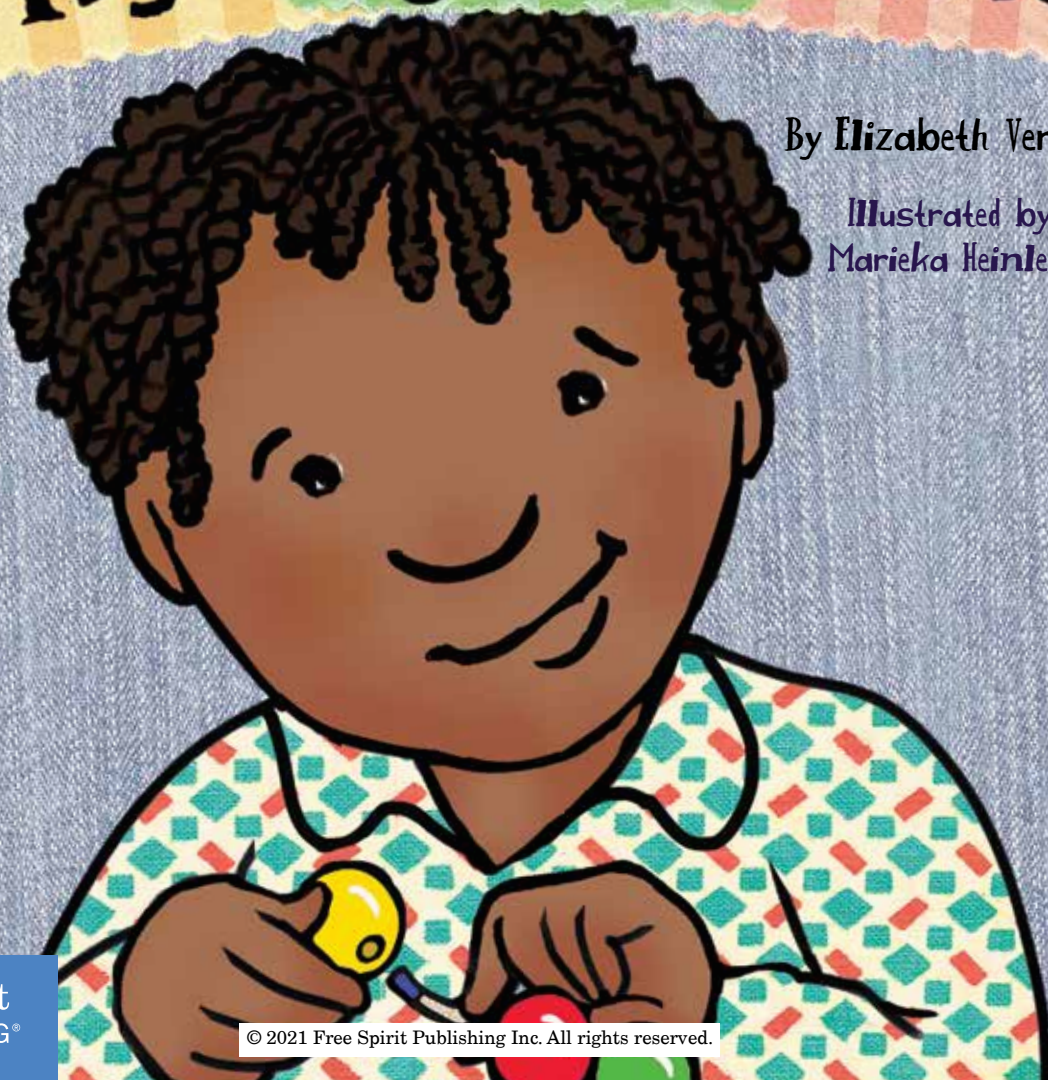


Try-Again Time

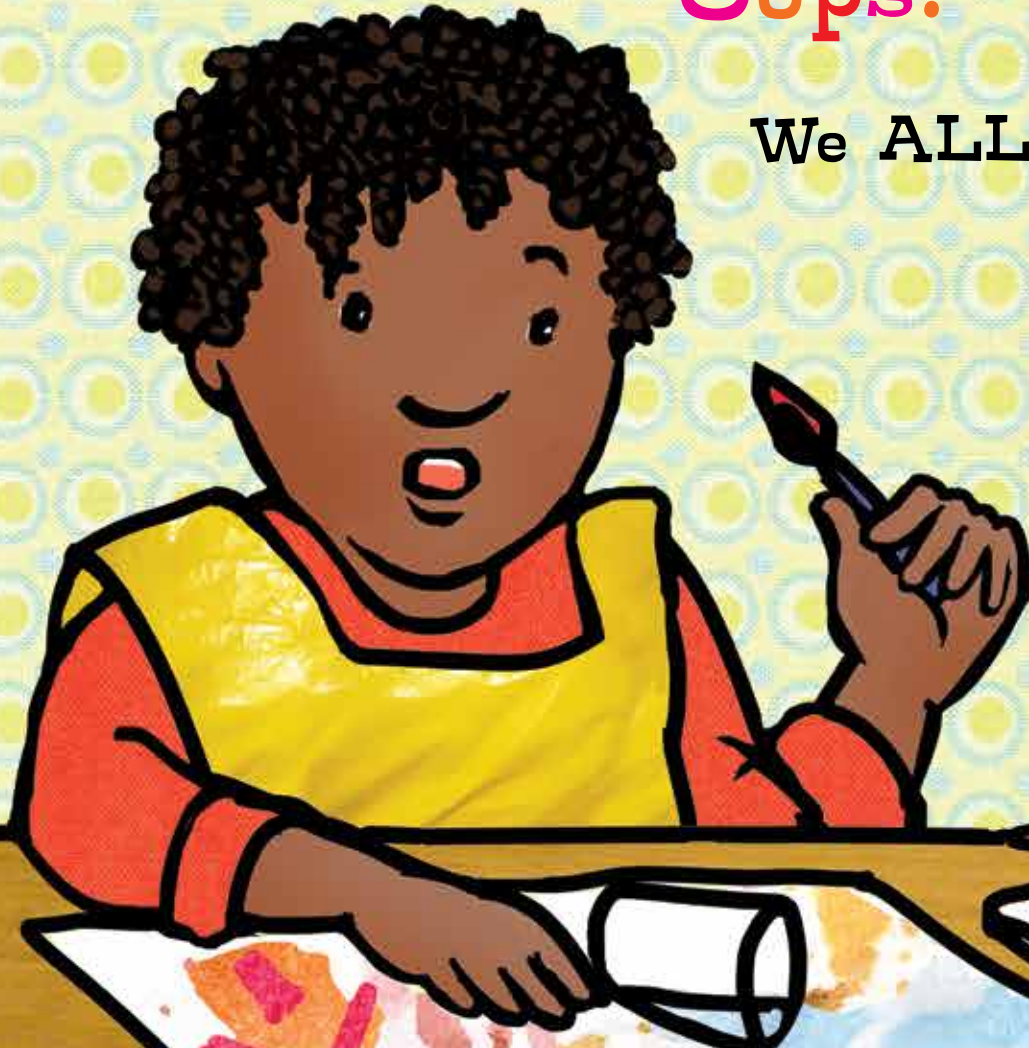
By Elizabeth Verdick

Illustrated by
Mariëka Heinlen

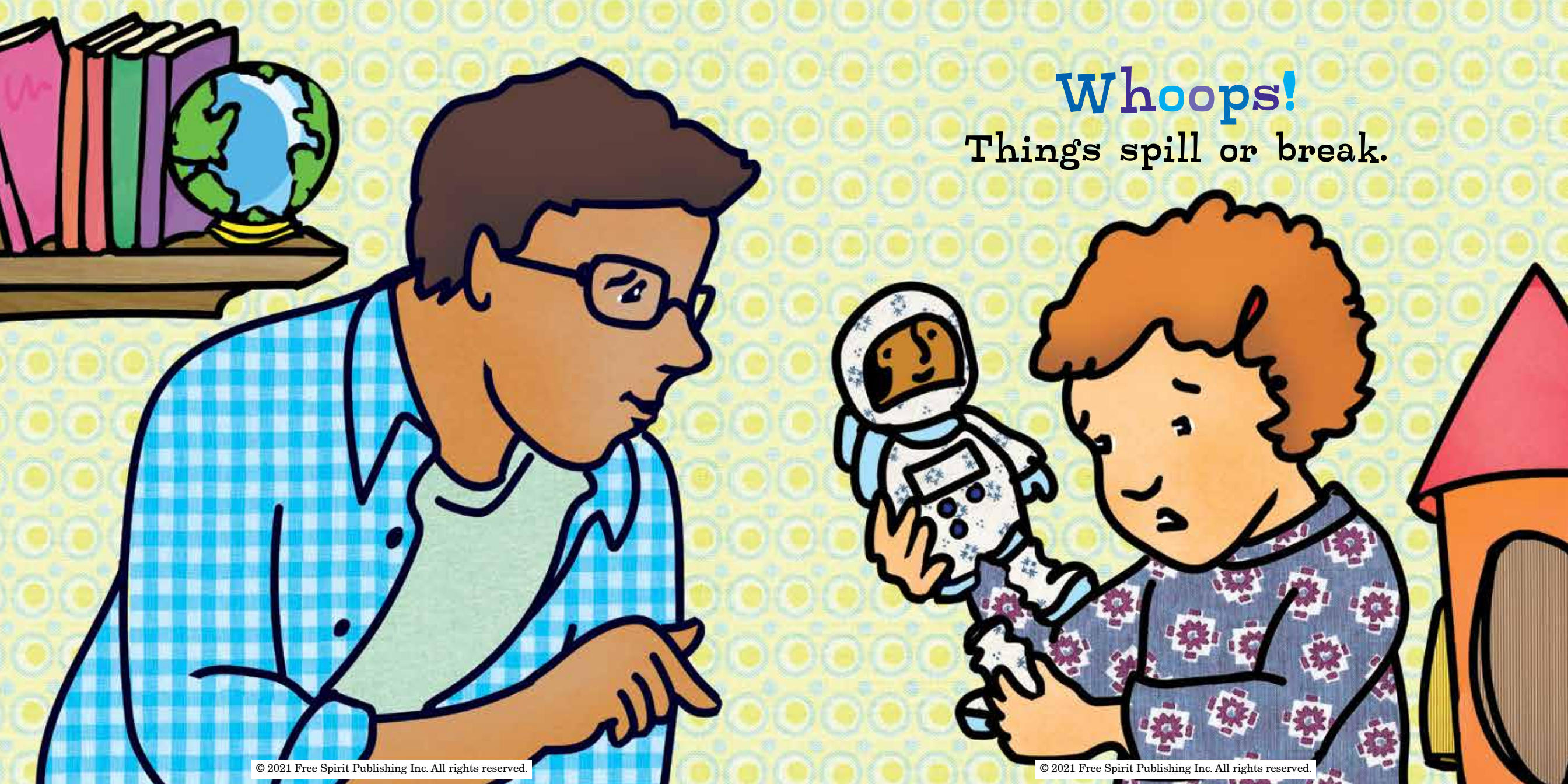


Oops!

We ALL make mistakes.



Whoops!
Things spill or break.



Try-Again Tips for Parents & Caregivers

The toddler years are a “trying” time, in more ways than one. Young children constantly push to do new things while pushing us away (“No help!” “I do it!”). But few toddlers accomplish each new skill with ease. They try and fail, try and fail, until one day that sought-after milestone is achieved. So much frustration on their part—so much patience needed on ours! Here are some tips for managing try-again time together.

Increase independence. Toddlers are eager to explore and learn new skills. Encourage independence by offering age-appropriate toys and activities. Get down to a child’s level, watch, interact, and look for clues about how the child takes on challenges