

WORKING WITH FAMILIES

Developed for workers in the
Intensive Family Support Service



Introduction

The IFSS program

The Intensive Family Support Service (IFSS) supports families in the Northern Territory and the APY Lands of South Australia.

The IFSS program is a community and home-based program created for families who have children at high risk of neglect; to work with and help these families improve the health, safety and wellbeing of their children.

Working with families, the program aims to ensure that by the end of their involvement in the program their children:

- **are adequately supervised**
- **have all their basic physical needs met**
- **have all their health needs met**
- **have their emotional and developmental needs met**
- **have their educational requirements met.**

IFSS is available to Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal families, but acknowledges that Aboriginal children are over-represented in the Northern Territory child protection system and works to reduce this.

Who is this resource for?

This booklet offers an initial set of topic-based content resources for use by those working with families. These resources are to assist workers when discussing these or related topics relevant to the family.

This resource aims to speak to workers – and through workers to families –

about what helps children in the IFSS program grow healthy and happy.

While workers might show or pass these materials to families, they are best used to inspire and fuel conversation between the worker and family about what is good for kids.

Topics

- **Loving, caring, holding**
- **Good sleep for kids**
- **Getting kids to school**
- **Culture is good for kids**
- **Wash and clean**
- **Respect house rules**
- **Kids and behaviour**

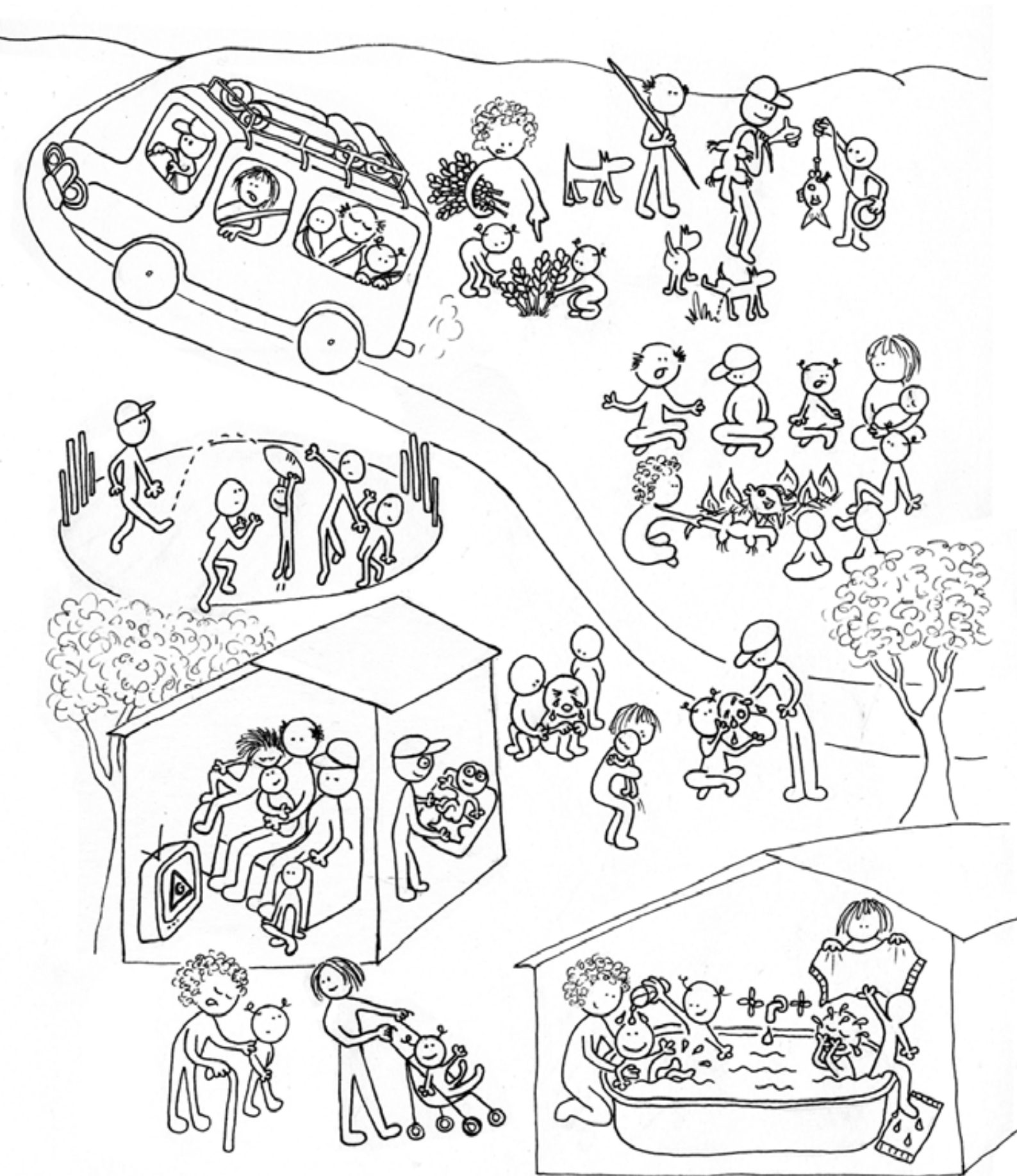
Loving, caring, holding

OUTCOME AREA: Children have their emotional and developmental needs met

My Mum, Dad
and Nana care for
and teach all
us kids.



Loving, caring, holding



Loving, caring, holding

Good story



I feel safe at home and I love my whole family.



My Mum, Dad and Nana care for and teach all us kids.



Dad is proud of us. He tells us when we've done something good.



He takes us all camping and we all tell stories.

Baby story



Mum or Dad check I am OK when I cry.



Sometimes I need a cuddle.



I like it when someone smiles at me.

Not good story



Things at home make me sad. Sometimes I feel scared.



I visit other people because it is safer. I know I can go back to Mum and Dad next day, but I still feel worried.

It got better when...



