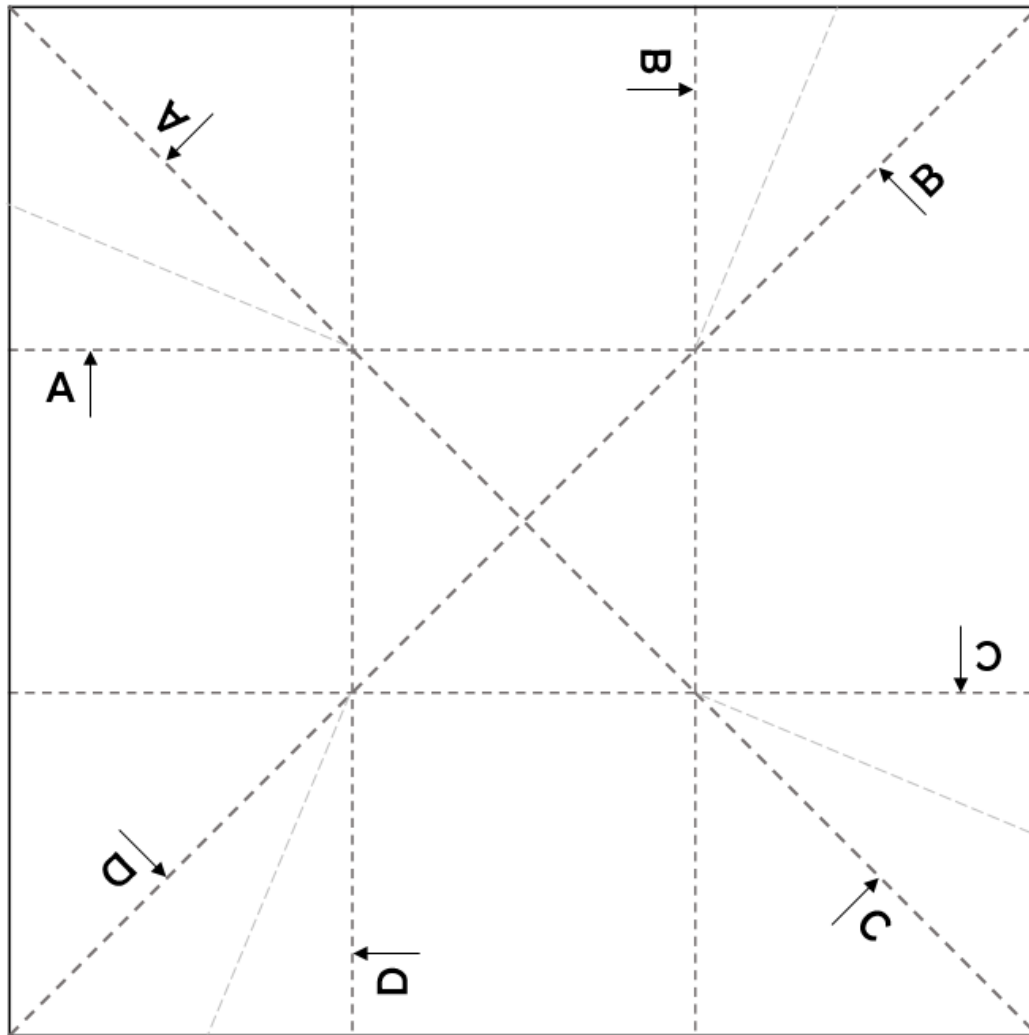
All done!

SCAN ME!



<https://bit.ly/3W5b3so>

**Origami
Anaesthesia
Mask
Template**



Medical Pretend Play in the Operation Room



Invite child to role play with you about going for an operation. Request child to lie down on the 'operating bed' (can be child's bed with a sheet over it or on a yoga mat perhaps)



Offer child the option to practise either with the origami anaesthesia mask which will be placed over his/ her mouth and nose or to use his/her hands instead. Let child know that he/ she will breathe in the sleepy medicine which will allow him/ her to sleep during the operation.



When child is ready and comfortable, suggest to child to close his/ her eyes and take in a few deep breaths to the count of: Breathe In...1...2...3...4... Breathe out.

Repeat this a few times and invite child to pretend to fall asleep.



Remove the mask.

Wait for a few seconds and announce that the operation is over.

Invite child to open his/ her eyes.

Offer praise to him/ her for doing a good job!

Medical Pretend Play- IV Plug Setting

Getting to know an IV cannula...

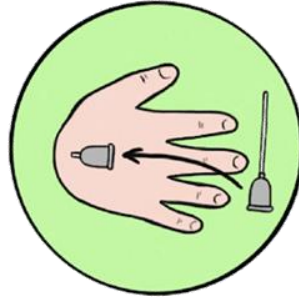


Anaesthesia mask

This is a soft mask which will be placed over my nose and mouth. This mask will help me to sleep and rest during the operation.