and handles frustration. Avoid stepping in too quickly when a child stumbles or fumbles. Your job is to help just enough—not too much. It’s a tricky balance, so you may need to try again too!

Use Try-Again Time language. You’ll find useful phrases throughout this book, ones you can adopt at home or in child care settings: “Take it slow.” “Each try makes you smarter. Each try helps you get stronger.” “Mistakes are okay!” And the three super words: “I’LL TRY AGAIN!” These cheerful expressions can become part of children’s everyday language to encourage pride in trying—and persisting.

Stay calm and positive. When a child gets frustrated, you probably do too. Instead of showing anger or impatience, work hard to be a source of calm in every storm. Take deep breaths, get centered, and say, “I’m here to help. Let’s work together.” Depending on a child’s temperament, they may need a hug, some time to blow off steam, or a simple break before trying again.

Show how persistence pays off. You are the role model children need, so look for opportunities to show how you try and try again. Invite children to help as you follow a new recipe, for example, or learn a dance step. Narrate your actions, pointing out successes and missteps: “This is hard, but I’m trying.” “Silly me, I poured too much.” “I’m not going to give up!” Share the finished product, whether it’s a hot meal or some hot new dance moves.

Celebrate the process. As children try new things or develop skills bit by bit, focus on the learning-and-growing aspects of each effort: “Wow, your arms and legs are getting stronger.” “Look how you’re solving problems!” “You’ve almost got it—keep trying.” “You’ve learned a lot, and I’m proud! Are you proud too?” You’ll teach the value of hard work and build a sense of resilience.

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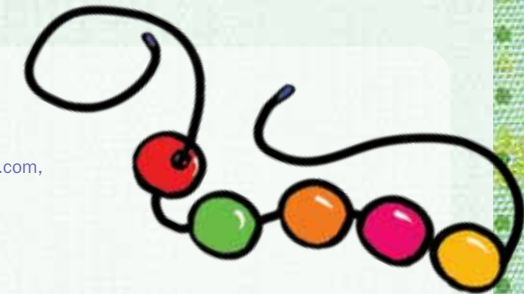
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