Nana talked to Mum and Dad about how I was feeling.

Baby story



I am crying. Dad gets angry and yells at me. Mum's doing other things and doesn't come and cuddle me.

It got better when...



Aunty had a talk with mum and now mum spends more time with me.

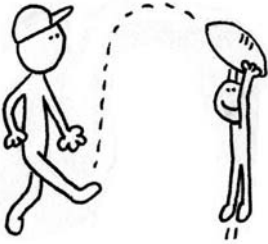
Loving, caring, holding

Activities for families

Talk to families about:



what they think
is good for kids.



what family activities
they can try to make
things better for
the kids.

Encourage families to:



notice when kids
do good things.



listen to kids,
talk with them.



be gentle with kids,
smile, look in their
eyes, give them hugs,
don't growl at them
all the time.



spend good times
with kids (not just
watching TV) – tell
stories, make up
games, play music,
go bush, have a
swim.



talk to an IFSS worker
about ways to spend
time with kids or talk
about any worries.

Your ideas

Good sleep for kids

OUTCOME AREAS: Children have all their basic physical, health needs and their educational requirements met.

**Every night
I have a bath, have
supper, brush my teeth,
go to the toilet and
fall asleep.**



Good sleep for kids



Good sleep for kids

Good story

Bigger kids story



After going to school and playing all day I feel tired.



Mum makes me go to sleep at the same time every night.



Every night I have a bath, have supper, brush my teeth, go to the toilet and fall asleep.



On the weekends I sometimes go to Aunty's place. She always reads to me and my cousin. We all snuggle up.

Toddler and preschooler story



During the day I get tired. When I start grizzling, Nana puts me down for a nap.

Baby story



When I wake up in the morning, Mum feeds me, then I kick and play.



Soon I get tired and rub my eyes. Dad changes my nappy and I sleep some more.

Not good story



There's been a lot of noise at home and lots of people.



I feel hungry so I drink lots of cola and tea. Nana says that is why I cannot sleep.



When I go to school I find it hard to listen and sometimes I fall asleep in class.

It got better when...



Someone told the housing officer about the noise and Nana told Mum and Dad to give me supper before bed.

Good sleep for kids

Activities for families

Your ideas

Talk with families about:



what happens in their house when it is time for kids to go to sleep.



what changes might help the kids get a good sleep.

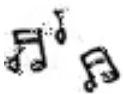
Encourage families to:



get a bedtime routine for the children – quiet activities, have a bath, have supper, brush teeth, go to the toilet, have a story, fall asleep.



make sure the kids have supper and do not drink cola, coffee or tea before bedtime.



keep the house calm when kids are sleeping – ask people to turn down the volume or go outside.



ask a family member or friend they trust to help if they can not put the kids to bed properly because they are doing other things or because of troubles in their own lives.

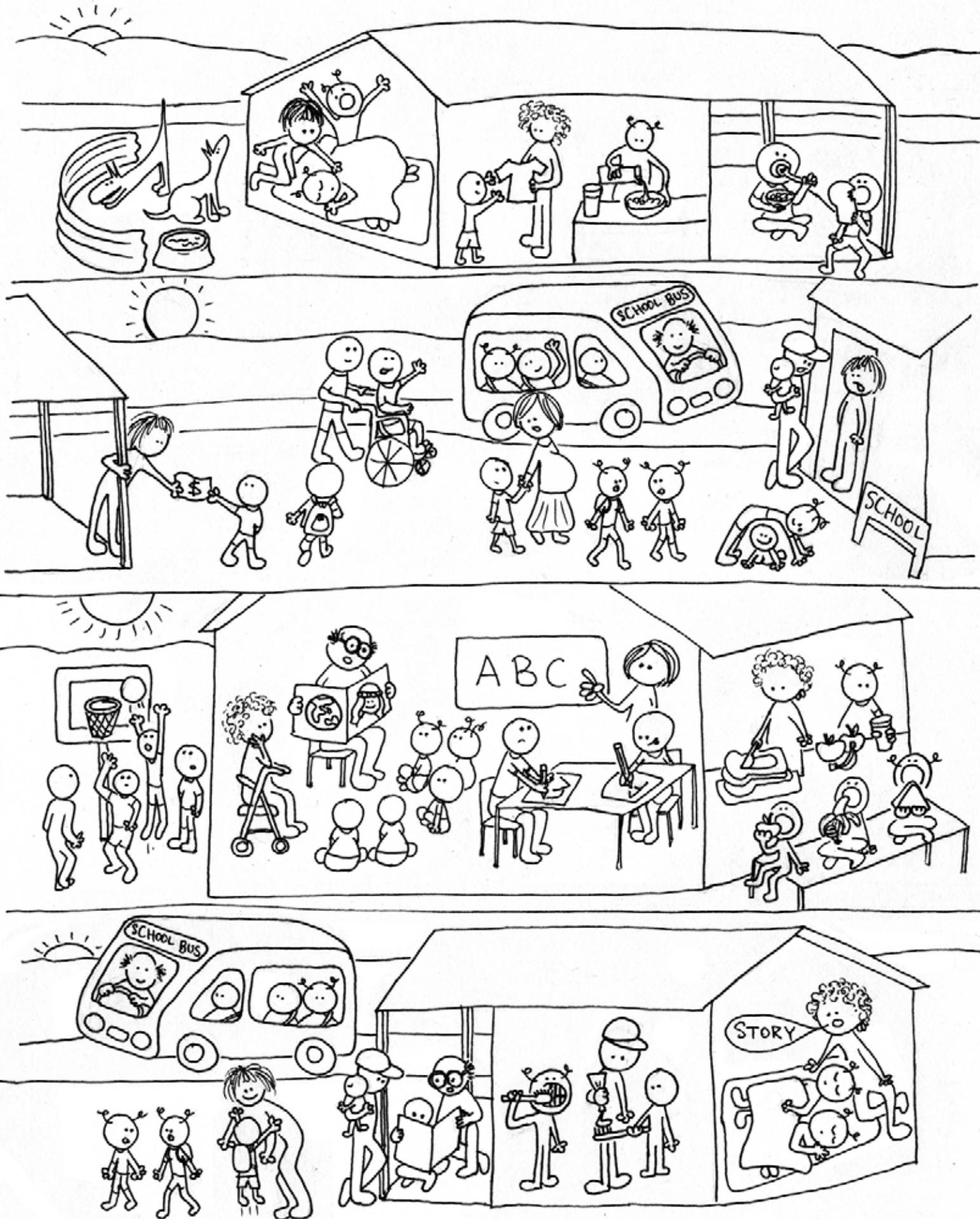
Getting kids to school

OUTCOME AREA: Children have their educational requirements met

I go to school
every day.