1



Cannula

This is a tiny straw which will be placed in my hand to help my body “drink” the medicine so that I can feel better.

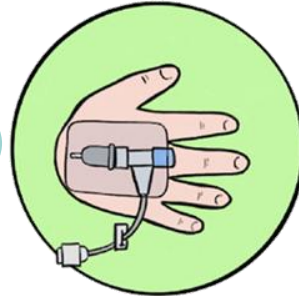
2



Connecting Tube

This is a plastic tube which will be attached to my cannula. The doctor or nurse uses this to put some medicine or fluid into my body with a syringe.

3



Tegaderm

This is a clear plaster which is placed on top of the cannula and connecting tube so that they will not move.

Comfort List

Make a comfort list to identify things which will help your child to feel safe and comfortable while in the hospital. Work together to build this list.

My Comfort List



- 1 _____
- 2 _____
- 3 _____
- 4 _____
- 5 _____

Hints

- Having a favourite blanket
- Having a trusted adult give hugs
- Having a favourite toy

How to Promote Better Hospital Recovery



1

Movement

Encourage your child/ ward to sit up and participate in gentle exercises as prescribed by the physiotherapists. This includes doing some gentle bed exercises too!

2

Diet

Do remind your child/ ward to eat nutritious meals and drink water. If he/ she does not have much of an appetite, encourage him/ her to take smaller but more frequent meals instead.

3

Breathing

Encourage your child/ ward to sit up and participate in gentle breathing exercises as prescribed by the physiotherapists. This will help to strengthen his/ her lungs.

4

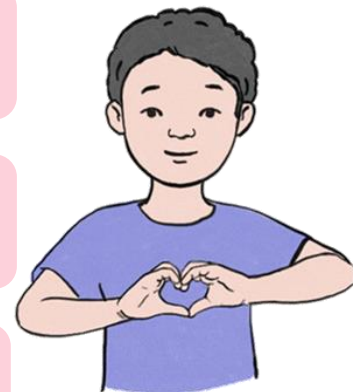
Medication

Ask your child/ ward to take some painkillers- especially after the first 2-3 days post operation. This will help him/her to feel better and move around without too much of discomfort.

5

Rest

Do remind your child to also get plenty of rest as this will help his/ her body to heal and recover sooner.



How to Offer Comfort and Reassurance



Listen

- 1 Listen to your child/ ward with an open mind and do not be quick to dismiss their fears. Children need to feel that they are being listened to and this will help to allay their anxieties. Give them your time and be present as they share.

Encourage sharing of feelings

- 2 Encourage your child/ ward to share their feelings through play, art and music. Allow them to share what they want to - there is no right or wrong here.

Pretend play!

- 3 Rehearse steps leading up to the operation and clarify their understanding through role playing. Practice with a stuffed toy or watch a video that shows the steps if child/ ward needs more time to warm up to the idea of an operation.

Check for understanding

- 4 Check and ask your child/ ward to explain what he/ she understands or has heard.

Be patient

- 5 Do not force your child/ ward to share or role play if he/ she is not ready to do so.

Reassuring Phrases

you can use with your child

- "I see that you look worried/ scared. That is an okay feeling to have. If you are comfortable, you can share your feelings with me and I will try to support you".
- "Let's try _____ and see if it helps you to feel a little better".
- "I understand that this might seem scary to you. I do not have an answer just yet but we can ask the doctor/ nurse to help us when we see them next".

Fun Sheet



At the next hospital visit, help your child to create a special “treasure map” about their hospital journey. Using this sheet as a sample, design your own map with words and pictures. Think of a fun activity to do together at the end of the hospital journey as a reward (e.g. going to the beach together).

1 About Me...

Name: _____

Age: _____

Height: _____

Weight: _____



2 My Surgeon is...

Name: _____



4 My Nurse is...

Name: _____



3 My Child Life Therapist is...

Name: _____



5 My _____ is...

Name: _____

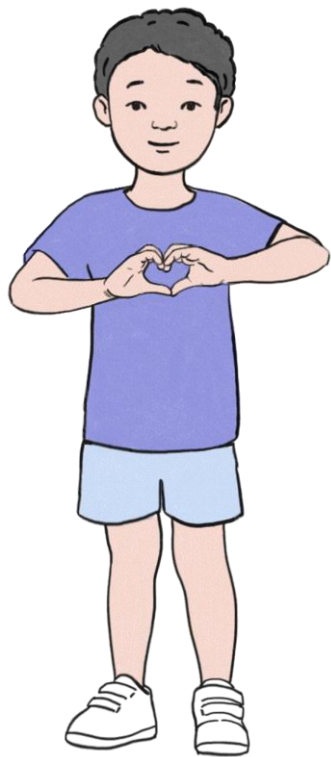


6 Back Home...

I did it! My reward is:

For Additional Resources





The End!