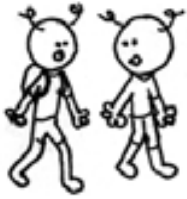


Getting kids to school



Getting kids to school

Good story



I go to school every day.



I wake early, put on clean clothes and make my breakfast.



Mum makes my lunch or gives me some money for tuck shop.



We sometimes talk about what's going on at school.



School is fun and a safe place to be. I learn a lot and there are lots of kids to play with.



I love learning about other people and other countries.



Sometimes we go to town for sports carnivals and visit other schools.



I want to be a teacher when I grow up.

Not good story



We visited Nana, but Mum forgot to tell the school and Centrelink, so we did not have enough money for food.



I felt shamed when I came back because I missed a lot of school and did not have any school clothes.



One boy was picking on me and I did not want to go any more.

It got better when...



Dad spoke to the teacher about why I had not been at school.

Not good story



I did not have breakfast before school.



I felt hungry and could not understand the teacher and got into trouble.

It got better when...



Mum kept breakfast food for me in a special cupboard.

Getting kids to school

Activities for families

Talk with families about how to make sure:



kids get a good night's sleep, wake early and get to school on time.



kids have breakfast and lunch either at home or at school.



have clean school clothes each day.



feel safe at school.

Encourage families to:



talk to kids about what happens at school.



go to school events or help with the lunch program or classroom reading.



talk with the school and get help if the kids will not go to school.



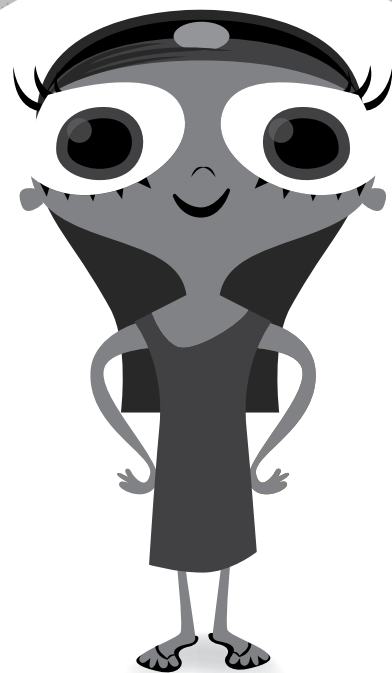
if needed, ask the teacher if they can stay with their little kids in the class room for a while every day until they are both are ready to let go.

Your ideas

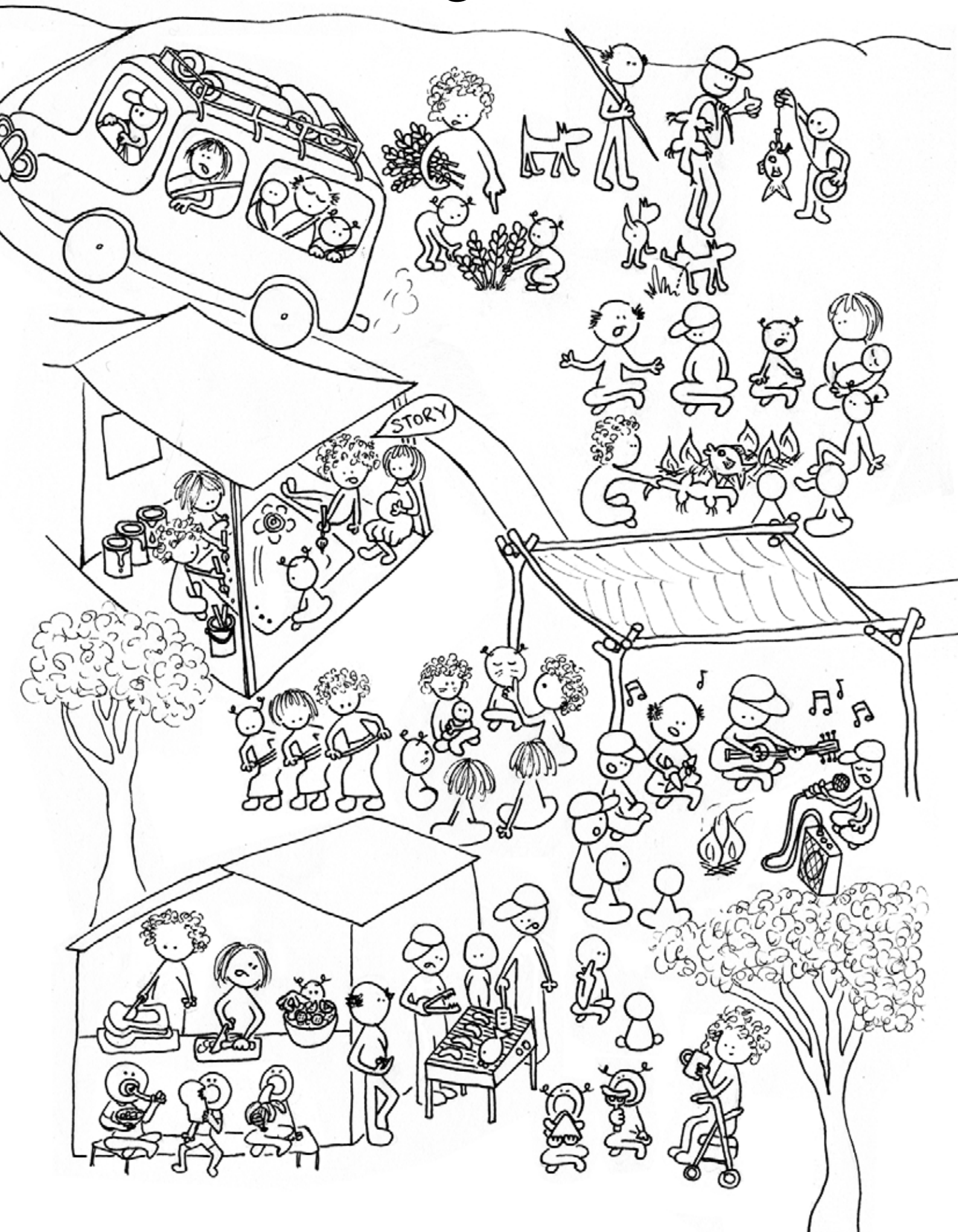
Culture is good for kids

OUTCOME AREA: Children have their emotional and developmental needs met

On the school holidays
we went camping and
visited country.



Culture is good for kids



Culture is good for kids

Good story



On the school holidays we went camping and visited country.

Not good story



My Uncle said I need to learn about my culture but I don't want to. Why do I need to learn that stuff?

It got better when...



Nana and Grandpa were really happy then. They told us stories about family, country and spirit.



That singer came and told us why culture is important to him.



The babies and little kids had a good time too. It was fun, but we had to follow the rules.



Sometimes we all paint or play music.

Culture is good for kids

Activities for families

Talk with families about:



what they value about the cultures they come from.



their fears and hopes for their kids and what they would like their kids to learn and carry forward.

Encourage families to:



tell kids stories about their family history and cultures – where do they come from – where is their country – who are their ancestors?



tell kids stories about people who have helped keep family and cultures strong.



give kids opportunities to hear stories from grandparents and community Elders.



paint, dance, sing, play, read, write and tell family and cultural stories together.



go to community events with kids – sports carnivals, dances, BBQs, weddings, ceremonies, funerals.



use traditional languages at home with kids.



go hunting, fishing or shopping for traditional food with your kids and cook it together.

Your ideas

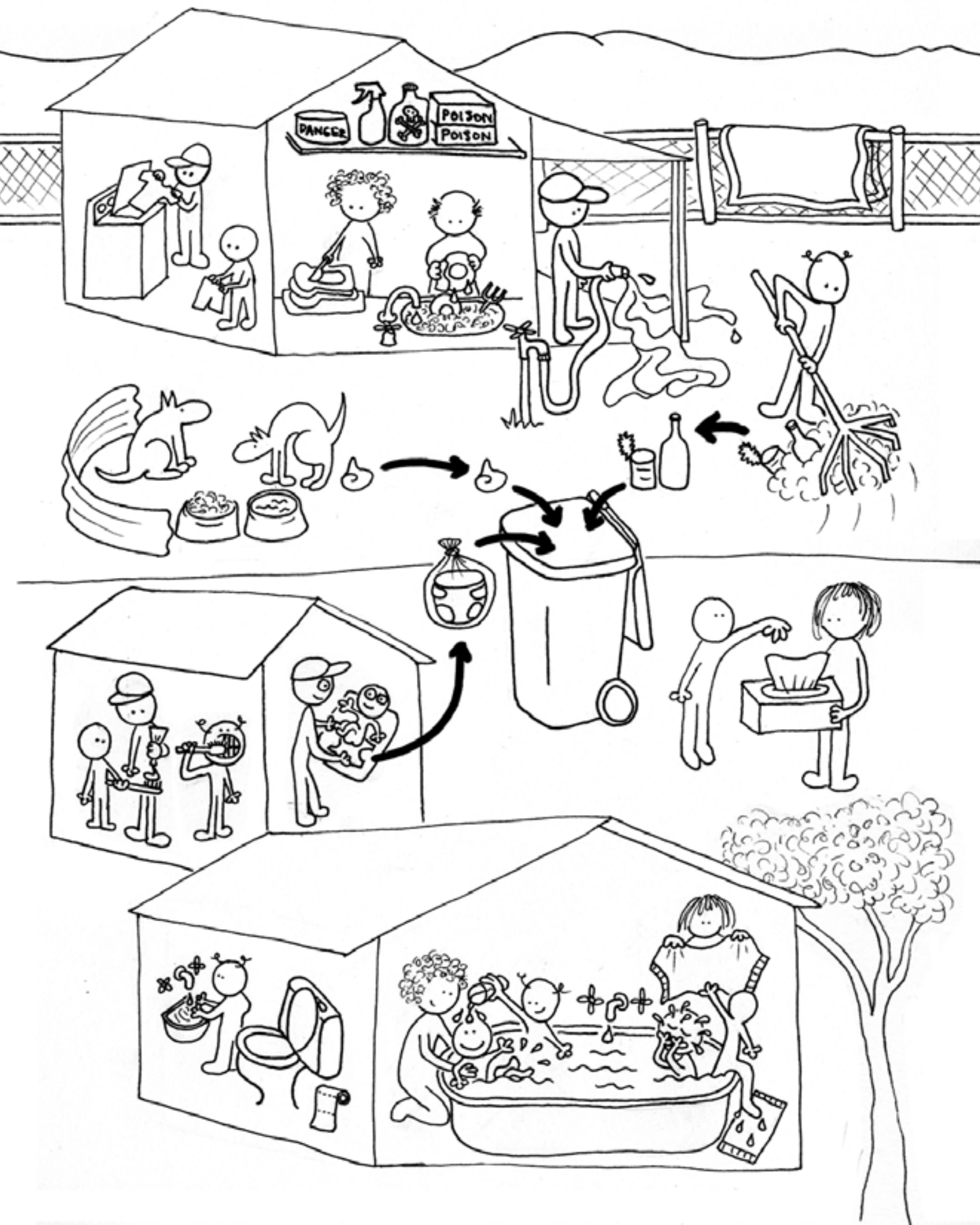
Wash and clean

OUTCOME AREA: Children have all their basic physical needs met

**I feel good when my
Mum and Dad clean up
the house and yard.**



Wash and clean



Wash and clean

Good story



I feel good when my Mum and Dad clean up the house and yard. I like the house to smell nice.



My brother's job is to collect dirty clothes and put them in the laundry.



On weekends my job is to help Dad rake the yard and hose the verandah.



Most nights before my shower I help Nana bath baby and change his nappy.



If I forget to blow my nose, brush my teeth or wash my hands, Mum always reminds me. She always says 'Clean house, clean kids, clean dogs.' It makes me laugh.

Not good story



I feel sad because the kids tease me.



They say I smell and my hair is dirty, but I hate going into the bathroom because the toilet is yucky.



I got sick when I drank milk that was old.

It got better when...



I stayed at Aunty's place and my cousin gave me some of her nice clean clothes.



Mum took me to the clinic because I was itchy and Mum and Dad started throwing away milk as soon as it got old.

Baby story



Sometimes I get nappy rash. It goes away when my nappy is changed more often.

Wash and clean

Activities for families

Talk with families about:



the importance of keeping the kids and house clean and safe.



having a big family clean up day.



giving the bigger kids some regular small home clean duties.



talking to the Housing Officer if the house is too crowded to keep clean and safe.

Encourage families to keep the house (and animals) clean:



keep the cooking area clean.



throw rubbish in a bin outside, rake up outside rubbish and animal poo, hose the veranda, fix leaking taps.



keep little kids away from dirty areas such as near outside taps.



store glass, sharp things, poison and medicine away from little kids.



wash the kids' clothes regularly and hang blankets in the sun sometimes.



care for dogs well, keep them clean and preferably keep them outside.

Encourage families to keep the kids clean:



make sure kids wash their face and eyes every day, and their whole body most days, and wash their hands after using the toilet.



teach kids to brush their teeth every day.



remind kids to blow their noses.



clean babies and change their nappies often.

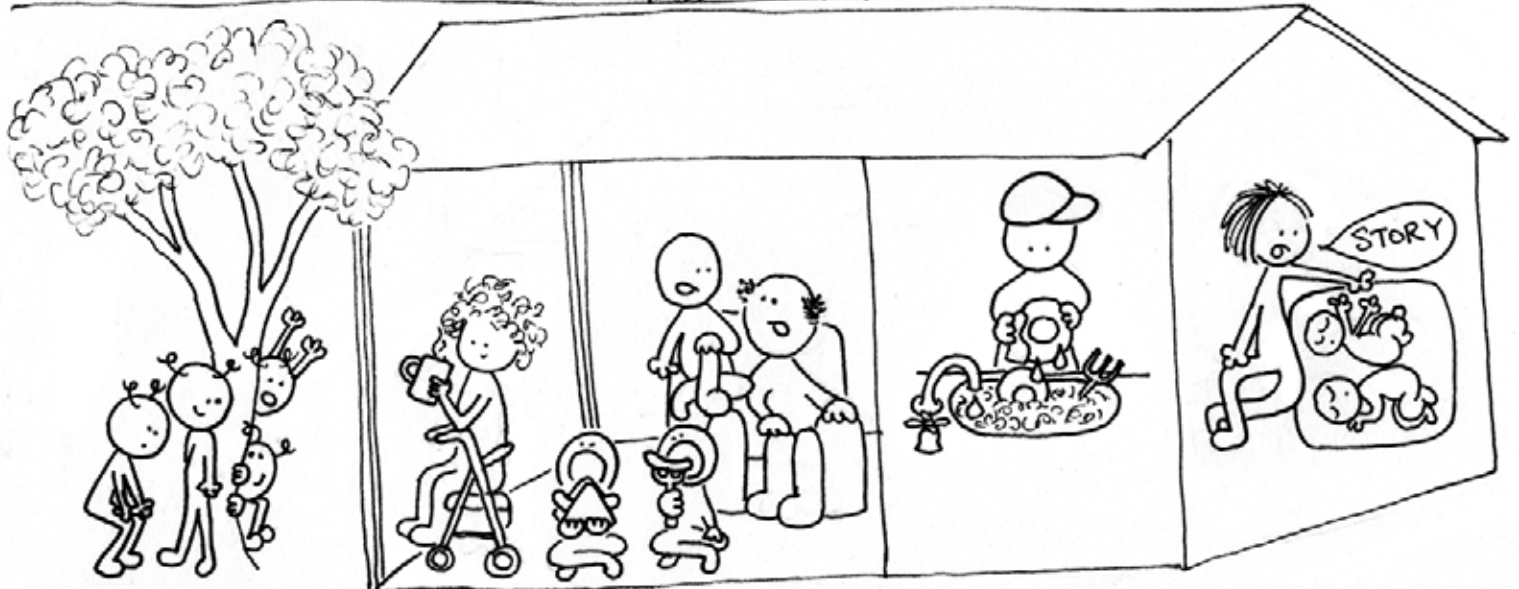
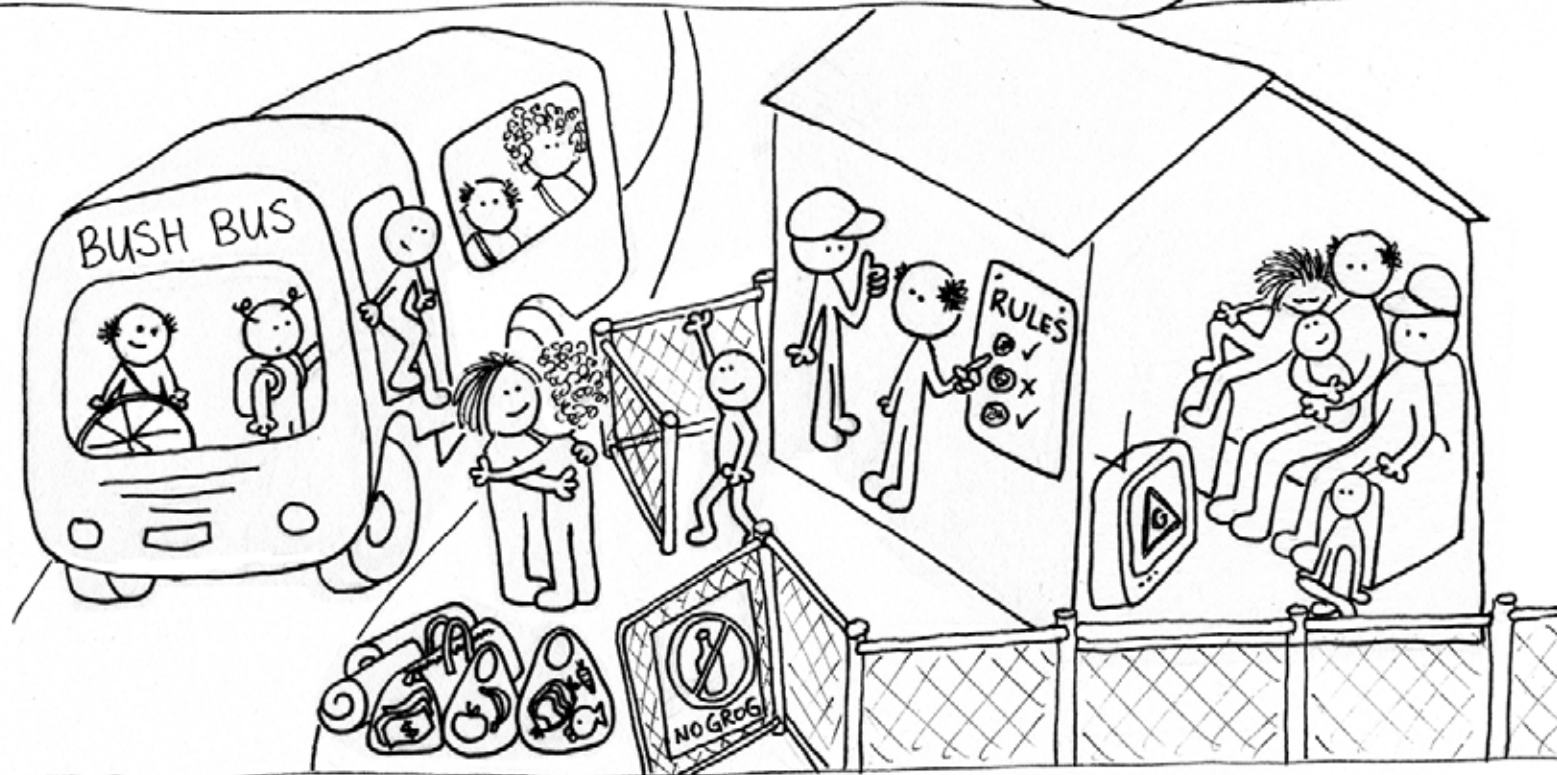
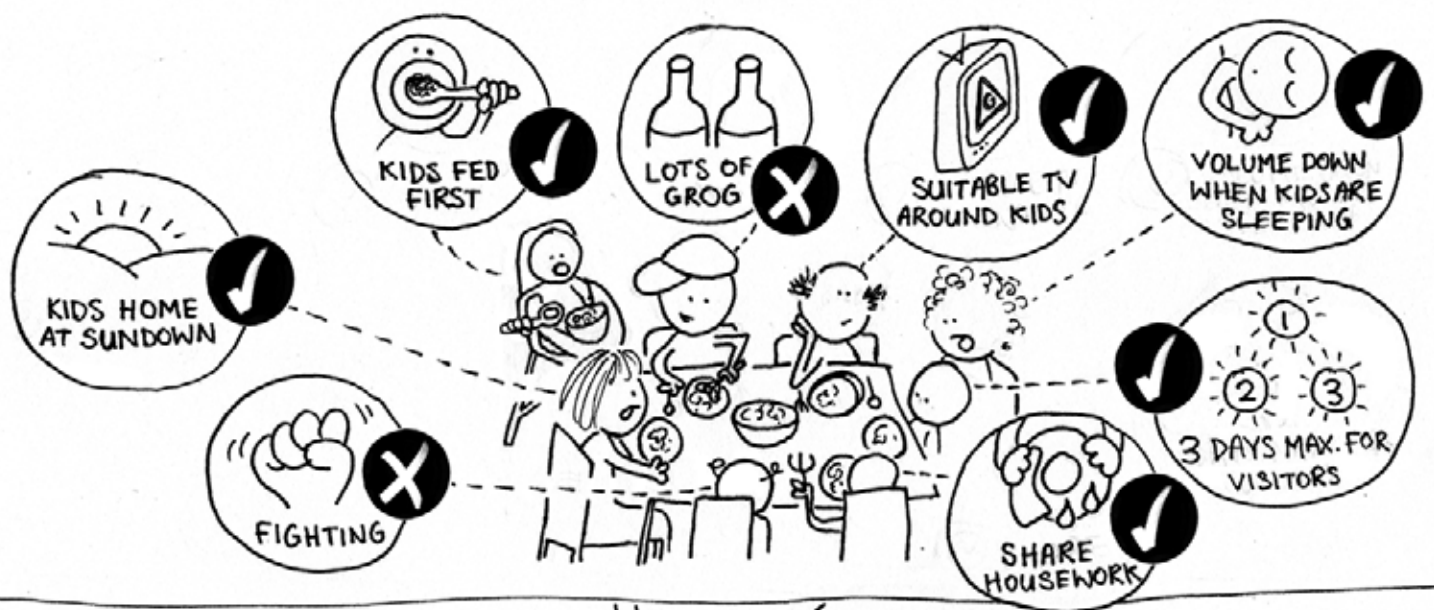
Respect house rules

OUTCOME AREA: Children have their emotional and developmental needs met

We have rules about
what we do at home.



Respect house rules



Respect house rules

Good story



My home is a safe and happy place.



I know my whole family, I know who I can talk to if I need to.



The grown ups always know who I am with.



We have rules about what we do at home. Nana or Grandpa always tell visitors the house rules.

Baby story



We have a lot of visitors but the house is still safe and clean enough.

Not good story



When I came home from school Mum and Dad were gone and the visitors were drunk.



So I went to Nana's because there was no food and I felt scared.

It got better when...



Nana talked to Mum and Dad about all the visitors.

Respect house rules

Activities for families

Talk with families about:



getting the main family members to agree on some rules to keep the home safe for everyone – for example:



- kids fed first



- kids home at sundown



- no fighting



- volume down when kids sleeping



- suitable TV around kids



- share housework



- not too much grog or no grog



- 3 days max. for visitors (visitors bring food, money, bedding)

Encourage families to:



get someone to write and draw the rules and stick them on the wall.



ask the right person to show or tell visitors the rules.



get other adults and kids more involved in making and keeping house rules.



get help if there are too many people to keep the rules (maybe the Housing Officer or the police).

Your ideas

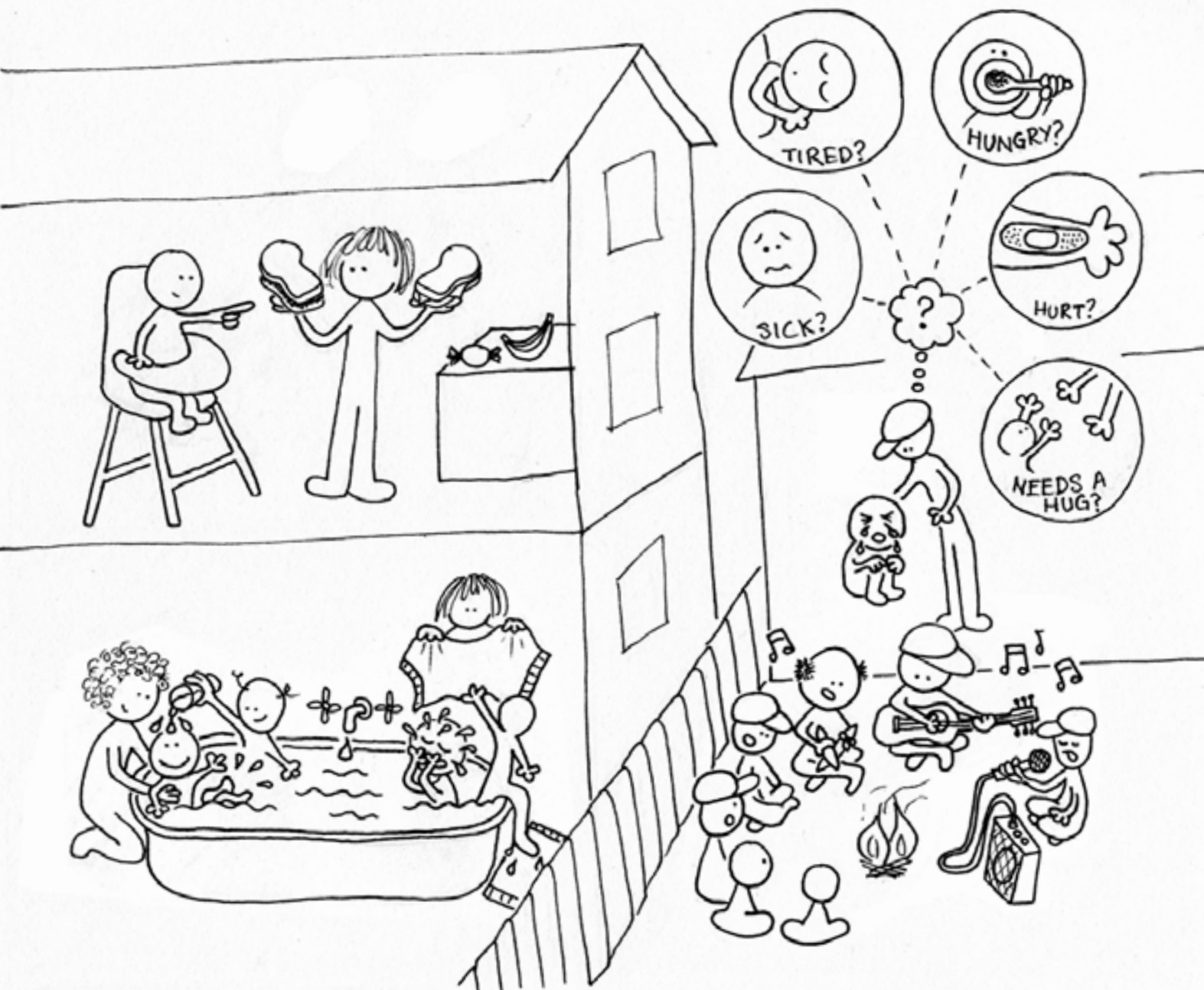
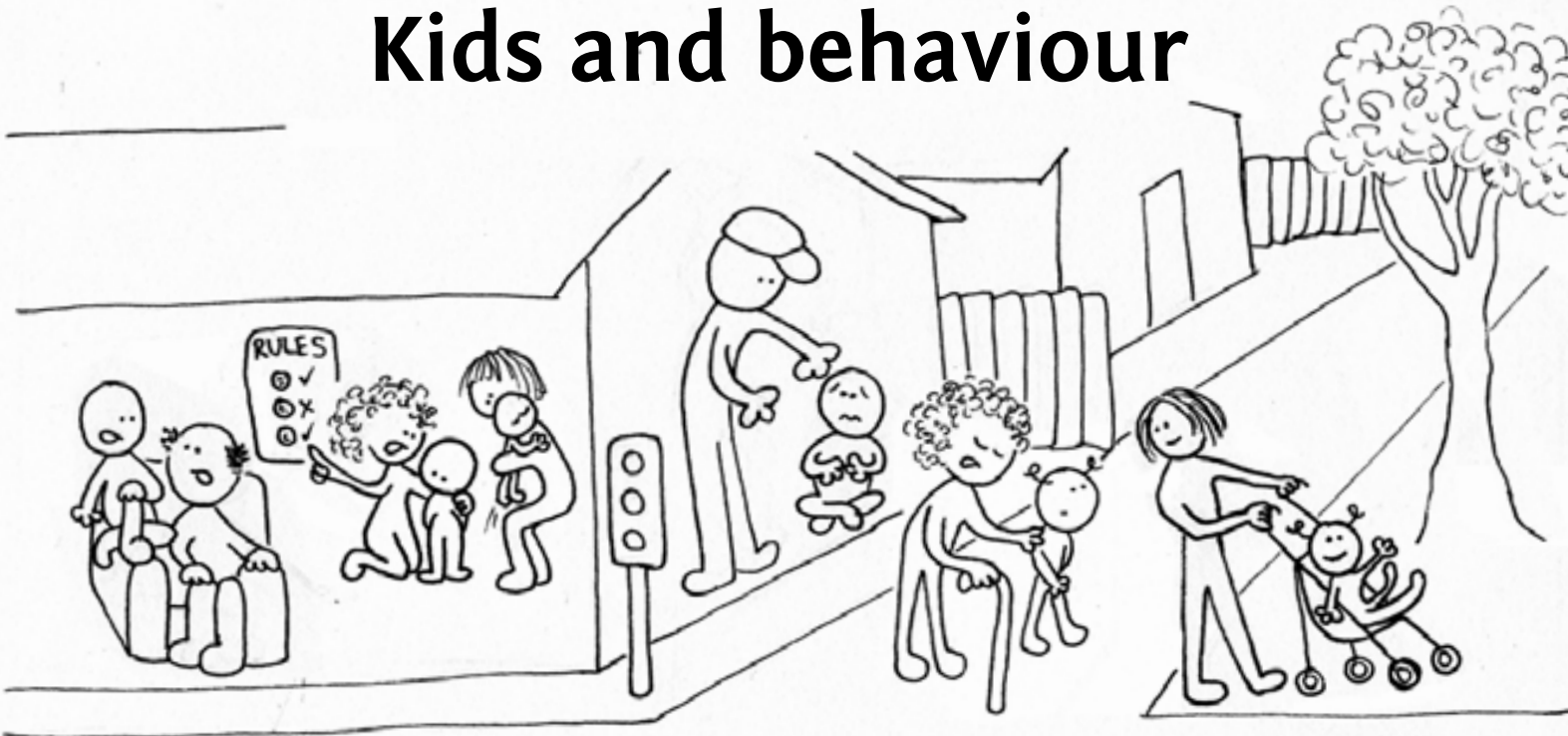
Kids and behaviour

OUTCOME AREA: Children have their emotional and developmental needs met

**I am a strong kid
but I know what they
expect from me.**



Kids and behaviour



Kids and behaviour

Good story



My parents take good care of me. I am a strong kid but I know what they expect from me.



I am happy, so I usually do what they ask me to do, but they have to keep reminding me about things sometimes.



When I am sad or sick they usually know something is wrong and try to fix it.

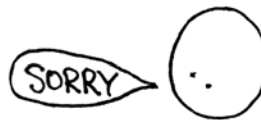


When I grow up I will teach my kids the same things.

Not good story



I throw things at Nana and get in trouble at school.



I love Nana and say sorry sometimes, but I miss my Mum.

It got better when...



Nana and I talked about some rules at home that I need to follow and I understand them better now.

Not good story



My two year old sister screams until she gets what she wants.

It got better when...

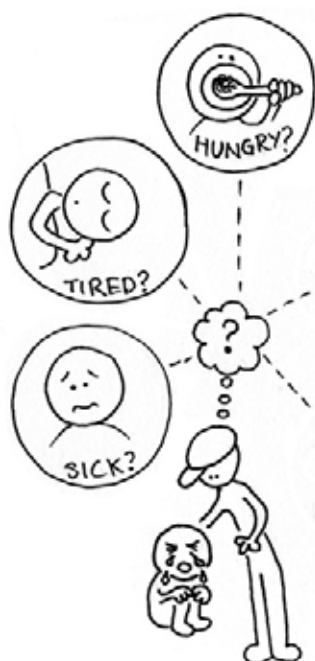


Mum started talking to her more and giving her only a few choices like does she want peanut butter or cheese in her sandwich.

Kids and behaviour

Activities for families

Talk with families about:



learning to understand their kid's behaviour – think about times when it seems either hard or easy teach your kids how to behave.

what could be affecting how the child is behaving – for example feeling tired or sick, poor diet, being bullied, copying adults' behaviour, missing family and culture, no one listening to them, needing attention.

how they could try to make these things better.

Encourage families to:



listen and talk to kids, respect them and put their interests first.



be patient, explain to the kids what they want them to do and remind the kids often.



do not growl too much – negotiate when they want something, be firm but give them a choice – for example say “We will not go to footy until you have a shower – would you like a shower now or after lunch?”



tell kids what they do not like, for example, “Do not hit your sister,” and notice when kids do good things, for example “Thanks for looking after your Nana.”



try to find the right person to teach the right way – Nana, Grandpa, Aunty or Uncle.



use culture to show kids what is right, have kids spend time with grandparents, and learn where they come from.



talk to someone if they can't handle their child's demands and do not want to be with them.

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Alice Springs consultations

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